




To: Planning Committee
From: Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning
Date: May 17, 2002
File: 4057-11
Re: **RICHMOND HOMELESSNESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY**

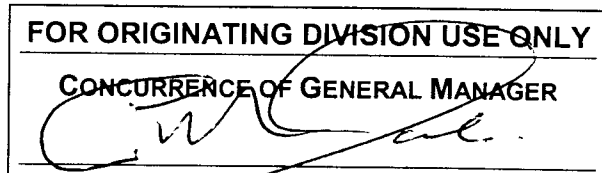
Staff Recommendation

That, as per the Manager, Policy Planning Report, dated May 17, 2002:

1. Council endorse:
 - a) The vision and guiding principles to address homelessness in Richmond as identified in the Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy (see Attachment 4)
 - b) The Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy, May 2002, as a framework to guide and co-ordinate local efforts to address homelessness in Richmond;
2. The recommendations from the Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy be co-ordinated with recommendations from the Poverty Response Group Report;
3. The Strategy be considered in conjunction with the City's program, service level and budget reviews to determine how it can be best implemented.


Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning

Att.



Staff Report

Origin

At its regular meeting of May 27, 2001, Council directed staff to submit an application on behalf of the City and community stakeholders to the federal government's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) to develop a homelessness strategy for Richmond.

In November 2001, the City was awarded a \$45,000 grant from the federal government to support this work which was guided by a steering committee of local community based stakeholders and undertaken by CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

An executive summary of the report entitled Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy is included as **Attachment 1**.

The complete report entitled Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy and is included as **Attachment 2**.

Findings Of Fact

Council's housing policies in the Official Community Plan (OCP) recognize the need to facilitate the development of specialized housing such as transition houses for women and children fleeing violence, second stage transition housing, group homes for persons with mental and physical challenges, and emergency shelters.

The study process was guided by a local steering committee representing the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC), local faith community, Richmond Health Services, Chimo Crisis Services, Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Seniors Advisory Council, Richmond Youth Services Agency, SUCCESS, Richmond Committee on Disability, Canadian Mental Health Association, mental health consumers and the Richmond poverty response committee. A complete list of steering committee members is included as **Attachment 3**.

The study focussed on people who are "absolutely homeless" and those who are "at risk" of homelessness.

"Absolute Homelessness" is defined as "individuals lying with no physical shelter- including people living on the streets, in doorways, covered parking lots, in parks or on beaches, in their vehicles and those squatting in vacant buildings. Being absolutely homeless is also referred to as "shelterless". Those who are absolutely homeless have no housing choice and end up living on the streets or in shelters."

"At risk of Homelessness" means people living in spaces or situations that:

- do not meet basic health and safety standards
- do not provide for security of tenure or for personal safety, and
- are not affordable on a continuing basis.

The number of people at risk of being homeless can vary with the local economy and the rental housing market.

The report also includes:

- overviews of other local and regional initiatives which are relevant to the Richmond strategy including the Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver
- key data that provides an indication of the challenges presented by homelessness and the current situation in the City developed through:
 - interviews with local service providers and government services that provide accommodation and services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
 - interviews with homeless people and those at risk;
 - current data on the numbers of people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness in the City;
- a profile of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in Richmond;
- information gathered from a public open house and workshop held in February, 2002;
- a vision, guiding principles, key themes and an action plan comprised of 12 projects that are being recommended over the short to long term to address homelessness in particular and affordable housing in general in Richmond.

The scope of homelessness in Richmond- Summary of Key Findings

Richmond has only two emergency homeless shelters which include:

- Richmond House Men's Shelter operated by the Salvation Army:
 - eight beds with three additional beds during cold/wet weather
 - in 2001 was running at 85% capacity; 100% capacity in September 2001
- Women's Transition House-Nova House:
 - 10 spaces for women and children only
 - January to September 2001-107 women and children served and during the same period-195 women and children were turned away.

Richmond's two emergency shelters only cater to a specific population. Homeless people with disabilities, mental health challenges and substance misuse cannot be accommodated in Richmond. Similarly, there is no emergency accommodation for youth, homeless women, or women with teen age sons who are fleeing abusive relationships.

The study acknowledges that the number of absolutely homeless in Richmond is small. A 24 hour snapshot of absolute homeless undertaken in January 2002 in Richmond found 29 homeless people in the city. Fifteen of these were in staying in shelters and 14 youth who were without permanent shelter.

The study measured the “at risk” population using a variety of methods including:

- Population paying more than 50% of income on shelter
 - This included 5,650 renter households in Richmond in 1996
- Population in core need and spending half of income on shelter
 - This included 3,630 households or 10,555 individuals in Richmond in 1996
- Population below the “Low Income Cut Off” (an approximate for the poverty line) of \$22,964 for a two person household in Richmond
 - In 1996, this included 9,000 Richmond residents
- BC Benefits Shelter Allowances/Average Rents in Richmond
 - Shelter allowance of \$325/month for single person and \$520/month for a couple
 - In 2001, average bachelor suite in Richmond was \$550/month and one bedroom unit was \$699/month
- Waiting List for non market, subsidized housing
 - Currently stands at 1,300 persons who want to rent subsidized units in Richmond
- Food Bank Usage
 - In 2001, approximately 1,100 households visited the Richmond Food Bank with about 15% visiting on a weekly basis.

Analysis

The Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy represents a comprehensive community based approach to addressing issues of homelessness and at risk of homelessness in the City. The study process and recommended action plan recognize that solutions to homelessness issues do not rest with any one community stakeholder or agency, but rather require a coordinated, targeted and pragmatic response by a variety of community interests. The study has clearly benefited from the active and sustained participation of these stakeholders over the past year. The diversity of stakeholders represented on the steering committee represents the range of community interests including the City which will be required to effectively address local issues.

While the study recognized the few numbers of people who are absolutely homeless in Richmond, it did identify relatively significant numbers of persons who may be “at risk” of homelessness. These results are generally consistent with some of the key findings included in the Richmond Poverty Report Card completed in the fall of 2000.

Community Strengths

The study also recognized a number of key strengths relevant to addressing homelessness and affordable housing issues in Richmond such as:

- the strong network of community service providers and business interests;

- positive legacy of affordable housing commitments by City Council and staff; particularly the recent Council decision to assist in providing a permanent location for Nova House Women’s Shelter;
- two existing emergency shelters; and,
- a developed health services network.

It is this strength that provides the foundation for the proposed action plan.

Local Challenges

At the same time however, a number of specific needs were identified through the study process. These include:

- poor physical condition of Richmond House men’s shelter which runs at capacity;;
- no emergency shelter for youth, families, persons with mental health issues, physical disabilities, individuals with HIV, people with complex needs or multiple disabilities or people who experience temporary event homelessness resulting from fires or other disasters;
- no second stage housing (transitional, time limited housing obtained after leaving an emergency shelter and before a person is ready for independent housing) ;
- a lack of enough affordable housing;
- a lack of community awareness of the issue of homelessness and “at risk” of homelessness;
- a lack of awareness of programs, services and supports, particularly related to housing and homelessness, that are available in Richmond;
- a lack of awareness of services, particularly related to housing, for immigrants and refugees;
- a need for after care (support services provided to people leaving hospital or treatment programs) and longer term counselling.

Recommended Strategy

The study recommends a strategy and action plan of 12 projects that will be required to address the identified needs. The action plan is centred on a vision statement and seven guiding principles (**See Attachment 4**) and organized around the following five themes:

- Theme 1 Upgrade and increase emergency shelter capacity
- Theme 2 Create Supportive Housing for At Risk Groups
- Theme 3 Increase Community Awareness
- Theme 4 Support Local Services
- Theme 5 Affordable Housing

Proposed projects have also been categorized into short, medium and longer term priorities.

- Short term projects: undertaken immediately and be completed within two years (by 2005)

- Medium term projects: undertaken within two years, completed within three years (by 2006)
- Long term projects: undertaken within three to five years (by 2008)

Theme 1- Upgrade and increase emergency shelter capacity

- Project 1- Richmond House Emergency Shelter (short term priority)
 - replace the existing shelter with a purpose built, 20 bed barrier free shelter for men and women
- Project 2- Nova House Transition Shelter (short term priority)
develop a purpose built, accessible facility with a minimum of 10 beds
- Project 3- Family Emergency Accommodation (short term priority)
 - work with partners such as local hotels to develop a plan to provide families who are displaced because of emergencies such as fires with temporary accommodation beyond the current two days
- Project 4- Youth Emergency Housing (medium term priority)
 - develop a 10 unit supported second stage housing project for youth, incorporating up to three emergency beds.

Theme 2- Create Supportive Housing for At Risk Groups

- Project 5- Second stage housing for women and children (medium term priority)
 - identify a site for 10 to 12 units of second stage housing
- Project 6- Second stage housing for single men and women (medium term priority)
 - identify funders and locate a site for 10 to 12 units
- Project 7- Supported Independent Living (longer term priority)
 - provide additional supported barrier free independent living

Theme 3- Increase Community Awareness

- Project 8- Community Awareness Strategy (short to medium term priority)
 - Increase local awareness of poverty/homelessness issues on a continual basis through a variety of techniques

Theme 4- Support Local Services

- Project 9- Support Services Coordination (short term priority)
 - Facilitate ongoing co-ordination of local services through continued support to a local homelessness steering group
- Project 10- Continue to support local services (short term priority)
 - Continue to provide financial support for local services which serve homeless and at risk population

Theme 5- Affordable Housing

- Project 11- Affordable Housing Strategy Review (short term priority)
 - review and update the City's Affordable Housing Strategy

- Project 12-Encourage market based affordable housing (medium term priority)
 - work with the private sector to identify ways to increase supply of affordable rental housing

Recommended City Roles

The proposed Strategy is based on the assumption that addressing homelessness in Richmond is not the sole responsibility of any one community stakeholder or agency. It will however require a coordinated and sustained effort by a number of community partners including the City.

Recommended City roles include:

- *Continuously monitoring the situation*

The proposed Strategy includes a monitoring and evaluation framework which can be used to track progress in implementing the action plan. Fourteen performance indicators are proposed which address such conditions as affordable waiting lists, the number of affordable units, number of people using and those who are turned away from existing emergency shelters, number of households “at risk” of homelessness (eg, using local food bank and those Richmond households which are paying more than 50% of income on rent.

- *Supporting some projects with funds from the City’s Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund*

The Strategy recommends that the City’s Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund be used to assist in providing some financial support for recommended short term priority projects including:

- Nova House Women’s Emergency Shelter
 - approximately \$1.2 million in total capital costs including land, building, replacement and major facility repairs;
 - Nova House has been recommended to receive approximately \$700,000 from the federal government’s SCPI program to primarily support construction costs;
 - Council has already committed financial support to this project by providing a city owned site to Chimo Crisis Services for a permanent location for Nova House by granting a ground lease for 60 years at nominal rent.
- Richmond House Emergency Shelter
 - approximately \$1 million capital costs (ie land)
- Family Emergency Shelter
 - Set aside \$100,000 which could be used to assist families in need find temporary accommodation beyond the two days provided by existing emergency service programs.

The Strategy also recommends that the City provide some financial assistance to support the following short term priority projects:

- Community Awareness Strategy
 - \$2,000 annually plus staff costs to support strategy development
- Support Services Coordination
 - \$2,000 annually plus staff costs to support a local steering committee responsible for implementing the action plan
- Affordable Housing Strategy Review
 - staff costs to lead a community based review of the strategy first adopted by Council in 1989 and amended in 1994.

Council may also wish to consider financial contributions to some of the medium to longer term projects as they became more concrete proposals.

- *Taking a lead coordination role in implementing the plan through a community based steering group*

The Strategy also recognizes the need for a structure to help implement the action plan. A steering group based on a voluntary partnership basis is recommended to be established which would:

- act as an “umbrella advisory group” to facilitate delivery of the recommended projects;
- consist largely of the diverse range of community stakeholders who participated on the study steering committee (approximately 15 members)
- make policy and expenditure decisions and recommendations to Council and partners regarding annual budgets and expenditures plans of the partners.

The proposed steering committee would not be a standing committee of Council but rather an advisory group of local stakeholders who would meet periodically to monitor and guide implementation of the action plan. The steering committee would report to Council through City staff and Planning Committee.

Financial Impact

For this study:

The City received a federal government grant of \$45,000 to undertake this project. Staff costs were incurred to manage and coordinate the study process.

For the proposed homelessness strategy:

The proposed strategy and action plan identifies the City’s Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund as a source of some of the recommended capital for projects including the replacement of the Richmond House Mens’s Shelter.

A 2003-2008 budget program is provided to identify possible City expenditures to implement recommended homelessness projects (See **Attachment 5**)

It is recommended that additional homelessness strategy implementation expenditures be considered during the City budget process. These will be identified each year by the proposed steering committee, partners and City staff.

Conclusion

The Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy represent a comprehensive, community based approach to identifying and addressing issues of homelessness and “at risk” of homelessness issues in the City.

The proposed Strategy:

- supports the City’s Corporate Vision of creating an appealing, livable and well-managed City;
- supports Council’s affordable housing policies in the City’s Official Community Plan; and
- sees the City assuming a role in leading, co-ordinating, partnering, cost sharing and monitoring homelessness and affordable housing issues;
- recognizes the need for a variety of community interests including local service providers, the City, senior government, local faith community, local health authorities and the private sector to effectively address identified issues.

Specific actions and roles for the City have been identified for Council’s consideration.



Rob Innes
Planner

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A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens

"It's My City Too!"**A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens: Executive Summary**

Reena and her two children spent last summer at the Women's Transition House. She came to Canada seven years ago to marry and both the children were born in Richmond. Sadly, her husband is a violent man, and to keep herself and her children safe, Reena had to leave. Richmond has been her only home in Canada and she wants to stay. Almost 70% of her income is used to rent her one bedroom apartment. It's more than she can afford and she doesn't know how much longer she can hang on.

Al is 28 years old. He has schizophrenia. For the past four years, he's been hospitalized many times and wonders if he'll ever be able to complete his university degree and get a decent job. Since his illness, he has moved back home with his parents. He's been in hospital for six weeks this time and his parents have told him he can't come back – they just can't cope any longer. Al is on a waitlist for Supported Independent Living in Richmond, but he knows that the wait can be two years or more.

Jeff is 17 years old and has always lived in Richmond. He's had family problems and left home about two years ago. He dropped out of school and got pretty heavily involved with drugs. He has mostly stayed with friends – "couch-surfed". He's struggling to get his life back on track with the help of an Outreach Worker. He's back in school now and the teachers have been supportive. But with no regular place to stay, getting to school is pretty difficult. His Outreach Worker has helped him find a place to live – but it's in Surrey.

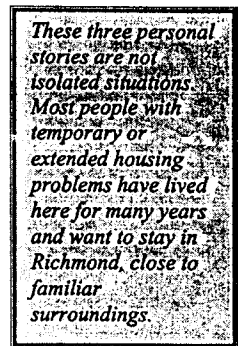
Unfortunately, these are not isolated situations. Richmond has little housing and inadequate support for many of its most vulnerable citizens. Individuals and families have few alternatives except to search for accommodation in Vancouver, Surrey or further away.

Richmond is "home" for many people who are experiencing temporary or extended housing problems. Most have lived here for many years and want to stay in the city, close to familiar surroundings. Some are frightened of having to relocate to neighbourhoods with more social problems.

This study, shaped by the valued input of a 14-person Steering Group of concerned citizens and service providers, sets out an Analysis and Homelessness Strategy. The following are highlights from the full report.

Highlights – The Analysis

- The majority of people who become homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless must leave Richmond to find necessary housing, income and support services.
- The men's shelter – Richmond House – and the women's transition house – Nova House – have uncertain tenure and are limited in terms of their capacity to help local people. Last year, 70 men were turned away from Richmond House; during the last nine months,



A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens

195 women and children have been turned away from Nova House. Additionally, these facilities are not accessible to people with mobility challenges.

