



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** General Purposes Committee **Date:** December 11, 2018  
**From:** Kim Somerville **File:** 07-3000-01/2018-  
 Manager, Community Social Development Vol 01  
**Re:** **BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's "ABC" Plan**

### Staff Recommendation

1. That the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's proposed Municipal Resolution, "Call for the ABC Plan for an Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive poverty reduction plan for British Columbia", be endorsed and
2. That the resolution be sent to the Premier, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Kim Somerville  
 Manager, Community Social Development  
 (604-247-4671)

Att. 6

<b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>	
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>	
<b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>  
<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>	

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the December 10, 2018 Regular Council Meeting, the Richmond Poverty Response Committee delegated to Council about a non-agenda item, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's proposed resolution regarding the forthcoming provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy. It was moved:

*That staff provide analysis on BC Poverty Reduction Coalition's ABC Plan regarding poverty reduction in BC and report back to a future General Purposes Committee Meeting.*

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goals:

#2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

*2.2. Effective social service networks.*

#5 Partnerships and Collaboration:

*5.2. Strengthened strategic partnerships that help advance City priorities.*

This report also supports the following Social Development Strategy Action:

*Action 5 - Acknowledging that income data from Statistics Canada and other sources alone do not present a complete or fully reliable picture of poverty in Richmond, work with community-based organizations, senior governments and other partners to initiate a culturally-sensitive process to:*

*5.2 Support initiatives to help individuals and families move out of poverty, specifying the roles that the City and other partners and jurisdictions can play in pursuing viable solutions (e.g. job readiness programs, affordable housing measures).*

### Findings of Fact

The Richmond Poverty Response Committee provided three documents for consideration at the December 10, 2018 regular Council Meeting. These documents were all prepared by the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, of which the Richmond Poverty Response Committee is a member:

- A proposed municipal resolution, "Call for the ABC Plan for an Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive poverty reduction plan for British Columbia" (Attachment 1);
- An explanation of the ABC Plan, "An Effective Poverty Reduction Plan: It's as simple as ABC" (Attachment 2); and

- A booklet outlining proposed roles for municipalities in addressing poverty, “What Municipalities Can and Can’t Do to Prevent and Reduce Poverty in our Communities” (Attachment 3).

On October 2, 2018, the Province announced the introduction of legislation to guide the development of BC’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy, Bill 39 – *2018 Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*. A staff memorandum dated October 2, 2018, “BC Poverty Reduction Strategy Act”, provided Council with background information about the Act on which the provincial Strategy will be based (Attachment 4). As indicated in the memorandum, noteworthy aspects of the legislation include:

- The use of Statistics Canada’s Market Basket Measure to measure poverty rates;
- A commitment to reduce BC’s overall poverty rate by 25 per cent and child poverty rate by 50 per cent in the next five years;
- The establishment of an independent advisory committee, including those with lived experience, to advise the Province regarding poverty reduction and prevention;
- An annual report identifying actions, impact and progress toward targets;
- Topics to address will include, but not be limited to housing; families, children and youth; education; employment; income supports; and social supports; and
- Thirteen populations will be considered, including youth, seniors, those with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ2S+, those with mental illness or addiction, and others.

The BC Poverty Reduction Strategy is anticipated to be released in February 2019. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition is requesting advocacy to the Province at the earliest possible date to help ensure that the Strategy will be comprised of the strongest possible actions to reduce poverty.

#### Previous City Actions

On May 24, 2016, Council received a delegation from the Richmond Poverty Response Committee and the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition requesting that Council endorse the Coalition’s open letter on poverty reduction and forward the resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) requesting the development of a provincial poverty reduction plan, including concrete target and timelines. The resulting resolution was sent to the Province as well as the UBCM (Attachment 5). A similar resolution was passed at the September 2016 meeting, as endorsed by Council and other municipalities.

On February 27, 2017, Council considered a report from the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC), “Municipal Responses to Child and Youth Poverty” and resolved to forward the report to the Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Richmond Members of Parliament, Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly and Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly candidates” (Attachment 6). The resulting letter to the Province includes a request to consider preparing a BC Poverty Reduction Plan.

## **Analysis**

Now that a provincial poverty reduction strategy is imminent, the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (BCPRC) is urging municipalities to forward a resolution to the Province emphasizing the importance of making the forthcoming plan “Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive” (Attachment 1). The BCPRC’s explanation of these criteria is found in Attachment 2, “An Effective Poverty Reduction Plan: It’s as simple as ABC”. A summary of the three components are as follows:

### Accountable

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act indicates that the province must reduce the poverty rate by at least 25 per cent and for those under 18 years of age by at least 50 per cent. The BCPRC proposes targets exceeding these minimum limits, include

- reducing the rate by 30 per cent within four years, and 75 per cent within 10 years,
- ensuring that particularly marginalized groups are included in these reductions,
- within two years, ensuring that all incomes are at least 75 per cent of the poverty line, and
- within two years, ensuring that no one has to sleep outside and ensuring that all homelessness is ended within eight years.

### Bold

The BCPRC is proposing that:

- the province increase income supports, including raising welfare and disability rates to 75 per cent of the poverty line immediately (for others, a two-year time frame is requested as indicated above) and to 100 per cent in two years, and
- rent control be tied to the unit (not the tenant) and build and protect affordable social and rental housing.

### Comprehensive

The BCPRC identifies seven policy areas for the province to address. Highlights include:

- **Income Assistance:** Increase rates and earnings exemptions while removing unnecessary reductions and barriers (no rates other than the above are mentioned),
- **Employment:** Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for no exemptions and indexed to the cost of living; enhance and restore the coverage and enforcement of employment standards,
- **Equity:** Better address the needs of indigenous people, provide access to income assistance regardless of citizenship status, and provide free transit for children 0-18 years and a low-income pass for a adults,

- Housing: Build 10,000 new social and co-op housing units per year and introduce stronger tenant protections, including unit rent controls, limits on annual rent increases and enforcement of the Residential Tenancy Act,
- Child Care: Improve early childhood educators wages, increase the number of licensed spaces and prioritize expanding the fee reduction program,
- Education and Training: Reduce tuition fees by 50 per cent and increase the availability of grants for low-income students; allow welfare recipients to attend post-secondary education and get apprenticeships; adequately fund K-12 education to mitigate inequalities,
- Health and Food Security: Expand community mental health and homes supports services and expand essential health services to include dental and optical care.

To date, the Cities of New Westminster and Vancouver have passed the proposed BCPRC resolution and anticipate that Port Moody, Powell River and Nanaimo will be reviewing it in the near future.

### Richmond Context

For Metro Vancouver, including Richmond, the Market Basket Measure for poverty has been set at an income of approximately \$40,000 per year for a family of four and for an individual, at approximately \$20,000 per year. It is estimated that 21.5 per cent of Richmond residents live below the Market Basket Measure threshold. This amount is considerably less than that determined to be a 2018 Living Wage by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, estimated as approximately \$76,112 for a family of four in Metro Vancouver. The Living Wage incorporates additional expenses above and beyond those in the Market Basket measure, including the cost of child care, fees for two college courses and a minimal recreation budget.

Given the profound challenges faced by Richmond residents and others throughout the Province struggling to make ends meet with incomes at or below the poverty line, it is hoped that the Provincial strategy will provide significant opportunities to improve the quality of life for low-income Richmond individuals and families. While the BCPRC resolution will present significant challenges for the Province to meet, given the ambitious targets and timelines, staff recommend its endorsement as strong measures are required to reverse harmful trends such as the increasing gap between the rich and poor and the commensurate depth of poverty experienced by the most vulnerable.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact.

### **Conclusion**

Staff recommends the endorsement of the BCPRCs proposed resolution as significant steps must be taken to improve the circumstances of those living on the edge of or below a sufficient income to maintain health, dignity and the ability to participate in and contribute to society. Staff

also recommends that the resolution be conveyed by letter to the Premier, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Once the BC Poverty Reduction Strategy is released in February 2019, staff will advise Council of its directions, actions and timeframes, with particular attention paid to proposed municipal roles.



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- Att. 1: Municipal resolution: Call for the ABC Plan
- 2: An Effective Poverty Reduction Plan
- 3: What Municipalities Can and Can't Do To Prevent and Reduce Poverty
- 4: Memorandum: BC Poverty Reduction Strategy Act
- 5: Letter Re: BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
- 6: Letter Re: Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee Report

**Municipal resolution: Call for the ABC Plan for an Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive poverty reduction plan for BritishColumbia**

## WHEREAS:

1. The poverty rate in British Columbia continues to be among the highest in Canada at approximately 1 in 8 using Canada's official poverty line (Market Basket Measure), and child poverty rates in BC are still 1 in 5;
2. Many impacts of poverty are experienced at the local level, and local residents pay for poverty in increased health care costs, higher crime, higher demand for community, social and charitable services, lack of school readiness, reduced school success, and lower economic productivity;
3. 4 people are dying every day in BC due to the opioid epidemic that the Provincial Health Officer of BC has declared a Public Health Emergency. Many more are sick from poverty with cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression or other health issue; and the health of everyone is worse from living in such an unequal society;
4. A poverty reduction plan will save lives and money as it is a social and economic investment in our province;
5. There was unanimous support from all three provincial parties for legislated targets and timelines to reduce poverty in Bill 39: Poverty Reduction Strategy Act when it was passed on November 5, 2018;
6. BC is the last province in Canada to have a poverty reduction plan and is now developing a plan to be launched in March 2019;
7. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (the "Coalition") is a broad-based network of over 400 organizations including community and non-profit groups, faith groups, health organizations, indigenous organizations, businesses, labour organizations, and social policy groups;
8. The Coalition has renewed its call for a strong poverty reduction plan for BC by launching the ABC Plan, which outlines an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan to prevent and reduce poverty in BC.

## THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT this council support the Coalition's ABC Plan for an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan for BC; and

## BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

THAT this council advocate to the provincial government to develop and implement a provincial poverty reduction strategy that includes the measures within the ABC Plan before February 2019, with the commitment that this council will work with the provincial government in implementing this plan.

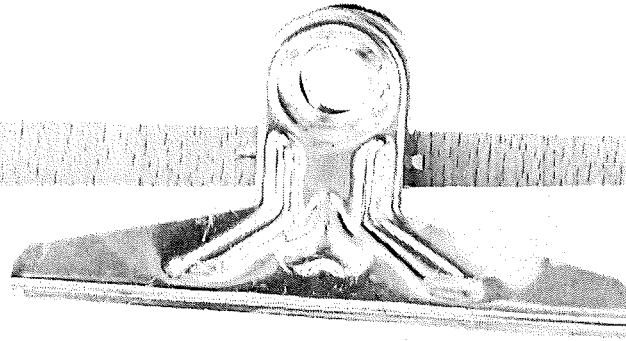
**For more information:**

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Website: [bcpovertyreduction.ca](http://bcpovertyreduction.ca) / [ABCplan.ca](http://ABCplan.ca)



## **An Effective Poverty Reduction Plan: It's as simple as ABC**

First Steps for an Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive Poverty Reduction Plan for BC

Over half a million British Columbians live in poverty: from youth aging out of care to sleeping on the streets to seniors struggling to buy food; from low-wage workers having to commute hours every day to people on income assistance trying to survive day by day; from newcomers to indigenous people who we welcome and acknowledge with words but not with enough financial support; from the homeless to those living one paycheque away from joining them; and from people with disabilities facing a lifetime of poverty to families trying to give their children the lives they never had.

### **In a wealthy province like BC, we can do better.**

And the good news is that British Columbians want to do better. The majority of voters in BC's 2017 provincial election voted for bold action on poverty; and with all three major political parties now publicly committed to a poverty reduction plan, British Columbians can finally look forward to action to tackle poverty and the increasing levels of homelessness and inequality that we see in our communities.

This is a crisis that requires urgent action. 4 people are dying every day in BC due to the opioid epidemic that the Provincial Health Officer of BC has declared a Public Health Emergency. Many more are sick from poverty with cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression or other health issue; and the health of all of us is worse from living in such an unequal society.

### **A poverty reduction plan will save lives.**

It will also save money. It's an economic investment in our province. Initial funding should be provided by restoring tax fairness. Then, over the long term, a poverty reduction plan that puts in place strong, preventative measures to tackle both the depth and breadth of poverty costs far less than the cost of poverty, at \$8 to 9 billion per year for health and criminal justice costs, as well as lost tax revenue. Let's stop mopping the floor and fix the roof.

### **An Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive poverty reduction plan for BC is the solution to save lives and promote equality.**

So far, the government has undertaken a poverty reduction consultation from October 2017 to March 2018. They visited communities throughout the province and heard consistent themes about the issues and the necessary solutions. They now plan to table legislation in the fall and launch the full plan in February 2019.

Now British Columbians expect action with an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan that reflects those themes. A plan needs to tackle immediate affordability challenges but, more importantly, go upstream to enhance our universal basic services to prevent these challenges in the first place and ensure healthy people and healthy communities throughout our province.



The over-arching vision and first steps matter in leading in the right direction.

