



To: General Purposes Committee

Date: February 5, 2025

From: Kim Somerville
Director, Community Social Development

File: 08-4057-11-03/2025-Vol 01

Re: **Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update**

Staff Recommendations

1. That the Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update, as outlined in the staff report titled “Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update”, dated February 5, 2025, from the Director, Community Social Development, be received for information; and
2. That the Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update be distributed to key community partners, local Members of Parliament, local Members of the Legislative Assembly, including the Minister of Health, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, and posted on the City’s website.

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

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Community Bylaws	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Corporate Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Facilities & Project Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Housing Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
RCMP Administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation & Sport Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

Since its adoption on September 9, 2019, the City of Richmond Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029 (Homelessness Strategy) has guided the City’s actions and collaborative approach with the community to reduce and prevent homelessness in Richmond.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress made in the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy in 2024.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

6.1 Advance a variety of program, services, and community amenities to support diverse needs and interests and activate the community.

6.4 Support vulnerable populations through collaborative and sustainable programs and services.

This report also supports the City of Richmond’s Homelessness Strategy Strategic Direction #5 Communicate, Research and Monitor Homelessness:

5.6 Report out annually on the progress of the Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029.

Analysis

The number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver, including in Richmond, has increased according to Homeless Counts that have taken place across the region at regular intervals since 2002. Individuals typically experience homelessness due to complex and multifaceted reasons including untreated mental and physical health conditions, unaddressed substance use and addiction, and intergenerational and chronic experiences of poverty. These factors, accompanied by high housing costs in the Lower Mainland, have led to an increase to the number of people experiencing homelessness in the region.

The City of Richmond and its partners are committed to collaborative and integrated work to reduce the number of people in Richmond who do not have a safe and affordable home to call their own. In order to do this, the City is taking action to prevent and reduce poverty in Richmond, increase affordable housing options and the appropriate supports for those who need them, and foster the well-being of its residents, including those who are vulnerable or experiencing challenges in their lives.

Richmond’s Homelessness Strategy is guided by a vision that, by 2029, “homelessness in Richmond is rare, brief and non-recurring.” To achieve this vision, the strategy outlines five strategic directions:

1. Prevent pathways into homelessness;
2. Support residents who are experiencing homelessness;
3. Provide pathways out of homelessness;

4. Foster collaboration and community building among community partners; and
5. Communicate, research and monitor homelessness.

Under these strategic directions, the Homelessness Strategy identifies 32 actions with associated timelines to be completed over a 10-year period. At the end of 2024, halfway through the Strategy's intended time frame, 24 of the 32 actions have been initiated and are either complete or in progress.

Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Highlights

Throughout 2024, the City, government partners and community service providers have made progress towards a more integrated system of services for those who are experiencing homelessness and have supported individuals who have been unsheltered to transition into safe and affordable housing that meets their needs. The Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update (Attachment 1) provides an overview of key achievements undertaken or advanced in 2024. These highlights include:

- In 2024, the City developed a Homelessness Outreach Program and hired two Homelessness Outreach Workers to support individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Richmond. The Outreach Workers provide community-based street outreach to people experiencing homelessness, work directly in the community to meet clients wherever they are located in Richmond and support referrals to housing and other relevant programs and services.
- The City created four new Bylaw Officer positions to complement the City's response to homelessness, including two Bylaw 1 Officers and two Bylaw 2 Officers. The new Bylaw 1 Officers respond to people living in their vehicles, including camper vans and recreational vehicles (RVs), and the new Bylaw 2 Officers respond to people experiencing homelessness who are living outdoors. These new positions work closely with the Homelessness Outreach Team and focus on building rapport with people experiencing homelessness, using an enforcement approach only when necessary.
- The Richmond Integrated Outreach Team and the Homelessness Outreach Worker Network were both formed in 2024. These two groups play an important role in creating a more integrated system of services for individuals experiencing homelessness in the community. The Integrated Outreach Team is engaged in interagency case planning for clients who have provided informed consent to have their information shared between member agencies and who would benefit from being served by multiple organizations. The Outreach Worker Network provides a venue for sharing resources, referral options and service details, and supports relationship building, cooperation and communication amongst member organizations.
- The Drop-in Centre and Shower Program at the Brighthouse Pavilion, a City-owned facility, continued to operate throughout 2024. Funded by the province through the UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services grant from December 2021 to March 2024, the City took on the responsibility of funding this program in April 2024. Currently operated by Turning Point Recovery Society, the Drop-In Centre offers critical resources, referrals and services for people experiencing homelessness in the community, including

access to shower and laundry facilities, lunches and supports with referrals to housing and other services.