- There are insufficient services for low-income families, immigrants, youth and people with mental health issues or substance misuse.
- Richmond is considered an affluent community. Despite this, last year, approximately 1,100 households visited the Food Bank, with about 15% visiting weekly.
- There are 1,000 households currently collecting BC Benefits. This program pays no more than \$325 towards housing for single people monthly and \$520 for a couple. The average bachelor suite in Richmond rents for \$550; a one-bedroom apartment rents for \$699.
- The limited supply of affordable housing in Richmond is unable to meet the demand of its citizens. The waiting list for subsidized housing has grown to 1,300 applications, with a waiting time between four and eight years.
- Given the current cutbacks in social service programs, more people will likely find themselves either at risk of homelessness or without shelter.

Highlights – The Strategy

- The City of Richmond cannot be expected to tackle the problem of homelessness alone. The Strategy proposes that the City, working in partnership with key stakeholders, adopt a proactive approach to homelessness that not only fills existing gaps in service provision, but also addresses the fundamental issue of minimizing homelessness.
- There are **three components** to the Homelessness Strategy – Vision, Guiding Principles and Action Plan.
- **The Vision** – *“Richmond is an inclusive community that provides a wide range of services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. The City takes a proactive role in developing affordable housing as a means to prevent homelessness. The City works with the business community, local faith organizations, community service organizations and the general public to find innovative methods of combating homelessness at the local level”.*
- The **Guiding Principles** comprise seven statements. In condensed form these are:
 - ✓ Responsibility: commitment to taking responsibility for Richmond’s homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless;
 - ✓ Services: when Richmond residents become homeless, necessary services will be available;
 - ✓ Inclusiveness: this is an inclusive, caring community: We can do more;
 - ✓ Housing: a commitment to addressing deficiencies in emergency housing;

A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens

- ✓ Housing: provide transition housing to fill the void between emergency shelter and permanent accommodation;
- ✓ Awareness: the community should be more aware about homelessness, find appropriate solutions and take preventative measures; and
- ✓ Partnerships: groups, including the business community, faith communities and local service providers, must work as partners.
- The proposed Action Plan focusses on 12 practical projects that can be successfully implemented with clear, measurable objectives. The total cost of these projects is approximately \$6.2 million over the life span of the Strategy. These activities are grouped into five themes.

Theme 1 – Upgrade and Increase Emergency Shelter Capacity

- P1. Richmond House Emergency Shelter
- P2. Nova House Transition Shelter
- P3. Family Emergency Accommodation
- P4. Youth Emergency Housing

Theme 2 – Create Supportive Housing for At Risk Groups

- P5. Second Stage Housing for Women and Children
- P6. Second Stage Housing for Single People
- P7. Supported Independent Living

Theme 3 – Increase Community Awareness

- P8. Community Awareness Strategy

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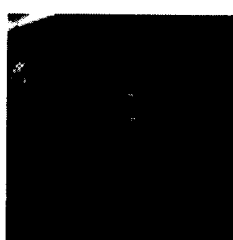
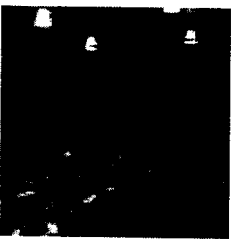
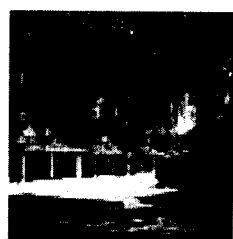
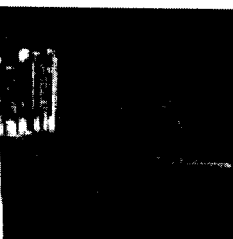
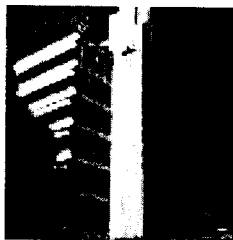
- P9. Support Services Coordination
- P10. Financial Support for Local Services

Theme 5 – Continue Leadership on Affordable Housing

- P11. Affordable Housing Strategy Review
- P12. Private Rental Housing

- Partnerships among the City, Richmond agencies and businesses are key to an effective delivery of the 12 projects.
- Ensure the Housing Steering Group that was established for this study remains active during the implementation period, perhaps associated with the Poverty Response Group, to provide coordination.
- Monitoring is essential for tracking the progress of the Action Plan and to demonstrate the benefits of a proactive approach.

Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy



"It's My City Too!" A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens

**Prepared for the City of Richmond
by CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.**

May 2002

"It's My City Too!"
A Study of the Housing Needs of
Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens

CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.
May 2002

CitySpaces Consulting appreciates the assistance and advice provided by the City of Richmond Policy Planning Department and the study's Steering Group on Homelessness while undertaking this study. The proposed Homelessness Strategy – the study's central outcome – takes aim at the unique issues in Richmond. Much can be accomplished by the City and its partners.

The Richmond Steering Group on Homelessness comprises:

- City of Richmond
- Richmond Community Services Advisory Council
- Richmond Committee on Disability
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Richmond)
- Chimo Crisis Services (Nova House, Women's Transition House)
- Ministry of Human Resources
- Salvation Army (Richmond House, Men's Shelter)
- Touchstone Family Services
- SUCCESS
- Richmond Health Services
- Richmond Youth Service Agency
- Chamber of Commerce
- Richmond Mental Health Consumer and Family Society
- Richmond Seniors Advisory Council
- Poverty Response Committee

**"It's My City Too!"
A Study of the Housing Needs of
Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens**

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"It's My City Too!"

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- Partnerships among the City, Richmond agencies and businesses are key to an effective delivery of the 12 projects.
- Ensure the Housing Steering Group that was established for this study remains active during the implementation period, perhaps associated with the Poverty Response Group, to provide coordination.
- Monitoring is essential for tracking the progress of the Action Plan and to demonstrate the benefits of a proactive approach.

Section 1 – Introduction

The City of Richmond has been working with the community to explore the issue of local homelessness. In December 2001, the City commissioned CitySpaces Consulting to conduct a study with the following aims:

- Identify the scale of the homelessness situation;
- Produce a profile of the homeless and those “at risk”;
- Reach a consensus on the key causes of homelessness;
- Evaluate the existing local support infrastructure;
- Recommend preventative actions against homelessness;
- Develop a prioritized, co-ordinated action plan and implementation strategy;
- Identify funding opportunities, priority actions, and lead partners; and
- Raise community awareness and understanding of the homelessness issue.

The ultimate goal of the study was to produce a Strategy that identified specific programs and projects to be undertaken by the City and its partners in the short, medium and long term.

The ultimate goal of the study was to produce a Homelessness Strategy that identifies specific programs and projects for the City and its partners.

1.1 How was the Study Conducted?

Stage 1 was focussed on understanding the current situation. It included interviews with local service providers and government agencies that provide accommodation and services to the homeless of Richmond. The consultants also met with homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless. Additionally, a range of data was assembled that provided an indication of the number of people who are homeless.

To complement the research, a community awareness strategy was developed which included a series of media releases, a web site focussed on homelessness issues, public presentations and a feature program on Shaw Cable.

Stage 2 involved the broader community through an Open House and a Community Issues Workshop held on 21 February at City Hall. The aim of these sessions was to present the research findings, discuss the key challenges and opportunities and to recommend broad directional options for the Strategy.

Stage 3 involved finalizing the Strategy and developing an Action Plan.

1.2 Report Organization

- Section 2 provides a picture of homelessness and those at risk of homelessness.
- Section 3 presents a brief overview of other local and regional initiatives that affect the development of the Strategy. This chapter also identifies sources of best practices from other jurisdictions.

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- Section 4 outlines the key data that provides an indication of the scale of challenge presented by homelessness.
- Section 5 provides a profile of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. These are based on composites, drawn from the interviews with local residents.
- Section 6 summarizes the information gathered from the Open House and Issues Workshop. The fundamental issues of homelessness in Richmond are presented.
- Section 7 provides the vision, themes and projects that realistically meet the aspirations of the public, local service providers and government agencies.
- Section 8 presents overall conclusions and outlines next steps.

Section 2 – Defining Homelessness

The focus of this study has been on two groups of people – people who are “absolutely homeless” and those who are “at risk of homelessness”. This section helps define what is meant by these terms.

2.1 What is homelessness?

Urban centres across Canada, including Greater Vancouver have witnessed a considerable increase in the number of homeless people since the 1980s. Previously, homelessness was seen to involve a small number of mainly middle age males who were transient or disassociated from a family network. They could be found in the older skid row districts of Canada’s cities. These were not absolutely homeless by today’s definition, as they relied on hotels, motels and rooming housing. During the early 1980s, however, more and more people of all ages became visibly homeless in most cities. Housing and employment have changed dramatically since the 1970s. A significant restructuring of the labour market, an increased number of divorces and dramatically changing housing markets have contributed to the increasing homelessness. These factors have created a general environment that is putting more people at risk of becoming homeless.

The underlying cause can be attributed to poverty meaning that low-income people have little or no choice in the type of housing they can select. Other reasons identified for homelessness include:

- The absence of new private purpose-built rental housing in the region for at least a decade;
- A dwindling stock of existing affordable housing because of redevelopment and conversion;
- The demand for social housing consistently outstripping supply;
- The high cost of private market housing;
- An inadequate capacity of emergency shelter space;
- Low vacancy rates for rental housing;
- A lack of funding for community supports which were supposed to have accompanied deinstitutionalization policies;
- An inadequate capacity of residential detox and addiction treatment beds;
- Changes in the labour market corresponding to changes in levels of personal and household income; and
- A growing incidence of poverty in the region.

2.1.1 Absolute Homelessness

The United Nations defines “Absolute Homelessness” as individuals living with no physical shelter – including people living on the streets, in doorways, covered parking lots, in parks or on beaches, in their vehicles and those squatting in vacant buildings. Being absolutely homeless is also referred to as

Richmond has few residents who are "absolutely" homeless. But there may be more than 1,000 households who are "at risk" of becoming homeless. Many are just "making do" or have to find housing outside Richmond.

being shelterless¹ Those who are absolutely homeless have no housing choice and end up living on the streets or in shelters.

2.1.2 At Risk of Homelessness

At risk of homelessness means people living in spaces or situations that:

- do not meet basic health and safety standards,
- do not provide for security of tenure or for personal safety, and
- are not affordable on a continuing basis.

The number of people at risk of being homeless can vary with the local economy and the rental housing market. Many who are at risk of becoming homeless are "one pay-cheque away" from a housing crisis.

2.2 Who are the Homeless in Richmond?

The homeless and those "at risk" of homelessness in Richmond comprise a range of people who have in common their low-income status. Low income status is defined by Statistics Canada as those households that have to spend 20% more of their income to acquire the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average Canadian household). Those most vulnerable to homelessness include:

- Women and children fleeing abusive situations;
- Some low income people with disabilities;
- Some low income people with mental health issues;
- Some low income people with substance abuse problems;
- Some low income people with HIV;
- People with complex needs or multiple disabilities;
- Some new immigrants and refugees who are unable to find affordable accommodation and do not have family or friends;
- Youth who are unable to live at home; and
- People who are displaced by special circumstances, including home and apartment fires or other unanticipated disasters.

¹ Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver (2001) Woodward, Jim; Eberle, Margaret, Kraus, Deborah; and Goldberg, Michael. Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness Page 84

Section 3 – The Broader Context

In response to the growing number of people who have become homeless in recent years, governments at the federal, provincial and local levels have been developing policies and establishing initiatives to combat the challenge. This varies across the country, however, with larger cities generally taking a lead role. As a result, a number of policy documents and studies have been completed that provide information and guidance on homelessness. These influence the way in which the Richmond Homelessness Strategy is developed and carried out. Many of the policies are subject to national/provincial guidance and then prepared at a regional and/or local level. The most relevant documents to the study are briefly described below.

3.1 National Homelessness Initiative

The National Homelessness Initiative provides a range of co-ordinated elements to tackle homelessness. There are three basic components to the National Homelessness Initiative:

- The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI),
- The Youth Homelessness Strategy and
- The Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS).

The SCPI component of the Initiative represents the largest investment by the Federal Government, around \$305 million over three years. Eighty percent of the funding is targeted at 10 cities across Canada, including Greater Vancouver. SCPI has five specific objectives:

- Alleviate the hardship of those who are currently without shelter;
- Promote a co-ordinated series of programs and initiatives aimed at reducing homelessness;
- Strengthen the capacity of communities to address the needs of homeless people and to reduce homelessness;
- Promote the development of collaborative processes and broad-based partnerships; and
- Develop a base of knowledge, expertise and data about homelessness and share it with the public.

This study was funded through the Federal SCPI.

3.2 Role of BC Government

The Provincial Government provides a number of services through various ministries and agencies to help communities address homelessness. The lead agency, BC Housing, provides funding for affordable housing for families, seniors and those who are at risk of homelessness. Other ministries such as Health Planning and Human Resources provide funding for a range of services for the homeless and at risk population. The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services provides funding for women's transition houses and other emergency shelters for men and youth.

Homelessness has become more prevalent and more visible in the past five years. Recent Federal Government initiatives are welcomed. But provincial and local governments have an important role to play too.

3.3 Greater Vancouver Regional Homelessness Plan 2001

In March 2000, the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness was established to develop a co-ordinated regional plan to address homelessness. The Plan provides a formal framework for the regional co-ordination and development of services and facilities to address homelessness and its contributing causes. The Plan also guides decisions on the allocation of funding for existing and new/revised programs around the region. The plan sets out 38 policies and recommends strategies for additional services and facilities to alleviate homelessness in Greater Vancouver.

Richmond's Strategy has been developed within the framework for the Greater Vancouver Plan while focusing on Richmond's specific areas of need and priority. Richmond Council has endorsed the Regional Plan's Guiding Principles.

The Plan recommends a continuum of housing and support centred on three major elements – housing, income and support, each of which has several sub-elements.

3.4 Other Key Documents

There are a number of other documents that will assist development of the Richmond Strategy. *The Vancouver Richmond Health Board: A Strategic Plan for Housing Services 2000* sets out the role of the Health Authority in terms of housing centred around advocacy, housing development, research and education. *The City of Richmond Official Community Plan* presents the long-term vision for Richmond. It also sets out policies, priorities and regulations that guide land use, community development and municipal spending decisions. The OCP recognizes the need for a more diversified range of housing choices and the need for increased affordable and supportive housing in the City. Also of importance is *The City of Richmond: Affordable Housing Strategy* from 1989.

The Provincial Government has prepared two documents that provide advice and guidance on various ways of addressing homelessness: *Homelessness – Causes and Effects: The Costs of Homelessness in BC* from 2001 provides a range of information on the impact of homelessness. *Local Responses to Homelessness: A Planning Guide for BC Communities* from 2000 provides examples of ways in which communities can address the complex housing needs of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

Section 4 – Research Findings

An important component in the study was the identification of key baseline data that provides an indication of the scale of homelessness in Richmond. While it is very difficult to place an absolute figure on the number of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, we have attempted to provide an indication of the order of magnitude of the challenge.

4.1 What is the Scope of Homelessness in Richmond?

Identifying the homeless population in Richmond is a difficult task because there are no direct data sources that measure the absolute homeless population. Most agencies do not track where their clients go to find emergency shelter or affordable housing.

4.1.1 Absolutely Homeless

The number of absolutely homeless in Richmond is likely very small. In January of 2002, a 24-hour snapshot exercise was undertaken as part of a larger regional research project which attempted to identify the number of absolute homeless people. The Survey identified 29 homeless people in Richmond, with 15 people staying in shelters and 14 youth who were without permanent shelter. These 29 individuals represent 3% of the total homeless population of the GVRD of 1054 homeless individuals.

The number of people who are absolutely homeless in Richmond will likely remain low for several reasons:

- The capacity of the existing emergency facilities is small. When demand rises above the existing supply of emergency shelters, people must look to other municipalities for assistance. Interviews with staff of Richmond House and Nova House reveal that there is a large turnover, with only a small percentage being repeat clients.
- Richmond, unlike downtown Vancouver and the centres of other large cities, doesn't attract as many transient individuals. The lower-density suburban form of development that characterizes much of Richmond, doesn't offer the sleeping niches, alleys and SROs (typically single furnished rooms with shared facilities) found in central city neighbourhoods.

Some key facts associated with the use of the emergency shelters in Richmond include:

- Men's Shelter – Richmond House:
 - eight beds; three cold/weather beds
 - 2001: 85% capacity, with 100% capacity in September
 - 2001: 70 people turned away because of lack of room
- Women's Transition House – Nova House
 - 10 spaces

Richmond's two emergency shelters have to turn more people away – 70 men last year; 195 women and children in just the last nine months.