That is why the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition with over 400 supporting organizations recommend the following first steps for the government's legislation and plan:

## ☑ **A is for Accountable.**

Embed strong accountability measures

- ◆ **Ensure long-term sustainability through legislated targets, timelines and accountability measures:**
  - ◆ Reduce BC's poverty rate by 30% within four years, and by 75% within 10 years.
  - ◆ Recognize that poverty is concentrated in particular marginalized groups and ensure concurrent declines in the poverty rates for these groups by 30% in four years, and by 75% in ten years.
  - ◆ Within two years, ensure that every British Columbian has an income that reaches at least 75% of the poverty line.
  - ◆ Within two years, ensure no one has to sleep outside, and end all homelessness within eight years (ensuring all homeless people have good quality, appropriate housing).
  - ◆ Commit to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #1: "End poverty in all its forms everywhere" by 2030.
  - ◆ Create an independent, funded Office/Advocate to monitor the plan's implementation.
- ◆ **Make sure all Ministries are working together, including:**
  - ◆ Legislate a Poverty/Equity Lens at Treasury Board to ensure no Ministry can make decisions that will hurt people in poverty.
  - ◆ The Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction should present mandatory annual reports (including reports from all relevant Ministries) to the Legislature and to the public about actions taken, outcomes and advocacy to other levels of government.
- ◆ **Embed strong fundamental principles in the legislation and plan:**
  - ◆ Respect the human rights of people living in poverty.
  - ◆ Upstream approach focusing on the social determinants of health.
  - ◆ Poverty reduction as a social and economic investment for our province.

## ☑ **B is for Bold.**

Take bold, immediate action

- ◆ **Increase income supports, including raising welfare and disability rates to 75% of the poverty line (Market Basket Measure) immediately and to 100% of the MBM in 2 years.**  
*The first step would cost \$365 million while lifting everyone on income assistance to the poverty line would cost \$1.16 billion, only 2% of the provincial budget*
- ◆ **Tie rent control to the unit (not the tenant), and build and protect affordable social and rental housing.**  
*Affordable is defined as 30% of income. An appropriate percentage of the housing to be built should be at welfare shelter rates and another set target should be tied to the senior shelter level.*

## ✓ C is for Comprehensive.

Develop a comprehensive poverty reduction plan with short, medium and long-term actions in 7 policy areas:

- ◆ **Income assistance:** Provide adequate and accessible income support for the non-employed.
  - ◆ Increase and index income and disability assistance.
  - ◆ Increase earnings exemptions, and remove clawbacks and arbitrary barriers that discourage, delay and deny people in need.
- ◆ **Employment:** Improve the earnings & working conditions of those in the low-wage workforce.
  - ◆ Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers with no exemptions and index it to the cost of living.
  - ◆ Enhance and restore the coverage and enforcement of employment standards.
- ◆ **Equity:** Address the needs of those most likely to be living in poverty, including:
  - ◆ Restructure federal and provincial funding to better address the needs of all Indigenous people, including the large off-reserve population.
  - ◆ Guarantee access to income assistance for all regardless of citizenship status.
  - ◆ Provide free transit for children 0-18 years of age and a low-income transit pass for adults.
- ◆ **Housing:** End homelessness and adopt a comprehensive affordable housing and supportive housing plan.
  - ◆ Build 10,000 new social & co-op housing units per year that low income people can afford.
  - ◆ Introduce stronger tenant protections, including rent control on the unit (not the tenant), tighter limits on annual rent increases, adequately enforcing the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) and the Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act, and extending tenant rights to include all non-profit social housing currently exempt from the RTA.
- ◆ **Child care:** Provide universal, high quality, publicly-funded child care.
  - ◆ Improve the wages of early childhood educators.
  - ◆ Continue to increase the number of licensed spaces.
  - ◆ Prioritize expanding the fee reduction program so that the affordable child care benefit can be reduced over time, and ensure that low income families have access to free, high quality child care.
- ◆ **Education and training:** Enhance support for training and education for low-income people.
  - ◆ Reduce tuition fees by 50% and increase the availability of post-secondary grants for low-income students; allow welfare recipients to attend post-secondary education and get apprenticeships.
  - ◆ Adequately fund K-12 education to mitigate inequalities and to ensure adequate library staff and resources, and special needs assessment and support
- ◆ **Health and food security:** Enhance community mental health and home support services, and expand integrated approaches to prevention and health promotion services.
  - ◆ Expand essential health services in the public system, such as dental and optical care and community mental health services.

More information and take action at [ABCplan.ca](http://ABCplan.ca)



For more information, visit:

**ABCplan.ca**

The **BC Poverty Reduction Coalition** is a coalition that includes community and non-profit groups, faith groups, health organizations, indigenous organizations, immigrant service agencies, businesses, labour organizations, and social policy groups. We have come together around a campaign aimed at seeing the introduction of a bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan from the government of British Columbia that would include legislated targets and timelines to significantly reduce poverty, inequality and homelessness. We have over **80 Coalition Members** and over **400 supporting organizations** that have joined the call for a poverty reduction plan.

**Vancity**



vancouver  
foundation

**Vancity**  
Community Foundation

## What Municipalities *Can* and *Can't* Do To Prevent and Reduce Poverty in our Communities

You're seeing increasing levels of homelessness in your community and you are turning to your local government to take action. However, solving the challenges of poverty requires all three levels of government working in collaboration. Municipal councils cannot address these pressing social issues alone and yet they face them daily as they show up at the local level within our communities. This is why it is so important to align municipal commitments with provincial and federal strategies.

Government budgets show the scale of responsibility and investment each level of government should be taking:

- Municipal: \$1.8 billion<sup>1</sup>
- Provincial: \$50 billion
- Federal: \$340 billion

Local governments can play an important role in poverty reduction but much of that role must include strong advocacy to senior levels of government to impact their priorities and necessary investments.

**Now is an especially critical time to advocate to the provincial government because they are developing a poverty reduction plan for BC for the first time!**

Before the plan is launched in February 2019, municipal governments can join the call for the [ABC Plan](#), which highlights that an effective poverty reduction plan must be Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive.

We've developed this resource to share what Local Governments and School Boards can do to combat poverty in our communities; and what they can't do. You can use this to hold your newly elected officials accountable to bold action *and* advocacy after they have been elected.


*The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (BCPRC) is an alliance of over 400 organizations throughout the province that have come together in the call for the provincial government to implement a strong poverty reduction strategy with legislated targets and timelines to significantly reduce poverty, inequality, and homelessness in BC. Our work is grounded in the foundation of universal human rights. We advocate for an accountable, bold and comprehensive plan that will take action in seven policy areas: income assistance, employment, housing, child care, education, health, and equity.*

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<sup>1</sup> maximum, using Vancouver as example

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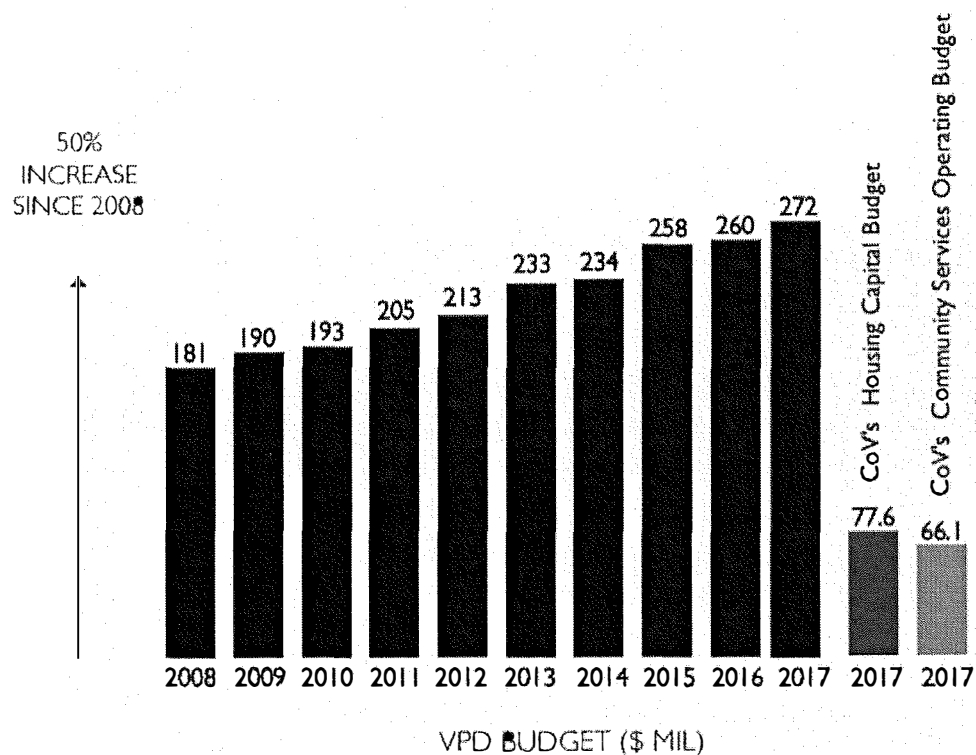
## Human Rights

### **Municipalities are primarily responsible for the criminalization of poverty.**

Many local governments across British Columbia have bylaws and local law enforcement practices that violate the human rights of people living in poverty. They have the potential to criminalize people who live in public space, increase stigma and restrict the delivery of harm reduction programs, emergency shelter, and other services for marginalized people. Local governments should listen to people living in poverty and address the ways that their bylaws infringe on their human rights and increase stigma and discrimination.

**We recommend that municipal governments stop criminalizing poverty by revoking laws that penalize or discriminate against people for engaging in behavior necessary for survival because of homelessness and poverty, such as sleeping and erecting shelter in public spaces.**

The best way to see government priorities is not by what politicians are saying but what they are spending our money on. That's exactly what the Carnegie Community Action Project did in their analysis of the Vancouver Police Department funding within the City of Vancouver's budget.<sup>2</sup> Here you can see the dramatic increase of almost \$100 million over 10 years, and the comparison to the City's housing investment and community services budget, which is far below public spending on the police.



<sup>2</sup> Carnegie Community Action Project, *No Pill For This Ill: Our Community Vision of Mental Health*, <http://www.carnegieaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/MH-REPORT-FINAL-1.compressed.pdf>

In addition to stopping the criminalization of poverty, municipal governments have an important role to play in combating discrimination against people in poverty. In particular, improperly managed public municipal consultations have become a forum for inappropriate language, harassment and the silencing of marginalized people. Having monitored and learned of countless attacks at public hearings against people with addictions and other disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness, Pivot Legal Society argues that “it is incumbent on municipalities to ensure that all people feel safe and welcome at public hearings on issues that matter to them and they have duties to protect people from discriminatory statements and ensure hearings do not become forums for abuse.”

Municipal planners and human rights advocates have developed special procedures for how councils should carry out public consultations concerning new affordable housing projects including:

- Layout clear ground rules.
- State that the only issues open for discussion are legitimate land use issues such as location, size, setback and parking requirements.
- Advise attendees that the meeting will not be a forum to make negative comments about the people who will be living there.
- Be clear that they will actively interrupt and object to discriminatory language or prejudicial comments.

**We recommend local governments take these proactive measures to ensure that everyone is treated with respect.**

Read more:

*Pivot Legal Society submission on Human Rights in Canada*

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/pivotlegal/pages/1850/attachments/original/1455843171/UN\\_submission.pdf?1455843171](https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/pivotlegal/pages/1850/attachments/original/1455843171/UN_submission.pdf?1455843171)

*“Community outcry should not block health and safety measures for people who are homeless” Pivot Legal Society Blogpost*

<http://www.pivotlegal.org/community-outcry-should-not-block-health-and-safety-measures-for-people-who-are-homeless>

*“In the zone: Housing, Human Rights and Municipal Planning” Ontario Human Rights Commission*

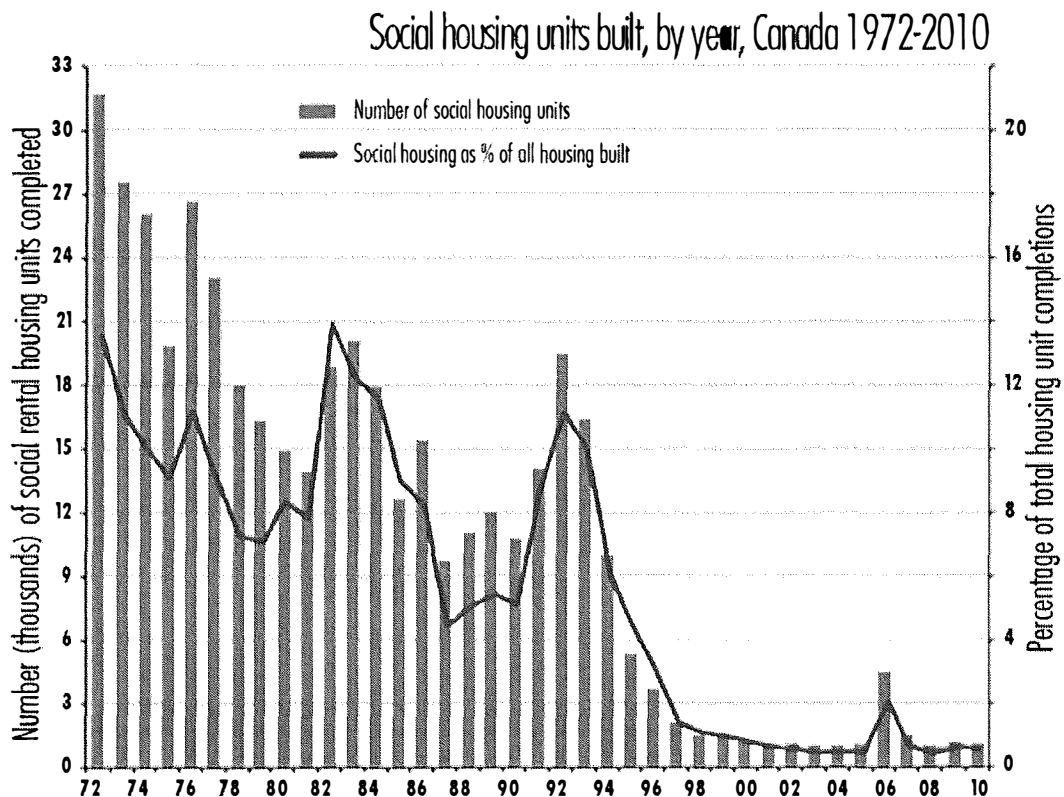
<http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/mon/26002/315300.pdf>

## Housing

BC has a housing crisis throughout the province with thousands of homeless and people facing housing insecurity struggling to survive in our communities, spending a huge share of their income on rent and/or living in sub-standard, over-crowded housing. According to the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, 45% of renters in BC are living in housing insecurity, spending more than 30 per cent of their income on rent; and 1 in 5 renters are spending more than half their income on rent leaving them with little left over to support themselves and their families.