- During the 2023/24 and 2024/25 winter seasons, additional temporary services and shelter options have been made available for people experiencing homelessness in the community. In 2023/24, these included expanded hours of operation at the Drop-in Centre at Brighthouse Pavilion and expanded operations of the two Warming Centres at the Brighthouse Pavilion and the South Arm Outdoor Pool building. In 2024/25, two nightly Temporary Winter Shelter options are available at the Brighthouse Pavilion and the South Arm Outdoor Pool building for individuals experiencing homelessness. These services are supported by funding from the City and BC Housing and operated by The Progressive Housing Society. Temporary winter services complement the permanent shelter beds at Richmond House Emergency Shelter. The current capacity of the shelter is 55 beds following the conversion of 10 extreme weather response spaces to permanent beds at the end of the 2023/24 winter season.

In addition to these key highlights, the Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update includes additional achievements related to the five strategic directions. A complete list of the 32 actions outlined in the Homelessness Strategy and the status of each is provided in Attachment 2. Copies of the Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update will be distributed to key partners, including local members of Parliament and local members of the Legislative Assembly, and posted on the City’s website, pending Council’s approval.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029 outlines the City’s commitment to continuing to use its role as a leader to respond to the needs of Richmond residents at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. Since its adoption, the strategy has guided the actions of the City and its partners in reducing and preventing homelessness in Richmond. The Homelessness Strategy Update report outlines the progress made with advancing actions in the strategy in 2024.



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- Att. 1: City of Richmond Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029: 2024 Update
2: Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029 – 2024 Status of Actions



CITY OF RICHMOND
**HOMELESSNESS
STRATEGY**

2019–2029

2024 UPDATE



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INTRODUCTION

The City of Richmond and its partners are committed to collaborative and integrated work to reduce the number of people in Richmond without a safe and affordable home to call their own. In order to do this, the City is taking action to prevent and reduce poverty in Richmond, increase affordable housing options with appropriate supports for those who need them, and foster the mental health and well-being of its residents, especially those who are vulnerable or experiencing challenges in their lives. This approach aligns with priorities in City Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 focused on the creation of a vibrant, active and resilient community that supports the diverse needs of residents and vulnerable populations through collaborative and sustainable programs and services.

Access to safe and affordable housing is the most critical factor in circumstances surrounding homelessness, especially when combined with a Housing First approach. Housing First involves moving individuals who are actively experiencing homelessness, particularly those who experience chronic homelessness, from the street or emergency shelters into stable and long-term housing, with supports, as quickly as possible. Stable housing increases quality of life and enhances opportunities to access services to address issues often faced by individuals who are unsheltered including substance use and untreated mental and physical health issues.

Reducing the number of people who are without permanent and appropriate housing, and enhancing access to the supports necessary to stabilize their lives and maintain housing, directly aligns with both the Richmond Homelessness Strategy (2019-2029) and the Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy (2017-2027). In addition, the City's 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond further complements these strategies by guiding actions aimed at connecting people at risk of poverty to community resources that meet immediate needs and builds capacity for their futures. These strategies advance the City's actions aimed at reducing and preventing homelessness while also increasing a range of affordable housing options along the housing continuum in Richmond.

The City of Richmond Homelessness Strategy (2019–2029), adopted by City Council on September 9, 2019, is an action-oriented framework that guides City and stakeholder involvement in homelessness initiatives. The Homelessness Strategy is driven by the following vision statement:

By 2029, homelessness in Richmond is rare, brief and non-recurring. Richmond is an inclusive community that works in collaboration to provide a continuum of housing and support services.

To achieve this vision, the strategy outlines five strategic directions:

1. Prevent pathways into homelessness;
2. Support residents who are experiencing homelessness;
3. Provide pathways out of homelessness;
4. Foster collaboration and community-building among community partners; and
5. Communicate, research and monitor homelessness.

Under these strategic directions, the Homelessness Strategy identifies 32 actions with associated timelines to be completed over a 10-year period. The City of Richmond has now reached the halfway point in implementing the Homelessness Strategy and excellent progress has been made on the actions outlined. At the end of 2024, 24 of the 32 actions have been initiated and are either complete or in progress. Over the next five years the City is committed to continuing its leadership role to make homelessness in Richmond rare, brief and non-recurring. While any one level of government alone cannot solve homelessness, the City continues to play a leadership role and has taken significant steps, in collaboration with key community partners, to invest in an immediate response to homelessness and homelessness prevention.