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- From January to September 2001, 107 women and children were served
- From January to September 2001, 195 women and children were turned away

The number of women turned away from the Women's Transition House is due, in part, to the inflexible configuration of the house for specific situations. Not all people who turn to the Transition House can be served. Those with substance misuse problems, women with adolescent sons or women who are homeless but not fleeing abuse cannot be accommodated.

Significantly, the two emergency shelters are only able to cater to a specific portion of the population. People facing challenges with mental health, substance misuse and other disabilities cannot be accommodated in Richmond. There is also no provision for youth who are unable to live at home, or homeless women or women with adolescent sons who are fleeing abuse.

Government agencies and local service providers who help people find the services they require do not keep track of the number of people who have been forced to leave their own community due to a lack of local accommodation therefore the true dimensions of the problem are difficult to define. Based upon our consultations with the key stakeholders, a significant number of people are referred outside the community for emergency services and for longer-term housing. Many of these people do not return to Richmond because they become entrenched in the lifestyle associated with homelessness. Some homeless people will avoid the offer of services outside of Richmond, acknowledging that their particular circumstances will become even worse if they end up in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, for example.

4.1.2 At Risk of Homelessness

Identifying the number of people who are at risk of homelessness is even more challenging. There are a number of indicators that can be used to approximate the number of people who are at risk of homelessness.

The standard indicators applied to the "at risk" population include anyone who pays more than 50% of his or her income towards shelter; this includes both mortgages and rentals. This is not always a reliable indicator given the fact that those with high levels of income may choose to pay more than 50% of their income towards shelter and are not at risk of homelessness. Also, given the current low interest rates, those with a mortgage are less likely to be at risk of homelessness since their tenure is secure. In Richmond, in 1996, 5,650 households paid more than 50% of their income towards rented accommodation. In Richmond, in 1996, 12,310 households paid more than 50% of their income towards their mortgage.

Another approach to measuring the at risk population is through what the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) refers to as "In Core Housing Need & Spending at Least Half Their Income on Shelter" (INALH). In 1996, there were 3,630 households or 10,555 individuals in Richmond identified as at risk of homelessness through the INALH definition.

The real focus of those at risk of homelessness is those who have low incomes and are unable to find affordable accommodation. In 2000, the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) (a mechanism that can be used as an approximate poverty line)

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was set at \$22,964 for a household of two. In 1996, there were 9,000 people living below the Low Income Cut-Off in Richmond. This is 5.6% of Richmond's total population of 160,000.

In terms of income, BC Benefits pays a maximum of \$325 towards shelter for single people on benefit, and \$520 for a couple. In 2001, the average bachelor suite in Richmond rented for \$550 a month and one-bedroom units rented for \$699 a month. Within Richmond there are 1,000 households currently collecting BC Benefits.

Richmond has 2,600 units of subsidized housing in a variety of self-contained rental units in apartments and townhouses, as well as cooperative units. The breakdown of these units is: 897 units for families, 714 units for seniors and 989 units are part of cooperative housing. Qualification for government assisted housing is assessed on the basis of need. The waiting list to get into these units currently stands at 1,300 applications with a waiting time of anywhere between four and eight years.

Use of the food bank is a measure of poverty and provides an indication of the number of people who are at risk of homelessness. In 2001, approximately 1,100 households visited the food bank, with about 15% visiting on a weekly basis.

Section 5 – Local Stories of Homelessness

As part of the study, the consultants met with over 40 people who were either homeless or at risk of homelessness. We have developed the following composite stories to provide an indication of the type of challenges the homeless in Richmond are facing.

Reena and her two children spent last summer at the Women's Transition House. She came to Canada seven years ago to marry and both the children were born in Richmond. Sadly, her husband is a violent man, and to keep herself and her children safe, Reena had to leave. Richmond has been her only home in Canada and she wants to stay. Almost 70% of her income is used to rent her one bedroom apartment. It's more than she can afford and she doesn't know how much longer she can hang on.

Al is 28 years old. He has schizophrenia. For the past four years, he's been hospitalized many times and wonders if he'll ever be able to complete his university degree and get a decent job. Since his illness, he has moved back home with his parents. He's been in hospital for six weeks this time and his parents have told him he can't come back – they just can't cope any longer. Al is on a waitlist for Supported Independent Living in Richmond, but he knows that the wait can be two years or more.

Jeff is 17 years old and has always lived in Richmond. He's had family problems and left home about two years ago. He dropped out of school and got pretty heavily involved with drugs. He has mostly stayed with friends – “couch-surfed”. He's struggling to get his life back on track with the help of an Outreach Worker. He's back in school now and the teachers have been great. But with no regular place to stay, getting to school is pretty difficult. His Outreach Worker has helped him find a place to live – but it's in Surrey...

The consultants also interviewed recent immigrants and food bank users. A common theme to emerge from these discussions was the number of people who are living with one or more other families in a single residence to reduce the overall cost of housing. A number of people are living with their extended family including children, parents and grandparents.

Section 6 – Consultations

Based upon our background research, consultations with the key service providers, interviews with the homeless and those at risk of homelessness and the feedback provided at the Open House and Workshop a number of key findings have emerged. These are presented in this section.

6.1 Open-House and Issues Workshop – February 21st

The Open House component of this community event was held between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. at Richmond City Hall. It was well attended, with 43 people visiting the display, representing a broad spectrum of the population and including politicians, community organizations, local service providers and concerned residents. Fourteen presentation panels outlined the aims of the study, definitions of homelessness and at risk of homelessness, key findings and some recommended projects. Attendees were provided with a comment form to provide feedback to the study team.

The Issues Workshop was held between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. Approximately 35 people attended the event with representation from local service providers, community based organizations and interested residents. A brief presentation was made, following the format of the presentation panels and the briefing paper. The group was split into three groups to explore the issues, strengths, priorities and suggested projects in more detail.

The Open House and Workshop discussions confirmed earlier research and revealed surprising new issues.

6.2 Cumulative Findings

The Open House and Workshop discussions reinforced much of the findings of the research undertaken as part of this study. Two particular contributions, however, highlighted the "tightness" of the housing market and the vulnerability of homelessness for some residents in January 2002:

- Minoru Boulevard Apartment Fire. A number of individuals made homeless by this fire spoke about severe problems in finding replacement housing.
- Single Parents with Richmond Roots. Several working parents spoke of their difficulties in trying to remain in their home community. They currently pay a very high proportion of their income to live in Richmond.
- Richmond is a good place to live. The Open House also confirmed that Richmond is a well-liked livable city and a community where people wish to stay. Further examples were cited of how hard individuals will work to remain residents in the City.

The following information represents the cumulative findings from the research, consultation, interviews and open house and workshop and reflects the key issues and opportunities upon which the Homelessness Strategy needs to be developed.

6.2.1 Richmond has Many Strengths...

There are a number of assets within Richmond that can be built upon to tackle the issue of homelessness. Through our consultations and research, the following key strengths have been identified:

- Strong network of community service providers, each providing services targeted at specific sectors of the community (Food Bank, CHIMO Crisis Services, Salvation Army, Disability Resource Centre, SUCCESS and Touchstone Family Services, to name a few);
- A strong tradition of the community rallying around various challenges (e.g. Richmond Community Services Advisory Council);
- The municipality has a history of supporting affordable housing. The municipality has committed staff and has been supportive of this initiative;
- The 1989 Affordable Housing Strategy has been successful in establishing an *Affordable Housing Reserve Fund* which has been used to fund/partly fund certain projects;
- Two shelters providing basic emergency shelter for members of the community;
- Large faith community which is active in the community and provides assistance to the homeless in Richmond;
- A developed network of health services for people with mental health issues, substance misuse and those living with HIV; and
- Viewed as a safe community and a great place to live.

6.2.2 Richmond Also Has Specific Needs ...

There are also a number of areas in which the specific needs of the community could be better provided for. The consultation and research components of the study indicated the following key issues to be tackled:

6.2.2.1 Emergency Housing

Improvements to the quality of Richmond House, the men's shelter, which is in poor physical, condition and runs at capacity.

Nova House, the women's transition house, suffers from insecure tenure and has recently moved three times as short term leases have expired. A permanent location for the transition house is required. Increasing capacity would be beneficial to the community. The City of Richmond and the Federal Government are currently exploring a number of locations for a permanent location for Nova House.

There is no emergency housing in the community for:

- Youth;
- Families;
- Individuals with mental health issues;
- Individuals with physical disabilities;

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- Individuals with HIV;
- People with complex needs or multiple disabilities; and
- People who experience temporary event homelessness (e.g. fires and other unexpected disasters).

6.2.2.2 Second Stage Housing

- There is no second stage housing that can assist people making the transition from an emergency shelter to permanent accommodation.

6.2.2.3 Affordable Housing

- The demand for social housing outstrips supply, forcing people to find private rented accommodation which is either inadequate or beyond their financial means;
- A greater commitment is needed by the City and its partners to increase the stock of affordable accommodation;
- The City and its partners should consider investigating ways in which it can stimulate the development of new affordable housing by accessing the City's Affordable Housing Reserve Fund, by continuing to make land available for certain projects and by offering tax incentives or bonus densities;
- The City should consider reviewing its policy on secondary suites and the role they play in providing market-oriented affordable accommodation;
- BC Housing and the providers of affordable accommodation should review the priority placement system to determine why women fleeing abuse are now waiting for extended periods of time to get into affordable accommodation;
- Assist in developing rental housing in the City because low-income families are spending a disproportionate amount of their income on rent. In a few cases, people are spending up to 100% of their income to be able to afford suitable accommodation;
- Provide affordable housing and homeless services in Richmond because local people have to leave Richmond in search of services and affordable housing which aren't provided in the City, this includes long time residents such as seniors; and
- Within the community there are an unidentified number of households comprising extended family, particularly among new immigrants and refugees. While this will always be the case to some extent, the City and others can do more to alleviate the problem by providing more affordable accommodation.

6.2.2.4 Community Awareness

- Education about the problem is required; homelessness is seen by many in Richmond as someone else's problem. The community and local politicians need to better understand the scope of the issue; and

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- While there is a wide range of programs in Richmond, people don't necessarily know about them, how to access the services or where they are provided.

6.2.2.5 Local Services

- Services for immigrants and refugees need to be better focused and publicized;
- The need for after-care (support services provided to people leaving hospital or treatment programs) and counseling on a longer term basis to provide the necessary support services to assist in the recovery from financial, emotional and psychological crises; and
- The impact of budget cuts at the Provincial level will likely increase the number of people with low incomes who become homeless or are at risk of homelessness so continued proactive vigilance and solutions will need to be championed.

Section 7 – Homelessness Strategy

The Homeless Strategy has three inter-related components – A Vision, Guiding Principles and an Action Plan. To be successfully carried through, the City and key stakeholders must adopt a proactive approach that not only fills existing gaps in service provision but also addresses the fundamental issue of preventing homelessness.

The Strategy has three inter-related components – Guiding Principles, a Vision and an Action Plan.

The Strategy builds on the Vision and Guiding Principles with 12 projects that have clear objectives from which results can be measured. There can sometimes be a danger to take on too many projects and become overwhelmed by the demands on resources, both human and financial. In this regard, projects relating to training and income support for the homeless are an essential component of the Continuum of Care Model, but they are already being provided by other initiatives that the homeless can access through their caseworker at the Ministry of Human Resources.

This Strategy recognizes that the City of Richmond cannot tackle the problem of homelessness alone and that services will come from a co-operative effort between many partners. The City of Richmond's roles vary with each project, but in general terms, the municipality needs to continuously monitor the situation, support some groups with funding from its Affordable Housing Fund, and take a lead role in co-ordination through a steering group.

It is also important to keep the projects focussed so members of the service and business communities can clearly understand how their involvement can address homelessness. This also helps to limit public debate over the merits of the projects as a clear set of goals and projects can be more easily articulated to the community than a large number of interrelated projects.

The Vision for tackling homelessness in Richmond will be delivered by implementing an Action Plan based around five themes. Some of these projects can be implemented in the short term, while others take a medium and long-term perspective. The Action Plan is integrated, embracing not just physical projects, but also social and education projects. It has been designed to fit within the context of the Greater Vancouver Homelessness Plan and other Richmond based strategies such as the Poverty Response Strategy that will complement the projects set out in this document. The Action Plan is inclusive in that it seeks to engage businesses, community organizations, faith communities, government agencies and the general public.

7.1 The Vision

The underlying issues of limited emergency facilities, community awareness and education, and a high demand and limited supply of affordable accommodation require a positive and ambitious vision statement. The proposed overarching vision for tackling homelessness in Richmond is:

"Richmond is an inclusive community, that provides a wide range of services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. The City takes a proactive role in developing affordable housing as a means to prevent homelessness. The City works with the business community, local faith organizations, community service organizations and the general public to find innovative methods of combating homelessness at the local level."

7.2 Guiding Principles

The following seven statements are guiding principles that shape the Vision and the Action Plan and are related to the continuum of housing and support services outlined in the Greater Vancouver Homelessness Plan.

- ✓ Agree, as a community, that it is unacceptable to “pass” the difficulties associated with homelessness to other municipalities and commit to taking responsibility for Richmond residents;
- ✓ Ensure that when local people become homeless, the necessary services are available to them;
- ✓ Take a serious look at the affordability of Richmond's housing stock. What more can be done to create an inclusive, caring community?
- ✓ Commit to address specific deficiencies in the provision of emergency housing;
- ✓ Provide second stage housing to fill the void between emergency shelter and permanent accommodation;
- ✓ Ensure that the community is aware of local homelessness, ready to find appropriate solutions and take preventative measures; and
- ✓ Bring together various groups, including the business community, faith communities and local service providers to work in partnership in order to tackle specific projects.

7.3 The Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out 12 projects that can be successfully implemented with clear, measurable objectives. These activities are grouped into five themes.

- Theme 1 – Upgrade and Increase Emergency Shelter Capacity
- Theme 2 – Create Second Stage Housing
- Theme 3 – Community Awareness Strategy
- Theme 4 – Increase Support to Local Services
- Theme 5 – Affordable Housing

The Action Plan can only be delivered with the commitment of the City and its government and community partners.

7.3.1 Delivering the Action Plan

Carrying out the Action Plan requires all stakeholders to work in partnership in order to secure joint funding and implementation. The key partners identified (but not limited to) are the following:

- *Richmond City Council:* already takes the lead role in the funding of a range of community services. Examples of these are the Richmond Community Service Advisory Council, City Leisure and Parks programs, community grants. The City owns land that it can make available for suitable projects. The City has an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund that it can direct towards qualified projects. The City takes the lead role in coordinating policies for the growth and management of the municipality.

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- *Richmond Community Services Advisory Council (RCSAC)* brings together a broad and diverse group of government, community and agency representatives concerned about community and social issues and the well being of the Richmond Community.
- *Ministry of Human Resources*: is the front line organization dealing with the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. The ministry provides financial assistance, employment planning and family maintenance. Ministry Staff also work with local people to help them find housing.
- *Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services*: provide funding and staff resources for women's transition homes, emergency shelters and settlement services to immigrants and counseling services.
- *Local Business Community*: the local business community has a strong track record for finding solutions to various challenges that the community faces. The Strategy offers opportunities for specific tasks that the business community can rally around.
- *Local Faith Community*: Richmond has a very diverse faith community reflecting the multi-cultural nature of the City. The challenge of homelessness provides an opportunity for the faith community to come together and as a group provide a more coordinated response to the issue of homelessness. The faith community would likely respond favorably to specific tasks set out by the Steering Group as part of a partnership approach to tackling homelessness.
- *Salvation Army*: are very active in Richmond through the work of the church, the Thrift Shop, family and community services and the men's shelter, Richmond House. The organization is currently exploring ways of improving the quality of the services available to Richmond residents and would be willing to work in partnership with other local organizations to provide a modern, more inclusive shelter.
- *SUCCESS*: United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (SUCCESS) provides a wide range of services to the residents of Richmond. SUCCESS would be a key partner in promoting public awareness and assisting the City in engaging the Chinese population to identify their specific needs regarding housing and homelessness.
- *CHIMO*: provide a range of crisis services to the people of Richmond. Chimo operates Nova House, the women's transition house, crisis intervention services, counseling and outreach to the community.
- *Canadian Mental Health Association*: provides subsidies and support services to people with mental health diagnosis. The organization has extensive experience in providing housing solutions for those with mental health challenges. The organization has some funding that could be used in partnership with other local stakeholders to provide additional housing units.
- *Richmond Disability Resource Centre*: provides specialized information and referral services for people with disabilities. Programs include

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peer support, self-management, computer and employment related skills training as well as access to recreation and social interaction. The Centre's focus is to assist people to achieve greater independence enabling them to participate in the community as consumers, employees and/or volunteers. The Centre is a program of the Richmond Committee on Disability.