Much of the focus is on municipal governments at the moment as we are seeing increasing levels of visible homelessness within our communities and we look to our closest level of government for action. However, the root causes of homelessness and the responsibility primarily lies with senior levels of government, which have not invested the resources they have over the last decades. The graph below shows the dramatic decline in federal housing investment since the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

This level of federal funding in partnership with provincial funding provided between 1500-2000 new housing units per year in BC, and the number of homeless people was much lower.



<sup>3</sup> Calculate by Walks, Alan from CMHC Canadian Housing Observer, various years; Figure 2 in Walks, Alan and Clifford, B. (2015), "The Political Economy of Mortgage Securitization and the Neoliberalization of Housing Policy in Canada," Environment and Planning A. 47(8): 1624-1642

**Local governments can still play an important role in building and protecting affordable housing through partnerships with local non-profits, co-operatives, and, in particular, other levels of government, which have the necessary resources.** Municipal contributions can include:

- providing public land and funds toward the creation of non-profit affordable housing
- protecting existing affordable housing supply through retention and replacement policies including policies that protect against the demolition of existing affordable housing and replacement with more expensive homes
- zoning specifically to retain and encourage rental housing in their communities, and through inclusionary zoning, they can require developers to create non-market housing as a condition for new development sites
- streamlining permitting and rezoning processes specifically for non-profit affordable housing

In all this work, it is important to emphasize that affordable housing must meet a diversity of needs. A set percentage of the housing to be built should be at welfare shelter rates and another set target should be tied to the senior shelter level. There also is a dire need for specific units for accessible, adaptable housing options and 3 and 4 bedroom units suitable for families with children.

Read more:

*BC Non-Profit Housing Association's Make Housing Central Campaign*

[https://housingcentral.ca/SITES/HousingCentral/2018\\_Civic\\_Campaign/HousingCentral/2018\\_Civic\\_Campaign.aspx](https://housingcentral.ca/SITES/HousingCentral/2018_Civic_Campaign/HousingCentral/2018_Civic_Campaign.aspx)

*BC Society of Transition Houses: BC Municipal Election Toolkit*

<https://bcsth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/municipal-election-toolkit-2018-09-24.pdf>

*Vancouver Tenants' Union's Renters Report Card*

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/vancouverrentersunion/pages/135/attachments/original/1538619170/Renters\\_Report\\_Card\\_-\\_Website\\_Information.pdf](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/vancouverrentersunion/pages/135/attachments/original/1538619170/Renters_Report_Card_-_Website_Information.pdf)



## **Health and Food Security**

Poverty is a fundamental determinant of health, and the health care costs of poverty add up to \$1.2 billion per year in BC. So, all of the other policy recommendations outlined here will have a direct impact on improving the health of low-income people.

However, local government can enhance and expand access to health initiatives, including:

- providing free or discounted recreational services and access to programs for low-income children, youth, families and individuals
- if people are not being housed, supporting them where they are, including developing public amenities like water fountains, public washrooms and public showers – careful consideration needs to happen to ensure these amenities are universally accessible and safe
- increasing food security through zoning that would ensure low-income neighbourhoods have access to reasonably priced, quality fruits and vegetables
- supporting community gardens and community kitchens to provide affordable, nutritious food; schools can also provide healthy meals and nutritional information to students

The epidemic of opioid overdose deaths, at a rate of 4-5 overdose deaths each day is a public health emergency. While federal laws often get the most attention, municipal bylaws and local law enforcement practices also have the potential to increase stigma and restrict the delivery of harm reduction programs, emergency shelter, and other services for marginalized people.

**Local governments need to ensure that they do not restrict access to health services including harm reduction programs and addiction treatment options in their communities.**

Read more:

*First Call Municipal Election Toolkit (See page 8)*

<https://firstcallbc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Municipal-Election-Toolkit.pdf>

*Municipal Election Engagement Toolkit for Food Security Advocates*

<https://gateway2.phabc.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/10/Municipal-Election-Toolkit-revised-Oct-1-2018.pdf>

*BC Poverty Reduction Letter about water fountains to the City of Vancouver*

<http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2016-COV-Water-Fountains.pdf>

*Open Letter to the Government of BC about the need for an Opioid Action Plan*

<http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/2017/11/bc-needs-an-opioid-action-plan-open-letter-to-the-government-of-bc>

## Equity

There are multiple ways that municipal governments can address the over-representation of poverty amongst particular groups to ensure equity. These are just a couple of examples:

1. Marginalized groups often rely on public transportation and face high costs and long travel times as unaffordable housing causes people to move further and further away from work. However, responsibilities for transit may vary depending on your local community. Your municipality may be one of the 60 local governments that pays into BC transit and shares responsibilities for developing and maintaining the province-wide transit system. Within Metro Vancouver, Mayors, the Chief of the Tsawwassen First Nation, and the elected representative of Electoral Area "A" sit on the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, which provides accountability to Translink.

**We recommend that mayors advocate for provincial funding to ensure equitable access to our public transit system including affordable transit measures such as free transit for all children and youth and reduced transit fares for low-income individuals and families.**

2. Indigenous people are far more likely than non-indigenous people to live in poverty and experience homelessness. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has five Calls to Action that directly apply to municipal governments:
  - fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation
  - repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts
  - provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations
  - work with other levels of governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students and current landlords to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried
  - work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

These actions are just a starting point to address the ongoing effects of colonialism.

Read more:

*#AllOnBoard Campaign Website*

<https://www.allonboard.ca>

*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*

[http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

## Childcare

Local governments are responsible for many local regulations, such as development zoning, and can require that child care spaces be included in new buildings. School Boards can ensure stability for the many child care programs that operate on school sites.

**Given that senior levels of government have far more responsibility and potential to invest, local governments can also endorse the \$10aDay Child Care Plan calling on the provincial government to begin building a better child care system.** The \$10aDay Child Care Plan is the community's solution to BC's child care crisis. 32 local BC governments support the Plan but they do not have the resources or mandate to implement it alone. The provincial government has made significant investments in child care and needs to keep moving towards universal child care. Local governments who have already endorsed the Plan support the next steps the campaign is calling for at the provincial level.

Read more:

*First Call Municipal Election Toolkit (See page 4)*

<https://firstcallbc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Municipal-Election-Toolkit.pdf>

*\$10aDay Child Care Plan Website*

<https://www.10aday.ca>

## Education

The under-funding of public education has meant an increase in school fees, such as those now collected for field trips, supplies, sports and arts, and specific course materials. This causes great family stress, and children from low-income families often exclude themselves from activities and programs. The role of public education in giving every child an equal chance is seriously undermined by the inequity created by school fees. Public school boards can reduce or eliminate fees that act as barriers to inclusion for low-income students as well as continuing to advocate to the provincial government for adequate funding.

Almost 1 in 4 LGBT youth in BC are forced out of their homes so, without guaranteed family support, school safety and inclusion can have a direct impact on reducing queer and trans homelessness and long-term poverty. **School Boards should publicly support the SOGI curriculum and implement strong gender identity and sexual orientation policies to allow schools to fully support queer and transgender students and ensure their safety and inclusion.**

Read more:

*First Call Municipal Election Toolkit (see page 8)*

<https://firstcallbc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Municipal-Election-Toolkit.pdf>

*BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils Submission on Provincial Public Education Funding*

[https://bccpac.bc.ca/images/Documents/Resources/BCCPAC\\_SSC-Submission\\_Oct-11-2018.pdf](https://bccpac.bc.ca/images/Documents/Resources/BCCPAC_SSC-Submission_Oct-11-2018.pdf)

*Poverty is an LGBTQ Issue, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (see submission to Vancouver School Board)*

<http://bcpovertyreduction.ca/campaigns/lgbtq>

## **Low Wages**

Despite public perception, poverty in BC is primarily working poverty. The majority of poor children in BC live in families with parents in the paid labour force, many of them working full-time and often multiple jobs. Local governments have a responsibility to avoid contributing to the problem of low-wage poverty.

**We recommend that local governments and school boards becoming living wage employers to embed the responsibility to pay all their employees a living wage and only contract for services with companies that pay a living wage.**

However, the provincial government is responsible for legislating the minimum wage and exemptions to that wage (for example, piece rate farmworkers who harvest fruit and vegetables) so local governments should advocate to them to increase the incomes of low wage workers. The provincial government is also responsible for employment standards, which desperately need to be enhanced and adequately enforced; for example, BC is the only province without the provision of paid sick leave.

Read more:

*First Call Municipal Election Toolkit (see pages 8-9)*

<https://firstcallbc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Municipal-Election-Toolkit.pdf>

*Living Wage for Families Campaign Website*

<http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca>

*BC Employment Standards Coalition*

<http://bcemploymentstandardscoalition.com>

*Level the Playing Field campaign for paid sick leave*

[https://www.leveltheplayingfield.ca/sick\\_leave\\_petition](https://www.leveltheplayingfield.ca/sick_leave_petition)

## **Income assistance**

The current income assistance system in BC is fundamentally broken. People in desperate need are being denied assistance, and if lucky enough to navigate all the structural and administrative barriers to welfare and have their application accepted, they are subjected to a life of “survival,” struggling to meet the most basic needs of shelter and food.

**Local governments do not have jurisdiction over income and disability assistance. They should advocate to the provincial government for increased income and disability assistance rates as part of the ABC Plan for an effective poverty reduction plan.** Other measures suggested in this document can help reduce costs for people living on deeply inadequate income and disability rates.

Read More:

*First Call Municipal Election Toolkit (see page 7)*

<https://firstcallbc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Municipal-Election-Toolkit.pdf>

*Raise the Rates Campaign Website*

<https://www.raisetherates.org>



City of  
Richmond

**Memorandum**  
Community Services Division  
Community Social Development

**To:** Mayor and Councillors

**Date:** October 2, 2018

**From:** Lesley Sherlock  
Planner 2

**File:** 07-3000-00/Vol 01

**Re:** BC Poverty Reduction Strategy Act

### Background

On October 2, 2018, the Province announced the introduction of legislation to guide the development of BC's first Poverty Reduction Strategy (Attachment 1). This draft legislation, Bill 39 – 2018 Poverty Reduction Strategy Act (Attachment 2), defines the scope of the Strategy to be released by March 31, 2019. Noteworthy aspects of the proposed legislation include:

- A commitment to reduce BC's overall poverty rate by 25% and child poverty rate by 50% in the next five years;
- The establishment of an independent advisory committee, including those with lived experience, to advise the Province regarding poverty reduction and prevention;
- An annual report identifying actions, impact and progress toward targets;
- Topics to address will include, but not be limited to housing; families, children and youth; education; employment; income supports; and social supports; and
- Thirteen populations will be considered, including youth, seniors, those with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ2S+, those with mental illness or addiction, and others.

### Community Consultation

The draft BC Poverty Reduction Strategy is already under development, based on community consultations held between October 2017 and March 2018 with the groups identified above. Consultations were held in 28 communities around the Province, including one held in Richmond attended by 80 to 90 participants as well as the Minister for Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Honourable Shane Simpson. Attendees included those with lived experience of poverty, front line workers, advocates, non-profit and business representatives, and a wide range of community members. A transcript of the Richmond meeting is attached (Attachment 3).

Affordable housing emerged as the top concern in all communities consulted, as noted in the report "What We Heard About Poverty in BC" (2018, Province of British Columbia). Other key issues identified in Richmond and elsewhere included mental health and addictions, child care, legal aid, employment, income, education and training, food security, transportation and access to services. A myriad of actions to address poverty and related issues were proposed to the Province, based on the key issue areas identified.

October 2, 2018

- 2 -

### Targets

Statistics Canada's Market Basket Measure will be used by the Province to measure poverty rates and will become Canada's Official Poverty Line once legislated, (see August 28, 2018 Staff Memo to Mayor and Councillors regarding Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy [Attachment 4]). The proposed Provincial targets aim to reduce overall poverty by 25 per cent and child poverty by 50 per cent in the next five years, compared with the Federal strategy which aims to reduce poverty at the national level by 20 per cent by 2020 and 50 per cent by 2030. A key difference is that the Provincial strategy specifies a separate rate for child poverty reduction that is more ambitious than that proposed by both Provincial and Federal governments for the overall population.

While questioned due to possible unreported offshore income based on Canadian and foreign income tax laws, Richmond's poverty rate based on the 2016 Census (living with low after-tax income based on average household needs) is 22.4 per cent, higher than the overall rate for Metro Vancouver (16.5 per cent). Its child poverty rate is 25.6 per cent, the highest in the region. Regardless of the veracity of these statistics, it is hoped that the Provincial strategy will provide significant opportunities to improve the quality of life for low-income Richmond individuals and families.

### Municipal Role

While specific roles for local governments are not referenced, the legislation, if enacted, will require that consideration be given to coordinating supports provided by provincial, federal, indigenous and local governments. The pending 2019 BC Poverty Reduction Strategy may include more explicit roles and actions for mutual engagement and implementation. Staff will provide further information as it becomes available and will actively pursue any opportunities to work collaboratively with Provincial and Federal governments, statutory organizations and local service providers as these strategies unfold.

Please contact me if you would like further information.