The number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Metro Vancouver, including Richmond, has increased according to Homeless Counts that have taken place across the region at regular intervals since 2002. In addition to the number of people without a home, the array of situations which have resulted in homelessness and the unique circumstances of individuals who are unsheltered are more complex than in the past. Homelessness, and the ability to secure housing, is more difficult due to the increased prevalence of mental health challenges, substance use, the toxic drug supply and the rising high cost of living in the Lower Mainland.

The following section provides an overview of key initiatives taken by the City and its partners in Richmond over the past year. More information about the Homelessness Strategy, previous Homelessness Strategy Update Reports and additional homelessness resources are available on the City's website.



GOVERNMENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDER ROLES

Preventing, reducing and responding to homelessness involves a wide array of responsibilities, services and partnerships across all three levels of government, multiple Ministries, Crown Corporations, sectors and health authorities. No one entity has oversight over all aspects of homelessness or can address the full scope of need for individuals who are experiencing homelessness. There are currently areas that overlap, significant gaps and areas where entities, often local governments, provide services and supports that are outside their jurisdiction in order to ensure support for vulnerable members of their community. This complex and dynamic set of factors further complicates a challenging issue. An overview of government and service provider roles is outlined below.

City of Richmond

The City of Richmond has reinforced its commitment to ensuring supports are available for individuals who are experiencing homelessness in Richmond in 2024. Through partnerships with senior levels of government and the private and non-profit sectors, the City is working to create and sustain the appropriate mix of housing and supportive services for the community's diverse population, including residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Recognizing that senior levels of government have the primary responsibility for providing funding for homelessness prevention programs, shelters, affordable housing and other services for individuals experiencing homelessness, the City is committed to remaining a local leader that works with community organizations to ensure that addressing homelessness in Richmond continues to remain a priority.

Specifically, these roles include:

- **Advocate:** The City works with community organizations to advocate to senior levels of government for funding and programs that work to prevent and reduce homelessness, offer seasonal and year-round emergency shelters and ensure that supports related to basic human needs, including access to meals, washrooms and showers, are available in Richmond.
- **Service Provider and Funder:** In the absence of funding from senior levels of government to sufficiently support outreach, drop-in and hygiene services and emergency shelter, the City has funded initiatives to address these needs in the community.
- **Analyst:** The City monitors local data and best practice research regarding homelessness to update its policies and plans to respond to current and emerging trends.
- **Communicator:** The City uses best practice research to raise awareness, educate and promote human dignity and respect for all community members, to convey the benefits of inclusive and mixed income neighbourhoods and to reinforce the necessity to create a compassionate, non-judgmental response to experiences of homelessness.

- **Supporter:** The City assists non-profit housing and service providers by facilitating collaboration, enabling capacity building, and providing financial and in-kind supports.
- **Partner:** The City collaborates and partners with senior levels of government, and the private and non-profit sectors to develop a mix of options along the housing continuum.
- **Planner:** The City gathers information, research and feedback on community needs regarding residents at risk of or experiencing homelessness in order to create policy and implement actions that support housing and homelessness focused services in Richmond.
- **Convenor:** The City brings diverse groups together including non-profit, faith-based and community organizations as well as senior levels of government to share information, collaborate and coordinate well-planned responses to homelessness.

In addition to working with service providers, faith-based organizations and senior levels of government, City facilities, including libraries and community centres, continue to provide safe spaces where residents experiencing homelessness are able to connect socially with others, receive information about supports and services available in Richmond and spend time indoors to reduce the impacts of extreme weather.





The Province of BC

The Province's *Belonging in BC: A Collaborative Plan to Prevent and Reduce Homelessness (2022–2025)* outlines strategic goals, commitments and actions, including the creation of more homes to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness and new coordinated, multidisciplinary actions to reduce encampments. The Province has a number of Ministries and Crown Corporations who fund or deliver services to individuals experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness as outlined below.

BC Housing

BC Housing is the provincial Crown Corporation responsible for providing funding and programs related to emergency shelter, supportive and affordable housing and homelessness. BC Housing funds various services, including emergency, seasonal and Extreme Weather Response shelter operations, homelessness prevention, outreach supports and services, and supportive and complex care housing projects for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. BC Housing is a partner with the City of Richmond in the provision of shelter and supportive affordable housing programs in Richmond and the two entities strive to work together and combine resources such as land, buildings, capital and operating funding to deliver much needed programs and services for individuals who are or have been unsheltered in Richmond.