- *Richmond Youth Services*: provide outreach and support services to the youth of Richmond. The organization works to find housing solutions for youth who find themselves without shelter.
- *Mosaic/Immigration Settlement Services (ISS)*: Provide a range of services for new immigrants to Greater Vancouver including a reception centre with orientation services, language and training skills and assistance with finding housing within the region.
- *United Way*: provides funding to a range of local service providers in Richmond and provide social planning support.
- *GVRD Homelessness Steering Committee*: oversees the development of the Regional Homelessness Plan. It is important that the Richmond Strategy reflects the objectives of the Regional Plan to ensure that potential funding can be drawn down through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) or new Federal funding sources that may arise.
- *Vancouver Coastal Health Authority*: mandated to address the health needs of people living and working in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi, Vancouver and Richmond. Through Richmond Health Services, the VCHA provides emergency and acute treatment, mental health, continuing care, and population health services. Programs such as the Richmond Community Mental Health Team, the Youth Clinic and the Gilwest Clinic frequently serve people who are dealing with homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

7.4 Themes and Associated Projects

The Strategy recommends 12 projects under the five strategic themes. Those who attended the Open House and Issues Workshop reviewed and supported these projects. The projects are to be undertaken within one of three specific time frames.

- Short-term projects should be undertaken immediately and completed within a two year time period;
- Medium term projects should be undertaken within two years and completed within 3 years; and
- Long-term projects should be undertaken within a three to five year time period.

7.4.1 Theme 1: Upgrade and Increase Emergency Shelter Capacity

As the study has revealed, there simply aren't enough beds in Richmond to handle the existing need for emergency housing. Many have been turned away. Should regional economic conditions worsen or emergency housing providers in other municipalities not be able to meet the shelter needs of Richmond residents,

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demand will increase locally. Four projects are recommended to increase shelter capacity:

- Project 1. Richmond House Emergency Shelter
- Project 2. Nova House Transition Shelter
- Project 3. Family Emergency Accommodation
- Project 4. Youth Emergency Housing

Project 1 – Richmond House Emergency Shelter, the only emergency shelter in the City has a capacity of eight beds during the summer and 11 during the winter. The existing facility is in a residential neighbourhood, in a house that is inadequate to serve the needs of the clients (the facility is extremely crowded and has turned people away, as previously indicated). The facility is only open to men. The facility is not accessible to people with mobility challenges or those with more serious mental health challenges.

The consultation process strongly indicated the need for an emergency shelter that can accept both men and women and accept people who are not referrals of the Ministry of Human Resources.

We recommend that a purpose-built, barrier free facility be constructed that is flexible in design to enable both men and women to stay in the house. Women generally make up a smaller proportion of the homeless population and it is unlikely that a purpose-built facility for women in Richmond would be viable. A joint male and female shelter would be designed in a manner that would provide a wing, or set of rooms, specifically for women that would ensure their security. When there are no women staying at the house, the rooms could be used by male guests.

It is recommended that this facility be built near the City Centre, close to public transport and community services. A location in the City Centre is also more likely to receive broad community support.

The Strategy proposes a 20-bed facility for single people, comprising 15 beds for men and five beds for women. The bed spaces should be designed to operate separately for women, but be convertible for men, depending on changing needs. Richmond House should also consider an attached space for emergency family accommodation. This space could also be convertible for single men, depending on the greatest needs.

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Project 1	
Richmond House Emergency Shelter	
Objective	To meet the demand of the community for emergency shelter facilities for both men and women which is accessible.
Justification	Richmond House, the men's shelter, is in poor condition. It is situated in a peripheral location, difficult to access without a car. The shelter caters only to men and limits stays to 30 days. The shelter often turns local people away because it is at capacity.
Action	Work with the Salvation Army to build an accessible emergency shelter for both men and women.
Lead/Support	Salvation Army (revenue), City of Richmond (capital), Business Community (supplies), Ministry of Human Resources (revenue), Private Sector (capital contributions, furnishings)
Costs	\$1 million, approximately
Timescale	Short Term: work in partnership to locate new site and begin proceedings to build new facility

Project 2 – Nova House, the women's transition house, is an essential service provided on a regional basis to women who are fleeing abusive relationships. The facility provides temporary housing to women and their children for up to 30 days. The capacity of the house is 10 residents at one time, but is often less due to the configuration of rooms and circumstances of the residents. A range of counseling services is also provided. Nova House serves women from all ethnic backgrounds and has been particularly successful at creating a safe and welcoming environment for women.

The women's transition house has had to move a number of times in recent years. The City of Richmond has provided the facility with short-term leases on homes that are in areas of redevelopment. Each time the facility has moved, it has canvassed the community for donations to fund the required renovations. None of the houses have been ideal for the facility due to the configuration of the rooms that limit the number of people who can stay in the house.

The City of Richmond is working closely with Nova House in securing a city owned residential lot that is suitable for Nova House to construct a permanent facility. Nova House will still be required to find the funding for the capital costs of the new house.

An application has been submitted to Human Resources Development Canada for capital funds under their program to address homelessness – Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI). The new facility should include flexible space to increase the capacity of the facility and enable it to better meet the needs of the community.

Special design features are required for a women's transition house. These features include:

- Flexible bedroom space to accommodate families of varying size and configurations (e.g. large bedrooms, lockable doors);
- Secure storage for residents' belongings;
- Indoor and outdoor play space for children;
- Common socializing space;

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- Private counselling office;
- Controlled access and other security features; and
- Wheelchair accessibility.

Project 2	Nova House Transition Shelter
Objective	To ensure the Transition House has a long term secure tenure.
Justification	The women's transition house provides an essential service to women fleeing abusive relationships. The house has had to move three times in recent years due to the expiry of short-term leases. A new facility needs to provide accessible, flexible space to reduce the number of women who are turned away due to capacity related issues caused by the configuration of the house.
Action	A purpose-built, accessible facility should be developed with a minimum of 10 beds, expandable to 12.
Lead/Support	CHIMO (capital), City of Richmond (land and replacement and major repairs to the facility), Business Community (supplies), Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (operating), HRDC Canada (capital), Private sector (capital contributions, furnishings)
Costs	Approximately \$1.2 million
Timescale	Short Term: work in partnership to secure new site and funding for new purpose-built facility.

Project 3 – Family Emergency Housing. There are currently no facilities in Richmond for families seeking emergency accommodation. The number of families who become homeless is relatively small (aside from those who are homeless from disasters), less than 10 a year. When a family has no place to live, the Ministry of Human Resources will provide temporary accommodation, usually at a local hotel. The demand for a purpose-built facility that caters to families is unjustified at present due to the infrequency of families becoming homeless in Richmond. The consultant team recommends the continuation of the existing system, but with greater attention focussed on assisting the displaced families to find new accommodation within Richmond.

The recent apartment fire left a number of people homeless. While the initial response by the Emergency Service Program was good, people were left with nowhere to live after a two-day stay in the hotel. The City could consider setting aside a reserve fund (that would be replenished on use) and work with its partners to have readily available solutions to provide housing for families when they become temporarily displaced. Homelessness from fire is very dramatic and it will be difficult for individuals to find new accommodation "immediately". The City could consider a protocol agreement with a number of hotels within the City for accommodating families made homeless from disasters (i.e. apartment fires). The City may consider a commitment for free accommodation for seven days and a reduced rate for a further period. The City could make a contribution to hotels to encourage a program that is affordable to the resident and the partners involved in this program.

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Project 3 Family Emergency Accommodation	
Objective	To ensure that families who become displaced are able to find temporary housing rather than become homeless. To start, it should be assumed that 10 families per year may need to be accommodated and that the City should set aside one or two units for temporary accommodation for up to 30 days per family.
Justification	It is unacceptable for an affluent community such as Richmond to allow families to become homeless.
Action	Work with partners to develop a plan to provide displaced families with temporary accommodation.
Lead/Support	City of Richmond, Steering Group, Business Community and broader community support through the work of volunteers
Costs	\$100,000
Timescale	Short Term

Project 4 – Youth Emergency and Transitional Housing

Youth Emergency Housing

There are currently no facilities in Richmond for youth who require emergency accommodation. Young people who need emergency shelter must be accommodated in other municipalities – Vancouver, New Westminster or Surrey. Due to the short supply of affordable accommodation, it may take many months for a young person to locate permanent housing. Many of these young people will not find housing so will continue to move from friend to friend (“couch-surfing”) or will leave Richmond. Richmond Youth Services also reports that young single women with children have a particularly difficult time securing affordable, adequate housing. The 24-hour snapshot of Homelessness conducted on January 15, 2002 identified 16 Richmond youth who appeared to be without shelter. The exporting of young Richmond residents to other municipalities creates significant difficulties for the individuals to live a lifestyle conducive to pursuing their education, training or employment.

Youth Transitional Housing

Richmond Youth Services is currently seeking partners and funders to develop a two-storey transitional housing project for youth. As well as 12 self-contained suites in the range of 450 square feet, the building would have two or three units of emergency shelter space. This small apartment-style building would include a caretaker suite on the main floor and a controlled entry.

This youth-serving organization has explored acquisition of an 11,000 square foot lot adjacent to the site of their current office. Whether the new facility is built here or on City-owned property, the project needs to be:

- On a major bus route; and
- Near but not in the core area.

Richmond Youth Services also plans to redevelop the site of their current office. The organization has raised significant funds towards a capital campaign and has completed “working drawings”. These two projects could proceed in tandem.

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Project 4 Youth Emergency & Transitional Housing	
Objective	To provide emergency and transitional housing in Richmond for youth.
Justification	Presently, Richmond's youth must leave the City to find emergency shelter space. No transitional housing is available to bridge between home or an emergency shelter and long term, independent housing.
Action	Work with Richmond Youth Services to develop a 10-unit, supported second stage housing project for youth, incorporating two or three emergency beds.
Lead/Support	Richmond Youth Services, City of Richmond, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Ministry of Human Resources, Business Community
Costs	Approximate cost: \$980,000 (based on HOMES BC Maximum Unit Price)
Timescale	Project Construction: medium term

7.4.2 Theme 2: Create Supportive Housing for At Risk Groups

Certain "at risk" groups would benefit considerably through transitional housing where some support services are available. At present, there is no "second stage" housing for men or women leaving emergency shelters. And for those with mental disabilities, there is a large waiting list for appropriate housing. The following projects are recommended:

- Project 5. Second Stage Housing for Women and Children
- Project 6. Second Stage Housing for Single Men and Women
- Project 7. Supported Independent Living

Projects 5 and 6 – Second Stage housing is transitional, time-limited housing obtained after leaving an emergency shelter, transition house or being discharged from a treatment program and before a person is ready for independent housing. Residents of second stage housing may be provided some specialized services such as counselling. At present, there is no second stage housing in Richmond. People who are leaving Nova House or Richmond House after 30 days and have been unable to find suitable accommodation in Richmond are obliged to leave the community. Second stage housing is needed for two at-risk groups:

Women and children fleeing abuse whose 30-day stay at Nova House has ended and alternative housing has not been located. Typically, these families have no financial resources to secure permanent housing. Waitlists even for a "priority placement" through BC Housing are eight months to a full year. At a time when stabilizing the family is critical, women are frequently finding that they have no option but to return to a potentially life-threatening situation. Second stage housing for a period of up to two years is needed in order for families to stabilize, for women to seek employment or upgrade skills, and to secure permanent housing. This housing needs to be located in an urban residential neighbourhood with good public transit and easy access to schools and support services.

Single men and women leaving emergency shelters, hospital or treatment facilities. Permanent affordable housing is difficult to locate in Richmond. This is particularly challenging for individuals who are poor, have mental or physical health problems or are recovering from

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addictions. Second stage housing, located away from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, could prevent vulnerable people from becoming entrenched in an unhealthy lifestyle.

Project 5 Second Stage Housing for Women and Children	
Objective	To assist in stabilizing families affected by family violence and to provide support and skills to break the chain of violence.
Justification	At present, there is no second stage housing in Richmond. If families are unable to locate permanent housing during the 30-day stay at Nova House, they are faced with the very real prospect of returning to an abusive or even life-threatening situation.
Action	Identify a site for 10-12 units of second stage housing. This housing could be co-located with another subsidized or supported housing project or as a stand-alone project.
Lead/Support	CHIMO, City of Richmond, BCHMC, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Business Community
Costs	Approximate cost: \$1.9 million (based on HOMES BC MUP for stacked housing three bedroom units)
Timescale	Medium Term. Work with key stakeholders to secure funding sources, identify and acquire suitable site.

Project 6 Second Stage Housing for Single People	
Objective	To assist individuals in making the transition from emergency shelters to permanent housing.
Justification	Currently, people leaving the emergency shelter or a hospital or treatment centre and who have not located permanent housing, once again find themselves without shelter. Second stage housing provides the link between emergency and permanent housing for individuals who are receiving support services, upgrading their skills or seeking employment.
Action	Identify funders and locate suitable site near services and public transit for 10-12 self-contained units and a caretaker suite. These units should be barrier free.
Lead/Support	City of Richmond (Capital), Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Ministry of Human Resources, Private Developers, Business Community, Faith Community
Costs	Approximately \$975,000 (based on MUP for 37m ² units)
Timescale	Medium Term. Work with key stakeholders to secure funding sources, and identify suitable location.

Project 7 – Supported Independent Living. The Canadian Mental Health Association has identified a waiting list of over 300 Richmond individuals who are currently waiting for Supported Independent Living. Supported Independent Living is affordable, independent accommodation, sometimes in a purpose-designed building or in scattered-site apartments that have added support services attached to them. These supports may include meals, skills training, assistance with housekeeping and banking, health therapies, counseling and crisis response. The combination of housing and support provide the

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opportunity for an individual to stabilize his/her personal situation in preparation for moving back into the community.

Some of these residents are almost certainly "at risk of homelessness". Individuals with mental illness often find it very challenging to find suitable affordable accommodation. In some cases individuals may require specialized affordable accommodation with in-house supportive services. Ensuring an adequate and continual supply of accommodation that the mentally ill can access is a challenge. This policy area will need further research to determine the appropriate level of response.

Project 7 Supported Independent Living	
Objective	To provide additional accommodation for those requiring supported independent living.
Justification	There are over 300 Richmond residents currently waiting to get into supported independent living. In the meantime, these people live with family or are housed in other municipalities until a unit becomes available in Richmond.
Action	Provide additional supported barrier free independent living accommodation in Richmond. Provide rent support supplement units or subsidies
Lead/Support	Canadian Mental Health Association, City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health Region, BC Housing
Costs	Requires further research
Timescale	Long Term

7.4.3 Theme 3: Increase Community Awareness

The issue of community awareness is also a fundamental challenge that was raised through the study process. There appears to be a perception among the general population that homelessness is not a problem in Richmond. The lack of visibly homeless people helps to perpetuate this notion. However, as discussed in this report, the number of people who are at risk of homelessness and the number of people that are leaving Richmond in search of more affordable accommodation is significant.

The implementation of the Action Plan requires the ongoing support of the community and the assistance of the faith communities, the local business community and community-based organizations. It is imperative that the issue of homelessness is strongly rooted in the collective consciousness of the public and that there is a clear consensus on the appropriate solutions and implementation plan. One project is recommended under this theme:

Project 8. Community Awareness Strategy

Project 8 – Community Awareness Strategy. It is recommended that as part of the Poverty Response Group's key recommendations, the issue of poverty and homelessness be clearly presented to the community, along with a selection of projects that the community can support to address the problems.