Lesley Sherlock  
Social Planner  
(604-276-4220)

Att. 4

pc: SMT  
Ted Townsend, Director, Corporate Communications and Marketing  
Kim Somerville, Manager, Community Social Development  
Denise Tambellini, Manager, Intergovernmental Relations and Protocol Unit  
Barry Konkin, Manager, Policy Planning

British Columbia News

## Historic legislation sets targets, timelines to reduce poverty

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/18173>

Tuesday, October 2, 2018 10:35 AM

**Victoria** - British Columbia's first Poverty Reduction Strategy, guided by legislation introduced today, will lift thousands of people out of poverty, create more opportunities to break the cycle of poverty and make it easier for people to participate in their community.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act will define the scope of the strategy, which will be released in early 2019, and sets poverty reduction targets and timelines that government must meet.

"A strong province is built on a foundation of equity, inclusion and opportunity for everyone," said Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. "We know that poverty is a serious issue in our province. That was driven home throughout the consultation as thousands of people told us about the impossible challenges they face each day. Social issues have been ignored for too long and that is why we are committing this government, and future governments, to break the cycle of poverty and improve people's lives."

The legislation is shaped by the experiences, voices and hopes of more than 8,500 people who took part in a broad public engagement on poverty from November 2017 to March 2018. If passed, the legislation will:

- Commit government to reduce B.C.'s overall poverty rate by 25% and child poverty rate by 50% in the next five years.
- Establish an independent advisory committee that will represent the breadth and depth of personal and professional experiences of poverty in B.C. and advise the minister on matters relating to poverty reduction and prevention.
- Require government to report annually on its progress to reduce poverty.
- Require government to release its first poverty reduction strategy by March 31, 2019. The strategy must focus on the key issues faced by people living in poverty including housing, education, employment, income supports and social inclusion.

The commitment to a poverty reduction strategy, in addition to addressing liveable wages under B.C.'s new Fair Wages Commission and exploring basic income, is a component of the Confidence and Supply Agreement with the B.C. Green Party caucus. The work of the Fair Wages Commission and the basic income expert panel will inform future updates to the poverty reduction strategy.

"It is our shared responsibility to make sure that everyone has the tools, resources and social supports they need to improve their lives," said Mable Elmore, Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Reduction. "Hundreds of thousands of people in our province experience poverty, and this kind of long-term government commitment is what is required to lift people up and achieve real progress."

### Quotes:

**Adrienne Montani, provincial co-ordinator, First Call –**

"First Call's Child Poverty Report Card shows one in five B.C. children live in poverty and we have called for a 50% reduction in B.C.'s child poverty rate since 2009. We are pleased that government has listened and has this target and timeline in legislation. Reaching this target will benefit the health and well-being of thousands of children and youth, and may well reduce the number of children coming into government care. Our coalition looks forward to working with government to deliver on this target and help more children, youth and families thrive."

### GP - 136

**Dawn Hemingway, co-chair, Minister's Poverty Reduction Advisory Forum –**

“The only way to seriously tackle the complex issue of poverty reduction is to have a meaningful and ambitious strategy that enforces targets and deadlines. This legislation is a significant step forward in making poverty reduction a reality in British Columbia.”

**Quick Facts:**

- British Columbia is the only province in Canada without a poverty reduction strategy despite having the second-worst rate of poverty.
- Based on the latest statistics available, in 2016 approximately 557,000 people were living in poverty in B.C., including 99,000 children.
- Between November 2017 and March 2018, government engaged in a provincewide consultation about how to reduce poverty and inequity and provide opportunities for people to be successful. Thousands of people participated in the consultation, more than half had lived experience.

**Learn More:**

To read the legislation: <https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/bills-and-legislation>

Learn more about B.C.'s commitment to reduce poverty for the people of B.C.:  
<https://engage.gov.bc.ca/bcpovertyreduction>

**Media Contacts**

**Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction**  
Communications  
250 387-6490



**2018 Legislative Session: 3rd Session, 41st Parliament  
FIRST READING**

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The following electronic version is for informational purposes only.  
The printed version remains the official version.

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**HONOURABLE SHANE SIMPSON  
MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

**BILL 39 – 2018  
POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ACT**

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**Explanatory Note**

HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, enacts as follows:

**PART 1 – DEFINITIONS**

**Definitions**

- 1 In this Act:

**GP - 138**

**"advisory committee"** means the committee under section 10;

**"annual report"** means a report under section 8;

**"strategy"** means the strategy under section 2.

## **PART 2 – POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY**

### **Division 1 – Development of Strategy**

#### **Minister to develop strategy**

- 2 (1) The minister must develop a strategy to reduce and prevent poverty in British Columbia.
- (2) The minister must
- (a) post the strategy in accordance with section 9 (a) by March 31, 2019, and
  - (b) review and update the strategy at least once every 5 years after that date.

#### **Poverty reduction and prevention initiatives**

- 3 (1) The strategy must include initiatives intended, over the 5-year period beginning on January 1, 2019, to reduce the poverty rate for 2024 below the poverty rate for 2016 by at least
- (a) 25% among all persons, and
  - (b) 50% among persons under 18 years of age.
- (2) The strategy must include initiatives intended to reduce and prevent poverty by increasing the following:
- (a) the affordability of goods, services and housing to persons living in poverty and other low-income British Columbians;
  - (b) the opportunities for persons living in poverty to move out of poverty;
  - (c) the inclusion of persons living in poverty in community life and in systems of supports.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1), the poverty rate must be measured using the market basket measure published by Statistics Canada as the "Market Basket Measure" or "Canada's Official Poverty Line".
- (4) The minister must review the targets set in subsection (1) before December 31, 2023 and, after doing so, may lay a report before the Legislative Assembly respecting future targets for the reduction of poverty.

#### **Commitment to Indigenous peoples**

**GP - 139**

- 4** The strategy must reflect a commitment to
- (a) reconciliation with Indigenous peoples,
  - (b) the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and
  - (c) the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

### **Scope of strategy**

- 5** (1) In developing and updating the strategy, the minister must consider
- (a) the breadth and depth of poverty, and
  - (b) the full range of persons living in poverty.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), the minister must consider the following topics:
- (a) housing;
  - (b) families, children and youth;
  - (c) education;
  - (d) employment;
  - (e) income supports;
  - (f) social supports.
- (3) Without limiting subsection (1), the minister must consider the following groups:
- (a) children;
  - (b) youth;
  - (c) persons of all genders;
  - (d) Indigenous peoples;
  - (e) persons living with disabilities;
  - (f) persons living in rural and remote communities;
  - (g) immigrants and refugees;
  - (h) LGBTQ2S+ persons;
  - (i) seniors;
  - (j) persons and families working and earning low incomes;
  - (k) persons living with or fleeing abuse;
  - (l) persons living with mental illness or addiction;
  - (m) persons of colour.

### **Accessibility and coordination**

- 6** In developing and updating the strategy, the minister must consider the accessibility and coordination of

- (a) initiatives included in the strategy, and
- (b) supports provided to or for persons living in poverty by or on behalf of the following:
  - (i) the government;
  - (ii) the government of Canada;
  - (iii) Indigenous governments;
  - (iv) local governments.

### **Description of effects**

- 7 The strategy must include a description of the effects that the minister intends poverty reduction and prevention to have on British Columbians as a whole.

## **Division 2 – Reporting and Publication**

### **Annual reporting**

- 8 (1) The minister must prepare, by October 1 of each calendar year, beginning in 2020, a report on the previous calendar year that describes the following:
- (a) the actions taken to implement the strategy;
  - (b) the effects of the strategy on poverty reduction;
  - (c) any progress made towards the targets set in section 3 (1).
- (2) An annual report on a calendar year must include the comments provided under section 10 (4) (a) in relation to that calendar year.
- (3) The minister must lay each annual report before the Legislative Assembly as soon as practicable and, promptly after doing so, must post the annual report in accordance with section 9 (a).

### **Publication**

- 9 The minister must
- (a) post the strategy and the annual reports on a publicly accessible website maintained by or on behalf of the minister, and
  - (b) make the strategy and the annual reports available in accessible formats.

## **PART 3 – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **Advisory committee**

- 10 (1) The minister must establish a committee to advise the minister on matters relating to poverty reduction and prevention.
- (2) At least half of the members of the advisory committee must be women.

(3) The advisory committee must include a representative from at least each of the following groups:

- (a) Indigenous peoples;
- (b) persons living in poverty;
- (c) persons living with disabilities;
- (d) local governments;
- (e) organizations that advocate for persons living in poverty;
- (f) the business community;
- (g) unions;
- (h) academics;
- (i) persons living in rural and remote communities.

(4) Without limiting subsection (1), the advisory committee has the following duties:

- (a) to give the minister comments in relation to a calendar year on the matters referred to in section 8 (1);
- (b) to advise the minister in relation to consultations under section 11.

(5) Members of the advisory committee must be

- (a) reimbursed for reasonable travelling and out-of-pocket expenses necessarily incurred by them in discharging their duties under this Act, and
- (b) if they are living in poverty, paid an honorarium.

### **Consultations**

11 (1) In developing and updating the strategy, the minister must consult with representatives of at least the groups referred to in section 10 (3).

(2) Consultations under subsection (1) must be carried out in a manner that is intended to

- (a) ensure the strategy is informed by the experiences of persons living in poverty, and
- (b) uphold the commitment under section 4 to Indigenous peoples.

### **Supports for participation**

12 The minister may provide monetary or other supports to or for persons living in poverty to enable them to

- (a) serve on the advisory committee, or
- (b) participate in consultations under section 11 (1).

**Section 5 of *Offence Act* does not apply**

13 Section 5 of the *Offence Act* does not apply to this Act or the regulations.

**Regulations**

14 The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations referred to in section 41 of the *Interpretation Act*.

**Commencement**

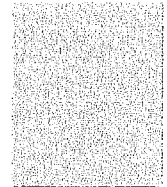
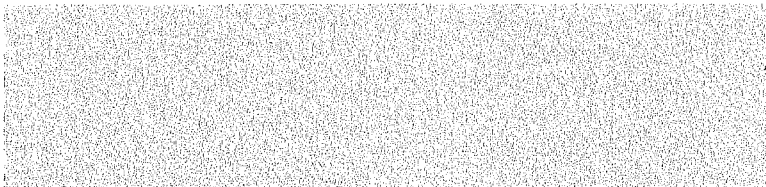
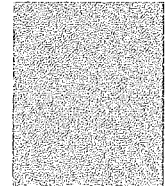
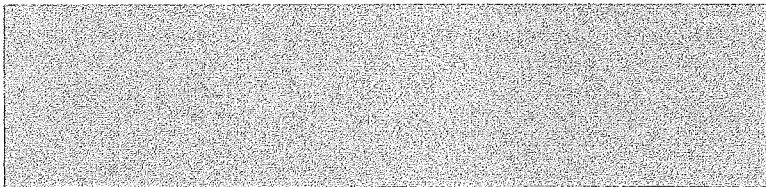
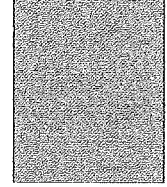
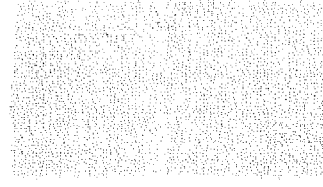
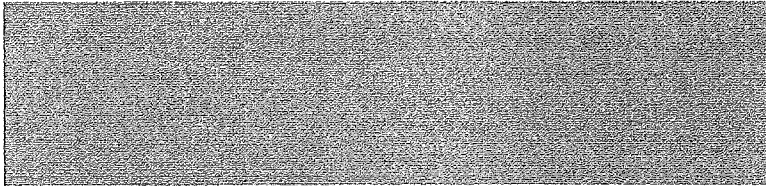
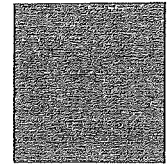
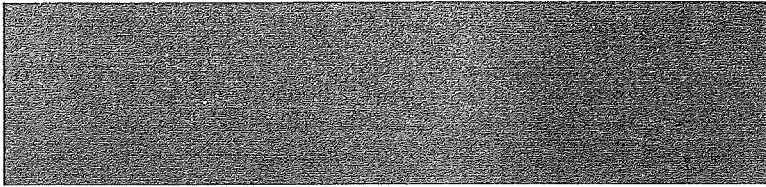
15 This Act comes into force on the date of Royal Assent.

**Explanatory Note**

This Bill provides for a strategy to reduce and prevent poverty.

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**Transcript:  
Community Meeting  
on Poverty Reduction**

**Richmond, BC  
January 25, 2018**



## **Introduction and Event Summary**

On January 25, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Richmond, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with local residents. The event brought together approximately 80 to 90 participants including people with lived experience of poverty; poverty reduction front line workers and advocates; people from the non-profit and business sectors; and other community members from all walks of life.

The event began with a welcome from Elder Roberta Price, followed by opening remarks from Shane Simpson (Minister for Social Development and Poverty Reduction).

Participants then engaged in round table discussions in groups of 8 to 10 people per table. Each table had a dedicated facilitator from a local community group or from SPARC BC who helped to guide the conversations. Each table also had a dedicated note taker who helped to record the discussion.

There were two rounds of discussion which focused on the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Following the discussions, participants were invited to put a sticky dot beside the strategies or solutions that were most important to them. Each participant received four (4) sticky dots. Following the individual priority setting exercise, participants were asked to determine as a table the top three (3) priorities from the evening and to report these priorities back to the room.

The Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction shared some closing remarks.

## **Document Organization**

This document contains the transcripts from the flip chart notes from those in attendance. The flip chart notes have been transcribed verbatim, correcting only for spelling and grammar as needed. The notes are organized according to the feedback received to the two questions beginning with:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?