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's (MSDPR) Community Integration Team plays an important role connecting vulnerable individuals, including those experiencing homelessness, with financial assistance and community supports. Services provided by MSDPR include assistance locating shelter spaces, case management and coordination of referrals to other services and support to access a range of government benefits. MSDPR, in partnership with the City and other organizations, offers these supports through direct outreach in the community to individuals who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Richmond's public spaces.

Ministry of Health and Vancouver Coastal Health

The Ministry of Health and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) are key partners in the delivery of services to those who may not have access to housing. Through programs and services, including the Richmond General Hospital and Urgent Care Centres, Mental Health and Substance Use Central Intake, Anne Vogel Clinic, the Cognitive Assessment and Rehabilitation for Substance Use Program (CARSU), and the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) and Substance Use Outreach Teams, VCH staff offer client-centred treatment, harm reduction and recovery-oriented services to support individuals with their physical and mental health and/or substance use. Due to the concurrent nature of mental health challenges or substance use for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness, VCH is an important partner in the continuum of facility-based and outreach support services in Richmond. In 2024, the Province dissolved the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and absorbed services and supports from that Ministry into the Ministry of Health placing greater responsibility for this area within a single Ministry.

Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program

Through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program, the province provided funding to support local governments and First Nations to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in their communities, while keeping both individuals and communities safe and healthy. By March 31, 2024, a total of \$3.35 million of funding through this grant program was invested in Richmond community-led projects. This funding has supported services such as outreach and mental health supports, a drop-in program for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to support access to referrals for needed services, meals, showers and laundry, and temporary overnight shelter spaces during the winter season.

The Government of Canada

The federal government released *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy* in 2019. The Reaching Home program prioritizes data-driven homelessness plans that aim to reduce and prevent homelessness at a local level. Funding to implement the Reaching Home program throughout the Greater Vancouver region has been allocated to Lu'ma Native Housing Society, the designated community entity responsible for administering the program across the region. Reaching Home mandates that funded communities develop and implement community-driven homelessness plans, coordinated access to services, and homelessness management information systems that drive data-informed decisions to improve programs. In Richmond, Turning Point Recovery Society is currently the designated community entity responsible for administering Reaching Home's short-term rent support services.

In 2024, Richmond continued the implementation of projects funded by two federal government grant programs. The programs, administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), include the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) and the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The RHI program provides funds to support the construction of affordable housing for populations who are vulnerable and in need of housing that would not otherwise be provided in the private market. The City of Richmond received \$9.1 million to support the construction of 25 units of housing for women and women with children who are at risk of homelessness. The project is also being supported with capital and operating funding from BC Housing in addition to contributions provided by the City. The project will be completed in the first quarter of 2025. The HAF grant program supports the construction of more homes through expediting and streamlining of local development approvals and offsetting the costs incurred by those who build housing. In 2024, the City was allocated \$8.9 million in HAF funding to help fast-track the review of affordable rental housing and market rental housing developments. The City is eligible for a further \$8.9 million per year in 2025, 2026 and 2027.



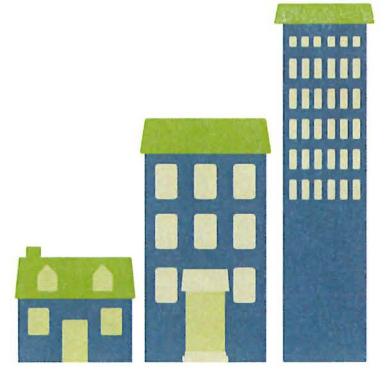
Non-Profit, Social Service and Faith-Based Organizations

Non-profit, social service and faith-based organizations, their staff and community volunteers play a critical role in supporting the needs of residents experiencing homelessness. These organizations deliver critical shelter, outreach and supportive services to clients to help navigate and access services, identify individual goals and priorities, promote independence, achieve housing stability, and ultimately participate fully in the community. Outreach, drop-in and shelter programming provided by these organizations supports clients by working with them to develop individualized plans to help them advance their own goals and priorities while addressing any unique barriers to accessing appropriate types of housing. Among the tangible services provided are:

- Referrals to government programs, healthcare and mental health services;
- Supportive programming including life and employment training skills;
- Community meals and food delivery;
- Access to washroom facilities, hot showers and laundry;
- Street outreach to individuals sheltering outdoors or in vehicles;
- Social and community connection;
- Provision of affordable housing units; and
- Assistance in finding appropriate affordable housing units.

In addition to these important services, the non-profit sector continues to provide valuable insight into the needs and priorities of the individuals they support in the community.