Maintaining community awareness of homelessness on a continual basis will be difficult. There are however a number of strategies that can be adopted to maintain awareness at particular points throughout the year. Concepts that might be considered include:

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- Annual report to Council on homelessness provided by the Steering Committee. This report would utilize the monitoring and evaluation framework shown in Section 7.6 (Table 1);
- Homelessness Day: designate one day a year as “Homelessness Day”. Council could consider the annual report on that date;
- Shelter Visit by Local politicians to inform the local community about homelessness
- Displays at City Hall and the public library; and
- Feature articles in the local media

Project 8	Community Awareness Strategy
Objective	To increase community awareness of homelessness issues in Richmond to ensure both political and community support.
Justification	The successful implementation of the Homelessness Strategy will require the support of the entire community if the issue of homelessness is to be tackled successfully.
Action	Annual Report to Council on homelessness from the Steering Committee Designate Homelessness Awareness Day in Richmond Shelter Visit by local politicians Displays at City Hall and the public library Prepare feature length article for local media to inform community. Prepare brochure about the City's response to homelessness
Lead/Support	City of Richmond, Steering Group
Costs	\$2,000 per year (plus staff support costs)
Timescale	Short Term: Tour of the shelter, transition home and other community and family support programs and facilities for Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly, Councilors and Council Staff Medium Term: Media campaign and full page advert in local paper

7.4.4 Theme 4: Support Local Services

Two projects are recommended in association with this theme:

- Project 9. Support Services Coordination
- Project 10. Continue to Support Local Services

Project 9 – Support Services Coordination. The formation of the Richmond Steering Group on Homelessness has created an environment in which major service providers, agencies and concerned citizens have come together to discuss how homelessness can best be tackled in Richmond. The presence of a Steering Group also provides the opportunity for these key stakeholders to become more knowledgeable about the activities of other organizations.

The Steering Group could have a major role in continued advocacy as well as coordination o This advocacy would be very useful for supporting individual projects/proposals, assisting individual groups in neighbourhood relationships and in obtaining contributions from the private sector and philanthropic organizations. The Steering Group can also quite obviously play an important role of the strategy following adoption by Council. The role of coordination and

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advocacy all not overly onerous and should be viable with limited support from City Staff.

It is recommended that the Steering Group continue to work together, possibly as part of the Poverty Response Group. The Steering Group comprises a number of agencies that deliver services to the community. It would also be beneficial to include representatives from the business and faith communities.

Project 9 Support Services Coordination	
Objective	To avoid duplication of services and fill identified gaps in service provision.
Justification	Within Richmond, a range of services is provided to those who are homeless and those at risk of homelessness. There are also a number of gaps in service provision that could be filled through better coordination.
Action	Facilitate a "joined-up approach" to delivery of services.
Lead/Support	Homelessness Steering Group, Richmond Community Service Advisory Council to work together to coordinate services
Costs	\$2000 annually for meeting costs (plus staff support costs)
Timescale	Immediate

Project 10 – Continue to Support Local Services. There are a number of local service providers who work with the homeless and those at risk of homelessness on a daily basis. These organizations tend to be funded on an annual basis and are subjected to fluctuations in revenue that make it difficult to plan for the future.

The cutbacks to funding at the Provincial level will have an impact on local services that will likely reduce the level of services that can be provided to the homeless and at risk of homeless populations in Richmond. The City and its partners will have to explore a range of local innovative solutions to ensure that existing services continue to be provided, while potential gaps in service provision are filled.

Project 10 Financial Support for Local Services	
Objective	There are a number of local support services that help to prevent homelessness in Richmond that require the continued support from all levels of Government.
Justification	The current fiscal climate will result in a number of local service providers facing reduced budgets. The successful continuation of these services will require the entire community's support, with the business and faith communities exploring new ways of supporting the community.
Action	Continue to provide financial support for these services.
Lead/Support	Richmond Steering Group on Homelessness, City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
Costs	Dependant upon particular organizational needs
Timescale	Immediate

7.4.5 Theme 5: Affordable Housing

One of the key issues facing Richmond is the strong demand and limited supply of affordable housing. The study identified a waiting list of over 1,300 applications for affordable housing in Richmond, with a wait time between four and eight years. In the meantime, these people stay in private rented accommodation, often paying a disproportionate amount of their income on rent. In many cases, a number of families will share cramped quarters, with several generations living in one unit. Other families leave Richmond to find affordable housing. While no major community in Canada has been able to provide enough affordable accommodation to meet needs, Richmond is in a unique position to take leadership in this area. Two projects are identified in this theme:

- Project 11. Affordable Housing Strategy Review
- Project 12. Private Rental Housing

Project 11 – The City's pioneering Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted in 1989 and amended in 1994 and included the creation of an Affordable Housing Reserve. As of December 31, 2001, this reserve currently stands at \$5.5 million.

The City can work with its partners, including non-profit housing associations, developers and government ministries to develop the means to continue to address the demand for affordable accommodation. The first step requires the City to revisit the Affordable Housing Strategy to find out what has worked well in the past, and what can be done to make it even more effective in the future.

Project 11 Affordable Housing Strategy Review	
Objective	To review the City's current Affordable Housing Strategy
Justification	The existing Affordable Housing Strategy dates back to 1989. Richmond has made a number of initiatives under this strategy. Consideration should be given to revising the strategy to find solutions to meeting the enormous demand for affordable accommodation within the community (e.g. multi-year agreements with the City, the Health Authority and the Province).
Action	Review and update Affordable Housing Strategy to better meet the needs of the community.
Lead/Support	City of Richmond (Policy and Capital Costs), Private Developers, Non-Profit Housing Societies, Richmond Community Services Advisory Council
Costs	None
Timescale	Short Term: Review Strategy Medium Term: Provide more affordable housing options Long Term: Monitor and adjust Strategy when required

Project 12 – Private Rental Housing. The second area that needs to be examined in terms of affordability is that of the private rental market. There have been a limited number of new private rental units brought onto the market in recent years, most at the higher end of the market. There is a great demand for those apartments that offer rents at the lower end of the price range. Even then, rental prices are far above the levels of income received by those receiving BC Benefits. Although secondary suites are officially illegal in Richmond, they have developed as a natural response to the high demand for affordable housing in Richmond. The City's Affordable Housing Policy could be revisited to examine

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how affordable, private rental accommodation can be developed through a range of mechanisms. These may include incentives through rezoning approvals and the legalization of secondary suites.

Project 12 Encourage Market Based Affordable Housing	
Objective	To encourage the private sector to build more affordable housing in Richmond, a proportion of which should be barrier free
Justification	The demand for affordable accommodation in Richmond surpasses the limited supply
Action	To be determined
Lead/Support	City of Richmond, Private Sector
Costs	To be determined
Timescale	Medium

7.5 Delivery Mechanism

Implementing the Homelessness Strategy would benefit from maintaining the Richmond Homelessness Steering Group and continuing the relationship with the Poverty Response Group. The work must be done in partnership as no one organization has the necessary resources to fully fund the projects. The right conditions for a meaningful and successful partnership built on mutual trust and confidence between partners needs to be put in place. It will be important to distinguish between those partners likely to play a strategic role and partners whose involvement should be focussed on project delivery. The partnership body itself will influence and develop policy and deliver some projects, but will need to act as an "umbrella" to facilitate the delivery of other projects by lead partners.

In this context, we have identified the following objectives for an effective delivery structure for the Richmond Homelessness Strategy. To meet the aspirations of the partners, the delivery structure should:

- add value to the efforts of existing agencies and ensure existing and new initiatives are relevant to Richmond;
- have a small, effective, action-driven Steering Group (utilizing existing resources that can be committed to a specific date in the future);
- be action oriented with a structure and decision making process that is clear and transparent;
- implement an agreed-upon agenda based on the Vision and 12 projects;
- ensure that partners are clear on their respective roles and responsibilities for policy and implementation; and
- ensure that the Steering Group and delivery arrangements have a defined period of operation and a clear "exit strategy".

7.5.1 Preferred Delivery Structure: Voluntary Partnership

On balance, the preferred model for tackling homelessness in Richmond would be to put in place a formal voluntary partnership agreement, establish a Steering Group and a small management team comprising existing officers. New initiatives under the Partnership's banner will complement and enhance existing provision. The Steering Group would make policy and expenditure decisions with the agreed budgets and expenditure plans of the partners. The partnership could become a standing committee for a three-year period to oversee the implementation of the key projects.

7.6 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

A monitoring and evaluation framework is essential for tracking the progress of the delivery of the Action, to demonstrate the added value and prove the benefits of following a proactive approach.

It is also important to set indicative targets, although it is essential to strike a balance: targets are valuable, but there are real dangers in being too output driven, especially in areas where impact is only to be achieved in the medium or long term. With this caveat, the accompanying table sets out a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Richmond Homelessness Strategy.

Table 1 provides a framework for monitoring change in relation to homelessness in Richmond.

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Table 1 – Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Performance Indicator	Measurement	Frequency	Target 2007
Affordable Housing Waiting List	Number of people on wait-list for affordable housing in Richmond. Monitored by Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation	Annual	Maintain 2002 level (1,300)
Supported Independent Living Wait List	Number of people in Richmond waiting for SIL. Kept by Canadian Mental Health Assoc.	Annual	Maintain 2002 level (800)
Number of Affordable Housing Units	Number of subsidized units in Richmond Kept by City of Richmond	Annual	10% increase over 2002 level (2,476)
Richmond residents using facilities elsewhere in GVRD	Number of Richmond residents living in shelters and other emergency housing in Region because of limited capacity in Richmond. Source: HIFIS data	Annual	50% reduction on 2002 level
Number of women & children using Transition House	Number of women and children fleeing abuse who need emergency shelter. Kept by Nova House.	Annual	25% increase in the number of bed spaces over 2001
Number of women & children turned away from Transition House	Number of women and children fleeing abuse who need emergency shelter. Kept by Nova House.	Annual	75% decrease on 2002 level (195 turned away)
Number of people using men's shelter	Number of people using men's Shelter. Kept by Salvation Army. Absolute figures & capacity.	Annual	75% increase in number of available spaces on 2002 level Number of minimal barrier spaces
Number of people turned away from men's Shelter	Number of people turned away from Richmond House. Kept by Salvation Army.	Annual	75% decrease on 2002 level
Number of Families at risk of homelessness	Number of families who are at risk of homelessness. Based on number of households using foodbank on a regular basis.	Annual	Maintain 2002 level
Number of people paying 50% or more for rent	Number of people at risk of homelessness. Kept by Census and City, updated every five years	Every five years	10% decrease in the number of people paying 50% or more of income on rent

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Performance Indicator	Measurement	Frequency	Target 2007
Number of Absolute Homeless	Number of people in Richmond who are absolutely homeless. Requires 24 hour snap shot, or information based on outreach workers in Richmond Kept by City and Stakeholders	Annual	50% decrease in the local homeless population over 2002 (around 30).
Number of accessible units	Number of beds in local shelters that are accessible for the disabled Kept by local service providers	Annual	Addition of 10 spaces over 2002 level (0 beds that are accessible)
Number of Single Women who are Homeless	Number of women in Richmond who are homeless. Kept by local shelters	Annual	No information available for 2002
Number of families who are homeless in Richmond	Number of local families referred to hotels due to homelessness Kept by Ministry of Human Resources	Annual	50% decrease in the number of families who are homeless in Richmond over 2002 levels (10 per annum)

Section 8 – Conclusions and Next Steps

Richmond has a unique set of issues relating to homelessness that distinguishes the City from other municipalities in the Greater Vancouver Region. As described in this study, the City has a relatively small number of residents who are absolutely homeless. Richmond, however, does have a significant population who is at risk of homelessness, likely in the range of 1,000 households.

Historically, there has been a strong community response, but this to poverty and homelessness has been uncoordinated. While there are community-based service providers, government agencies and members of the public providing a range of services, unfortunately, there are a number of service gaps.

8.1 Recommendation – Vision

As a primary step in addressing the issue of homelessness, it is recommended that the City adopt the following vision:

"Richmond is an inclusive community, that provides a wide range of services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. The City takes a proactive role in developing affordable housing as a means to prevent homelessness. The City works with the business community, local faith organizations, community service organizations and the general public to find innovative methods of combating homelessness at the local level."

8.2 Recommendation – Action Plan

The Action Plan has been developed to facilitate the Vision. The five themes and 12 projects that are described in this report can be realistically implemented over the short, medium and long term. The success of the projects is based upon a partnership approach between the City and key stakeholders who will share the total project costs of \$6.2 million.

Theme 1 – Upgrade and Increase Emergency Shelter Capacity

- Richmond House Emergency Shelter
- Nova House Transition Shelter
- Family Emergency Accommodation
- Youth Emergency Housing

Theme 2 – Create Supportive Housing for At Risk Groups

- Second Stage Housing for Women and Children
- Second Stage Housing for Single People
- Supported Independent Living

Theme 3 – Increase Community Awareness

- Community Awareness Strategy

Theme 4 – Increase Support to Local Services

- Support Services Coordination
- Financial Support for Local Services

Theme 5 – Continue Leadership on Affordable Housing

- Affordable Housing Strategy Review

Richmond has a unique set of homelessness issues when compared with other GVRD municipalities. This is specifically true in terms of the small absolute homeless population, but the large at risk population.

The City has already taken a pioneering role by creating an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund. Tackling local homelessness projects will build on this leadership role.

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- Private Rental Housing

The City of Richmond and its partners are invited to approve the principles, vision, action plan and projects as the basis for future investment and policy direction for tackling homelessness in Richmond over the next decade.

8.3 Next Steps

The immediate next steps are:

- Richmond's City Council to direct staff to review report and prepare coordinated implementation plan with recommendations for Council approval; and
- Coordinate the actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy with those of the Poverty Response Group's Action Plan.

Appendix A

Best Practices for Homelessness

Varied initiatives to address homelessness have been undertaken by non-profit societies, governments and more rarely, the private sector across North America. In many jurisdictions, responding to the issue of homelessness finds little political support and advocates struggle to find solutions. As a result, the incidence of homelessness has grown. The following are a selection of “best practices” drawn from a variety of settings but focussing mainly on British Columbia where there have been many excellent initiatives. These best practices also form the basis for the strategies recommended in the report “It’s My City Too!”, a Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond’s Most Vulnerable Citizens. These best practices are organized into four main categories with illustrative examples.

1. Designing Emergency Shelters

Emergency shelters are the front line in the fight to combat homelessness. By their very nature, emergency shelters are temporary accommodation with usually very basic bed space and rigorous rules on occupation. Many emergency shelters are conversions of existing buildings. Converted buildings often have constraints in terms of flexibility of space because they tend to “fit what they can” into a space. These buildings have the advantage, as existing structures, of fitting in with their surroundings. Purpose-built shelters have a number of advantages particularly in the ability to design flexible space, space built to meet the need and ability to build for durability and security. It is important, however, in designing for security to retain home-like features and facilitate positive interaction between residents and staff.

The new 10-bed shelter and 20-unit supportive housing project in Prince George has been able to save the heritage façade of one of its downtown buildings, while completing a new purpose built facility. Although funding has not yet been procured for amenities, such as a laundry facility, the space is there and community funders are being sought.

Other features important for shelter space include:

- Large sleeping rooms to avoid the stress of overcrowding
- Large reception area and foyer to avoid line-ups on the street
- Lockable storage areas for residents’ belongings

The attached photos of the Cool Aid Streetlink shelter in Victoria show these spaces.

Small Shelters Preferable

Although there are efficiencies to be had in maximizing the number of beds in an emergency shelter, there are many disadvantages. The best practice in designing emergency shelters is to develop smaller projects. Large facilities bring challenges to effective management and provide more opportunities for victimization and the concealment of alcohol and drug abuse. The presence of large numbers of homeless individuals in one shelter, many of whom may have

challenging behavior, can itself be a deterrent to some individuals seeking accommodation and, as a result, they may choose to stay outdoors. Large shelters also bring an image of “warehousing” the poor and can be difficult to find support for in development and can impact the street significantly. The Cool Aid Streetlink shelter, constructed in 1992 in Victoria, has a maximum 55 beds for the homeless and is a good example of a modest-sized shelter. The attached photos show how this shelter and supportive housing project have an attractive street presence. Examples of other small shelters include the recently completed 10-bed shelter and 20-unit supportive housing project in downtown Prince George, and the Bridge Housing Society for Women’s new shelter on East Cordova in Vancouver that opened in October 2001.