## Question 1: What are the issues facing you and people in poverty right now?

- Effects of poverty
  - o Stuck/ low mobility
  - o Hard to break out of the cycle of poverty
  - o Malnutrition
- Education
  - o Key to breaking the cycle - opportunity
- People need
  - o Housing
  - o Nutrition
  - o Food Security
  - o Day Care
  - o Unless the system is changed, poverty won't go away
- Challenges
  - o It can be tough on a single parent
  - o Family support can help
  - o We are an individualistic society
  - o Neighbourly support is not always there
  - o Must address the root causes
  - o Requires municipal support as well as all levels of government
  - o Poverty is the result of poor policies
  - o Greed keeps people poor
- Housing
  - o We need money to build more low rental housing
- Kids living in poverty
  - o We know the early years are important
  - o Parents can't afford childcare
  - o Many teachers are feeding hungry children at school –using their own resources
  - o “It used to be that I would bring a box of granola bars and give them out to kids that are hungry, now I am bring 3 boxes and it is not enough”
  - o Kids can't learn if they are hungry
  - o There is also a stigma that kids feel - “ I make extra sandwiches but I pretend that I made a mistake and made too many – ask kids to help me out”
- Pressures on families
  - o The pace of life has changed as well as the types of economic opportunities available to people – people are now working 2 to 3 jobs just to get ahead
  - o Some people are working seven day a week
  - o There are fewer sport opportunities for kids unless you have a lot of money –winter sports are very expensive
  - o Most income goes into housing, daycare and transportation – for many families there is very little left over

- Rules for income assistance
  - o People are cut off by the Ministry if you start earning more \$15,000 but at this income level you are still in poverty
  - o People need other supports – i.e. there should be transportation supports
  - o Disabilities should not be at poverty level
  - o Poverty affects people’s mental health
- Housing costs are high
  - o A 3 bedroom townhouse rents for \$2,300/ month not including utilities
  - o People need more affordable housing
  - o Childcare costs \$1,700 per month per child
  - o There has been no new social housing built in Richmond in the last 30 years
- Food security
  - o We need a lunch program in the schools like Scandinavian
  - o Some kids only get one (1) meal per day
  - o If there was a lunch program that was equally available for all kids it could be a socially positive experience- there would be no judgment or stigmatizing of poor kids
  - o It is do-able but we are too busy buying stealth bombers
- Community capacity
  - o Corporations are not pitching in
  - o Governments have a role to play
  - o Governments should not rely on charities to do it all
  - o Charities help but the help is not consistent – people get help at Christmas but poverty is all year round
  - o There are not enough social workers and the ones who are there are over worked- people cannot always make the best decisions because they are burnt out
- Incomes
  - o People need a fair or living wage
  - o Minimum wage at \$15 per hour could help but \$15 may still be too low
  - o There are not enough good full time jobs
  - o A lot of people have to go to different part-time jobs
  - o Employers like part-time jobs because they don’t have to pay benefits
  - o There need to be more union jobs with benefits
  - o If people lose their jobs they also lose their benefits
- Sense of responsibility
  - o We need to have a sense of responsibility to take care of everyone in the community – including people in poverty
  - o We often hear that “There is no poor people in Richmond”
  - o People at the top need to make a commitment – that’s part of the solution
  - o There is stigma around poverty
  - o It can mean that people don’t want to talk about it or are too ashamed to seek assistance
- Poverty denial
  - o Poverty is a taboo topic for some cultures

- Some people believe that families and individuals are in poverty because they didn't work hard enough
- "Poverty is in the mind" according to one
- There are examples of programs (i.e. New York) where people are given the opportunity to gain employment skills/ given access to education and help to get their feet on the ground
- These programs work because they help to address the root cause. However, it should also be noted that education and training might not be enough – structural changes to the economy (i.e. automation) has meant that there are fewer full-time jobs.
- Housing
  - Housing is a real issue in Richmond
  - There are too many new towers being built and the community is losing the older more affordable rental housing
  - There has been very little new affordable housing being built – need more co-op housing developments
  - People can't always own a house but they should still have a right to housing – rental housing
  - The issue is people in rental house don't have stability – they need to move a lot – it puts pressure on families
  - There are too many empty houses – too many absentee landlords and foreign buyers
  - The new empty house tax might help to free up housing for higher income people but it won't help low income families and seniors who can't afford housing
  - For most households their wages are still too low to carry the cost of housing at the current price
  - Young people have more barriers
  - To have empty houses is a crime especially with all of the homelessness
- Food security
  - People need access to healthy, nutritious food
  - People with disabilities can't access food
  - There are not enough grocery stores in Richmond
  - The price of food is too high and it continues to go up
  - Wages cannot keep pace with the increase in the cost of food
  - More working people are falling behind
- Housing
  - Need to look at other countries
  - Need to have more social inclusion to solve housing issues
  - Need to see what other countries have done
  - There is not enough affordable/social housing to meet community needs
  - Government develops policy to empower non-profit housing providers to increase the number of social housing units available
  - Builders and developers make a lot of money on every residential unit
  - The City has an Affordable Housing Fund – what do they do with the funding?
  - It takes a long time for new housing

- The zoning process is too long, permitting process
- Need to add more density to make units more affordable
- Child care spaces
  - Need to have more buildings with childcare
  - Kids are left at home alone because there is not enough childcare
  - \$10 day for childcare is not really affordable
- Housing for seniors
  - Long term housing for seniors is a problem
- Income inequality
  - Guaranteed income is needed
  - Basic income and supports
- Transportation
  - Transit is not affordable
  - The compass card is expensive
  - Mobility affects your ability to get a job
  - Not affordable, not accessible, travel too far
  - People having to live far out and travel more
- Education
  - Should be free post-secondary education
  - Tuition fees are too high
  - Need to look at other countries
  - How to make education free at low cost for people who need it
- Other factors
  - Taxes are too high
  - Takes political will
  - Part of the same poverty circle
  - Poverty affects mental health and health in general
- Barriers to employment
  - People with disabilities can work but can't find jobs
  - There is discrimination for all minorities –recent immigrants, people with disabilities, refugees – many of these groups live in poverty because they can't access opportunities
  - Our country brings people to our province but is there really inclusion?
  - Are programs accessible to everyone?
  - Accessibility to diverse population, different gender, race, class, education, sexual orientation, people with diverse sizes
  - The market is so competitive even being overweight could be a reason to discriminate against someone
  - Discrimination or a lack of inclusion a big barriers to employment
  - Age can also be a factor - people have barriers because we are too old or too young
  - Single parents who can't find affordable childcare
  - Recent immigrants face barriers - hard to access employment
  - Childcare is key to removing barriers (1 Vote)

- Food security
  - o People need access to food and water
  - o More water fountains are needed
  - o Food at food bank is often past the expiry date – need access to fresh healthy food choices (2 Votes)
- Health supports
  - o Over counter needed medication not covered (1 Vote)
  - o People do not have access to a family doctor (1 Vote)
  - o So many medications are not covered by Pharmacare (1 Vote)
  - o There are gaps in medical coverage for new immigrants/no status
  - o The waiting period to access MSP is three (3) months – this is unfair, if people need to see the doctor during this period there are high user fees
  - o Dental and orthotics are not covered (1 Vote)
  - o There is a gap in the dental care coverage for kids
- Affordable housing (3 votes)
  - o There is a lack of choices in the rental housing market
  - o There should be restrictions on rental rates – how much landlords can charge or the types of rent increases allowed (1 Vote)
  - o Landlords keep raising rents every year (1 vote)
  - o Landlords see rentals as investments not necessarily as shelter (1 Vote)
  - o The shelter rates are too low relative to the rents = my full cheque (Including support is used for shelter) – it leave nothing else to live off – I have to depend on my family
  - o In addition to rent, other costs like hydro are increasing
  - o Rent supplements are not enough
  - o Rooming Housing / SRO housing are not real housing choices – the quality of the housing and living conditions are poor
  - o The choices are not straight forward
  - o Moving is stressful and expensive
- Income support
  - o The minimum wage is too low
  - o The income assistance rates are too low (1 Vote)
- Low income families
  - o There are too many fees that low income parents cannot afford –i.e. school fees, the cost of field trips – the money is not available without support
- Income assistance
  - o All talk, no action
  - o People get tired of the fight
  - o Should be called the Ministry of Loneliness
  - o Why is the PWD application form so long
  - o Housing – Landlords keep raising rents every year (1 vote)
  - o Landlords see rentals as investments not necessary shelter (1 Vote)

- Low shelter rates = full cheque (Including support is used for shelter and leaves nothing to live off (have to depend on a family)
- Access to health supports
  - Lack of proper and personalized health care
- Recent immigrants
  - Very difficult to transfer education/ degrees for immigrants
  - Lots of red tape and fees and strict timelines (2 Votes)
  - Means difficult to access opportunities to use your training
- Systemic barriers
  - Income supports
  - There are too many constraints that means you are unable to improve your situation
  - Legislated poverty
  - Education helps to improve self-esteem but it is still had to look for work when you are homeless on the streets
  - Public attitudes – have to break them down through advertising, promotions, public meetings
  - Need to show support for people on the street/ on welfare
- Addictions
  - People struggling to pay rent - easier to take drugs
  - Not being able to find a place to sleep – turned to drugs
  - People are vulnerable when you are on the streets
  - People feel alone
  - Drugs are cheap and easy to find –they are always there
- Homelessness
  - The cost of housing is an issue
  - High rents mean that people are unable to find a place to live
  - Have to find a place with other people who abuse drugs (2 Votes)
  - Struggle with working, drugs and finding a place to live (1 Vote)
  - Constant circle – finding a place to live and being evicted (1 Vote)
  - People don't want recovery houses in their backyard
  - It is a struggle being on the streets
  - Poverty results in extreme homelessness
- Transportation
  - Cost
  - Unable to get to appointments/programs
  - UGM able to provide bus passes sometimes
- Cost of poverty
  - People are digging themselves into a hole –it is often too difficult to get out
  - Not enough
- Housing
  - Rent is high
  - Not much is leftover once the rent is paid

- Can't buy quality food, can't get enough
- Rent is so high
- People are renting out uninhabitable places
- The housing is infested with cockroaches, bedbugs etc.
- Homelessness
  - Being homeless is a full time job
  - Extremely difficult
  - Need help meeting basic needs
  - Even help with getting ID is an issue
  - So many barriers and rules – there needs to be a more streamlined process
- Services
  - Need one central place with the different agencies in the same building
  - Need to have relationship between agencies - i.e. income assistance, health services
  - Strong relationships between organizations/agencies
- Stigma
  - There is a stigma to being poor
  - People feel depressed/frustrated with their situation
  - There is the pressure of everything facing them
  - Trying to look for money leads someone to do something illegal
  - Make enough right now but no security for the future- no time for planning
  - Mindset of being poor, facing negative impressions from the society
  - People make assumptions and hold prejudices that are unfair (1 Vote)
- Addiction
  - People are trying to escape, trying to fit in
- Housing prices
  - Losing a place to live for homeless people
  - Can't afford to live in BC
  - Poor quality of life
  - Poor living conditions
  - People are being forced out, more homelessness
  - New buildings are being built but are not helping all of the people who need help
  - Need more housing choices, more places to live
  - Without an address cannot address other issues –i.e. missing out on appointments
  - People need access to basic essentials like food and shelter (1 Vote)
- Hopelessness/Compounding Problems
  - Loss of hope
  - Can't afford to go to school and work
  - Fail at school and problems add up (1 Vote)
  - Have to work multiple jobs
  - Not enough hours (jobs), all part time, not enough full time jobs (1 Vote)
  - Job hours cut, incurs debt, catch up but fall back again (3 Votes)

- Income and supports
  - o Minimum wage is too low
  - o Even if you work full time at minimum wage the rent is too high (3 Votes)
  - o No savings, living pay cheque to paycheque (3 Votes)
  - o Ability to make more and spend less (1 Vote)
  - o The difficulty to transfer credentials over from immigrants (5 votes)
  - o The situation of the parents passes onto kids (2 Votes)
  - o If you can't afford to pay for extracurricular activities –i.e. pets, clubs, sports then it means that kids are not able to participate – have less opportunities to learn
- Housing
  - o Lack of housing
  - o There are expenses (buying and renting)
  - o Cost of living is greater than income
  - o People moving out of their communities because of affordability
  - o Stores closing in the community
  - o Families moving to Surrey due to affordability
  - o Cost of living/affordability is an issue
  - o Everywhere, but why is it a big issue here?
  - o People selling houses just because prices are increasing then they rent also at a high price
- Income
  - o Minimum wage is too low
  - o Incomes are not increasing enough to keep pace with rising costs
  - o There is growing social disparity/inequality – rich versus poor
  - o People need a living wage – people are working 2 jobs but not able to make ends meet
  - o When income increases so does cost of bills
  - o Cannot keep the same standard of living as they cannot afford it any more
- Employment for people with disabilities
  - o Employment for people with disabilities is an issue
  - o Income affects social life, self-esteem, and opportunities
  - o Without employment - no support to get back, loss of friend etc.
  - o Not enough employers with experience employing PWD (excuses: liabilities)
  - o Job creation for PWD with no experience
  - o Challenges for PWD to obtain experience and find employment
- Health Care
  - o Health coverage is limited and many of the services that are needed are expensive –i.e. physio and other therapies
  - o MSP Coverage is too low for these services
  - o Need to be aware of the needs of people receiving PWD assistance – many costs are not covered –i.e. some medication and prescription costs
  - o Over the counter medications are too expensive
  - o People who cannot afford to cover the costs themselves might opt not to take it – can create more harm and more costs over the longer term.