Meet Different Needs in Different Shelters

The homeless, as has been shown by this study and others, are actually heterogeneous. It is a best practice to accommodate differing needs with separate emergency accommodation. Mixing homeless single men with youth, families, or women is not considered a good practice and can lead to victimization.

Men and women are generally served separately, although with flexible design, can be accommodated in the same building. Youth should not be obliged to be accommodated with single men, and families are best served in their own accommodation.

The attached photos illustrate how use of “swing space” at Victoria’s Streetlink Shelter allows two of the three bed units to be accessed from one side if men are occupying them and from the other side if occupied by women.

Important considerations for shelter design if both men and women are accommodated in the same building, is to provide, if possible, a separate entrance and reception area for women, a separate lounge and a separate laundry facility.

Location, Location, Location!

Homeless shelters need to be located in areas that are easily accessible by those who find themselves without shelter. Generally, locations close to a City’s core are most desirable. Shelters should be located in close proximity to other services such as income support, counseling and medical services and in an area with good public transit.

Streetlink Shelter provides a good example of appropriate location. The brick exterior of this attractive building is a good fit in the neighbourhood. The location of the shelter has not deterred other development as the waterfront condominium project behind the shelter and the upscale furniture store across the street were both developed after the shelter was opened.

Integrating Shelters with Other Services

The value of housing for the homeless is enhanced when other services are also provided. The homeless usually experience a range of other problems beyond low income alone. The provision of services on an integrated basis with accommodation provides an opportunity to assist an individual to tackle these problems. A number of developments in BC provide good examples of the integration of services with shelter.

Portland Hotel

The Portland Hotel in Vancouver's Downtown East Side primarily serves individuals who have previously been through the cycle of homelessness. A number of services are provided to residents of the Portland Hotel. These include mental health workers who manage and maintain the building and work with residents on a 24-hour basis, full time support staff, and a doctor and nurse (available four and one-half days a week). Portland House also has a nutritionist and counselors available.

Cool Aid Streetlink Emergency Shelter

The Victoria Cool Aid Society provides a range of counseling and specialist services. The main floor area is open in the daytime for residents and non-residents to access services such as counselling, doing laundry or socializing. Three meals are served to residents and a mid-day and 4:00 pm meal are also provided to non-residents. A unique feature of this development is the provision of a small health facility serving the needs of the homeless within the building. A dental clinic has recently opened in the building as well. This was purpose designed as part of the development.

2. Beyond Emergency Shelters

Important though emergency shelters are, they form only one part of a program that can be put in place to tackle homelessness. Second stage or transitional housing provides an important link between homelessness and permanent accommodation. This form of housing, that integrates appropriate services with housing, can assist in challenging the circumstances that the homeless often find themselves in.

Second Stage /Transitional Accommodation

Second stage housing for women and children fleeing abusive situations provides a stabilizing time, with the necessary supports and services, following a stay in a Women's Transition House. Often, women fleeing abuse leave without their belongings and no financial resources. They may not be employed and/or require employment skills upgrading. Children who witness abuse may need longer term counselling and support than they receive at a Transition House.

Like Women's Transition Houses, second-stage housing can be purpose-built or renovations of existing buildings. Security features, common space for social interaction, secure outdoor play space and space for individual counselling are desirable features.

For example, Casimir Court in Vernon, which has operated since 1982, contains eight units, six one-bedroom and two two-bedroom. One of the one-bedroom units serves as an office and counseling space. It is a small concerted apartment block that was purchased by the operating society (which also operates the Women's Transition House).

Affordable Housing for Low-income Singles

Affordable Housing for singles can be permanent or second stage/transitional housing. A feature common to all transitional housing is the availability of some staff support.

The Cool Aid Society in Victoria has successfully co-located two projects in downtown Victoria. The Mike Gidora Place is a market rental project with small units. Building on City-donated land and incorporating revenue-producing spaces, means that units can be rented for the shelter portion of income assistance. This building also contains the offices of the Cool Aid Society on the main floor and some leased commercial space, occupied by a small art gallery. Next door is the Homes BC Pandora Project. This singles housing project includes eight units for youth on the main floor with a separate entrance. Through funding support of the business community and the Real Estate Foundation, a community gymnasium has been included in this project. The courtyard in the interior of the complex provides attractive, open-air common space while providing privacy from the street.

In the transition area between Victoria's downtown and the residential community of Fairfield, Cool Aid has recently opened a housing project for special needs clients formerly homeless or at risk of homelessness. This purpose-built project replaced two dilapidated homes improving the streetscape along Johnston Street.

3. Innovative Funding

Finding funding to develop accommodation and provide services for the homeless has become especially challenging over the previous decade, as most provincial governments in Canada have withdrawn or restricted their funding for social housing following the lead of the federal government. In the vacuum that has developed over that period, non-profit societies have sought out partnerships with the private sector, the philanthropic sector and municipal governments to make projects and programs work.

The evolving practice with innovative funding has been the formation of partnerships for specific projects with funding contributions from a number of sources that "make the difference" and enable a project to proceed. Contributions from the private sector, often through company foundations, have been increasing. Contributions from the philanthropic sector have not generally been to the housing sector with the health sector being a more dominant recipient.

Municipalities in BC have traditionally stayed away from major commitments in the social housing field, with the exception of the City of Vancouver. This contrasts with Ontario where a large number of municipal non-profit corporations were created in the 1980s and early 1990s. Increasingly, municipalities are playing a role in making a difference in the field of social housing provision and contributing to projects to enable them to happen.

Examples of innovative funding are provided below, with the emphasis on examples that Richmond may employ.

The Private Sector

Royal Bank. The Royal Bank (RBC) is one of the largest corporate sponsors in Canada and in 2001 contributed \$27 million to charities in hundreds of communities throughout Canada. RBC has donated over \$2 million to agencies concerned with homelessness in Canada. RBC has placed its support behind Raising the Roof's "Toque Tuesday", an annual fundraising campaign by an organization whose mission is finding long term solutions to homelessness. In

A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens Appendix A – Best Practices for Homelessness

2001, RBC helped Raising the Roof raise almost \$450,000 by selling 70,000 toques in addition to RBC Foundation's corporate donation of \$250,000.

Fairmont Hotels and Resorts. Fairmont Hotels and Resorts is the largest hotel management company in North America, headquartered in Toronto and also managing hotels and resorts worldwide. The current Fairmont organization arose out of a purchase of Fairmont by Canadian Pacific Hotels in 1999. Originally initiated in Canada, Fairmont Hotels have adopted a chain-wide program called "Adopt a Shelter". The focus of this program is abused women. The "Adopt a Shelter" initiative is based on the "simple fact that the company has 30,000 rooms in 70 hotels across North America and on any given day have a lot of things that are suitable for donation". It is a program that lets the hotels contribute to the community by donating linens, towels and furniture to Women's Transition Houses and second stage homes.

Credit Unions

VanCity Place for Youth, although a much larger project than would be needed or desirable in Richmond, illustrates the partnership between the credit union, the municipal government and the community. The City of Vancouver acquired the land and leased it to a non-profit society for \$1. The city also donated money toward the capital cost of the project (about 50% of the total cost), VanCity Credit Union developed the property, took the construction risk and guaranteed the mortgage while their staff raised money through community events.

Municipal Initiatives

Like Richmond, many municipalities are taking the lead in developing strategies to prevent and address homelessness. The City of Port Moody, for example, has provided land (1.7 acres in the town centre) at Inlet Centre, leased to the Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation for 60 years at 65% of the land value. Development of the property includes plans for non-market family housing, a residential hospice, seniors' supportive housing and supportive housing for women. The GVHC partnered with three other non-profit housing organizations, the provincial government, the health region and a private sector builder.

Philanthropic Contributions

The Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia was formed in 1985 by an amendment to the Real Estate Act. The Foundation is a non profit corporation that receives interest from unassigned trust deposits held by real estate agents. The Foundations Mission is:

"to use its resources for the benefit of British Columbians by supporting efforts that improve all aspects of land use and real estate practices."

During the last six years, the Real Estate Foundation has approved \$5.3 million in housing related grants to an impressive array of organizations. The foundation has made contributions to the "hard to house", transition houses and treatment centers.

The Vancouver Foundation is a philanthropic non-governmental community foundation which operates primarily as a permanent collection of endowed funds. Income derived from the investment of the pooled capital is distributed to support the activities of charitable organizations across British Columbia. The Vancouver Foundation's mission is:

“Through the growth and stewardship of permanent endowment funds and the distribution of income to a broad range of eligible organizations, Vancouver Foundation, in meeting community needs, provides philanthropic leadership to improve the quality of life for all British Columbians.”

Originally established in 1950, Vancouver Foundation is the custodian of 689 funds with a market value of \$610 million. Each year, the foundation distributes approximately \$27 million to organizations and groups.

4. Working with the Community

Developing new social housing has always faced opposition from neighbours and what has often been called “NIMBYism” or “not in my back yard”. New housing to accommodate the homeless can be expected to face opposition. Avoiding the “not in my back yard” syndrome is unlikely to be completely possible, but mitigating its impact and allaying community fears can occur through some considered steps.

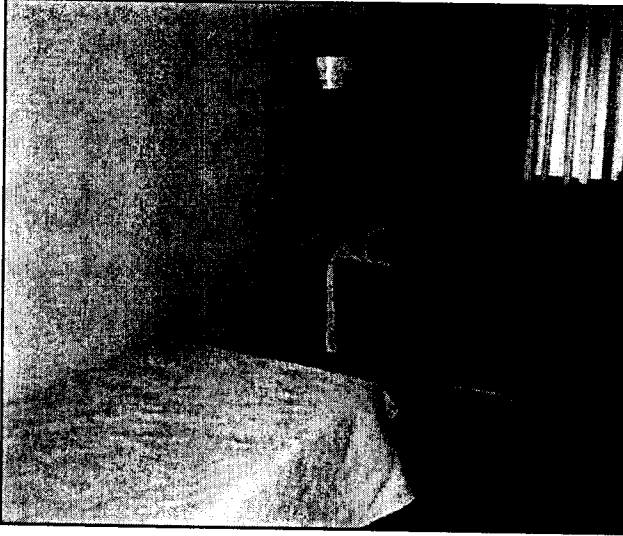
In 1995, the then Ministry of Housing, Recreation and Consumer Services examined the issue of community resistance to non-market housing. This resistance – NIMBYism, as it is commonly called – slows down or prevents the development of needed affordable housing, particularly for groups at highest risk of homelessness. The product of this work was a series of guides that provide practical tools to assist those working to develop non-market housing. These guides, entitled “Toward More Inclusive Neighbourhoods”, address the following topics:

- Gaining and Keeping Community Acceptance – emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach, developing a “good neighbour” strategy and communicating with local government and the neighbourhood.
- Building Partnerships with Local Government.
- Effects on Non-market Housing on Property Values – studies of seven projects around the province, which were later updated, all found no evidence that the presence of non-market housing, whether family townhomes or special needs housing, negatively impacted the sale prices of homes in the area.
- Design Details – includes tips regarding neighbourhood context, site planning and building design and materials.
- Sample Materials for Sponsors – provides tips and materials to prepare for neighbourhood meetings, media interviews and public hearings.

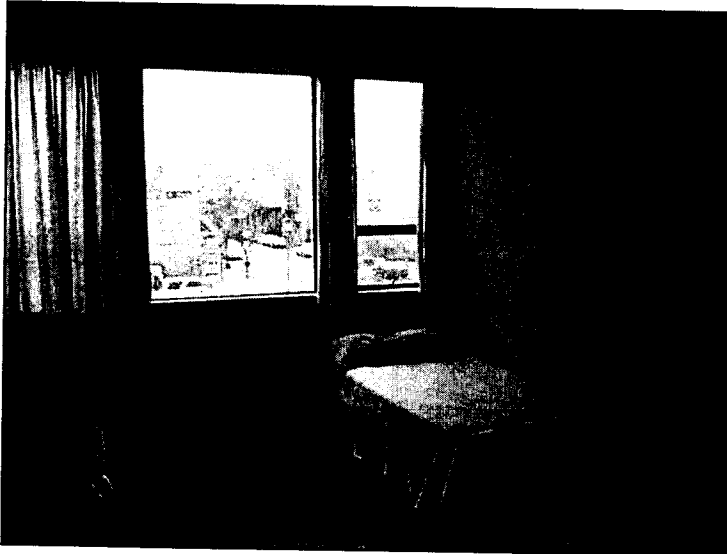
Photo Illustrations

Streetlink Shelter

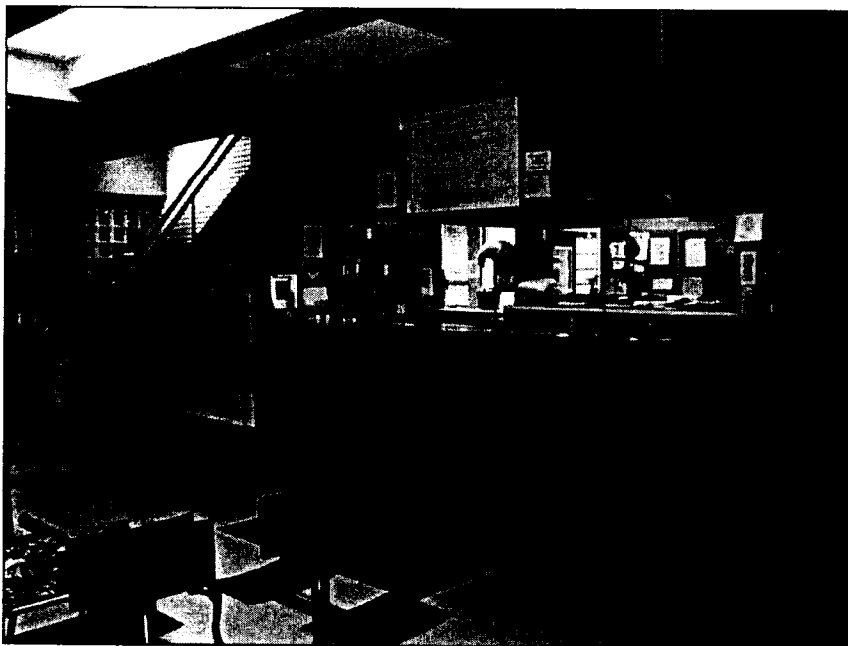
Large sleeping rooms avoid stress of overcrowding.



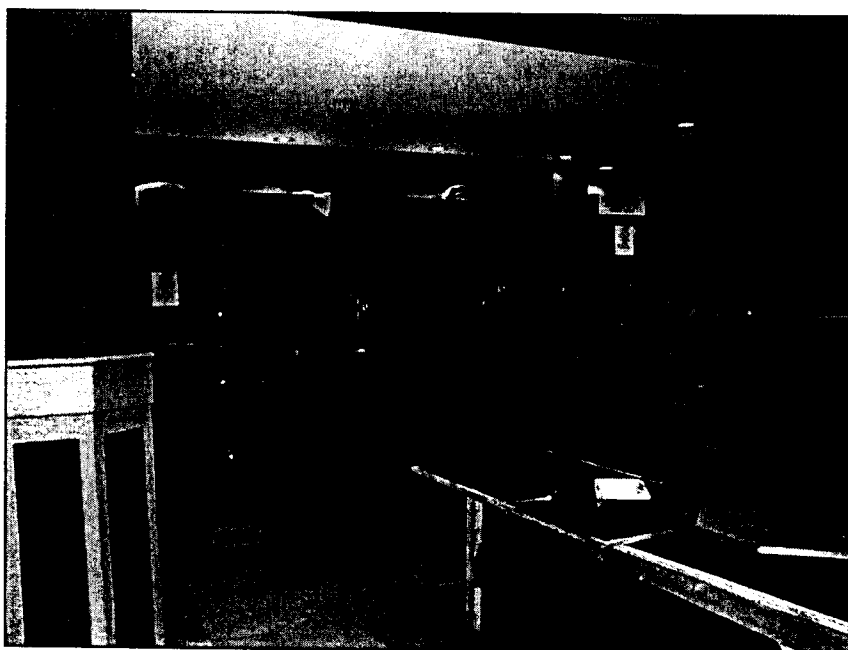
Two-bed unit.