- Childcare
  - o Look at Sweden for a model for childcare
  - o Here the cost of childcare is too high
  - o Income from work – goes to child care
  - o One parent has to give up work for childcare
  - o It should be a right for everyone who want to work and have children
  - o Just want the basic needs to be met
- Education
  - o Post-Secondary education is not affordable
- Transit
  - o Public transit is expensive
- Systemic Challenges
  - o The way the system is set up is hard –some people can't access (i.e. many women face difficulties accessing the system)
  - o You are not able to speak to someone
  - o Sometimes the problem is not sorted out for weeks
  - o The amount of money that people receive is too low
- Income Pressures
  - o Minimum wage too low
  - o Refugees have difficulty upgrade their education
  - o Face food bank/housing issues
  - o Hard to access housing
  - o Impossible to find housing
  - o Single mothers not able to find childcare and can't work
  - o Lots of women in poverty
  - o Women are forced to stay in violent relationships because too expensive to leave
  - o People face difficult choices – harsh environment - much harder more difficult
  - o Hard to cope with the high cost of living
  - o People struggling with addictions because it's hard
- Poverty Reduction
  - o Social Development and Poverty Reduction is a good name
  - o Should not just focus on employment -some people cannot enter the work force because of barriers
  - o People are so desperate due to cost of living
  - o Have to work 2 minimum wage jobs to make ends meet
- Access to services
  - o People have long waiting times to see a doctor
  - o There are waiting lists for programs
  - o There are not enough supports services –i.e. women are trapped in violent relationships but have nowhere to go
  - o Women who are homeless are invisible and many face horrible stressful situations
  - o It can become a vicious cycle

- If you would give her \$1000 this would work attending MCFO appointments
- Know a woman (Grandma) who is taking care of grandkids because the funding was scaled back
- People need help meeting basic needs
- Income
  - Ontario pilot looks good
  - Gives you much more power – you don't have to prove it – you are entitled to it
  - Gives more freedom/more control over decisions
  - More help should be given to those who are on the borderline of poverty – they are doing everything to advance their life – a bit of help would change so much
  - It is difficult for single mothers who are going to school
- Cost of Housing
  - Rent is a minimum of \$1000 per month
  - There is a mismatch between income and cost of living
  - Means people have not control over their situation
  - Need to have better rent controls -regulations for amount of rent that can be charged
  - A 1000 sq ft unit on Commercial Drive was renting for \$3,000.
  - People can't afford to live in BC
  - Landlords can behave poorly – i.e. raise the rents due to the housing market
  - Issues are intertwined
  - There is no security for families – too expensive
  - Stability of people's lives – living in poverty – barriers
- Recent immigrants
  - A lot of middle eastern refugees – families like to settle in areas close to each other
  - Large families that need childcare
  - English language learning outback – ESL classes that grade your learning
- Barriers to Housing
  - Landlords are afraid to rent to people with mental health.
  - Discrimination against people receiving disability assistance (1 vote)
  - No access to housing for people who are addicted
  - Need money for affordable housing
  - We need way more affordable housing being built
  - Where do people go to live
  - It takes too long to build housing and shelter
  - Rental housing is too expensive – people are forced to rent rooms and pay board
  - People on disability are so normalized with their circumstances
- Access to social and recreational opportunities
  - Access to recreational and leisure activities costs money
  - Physical activities helps prevent alienation
- Social isolation
  - Isolation/vulnerability makes people a target for crime

- Homeless senior with dementia are vulnerable to theft –i.e. cashing cheque at money mart – people watch - it makes the senior a target for crime
- Income Assistance
  - Housing should be a right for everyone
  - People on assistance only receive shelter if they have housing
  - No security deposit if owner the owner lives there
  - Slow turnaround time to receive shelter cheques for people on assistance
  - SDPR – people all over province dealing with clients
  - Very bad medication coverage – many medications are not covered
  - No one knows what’s happening in SDPR
  - There are no straight answers –sometimes it can take weeks for a response
  - The system is very broken
  - Low income seniors cannot afford their medication
  - No dental care, no free clinics, no proper nutrition
- Health supports
  - Health supports are lacking for low income people
  - Senior homes are not healthy places
- Impacts of poverty
  - Your environment can affect your overall being and shortening one’s life
  - When you are poor you life is consumed by surviving
  - You feel isolation and alienation
- Income Assistance
  - People live in fear of being cut off of assistance
  - Everyday people are afraid today of what’s happening –what would happen if they were to lose their medical assistance?
  - Fear that they will not get assistance because somehow the Ministry thinks that you are not telling the truth - looking for fraud
  - There are so many barriers like the requirement for monthly stubs
  - Having security in the office is intimidating – concern that the office is unsafe
  - The service model is problematic - 1-887 number does not work
  - There are no workers to talk to
  - You call the number and the Ministry staff treat people like they are not human
  - You feel that there is no respect or dignity
  - It feels like a revolving door
  - Sometimes you can call the 1-877 number and you have to wait as long as two hours
  - Sometimes you have to call back next day
  - People need access to an advocate
  - You live in fear that you will say something wrong because you don’t know the rules
  - It also feels like the rules are constantly changing
- Stigma and Helplessness
  - The general population does not realize how close people are to poverty
  - In some ways it could happen to anyone

- A lot of people can be one pay cheque away from poverty and homelessness
- There is a stigma placed on people living in poverty
- Some people don't ask for help because of this stigma
- People feel this stigma and live with the constant trauma
- Many people do not have a choice
- A story was offered of a grandmother who was receiving PWD – she was raising her grandson and was trying to find work to pay for his prom tickets. She knew that he couldn't go to the prom because she could not pay the school fees
- RCMP, paramedics, and service people are affected as well – they are traumatized because they see the effects of poverty everyday and feel helpless to create change
- Food insecurity
  - Food security is lacking
  - Most poor people do not have access to healthy nutritious food
  - Their diets do not include fresh food
  - Often they have to ration the food
  - Lack of food can affect people's ability to learn –especially children in school
  - Lack of access to healthy food also has long term consequences for one's health
- The poverty trap
  - Social assistance can trap people in poverty
  - The basic income assistance rates are too low
  - It leave no money left over for food or transportation
  - Without a bus pass it is not possible to get to a job
  - People can't even get ID
  - Rates have stayed low for a long time –they have not kept up with the cost of living
  - The rates don't reflect the fact that BC has a high cost of living.
- Mental Health and Other Supports
  - People are normalized - they don't even know that they have a mental health problem
  - They don't understand their situation; they are so used to living in poverty
  - People are afraid to speak up – it is hard to ask for assistance
  - Sometimes It is hard for people with mental health issues to get assistance if they are not on income assistance already
  - The lack of services pushes people into poverty
  - Need affordable housing
  - Hard for someone earning minimum wage to cover everything
  - Homeless people feel isolated
  - It is difficult for those who have a mental health issues – can get worse
  - There are no centralized resources to turn to
  - It is hard to get to services without transportation
  - There is a need to recognize homelessness and the vulnerability of people with mental health challenges
  - There should be education to help deal with the stigma of homelessness
  - All levels of government should pay more attention to people who are homeless

- Richmond gave more money to animal shelter than to working to address homelessness
- People struggle to keep roof over their heads
- Once you are homeless it affects you health – you have less access to nutritious food
- Government should be proactive rather than reactive
- Richmond City Council is not doing enough to prevent poverty – there needs to be a more proactive response to address poverty
- Need a middle ground to manage – create a stepping stone that can help people out of poverty
- Need to recognize differences across different cultures and be more sensitive
- Need more programs in school
- Start with children, provide breakfast or lunch program for all kids
- Lack of education about drug/addiction and related issues
- Education should start with children at a young age
- Education about mental health needs to start early as well
- There are not enough facilities to help and house people with mental health issues

**Question 2: What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?**

- Food security
  - There should be a nutritious food program in every school in BC (2 Votes)
  - The program should not just be bread or soup and a bun
  - It should be available to everyone and just be part of lunch
  - If it is available to everyone it would help to reduce the stigma
- Business
  - Get businesses involved
  - Instead of throwing food out maybe there is a way to make it available
  - There are lost of rules and regulations that could make this difficult but it could make a difference
  - Maybe it is possible to create a school salad bar similar to the types of initiatives that are part of the Farm to Cafeteria program
  - Maybe there could be green houses built on school property and the different aspects of growing and harvesting good could be part of the school curriculum
  - Cooking class can could help to produce food for the salad bars while the school could also enter into partnerships with local farmer
- Employment
  - People need full time jobs with benefits (i.e. sick leave protection) (1 Vote)
- Affordable childcare (1 Vote)
- Affordable housing (2 Votes)
  - All 3 levels of government have to commit to work together
  - Housing decisions are influenced by developers through political donation

- o Ensure that the housing meets the needs of those who live in the community (3 Votes)
- Education
  - o People need job training and access to free education (1 Vote)
- Health services
  - o Need to consider the needs of socially isolated adults especially in minority communities – (i.e. the Chinese) – need to find a way to get them support
- Housing Markets
  - o Eliminate speculation in housing (3 Votes)
  - o Eliminate the commodification of housing (2 Votes)
  - o 40-50% of market pre-sales are done over seas
  - o In Richmond there is a lot of speculation –people are purchasing and flipping houses and condos
  - o The housing market is not correcting – price just keep going up
- Employment
  - o Ensure that people have access to employment and skill training (1 Vote)
- Youth
  - o Young people are couch surfing/living with roommates
  - o They are having to go to food banks to pay their student loans
- Day Care
  - o Provide subsidized daycare that includes a hot meal to fuel kids (4 Votes)
  - o Day care costs are too expensive especially for parents who have part time jobs (it is cheaper to stay at home some days to care for children)
  - o There are not enough day care spaces - some parents have to go to multiple day cares to fill the gaps.
  - o Need day cares that are available on weekends and evenings (2 Votes)
  - o Day care should be linked to school locations (2 Votes)
- Minimum Income
  - o People should be given a minimum income that is adequate( 4 Votes)
  - o Income should be based on a fair wage or living wage
  - o People need a guaranteed livable income (3 Votes)
  - o There should be no means test
- Affordable Housing
  - o There should be rent controls – not only on existing rental units but should remove the ability to re-price the unit when someone moves (2 Votes)
- Income
  - o People should be entitled to a liveable, dignified, thriving income
- Child care
  - o There should be a universal child care policy – affordable (2 Votes)
  - o MSP rates should be eliminated
- Transportation
  - o Transit passes should cover more than a single fare should cover more zones

- Transit passes should be cheaper
- There should be more transit accessibility for people in low income
- Housing
  - Build more subsidized housing (1 Vote)
  - Move away from relying on private housing developers
  - Be more strict rent control
  - Consider a tax on speculation
  - Stop building for investment market (2 Votes)
  - Bring sanity to housing prices
  - Encourage municipalities to adopt different approaches to their zoning
  - Adopt stricter rules and requirements on vacation rentals and short term rentals as well as around AirBnB
  - Return to a housing market that is designed to meet the needs of the people who live there – i.e. rental market for locals
  - Encourage more long term rental housing supply and protect the housing stock that is available
- Food Security
  - Food programs for schools, every day in every school -nutritious food (1 Vote)
  - More education around food and how to cook nutritious food at a low cost (1 Vote)
  - More community gardens
  - More food – urban gardens in Richmond
  - Programs to recover food in grocery stores that are going to waste
  - Make it easier for this food to go to charity while the food is still edible (1 Vote)
  - More flexibility around food that is close to or at the expiry date
  - Put controls on food waste
  - Find ways to reduce the amount of food that is wasted (1 Vote)
  - Store owners should have to pay a penalty for any food that they are wasting
  - Zurich is a good model to look at – they have found ways to use food before it is wasted
  - Provide education on how to preserve food –i.e. making jam or other food products
- Support with Income Assistance
  - Make more social workers available for those who want/need one
  - More community navigators
  - Service and supports all in one place
  - Create a resource hub/ centre
  - Information should be available in printed format in plain language
  - There should be one place that you can go to get all of the information that you need
  - Stop strict criteria to get help (1 Vote)
  - There should be coverage for medicine that is prescribed over the counter for things like allergies, lice, pain, gastro problems
  - Make help readily available so that you don't have to fight for it

- There should be more government supports delivered by people who care about the issues instead of through IT and technology – this should be for all areas of the public service –health, income supports, social assistance (1 Vote)
  - Raise income assistance rates (3 Votes)
  - Continue to work to reduce barriers (1 Vote)
- Support for recent immigrants and refugees (1 Vote)
  - Make it easier and cheaper for recent immigrants to transfer their skills and training
  - Provide better supports to refugees
  - Help provide navigation and support for ESL
  - Drop the hard to understand jargon/language (1 Vote)
  - Work to build community
- Service Delivery
  - Government needs to shift away from technology
  - This means creating a whole new way of thinking/focus
  - The focus should be on people not on technology
  - People have to think ahead about preventative solutions– Invest now for a better/cheaper tomorrow
  - There should be better access to services faster. i.e. Methadone treatment.
  - More and better access to harm reduction treatments
- Supports for Families
  - More family support workers (3 Votes)
- Transportation
  - Bus passes should be available to anyone who lives in poverty (3 Votes)
  - Transportation is key
- Other supports
  - There should be public water fountains and cooling stations (Like Vancouver)
- Housing
  - There should be more rent Control
  - Landlords have to stop raising rents every year = people need stable housing
- Public Awareness
  - There is value in getting the concerns/issues out there
  - Making the issues more public and building public awareness and support
  - Videos and news articles help to put a public face to the story
  - Helps to build better understanding with more exposure (1 Vote)
  - Need to educate society to help to break down the myths –remove misconceptions
- Access to Services
  - People need access to counselling – a support system
  - People need someone to help with homelessness
  - People need access to better social housing – longer term
  - Access to stable, affordable housing will allow people to focus on their lives
  - People need security of tenure in their housing (3 Votes)
  - People need counselling/assistance with budgeting etc. (1 Vote)



- o Need a resource centres that provides a range of services and that has more hours/availability, more staff that are trained, more follow through (1 Vote)
  - o Need to ensure that people are getting the help they need
  - o Could be one resource centre with different organizations/representatives
  - o Better rehabilitation programs – instead of sending to prison – offer better or more rehabilitation services (1 Vote)
- Minimum Wage
  - o There is the need for higher minimum wage
- Training and Skills Development
  - o People need to be equipped with skills like resume writing, typing, internet and job, search skills including support in developing these skills
  - o More people should be able to take courses, go to school,
  - o More encouragement, inspire people to go to school
  - o More balance, being able to go to school, being of assistance, same with work (1 Vote)
- Income Assistance
  - o Income assistance rates and supplements need to increase (2 Votes)
  - o There should be a basic income for everyone (guaranteed income) (1 Vote)
  - o Residential tenancy branch – improvements re moving out timelines
- Ministry:
  - o Staff need to show empathy
  - o Need more staff/more resources
  - o More investments in the social services
  - o More outreach
  - o Build trust
  - o Offer more counselling outside of methadone
  - o More long term solutions (1 Vote)
- Housing and Supports
  - o There should be more integration between housing, employment
  - o Housing and supports should be treated more as a package instead of passing person around from one resource to another (2 Votes)
  - o We need more shelters, food for the homeless (4 Votes)
- Inequality
  - o More privileged people should pay more taxes (13 Votes)
  - o Better education, affordable, make education more accessible (4 Votes)
  - o Education for lifestyle choices – more choice (2 Votes)
  - o For people to know they could do it, to have motivation (1 Vote)
  - o Increase affordability, purchase power(1 Vote)
  - o Promote more income equity
  - o Support small and local businesses (2 Vote)
  - o Fair taxation
- Healthy childhood development
  - o Create programs for kids that are struggling to reduce stigma (1 Vote)

- o Let the kids fit in even if they are on assistance
- Housing Affordability
  - o Decrease rent (2 Vote)
- Access to education and opportunities
  - o Provide education for all
  - o Decrease barriers for students
  - o Fair system for people entering the market (Jobs, housing, transport) (10 Votes)
  - o Make it more bearable for people trying to get out poverty so they can make it (2 Votes)
  - o Make sure immigrants can get proper training in English (4 Votes)
- Income Assistance
  - o People on PWD should not be financially penalized for being in a relationship
- Housing
  - o Need real housing alternatives
  - o How can we change things so that people feel more secure in their housing even if the cost of their housing is going up
- Empathy
  - o Decision makers should be people in the field (doctors etc. are not bureaucrats)
  - o Decision makers should be more connected to people receiving PWD.
  - o Give PWD more decision power or at least allow their opinion to be heard
- Service Delivery
  - o Shifting from a medical deficit model to prevention (3 Votes)
  - o More funding for prevention and choice
  - o Think of community instead of individuals
  - o Need a system that looks at the long run rather than a short run solution
  - o Basic needs of life should be covered. Universal benefits (6 Votes)
  - o The income/assets test for PWD application is degrading
- Transit
  - o Different color compass card is not needed if public transit is free – it just makes people stand out
  - o The cost of transit would be lower if there were no gates etc. (lower environmental impact)
  - o What is the incentive for taking public transit?
- Childcare
  - o Universal Childcare
- Health Care
  - o Flexible healthcare/ medications
  - o Give people credits and let them focus their credits on the medications/ therapies that they each need
  - o Transferrable medical coverage
- Building Community
  - o Promote a shift to a sharing culture (2 votes)
  - o Support tax increases for the greater good of the community (1 Vote)

- o Open minded about job creation/ opportunities for PWDs.
- Supports in the Community
  - o Mental Health Pathways
  - o Assisted living for 18 – 60
  - o Make it that people can make their own medical decision (1 vote)
  - o Free public transit (3 Votes)
  - o Universal childcare (1 vote)
  - o Support a guaranteed income – should be universal not means tested
  - o Need to support the dignity of the individual
  - o Create conditions for people to thrive
- Affordable Housing
  - o Rent controls should apply to units
  - o \$1700 a month for a 500 sq. ft. place is too much
  - o There is not enough publicly funded housing
- Medical Services
  - o MSP rates should not to be charged on a monthly basis – pay in taxes
- Transit
  - o Reduce transit fares – they are too high – it costs \$180 per month for a 3 Zone
  - o Single fares are too high– barrier to get around
  - o Subsidized transit – have to live in Surrey but work in Vancouver – expensive
  - o There should not be different prices for transit - no more zones – 1 Zone
  - o \$9 a day is too much for a transit pass
  - o Many of the transit busses are not accessible
  - o Buses takes too long to come - too long a wait
- Influence of the Development Industry on Housing Costs
  - o Province and city to move away from private developers
  - o Issue is cost of housing
  - o Empty units – tax – speculation driving up prices
  - o Start building – for people not investors
  - o Vacancy rate is less than 1%
  - o Short controls on vacation rentals – no air b and b's outside of home
  - o Long term rental housing
  - o Need to find a way to go from 1% to 3% vacancy
- Food Security
  - o Cost of Food
  - o Should have breakfast program in schools each day
  - o Access to healthy, nutritious food should be part of basic education.
  - o Provide nutritious food to kids at low cost
  - o Educational price – food and education
  - o Community gardens can help families
  - o Help supermarkets donate food that is close to the expiry date to charities
  - o There should be more flexibility on expiry dates on food

- Income Security
  - o There should be a minimum Income for all people
  - o It should be more than \$710 per month
  - o Use media, radio, and advertising to promote the benefits of a guaranteed minimum income – build awareness among the rich
  - o There needs to be a drastic increase in income assistance rates - more for shelter
- Service Delivery
  - o There should be cuts to the bureaucracy
  - o Medical and dental costs should be covered for everyone
  - o There should be more case workers
  - o People need to be able to call the 1-800 number and talk to someone right away
  - o Need more clarity on eligibility requirements for clients and advocates – applied consistently
  - o Services should be centralized -one place to go for help
- Seniors
  - o Seniors need access to a health care plan that covers medical and dental
  - o Seniors shouldn't have to worry about medication costs (1 vote)
  - o More access to seniors housing/ in home support (1 vote)
- Inclusion
  - o Community events that reach across all abilities/ classes/ races/ religions
  - o Mental health – people need support to help their physical well-being
  - o Free community centre programs for people with disabilities, low income (1 Vote)
  - o Communities need to be activated
  - o Expand participation, more eyes would be able to see the problem (4 Votes)
- Access to Services
  - o There should be access to treatment, wrap around services -no waiting
  - o There should be housing that is supportive and accessible
  - o Programs and supports should be geared to where a person is at
  - o Programs should not be isolating/alienating
  - o Need to increase shelter allowance from \$375 or provide housing for that level
- Income Equality
  - o Taxes should be higher for people with more money
  - o There are long-term savings by lifting everyone out of poverty
  - o Helping people out of poverty will save on services (4 Votes)
  - o There needs to be more social and economic inclusion
  - o We need to address the loss of industry = loss of community
  - o Find ways to replace the jobs that we lost from the loss of industry
  - o Retraining people = focus on jobs for the average person
- Housing
  - o Need to increase shelter allowance from \$375 or provide housing for that level
  - o People are renting a room for \$800 per month and have no locks on their door

- Perhaps there is a “billet program” that could be introduced – bring people together organizing and educating – make community a big family
- Each individual needs to take responsibility (1 Vote)
- Take much more presence in the press, more positive reports
- Richmond City Council should accept modular housing (4 Votes)
- There should be more facilities for treatment (3 Votes)
- Enhance current educational programs
- There are many good people in community who would be willing to participate in a billet programs, teamed with media and good positive stories
- School Food Programs
  - Have breakfast program for kids on their way to school to avoid stigma
  - Food allowance program
  - Utilize/ make community food gardens on public land
  - City operates gardens and provide free groceries (1 Vote)
  - Richmond should utilize land for public gardens instead of daffodils and tulips
- Families and Children
  - More funding for early childhood education (1 Vote)
  - CAP universal child bonus (1 Vote)
  - More programs for school on addiction and mental health
  - Free educational program for adults
  - Provide kids with access to education, daycare
  - Support healthy and nutritious access to food
  - Work to break the stigma of poverty
- Services
  - Easy access to treatment
  - Basic needs of life are covered – universal benefit
  - Activation of communities – expansion of programs
  - Make it so that fewer people are blind to poverty.
  - More facilities for treatments, especially in REMP treatment and crisis
  - Ensure that services are available when people decide to go to treatment
  - More programs for schools on addiction and mental health
  - Work to take stigma away from mental illness –break the stereotype
  - More social workers on staff to help people who need help
  - More advocacy
  - Create a resource centre/service hub
  - Shift the focus from the medical deficit model to prevention
  - More funding prevention
  - Show respect for people to make their own decisions
  - People should be encouraged and supported in making their own medical decisions
- Housing
  - Address foreign speculation

- Address the commodification of housing
- It is tough conversation but we have it –We need to ask the question of whether we are building homes and neighbourhoods
- To address the housing crisis we need the commitment of all levels of government
- There are good models like housing co-ops
- People need better access to social housing
- Provide incentives to landlords to reduce rent costs (e.g. tax credit for landlords)
- Addresses soaring rent costs
- Supports
  - People need more support obtaining ID and navigating the process
  - There should be a minimum income for everyone (more than \$710 per month)
  - People should not have to fear being cut off assistance – they should feel supported
  - The basic income assistance rates need to go up
  - There should be trauma-informed training to educate frontline service providers about the effects of trauma
- Community Education
  - Educate communities about homelessness to build buy in for supported housing
  - Build neighbourhood support for use of underutilized lands for temporary housing
- Income Security
  - Help people gain access to employment
  - Focus on greater pay equity
  - Create fair and living wages
  - Support full time employment with benefits
  - Support a guaranteed basic income
- Income Assistance
  - Fund Family Support Workers
  - Provide funding for support programs
  - Have the Ministry see itself as being in “the people business”
  - Raise PWD and income assistant rates
  - Simplify and streamline the process
  - Support people to access services, especially those with low computer literacy
- Transportation
  - Focus on transit accessibility
  - Work to support subsidized bus passes
  - More people should have access to discounted or free bus passes
- Income Support
  - Raise the rates
  - Higher minimum wage
  - Fair pay with benefits
  - There should be a \$15 minimum wage and affordable and available childcare
  - People should be able to have an affordable lifestyle –one that they want to live

- Partnerships
  - o Cities should be allowed to make their own decisions with adequate funding
  - o There should be partnerships across all levels of government
  - o Privatized services should be made public
- Strengthen the current system
  - o We need to strengthen the system (i.e. Income support, taxation, child tax benefit)
  - o So much of the assistance provided is not based on people's current circumstances – they system needs to be more flexible, make it fit, peoples circumstances, not vice versa
- Address the stigma
  - o The current system has stigma and prejudices
  - o There is a lack of quality and quantity of resources
  - o Need to find a way to expand the current resources and programs
- Housing
  - o Have to take steps to drive down housing values
  - o Have to prevent speculation



City of  
Richmond

**Memorandum**  
Community Services Division  
Community Social Development

<b>To:</b>	Mayor and Councillors	<b>Date:</b>	August 28, 2018
<b>From:</b>	Lesley Sherlock Social Planner	<b>File:</b>	07-3000-01/2018-Vol 01
<b>Re:</b>	<b>Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy</b>		

Background

On August 21, The Honourable Jen-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, announced the release of "Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy". The Executive Summary is included as Attachment 1.

The Strategy consists of three pillars:

*Dignity: Lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs – such as safe and affordable housing, healthy food and health care – are met;*

*Opportunity and Inclusion: Helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity; and*

*Resilience and Security: Supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience.*

Government initiatives supporting each pillar are identified in the Strategy, including new and pre-existing programs and investments. A list of new programs and expenditures, either implemented or announced since the Liberal government assumed power in late 2015, is included in Attachment 2. For example, the Canada Child Benefit, the National Housing Strategy and the Early Learning and Child Care Plan all represent increased investment that will contribute to poverty reduction. These additional and pre-existing resources will help the government to achieve its stated poverty reduction goals of 20% by 2020 and 50% by 2030 (from 12% in 2015 to 6% by 2030). No new funding announcements were made with the introduction of this Strategy.

Official Poverty Line

To measure poverty reduction progress, this Strategy sets Canada's first "Official Poverty Line". It is a "market basket measure", reflecting the income required to cover the actual cost of goods and services needed to attain a modest standard of living. To reflect variations in the cost of living across the country, the income level has been calculated for 50 different communities based on location and population size. The goods and services considered in this measure include clothing



and footwear, nutritious food, personal care items, household supplies, transportation and shelter costs, including water, heat and electricity. Calculations are based on amounts needed for individuals and families, with the latter calculation based on a “reference” family of four (two adults aged 25–49 years, a 9-year-old girl and a 13-year-old boy). For individuals, the income needed is estimated to be half as high as that required by a family.

For Metro Vancouver, including Richmond, the poverty line has been set at an income of approximately \$40,000 per year for a family of four; therefore, for an individual, at approximately \$20,000 per year. While not referenced in the Federal Strategy, this amount is considerably less than that determined to be a 2018 Living Wage by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, estimated as approximately \$76,112 for a family of four in Metro Vancouver. The Living Wage incorporates additional expenses including the cost of child care, fees for two college courses and a minimal recreation budget.

#### Measurement

In addition to tracking population level income changes in relation to the Official Poverty Line, a range of other indicators will be tracked over time to monitor progress toward the stated poverty reduction targets. The monitoring of these indicators will be publicly available through an on-line “dashboard” providing data as it becomes available, including both annual and intermittent results, depending on the data source, as well as long-term trends. Data sources to be monitored include the annual Canadian Income Survey, the annual Canadian Community Health Survey, the Census, the National Homelessness Information System, the Labour Force Survey, the Program for the International Student Assessment and Adult Competencies, the Longitudinal Administrative Databank and the Survey of Financial Security.