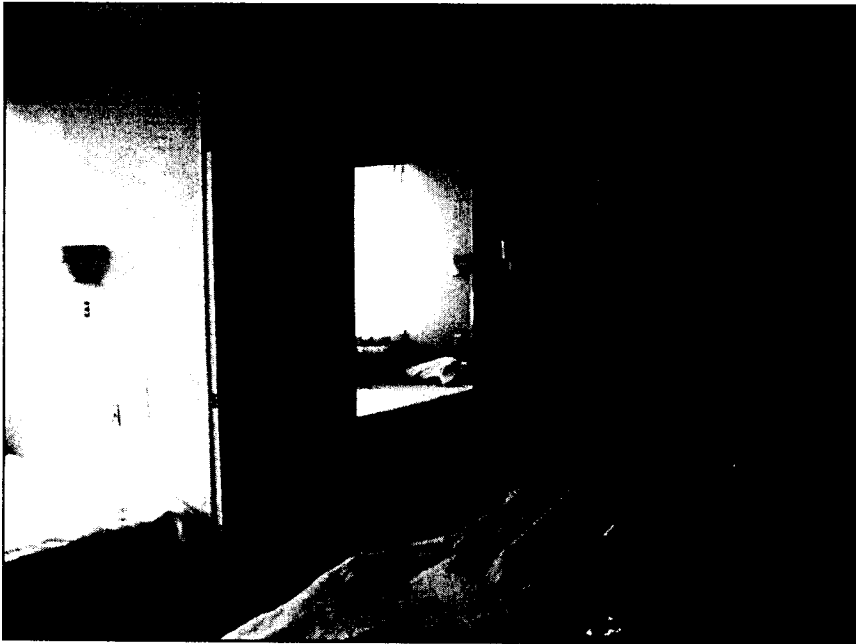
Three-bed unit.



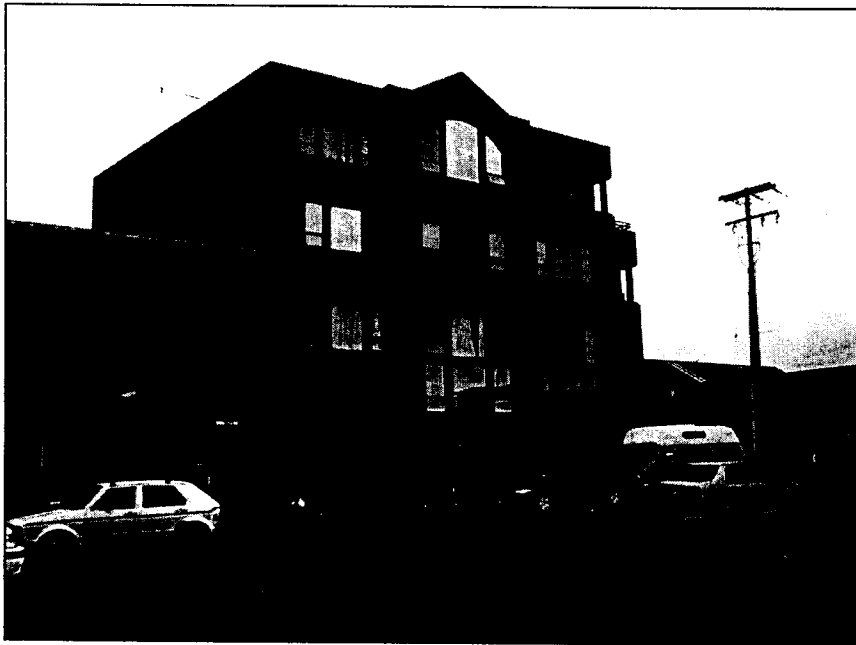
Large reception area and foyer avoid lineups on the street.



Lockable storage space important for residents.



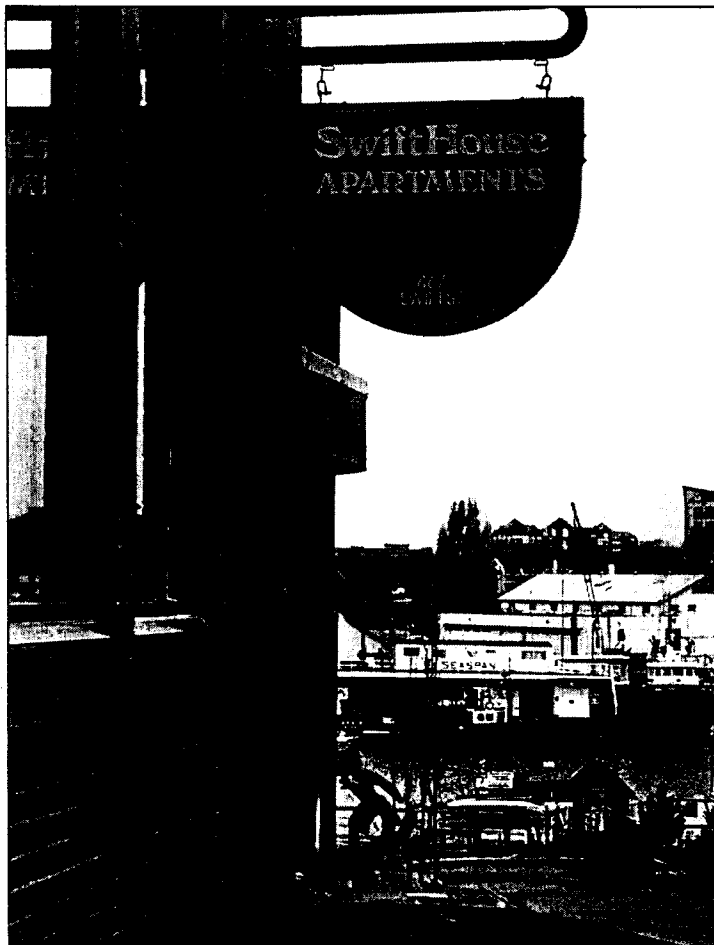
"Swing space" allows rooms to be used for men or women.



Attractive brick exterior fits with neighbourhood.

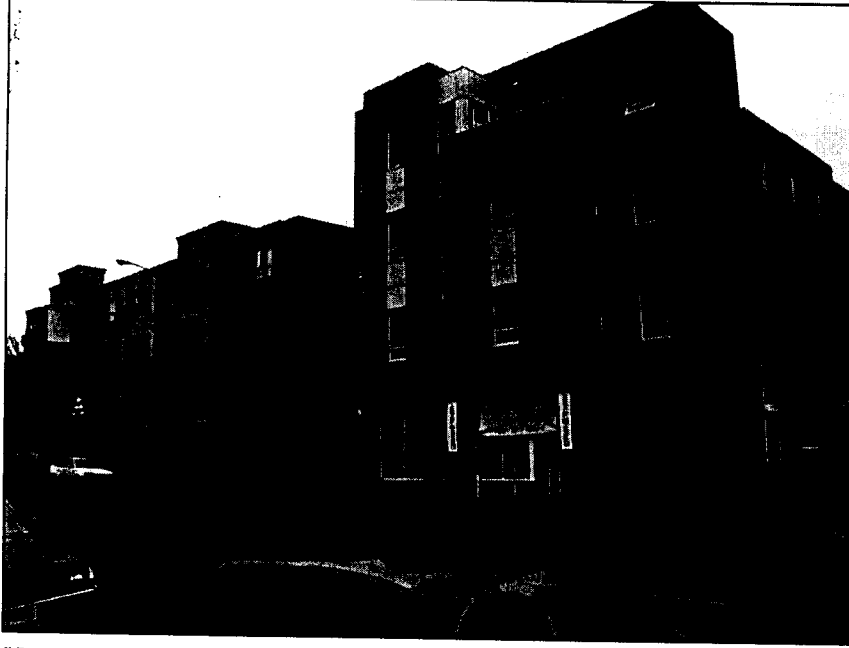


Services integrated with shelter. New development not deterred (condominiums attached).



Supportive housing integrates with shelter space.

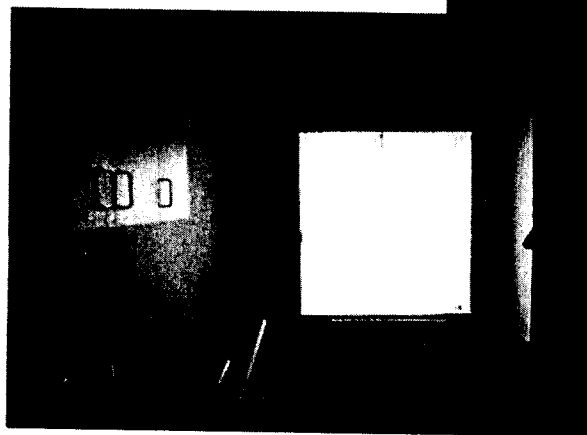
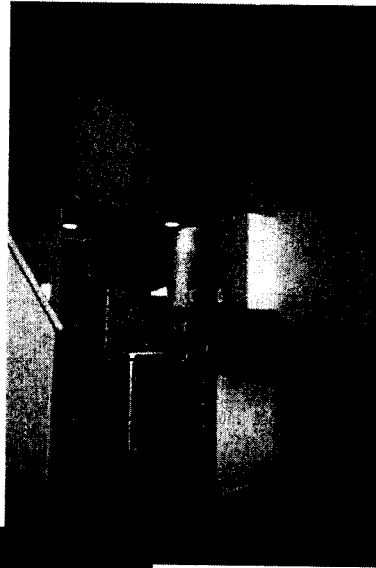
Pandora Project and Mike Gidora Place



Housing projects enhance downtown streetscape.



Projects integrate singles housing, youth housing, commercial and community space.

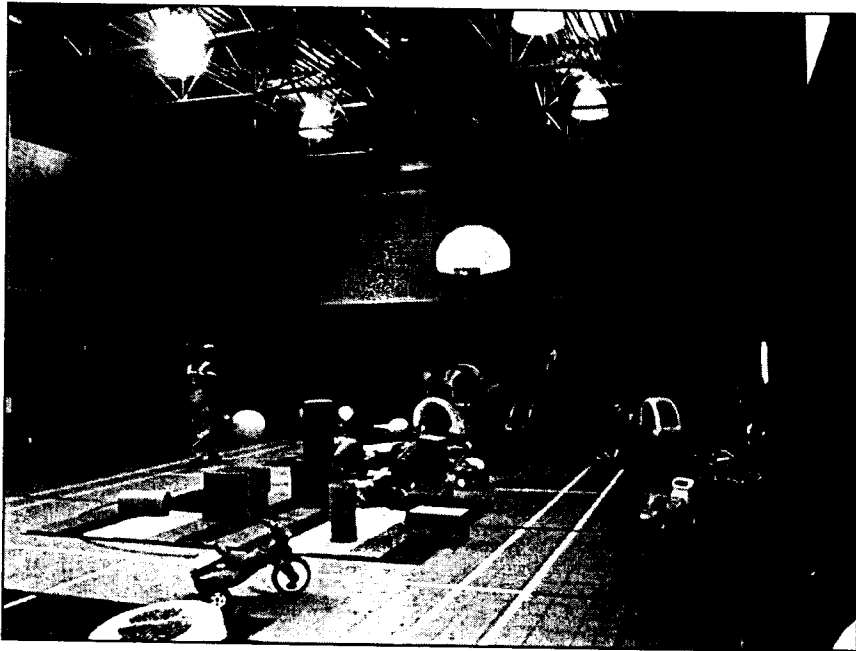


Room 411 - Studio Unit

Typical unit at Mike Gidora Place.

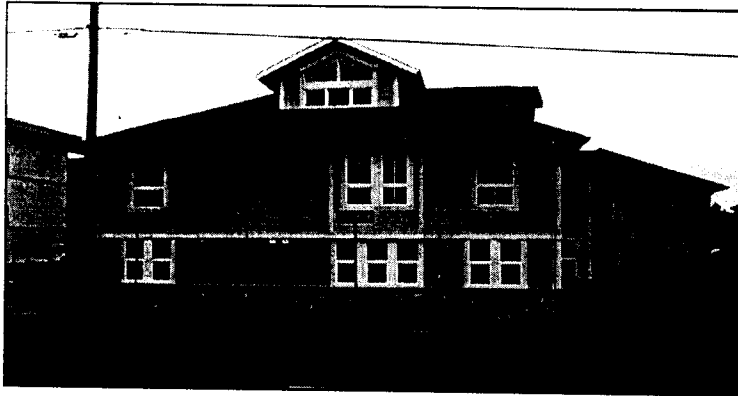


Airy courtyard off the street provides privacy.



Community gymnasium at Pandora Project.

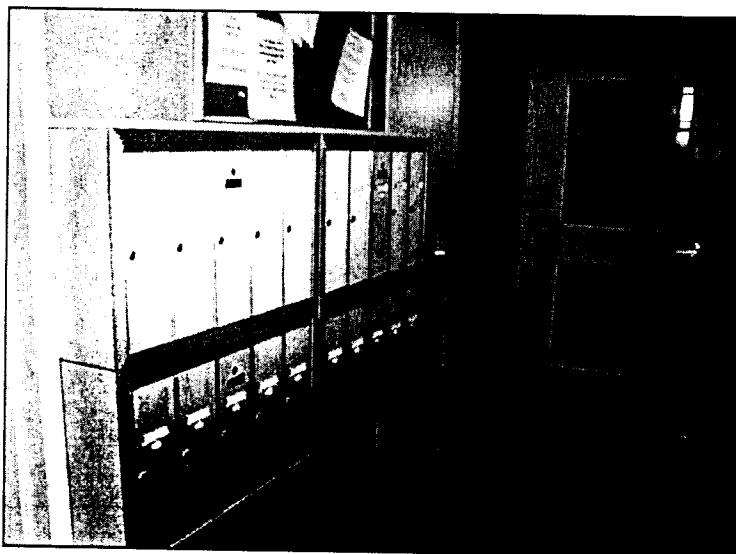
Johnson Manor



Permanent
singles
housing for
formerly
homeless.



Small garden
adds
"homey"
touch.



Entrance
foyer.

Appendix B Service Providers Consulted

Chimo, Nova House, Neena Randhawa Multi-Cultural Outreach Worker

Activities: provide 10 beds in a safe environment for women who are fleeing abuse

Identified Gaps: more subsidized family housing, second stage housing for women once they leave the transition house, and shelter space for women who are not fleeing abuse

Comments: seeing more homelessness in Richmond, clients are exceeding the 30-day limit because they have no housing. Some women are returning to their abuser because they have nowhere else to go.

Chimo Crisis Services: Joan Cowderoy, Executive Director

Activities: telephone crisis lines (English, Mandarin & Cantonese), suicide intervention counseling, Nova Transition House, Women's Counseling and Outreach, Children's Counseling and Community Education Programs.

Identified Gaps: Nova House will have to move by July 2003 due to expiry of lease

Comments: Group Home Task Force encountered resistance from residents of Richmond to housing for people with drug and alcohol addictions. Need to address homelessness from the preventative side, not just the intervention side.

Chimo Crisis Services: James Lowe, Crisis Line Team Leader

Activities: provide telephone support to people who are experiencing a crisis. Often deal with people who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Identified Gaps: non-stigmatizing shelter, a shelter for women, more accommodation for people with mental health issues

Comments: tend to deal with people before they become homeless, are able to take preventative action. Homelessness in Richmond is seen as someone else's problem.

Salvation Army, Les McAusland

Activities: operate Richmond House (men's emergency shelter in Richmond) as well as community and family services (emergency food and clothing and counseling). Also run the Job Wave program in Richmond.

Identified Gaps: knowledge of where services for the homeless are throughout GVRD. Easy access to information for people who find themselves homeless.

Comments: Richmond House works because it is low key, small scale and doesn't make waves in community.

A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens
Appendix B – Service Providers Consulted

City of Richmond, Rob Innes

Activities: social planning, housing policy, land use planning.

Identified Gaps: information about homelessness, the scale of the problem and the priorities

Comments: Good community network exists in Richmond. City is committed to addressing homelessness.