#### Legislation

Significantly, the country’s first Poverty Reduction Act will be introduced to the legislature at a future sitting (date to be determined). Once passed, the Act will enshrine the adoption of an Official Poverty Line and reduction targets, as well as the formation of a National Advisory Council on Poverty, in legislation.

#### Municipal Role

In this Strategy, the federal government indicates that it will work closely with provinces, territories, municipalities and other entities, including community groups, to ensure that poverty reduction efforts are “aligned and complementary”. Specific roles for municipalities are not identified, but will be embedded in specific undertakings, for example, in the implementation of Canada’s Homelessness Strategy, infrastructure investments and public transit projects.

As the federal government is seeking aligned and complementary initiatives with provinces, territories and municipalities, the introduction of a BC Poverty Reduction Strategy, anticipated to follow the introduction of Provincial poverty reduction legislation later this year, will be significant for BC municipalities including Richmond. As the City has many poverty reduction initiatives underway (e.g., implementation of the new Affordable Housing Strategy, Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy, Recreation Fee Subsidy Program, Youth and Seniors Service Plans,

August 28, 2018

- 3 -

Community Wellness Strategy and an in-progress Homelessness Strategy Update), staff will be seeking opportunities to work closely with both federal and provincial entities as well as community agencies to support these and other actions, with the goal of measurable and significantly reduced poverty rates for Richmond individuals and families.

For further information, please call me at 604-276-4220.



Lesley Sherlock  
Social Planner

Att. 2

pc: SMT  
Ted Townsend, Director, Corporate Communication and Marketing  
Kim Somerville, Manager, Community Social Development  
Denise Tambellini, Manager, Inter-Governmental Relations and Protocol Unit  
Barry Konkin, Manager, Policy Planning

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canada is a prosperous country, yet in 2015 roughly one in eight Canadians lived in poverty. The vision of *Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy* is a Canada without poverty, because we all suffer when our fellow citizens are left behind. We are all in this together, from governments, to community organizations, to the private sector, to all Canadians who are working hard each and every day to provide for themselves and their families.

The Government is committed to poverty reduction and did not wait to release a poverty reduction strategy before taking action. For example, the new **Canada Child Benefit** gives more money to families who need it most to help with the cost of raising children; The increase to the **Guaranteed Income Supplement** ensures more seniors can retire in security and dignity. And, starting in 2019, the new **Canada Workers Benefit** will help Canadians take home more money while they work hard to join the middle class.

The Government has also made longer-term investments in areas such as housing, clean water, health, transportation, early learning and child care, and skills and employment, which will help address multiple dimensions of poverty.

Overall, *Opportunity for All* brings together new investments of \$22 billion that the Government has made since 2015 to support the social and economic well-being of all Canadians. These actions will help lift about **650,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2019**, with more expected as the impacts of these investments are realized in the years to come.

*Opportunity for All* also sets the foundation for future government investments in poverty reduction. It is based on three pillars to focus Government actions to reduce poverty:

**Dignity:** Lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs—such as safe and affordable housing, healthy food and health care—are met;

**Opportunity and Inclusion:** Helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity; and

**Resilience and Security:** Supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience.

*Opportunity for All* offers a bold vision for Canada as a world leader in the eradication of poverty, with progress validated in terms of its alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending poverty.

For the first time in Canada's history, the Strategy sets an official measure of poverty: **Canada's Official Poverty Line**, based on the cost of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in communities across the country.

*Opportunity for All* sets, for the first time, ambitious and concrete poverty reduction targets: a 20 percent reduction in poverty by 2020 and a 50 percent reduction in poverty by 2030, which, relative to 2015 levels, will lead to the lowest poverty rate in Canada's history.

Through *Opportunity for All*, we are putting in place a **National Advisory Council on Poverty** to advise the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development on poverty reduction and to publicly report, in each year, on the progress that has been made toward poverty reduction.

The Government also proposes to introduce the first **Poverty Reduction Act** in Parliament in Canada's history. This Act would entrench the targets, Canada's Official Poverty Line and the Advisory Council into legislation.

*Opportunity for All* is a whole-of-government strategy that involves actions and investments that span across the federal government. However, the Government recognizes that to be successful, it cannot act alone. Partnerships will be important. The Government will work closely with provinces, territories and municipalities, and will forge strong bonds with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders, charities and community groups on the front lines of tackling poverty in communities across Canada, to ensure our programs and policies are aligned and complementary, as Canadians expect and deserve nothing less. And, finally, the Government will continue to reach out to all Canadians who all have a stake in *Opportunity for All*, particularly those who live in poverty.

The Government will continually track and make improvements to how poverty is measured. Progress will therefore be measured against, and future decisions will be informed by, evidence that is based on the highest statistical standards, building on the Prime Minister's leadership and the commitment G7 leaders made this year to measure growth that works for everyone.

The Government will advance the dialogue with Canadians from all corners of the country, so we can continue to build a Canada without poverty.

*Opportunity for All* will help reduce poverty, support Canadians working hard to join the middle class and build a diverse, prosperous and truly inclusive country where everyone benefits from economic growth—a country where all Canadians can realize their full potential.

**Poverty is:**

*The condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society.*

**Key New Investments to Help Lift Canadians out of Poverty and Support the Middle Class,  
Budget 2016, Budget 2017, and Budget 2018**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Projected New Investment</b>
Canada Child Benefit	Budget 2016 introduced the Canada Child Benefit, which represents new investments of over \$25 billion over five years, including the value of indexing the benefit beginning in 2018–19.
Guaranteed Income Supplement	Budget 2016 increased the Guaranteed Income Supplement top-up for single seniors with new investments of over \$7 billion over ten years.
National Housing Strategy	Budget 2017 introduced a National Housing Strategy. The 10-year, \$40-billion plan will give more Canadians a place to call home and includes \$16.1 billion in federal investments in provincial and territorial housing programs, including \$2.1 billion for Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.
Indigenous Housing	Through investments made in Budget 2017 and Budget 2018, the Government announced dedicated funding of over \$1.7 billion for Indigenous housing, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$600 million over three years to support housing on reserve as part of a 10-year First Nations Housing Strategy;</li> <li>• \$240 million over 10 years as announced in Budget 2017 to support housing in Nunavut;</li> <li>• \$400 million over 10 years to support an Inuit-led housing plan in the Inuit regions of Nunavut, Nunatsiavut and Inuvialuit; and</li> <li>• \$500 million over 10 years to support the Métis Nation's housing strategy.</li> </ul>
Public Transit Infrastructure	Budget 2016 announced \$3.4 billion over three years to upgrade and improve public transit systems across Canada. Budget 2017 announced an additional \$20.1 billion over 11 years in public transit infrastructure to transform the way that Canadians live, move and work. A further \$5.0 billion was announced in Budget 2017 for public transit projects that will be funded through the Canada Infrastructure Bank.
Early Learning and Child Care	Budgets 2016 and 2017 announced combined investments of \$7.5 billion over 11 years to improve the affordability, quality and accessibility of Early Learning and Child Care, including for Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care.
Labour Market Transfer Agreements	Budget 2017 provided additional investments of \$2.7 billion over six years through agreements with provinces and territories to help Canadians prepare for, find, advance in and keep good jobs.
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program	Budget 2018 introduced the new Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program to replace the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy with an incremental investment of almost \$450 million over five years and nearly \$100 million per year ongoing.
Canada Workers Benefit	Budget 2018 introduced the new Canada Workers Benefit to strengthen and replace the Working Income Tax Benefit with new investments of \$3 billion over five years, which includes measures to improve access to the benefit.
Home Care and Mental Health	Budget 2017 provided \$11 billion over 10 years to support better home care mental health initiatives through agreements with provinces and territories.



City of  
Richmond

Malcolm D. Brodie  
Mayor

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June 6, 2016

The Honourable Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia  
Office of the Premier  
PO Box 9041 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Clark:

**Re: BC POVERTY REDUCTION COALITION**

At the Regular City Council meeting held on May 24, 2016, Richmond Council heard a delegation from the Richmond Poverty Response Committee (BC PRC) concerning the above matter. At the meeting, Council adopted the following motion:

*Whereas:*

- (1) *The poverty rate in British Columbia continues to be among the highest in Canada at approximately 1 in 10 using the most conservative estimate (low Income Cut-Off – After Tax), and child poverty rates in BC are still 1 in 5;*
- (2) *Many impacts of poverty are experienced at the local level, and local residents pay for poverty in increased health care costs, higher crime, higher demand for community, social and charitable services, lack of school readiness, reduced school success, and lower economic productivity;*
- (3) *78% of British Columbians want the provincial government to implement a poverty reduction plan;*
- (4) *BC is the last province in Canada to have a commitment to a poverty reduction plan.*

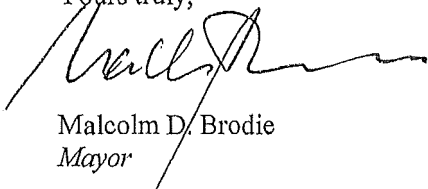
*Therefore be it resolved:*

- (1) That the City of Richmond advocate to the Provincial government to develop and implement a provincial poverty reduction strategy to reduce the number of people living in poverty in BC by setting concrete targets and timelines to reduce poverty.*
- (2) That the City of Richmond urge the Government of BC to adopt a comprehensive and accountable provincial poverty reduction strategy to reduce the number of people living in poverty in BC by setting concrete targets and timelines to reduce poverty; and*
- (3) That these resolutions be forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM).*

The BC PRC is requesting that the Government of British Columbia set legislated targets and timelines as well as specific policy measures and concrete actions as a poverty reduction plan. The Province has a responsibility to provide adequate and accessible support and services to those in poverty as well as remove policy barriers. Richmond City Council endorses the recommendations set forward by the BC PRC on poverty reductions, as indicated in the above resolution.

The City continues to encourage the Province to adopt a strong approach for implementing a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for British Columbia and urges the Government of British Columbia to implement a plan consistent with the recommendations set forth by the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition.

Yours truly,



Malcolm D. Brodie  
Mayor

pc: The Honourable Rich Coleman, Deputy Premier, Minister of Natural Gas Development, Minister Responsible for Housing and Member of the Legislative Assembly  
The Honourable Michelle Stilwell, Minister of Social Development and Social Innovation and Member of the Legislative Assembly  
The Honourable Linda Reid, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Richmond East and Speaker of the Legislature  
The Honourable Teresa Wat, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Richmond Centre and Minister for International Trade and Minister Responsible for the Asia Pacific Strategy and Multiculturalism  
Mr. John Yap, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Richmond-Steveston and Parliamentary Secretary for Liquor Reform Policy to the Minister of Small Business, Red Tape Reduction and Minister Responsible for the Liquor Distribution Branch

0150-20-UPRC



City of  
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February 28, 2017

The Honourable Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia  
PO BOX 9041 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Clark:

**Re: Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee Report On "Municipal Responses To Child And Youth Poverty"**

At its Regular Council meeting held on Monday, February 27, 2017, Richmond City Council considered the above matter and adopted the following resolution:

*That the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC) Report on "Municipal Responses to Child and Youth Poverty", identified in Attachment 1 of the staff report titled "RCSAC Municipal Responses to Child and Youth Poverty Report", dated January 30, 2017, from the General Manager, Community Services, be sent to the Premier, Leader of the Opposition, Richmond Members of Parliament, Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly, and Richmond Members of the Legislative Assembly candidates.*

The Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC) report, "Municipal Responses to Child and Youth Poverty", as well as the associated City staff cover report, has been attached for your reference. The RCSAC report provides a valuable scan of municipal actions to address poverty, including those undertaken by the City of Richmond which the RCSAC notes as comparing favourably with other municipalities.

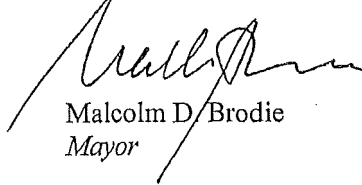
As identified in the enclosed reports, the City of Richmond is devoting considerable resources to initiatives within its mandate that address challenges faced by low-income residents. For example, in 2017 the City is updating its Affordable Housing Strategy, Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy, Recreation Fee Subsidy Program and Homelessness Strategy. However, only senior governments can substantively address poverty reduction. On May 24, 2016, Richmond City Council endorsed a resolution for submission to the UBCM calling on the Provincial Government to develop a BC Poverty Reduction Strategy, with UBCM endorsing a similar resolution at their 2016 Convention. In spite of repeated UBCM resolutions over the years to this effect, the Province remains the only province or territory in Canada without a poverty reduction strategy.



Given the critical need to improve the living conditions of children, youth and their families struggling to meet basic needs in Richmond as well as throughout the Province, Council respectfully requests that consideration be given to the need for a BC Poverty Reduction Plan as previously resolved by Richmond City Council, repeatedly requested by the UBCM and also recommended by the RCSAC in the enclosed report.

Thank you in advance for your review and consideration of the above City of Richmond requests. Should you have any questions, please contact Lesley Sherlock, Social Planner, at 604-276-4220.

Yours truly,



Malcolm D. Brodie  
Mayor

pc: John Horgan, Leader of the Opposition  
Alice Wong, Member of Parliament – Richmond Centre  
Joe Peschisolido, Member of Parliament – Steveston-Richmond  
Linda Reid, MLA  
John Yap, MLA  
Teresa Wat, MLA  
Chak Au, NDP Candidate  
Lyren Chiu, NDP Candidate  
Kelly Greene, NDP Candidate  
Jas Johal, Liberal Candidate