Success, Francis Li

Activities: focused on community airport newcomers network, settlement and immigration services, language training, employment services, family and youth counseling services, small business development and training, seniors and women's services and volunteer and membership development.

Identified Gaps: emergency housing for youth, affordable housing, special needs housing,

Comments: quite common for several families to live in one house to afford rent.

Richmond Women's Centre, Karen Martin

Activities: drop-in centre and support services to women who are at risk of homelessness (single women on income assistance, new immigrants, refugees, women leaving abusive relationships and women searching for affordable housing).

Identified Gaps: more affordable housing

Comments: housing is one of the top five reasons for women visiting the Richmond Women's Centre

Richmond Food Bank, Roberta and Margaret

Activities: provide food supplies to the needy in Richmond

Identified Gaps: affordable accommodation for low income people

Comments: stable number of customers, around 1,100 in 2001. Around 15% of those households visiting weekly

RCMP, Colin Abel

Activities: protection and security of the citizens of Richmond

Identified Gaps: more information on local services

Comments: Richmond is a family community, very rare to see homeless people in the City.

A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens
Appendix B – Service Providers Consulted

Canadian Mental Health Association, Marie Lemon, Manager of Housing Program

Activities: provide subsidies and support services to people with mental health diagnosis. Have 130 tenants at the moment and a waiting list of 800.

Identified Gaps: emergency, short term transition housing for mental health clients, second stage housing is required as is more affordable accommodation.

Comments: Clients want to stay in Richmond near to family connections. Projects dealing with mental health tend to be very controversial, lots of NIMBYism.

Ministry of Human Resources: Laura Rahn

Activities: financial assistance, employment planning, family maintenance, training consultants and verification officers.

Identified Gaps: short and long term affordable housing, emergency shelter for women, emergency shelter for youth.

Comments: Currently about 1000 clients in Richmond, with 1/3 on disability allowance. Refugees with trauma issues are most frequent income assistance recipients from ethnic populations.

Richmond Mental Health: Lynn Jones

Activities: rehabilitation, housing and consumer initiatives

Identified Gaps: need a harm-reduction policies and practices, need a variety of environments in the continuum spread across the city and a non-clinical outreach worker with a life-skills orientation.

Comments: Richmond is a conservative community with a tight housing market. Asian population of Richmond does not frequently access mental health services.

Gilwest Clinic: Al Zwiars

Activities: HIV care clinic, methadone maintenance and treatment program and hepatitis C clinic.

Identified Gaps: low barrier “damp” housing and low barrier “damp” emergency shelter

Comments: For those at greatest risk, a harm reduction program is more effective than an abstinence-based approach.

United Way, Linda Western

Activities: provide funds to the following agencies in Richmond: Advantage Society, CHIMO Crisis Services, Development Disabilities Association, Richmond Family Place, Richmond Multicultural Concern Society, Richmond

A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens
Appendix B – Service Providers Consulted

Women's Resource Society, Richmond Youth Service Agency and Volunteer Richmond Information Services.

Identified Gaps: affordable housing, improved linkages between service providers in Richmond and the Asian community.

Comments: stigma attached to living in poverty in an affluent community.

Richmond Youth Services, Denise Woodley

Activities: independent living support program, pregnant and parenting youth program, street youth outreach program, youth and family outreach program, employment skills and job search program

Identified Gaps: no youth shelter, need five emergency beds. Lack of affordable housing. No detox beds in Richmond.

Comments: most of the youth receiving services have grown up in Richmond, a lot of youth are couch surfing, there are a few homes that are known to be places where youth can 'crash'.

Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee, Lois Carson-Boyce

Activities: advise mayor and Council on issues related to seniors.

Identified Gaps: affordable housing.

Comments: Many churches in Richmond would provide services if asked. A study into seniors housing in Richmond is currently underway.

Disability Resource Centre, James Sullivan and Frances Clark

Activities: programs for the disabled, including peer support, self management, computer and employment related skills training, access to recreation and social activities.

Identified Gaps: inadequate supply of accessible housing for people with disabilities and/or the aging population. None of the shelters in Richmond are accessible, no detox or rehabilitation facilities for disabled people in Richmond.

Comments: the response to homelessness in Richmond needs to ensure that all solutions are accessible. Emergency shelters, second stage housing and long term affordable housing needs to meet the needs of disabled people.

Touchstone Family Services, Michael McCoy

Activities: family counseling, family intervention and group home support

Identified Gaps: integrated, supported social housing

A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens
Appendix B – Service Providers Consulted

Comments: need innovative solutions geared to the Richmond community and not to replicate the downtown eastside.

Richmond Community Services Advisory Council, Annie McKittrick

Activities: advises City of Richmond on social policies and community planning issues. The RCSAC is also now becoming more active in undertaking projects and tasks in response to these issues.

Identified Gaps: lack of information on the social issues in Richmond such as poverty and homelessness. Large demand for more affordable housing. Need for more inclusiveness between the Asian and more established community.

Comments: initiatives such as the homelessness strategy need to be tied to other initiatives that the City is undertaking such as the Poverty Response Group. Richmond has the resources and the people to deal with homelessness issue, they just need to be brought together. Need to engage the faith community to effectively tackle homelessness.

Appendix C

Interviews with Homeless and At Risk of Homelessness Individuals

As part of the study process, the consultant team met with a wide range of individuals who were either homeless or at risk of homeless to better understand their perspective on their current living situation and how it could be improved. In total 42 people were interviewed, representing a wide cross section of Richmond's population including women fleeing abuse, recent immigrants, the disabled, those with mental health issues and substance and abuse problems.

The results of these conversations are confidential, but general findings to arise from the interviews are outlined below. The information from these interviews was used to present the three composites that are outlined in the main report and the executive summary.

Richmond House Men's Emergency Shelter

Seven interviews were conducted with individuals staying at Richmond House on the evening of 14 January. All of the residents were single males. The majority were middle aged, Caucasian males. The majority of the residents were Richmond residents who had fallen on hard times. Some were new to Richmond and didn't have family or friends to stay with and could not afford to stay in a hotel. They planned to leave the shelter once they found employment, enabling them to look for more permanent accommodation. Other men had been sharing with friends until their relationship had become untenable and someone was forced to leave and needed a place to stay. Several of the residents had recently lost their job and as a result had to move out of their accommodation until they could find a job.

Nova House Transition House for Women

Many of the residents do not feel comfortable talking about their circumstances. The consultant team spoke to two of the women who wanted their stories to be told. Both had fled violent relationships and had been living typical middle class lives prior to leaving their abuser. Neither of the women had worked in recent years and were finding it difficult to find employment that would cover the cost of suitable accommodation in Richmond. One woman had a young child and was concerned that she would have to spend her entire paycheck on her rent to afford an apartment in Richmond. The alternative was for these women to leave their network of family and friends and move to the outer suburbs where rents are more affordable.

Richmond Food Bank

A researcher spent a morning at the Richmond Food Bank meeting with customers of the food bank, many who were at risk of becoming homeless. In total, 25 people were interviewed. Ten people interviewed were immigrants who

had recently moved to the country and were finding it difficult to cover their expenses. The other 15 were Richmond residents who had all lived in Richmond for at least the last five years. The food bank provided these people with the opportunity to direct their scarce resources into other required necessities such as clothes and household goods. Most people were living in apartments, with an average of 75% of their income going towards rent. There was an even split between males and females, with most people between the ages of 20 and 50. There were a number of people with young children. It was common for several families to be living in one household to be able to afford their accommodation.

Gilwest Clinic

The Gilwest Clinic provides HIV and Hepatitis C care and methadone maintenance and treatment. The research team met with five individuals who use the services of the clinic. None of the individuals were able to work at present. Two individuals had to leave their apartments and were currently living with family members. The other interviewees were in accommodation that was temporary and subject to insecure tenure given these people's limited income and inability to work.

Richmond Disability Resource Centre

Three disabled Richmond residents were interviewed to better understand their circumstances and how they were at risk of homelessness. The main challenge facing these individuals is the lack of accessible, affordable accommodation in Richmond. There is no emergency housing space for disabled people in Richmond and there are no facilities for those with special needs due to substance misuse that are accessible. In terms of affordable accommodation there are very few units that are accessible, and there are long waiting lists for those units. Without an adequate number of units for disabled people throughout the continuum of housing provision, local people are displaced to other communities.

Appendix D Glossary

BC Benefits – Income support programs for individuals and families in British Columbia. They include: Income Assistance, Disability Benefits, Youth Works, Drug and Alcohol Treatment and a Family Maintenance Program.

Continuum of Housing and Support – A framework that sets out the essential components of what is needed to address homelessness. It includes: emergency shelters, transition houses, supportive and second-stage housing, independent housing, employment, employment insurance, income assistance, outreach, drop-in centres, and health, mental health, prevention and substance misuse services.

Cold/Wet Weather Strategy – a partnership among service providers, community agencies, health boards and municipal and provincial governments to increase emergency shelter capacity throughout the region by opening winter only shelters and creating temporary beds or mats during extreme weather.

Emergency Shelters – Provide accommodation to the homeless for up to one month. Sleeping arrangements may be in dormitories, or in shared or single bedrooms. Some shelters can accommodate families, or alternatively, families may be placed in a motel room. Included as emergency shelters are youth safe houses and MSDES-funded SRO beds. Services (e.g. meals, medical aid, rehabilitative and social services, etc) vary depending on the shelter. Accommodation in most emergency shelters is restricted to individuals who are eligible for BC Benefits.

Hard to House – Individuals of all ages who because of their situation or vulnerabilities have difficulty maintaining stable housing and who are therefore at risk of becoming or remaining homeless. Many of these individuals have mental and/or physical health problems.

HIFIS – Homeless Individuals and Families Information System is a CMHC pilot initiative designed to assist local authorities with collecting data on homeless shelter clients. The data will identify: the unique characteristics of the shelter population; the services this population uses most frequently; the situations that led to their homelessness; and the types of support and services required. The aim of HIFIS is to enable better planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs.

Homelessness – The United Nations defines two categories of homelessness.

Absolute Homelessness refers to those without any physical shelter. This would include those who are living rough (i.e. outside, in parks or on the beach, in doorways, in parked vehicles, or parking garages), as well as those in emergency shelters or in transition houses for women fleeing abuse.

At risk of homelessness refers to individuals or families whose living spaces do not meet minimum health and safety standards, and do not offer security of

tenure, personal safety and/or affordability. Those at risk of homelessness spend more than 50% of their income on housing. The homeless at risk population includes the invisible homeless, those who are difficult to quantify, such as individuals who are staying with friends.

Independent Housing – Permanent, affordable housing for individuals who can live independently without need for support services provided in conjunction with the housing.

LICOs (Low Income Cut-Offs) were developed by Statistics Canada to identify households that would have to spend approximately 20% more of their income to acquire the basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing than would the average Canadian household. LICOs are considered a measure of poverty.

Minimal Barrier – access to flexible, non-judgmental service based on need, without restrictions to lifestyle, condition (e.g. intoxication), eligibility or number of times receiving the service, in a building that is accessible to everyone, regardless of physical condition, while acknowledging that acuteness of health needs, behaviour, or level of intoxication may limit the ability of the provider to give service.

SCPI (Supported Communities Partnership Initiative) a component of the federal governments initiative to combat homelessness. Through SCPI the government will provide \$305 million over three fiscal years, 2000-2003, to assist communities with absolute homelessness problems.

Second Stage Housing – transitional, time-limited housing obtained after leaving an emergency shelter and before a person is ready for independent housing. Residents of second-stage housing are expected to move on to permanent housing once their living situation is stabilized. Second-stage housing may provide specialized services. Examples are housing for women fleeing abuse, for youth or for individuals with addictions.

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) – hotels, motel and rooming house rooms renting by the week or month. Typically, SROs are one small room without bathroom or kitchen facilities.

Transition Housing – safe, secure but time-limited housing (30 days) for women and children fleeing abuse or for persons leaving addiction treatment. This housing may include safe housing in private family homes and government-funded shelters.

Wet, Damp and Dry Housing – housing stock that is part of the continuum of housing and support for those recovering from addictions who need a place to go upon completion of treatment.

Wet refers to housing where substance misuse is tolerated and is not considered a reason to bar or discharge the person

A Study of the Housing Needs of Richmond's Most Vulnerable Citizens
Appendix D – Glossary

Damp refers to housing that tolerates substance misuse off-site and provides support to help make the transition to abstinence

Dry refers to housing that expects abstinence.

Appendix E References

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6. City of Richmond, *An Affordable Housing Strategy*, 1994
7. City of Richmond, *Official Community Plan, 1989 (Currently Under Review)*
8. Raising the Roof Homelessness Initiative <http://www.raisingtheroof.org>
9. Richmond Community Services Advisory Council, *Poverty in Richmond: A Sense of Belonging, A Poverty Report Card*, 2000
10. Vancouver Richmond Health Board, *A Strategic Plan for Housing Services: A Discussion Document*, 2000
11. Woodward, Jim et al, *Greater Vancouver Regional Homelessness Plan*, 2001

Appendix F Steering Group Members

- Neena Randhwana Chimo Crisis Services
- Les McAusland Salvation Army, Richmond House
- Al Zwiers Richmond Health Services, Gilwest Clinic
- Lynn Jones Richmond Health Services, Mental Health
- Barry Grabowski Richmond Chamber of Commerce
- Loren Slye Richmond Chamber of Commerce
- Michael McCoy Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee
- Lois Carson-Boyce Seniors Advisory Council
- Catherine Andrews & Denise Woodley Richmond Youth Service Agency
- Annie McKitrick Richmond Poverty Response Committee
- James Sullivan & Frances Clark Richmond Committee on Disability
- Francis Li SUCCESS
- Marie Lemon Canadian Mental Health Association (Richmond Branch)
- Chris Feigel Richmond Mental Health Consumer and Family Society
- Vinola Aquilera Richmond resident

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 - Richmond Health Services, Gilwest Clinic
 - Richmond Health Services, Mental Health
 - Richmond Chamber of Commerce
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 - Richmond Mental Health Consumer and Family Society
 - Richmond resident

Vision and Guiding Principles

Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Action Plan

Vision Statement

“Richmond is an inclusive community, that provides a wide range of services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness. The City takes a proactive role in developing affordable housing as a means to prevent homelessness. The City works with the business community, local faith organizations, community service organizations and the general public to find innovative methods of combating homelessness at the local level”

Guiding Principles

- Agree, as a community, that it is unacceptable to “pass” the difficulties associated with homelessness to other municipalities and commit to taking responsibility for Richmond residents.
- Ensure that when local people become homeless, the necessary services are available to them.
- Take a serious look at the affordability of Richmond’s housing stock. What more can be done to create an inclusive, caring community?
- Commit to address specific deficiencies in the provision of emergency housing.
- Provide second stage housing to fill the void between emergency shelter and permanent accommodation.
- Ensure that the community is aware of local homelessness, ready to find appropriate solutions and take preventative measures.
- Bring together various groups, including the business community, faith communities and local service providers to work in partnership in order to tackle specific projects.

Source: Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy, May 2002
Completed by CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

ATTACHMENT 5

Proposed 2003-2008 City and Partners Budget Program (Estimates)

Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy

Project	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
1. Richmond House Men's Emergency Shelter Replacement	\$ 1 million (City)					
2. Nova House Women's Transition House	*					
3. Family Emergency Accommodation	\$100,000 (City)					
4. Youth Emergency and Transitional Housing			To be determined (portion of \$980,000)			
5. Second Stage Housing (Women and children)			To be determined (portion of \$1.9 million)			
6. Second Stage Housing (single men and women)			To be determined (portion of \$975,000)			
7. Supported Independent Living					To be determined	
8. Community Awareness Strategy	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)
9. Support Services Coordination	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)	\$2,000 (City)
10. Financial Support for Local Services	To be determined					
11. Affordable Housing Strategy Review	**					
TOTAL	\$1,104,000	\$4,000	\$3,859,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000

Notes:

*-In 2002, Council provided financial support to Nova House by providing a City owned site to Chimo Crisis Services for a permanent location by granting a ground lease for 60 years at nominal rent.

**-Assumes that City staff will facilitate this process

Source: City of Richmond Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy, May 2002, completed by CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.