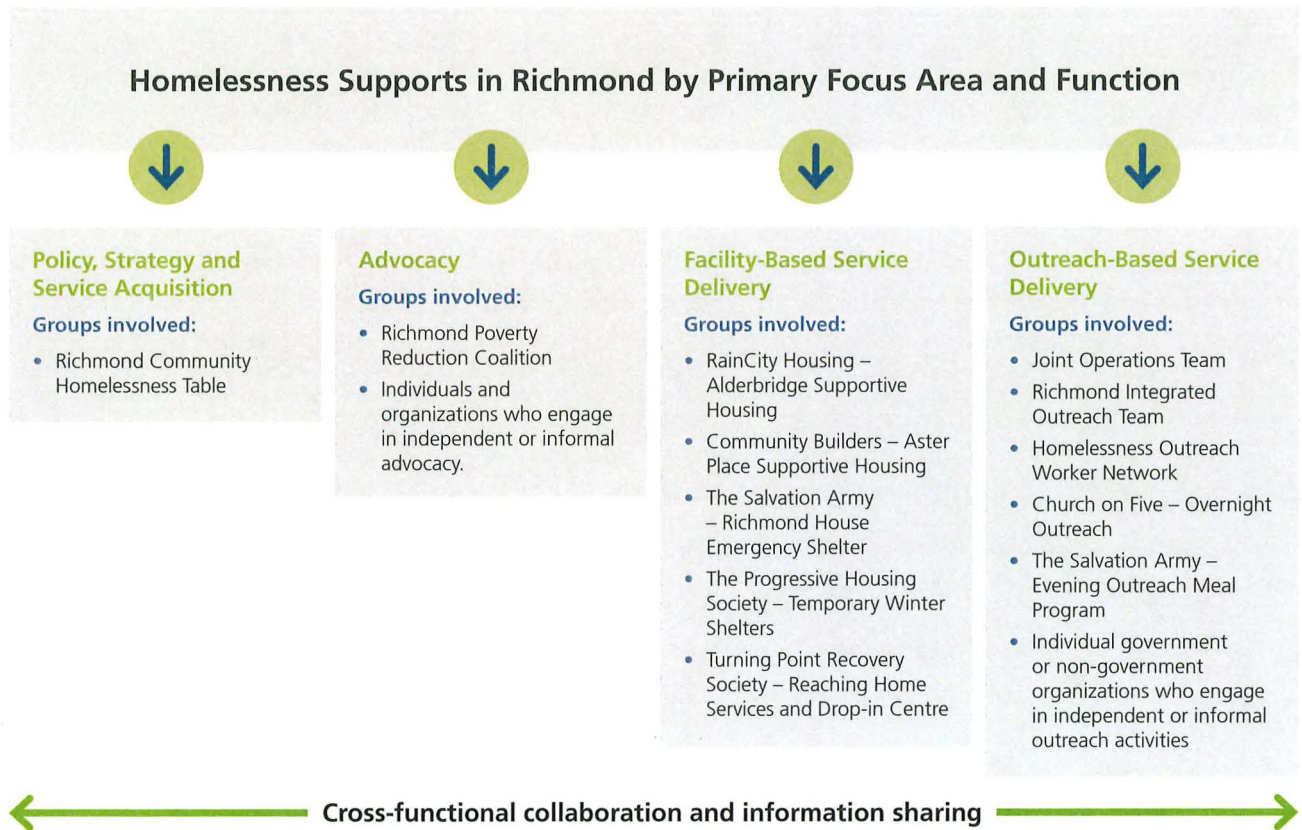


HOMELESSNESS IN RICHMOND IN 2024

Service Integration and Collaboration

There is currently a diverse range of individuals, groups and organizations focused on various aspects of Richmond’s response to homelessness including advocacy, service delivery, food initiatives, direct outreach, referral and social supports. These individuals, groups and organizations all play a critical role in responding to the day-to-day needs of those experiencing homelessness in Richmond by working together to support people to have access to safe, affordable housing. Collaboration and information sharing by the many groups are vital to delivering a comprehensive range of programs and supports while also avoiding duplication and focusing valuable time where it can be most effective. Figure 1 outlines the primary functions of groups in Richmond that provide supports to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Figure 1: Homelessness Supports in Richmond



In 2024, two new, important groups were formed that have enhanced service navigation and integration of individualized, client-centred planning and community outreach amongst the broad range of organizations providing services to individuals experiencing homelessness in Richmond. The Richmond Integrated Outreach Team and the Homelessness Outreach Worker Network enable a more integrated approach to providing support to individuals who are unsheltered. In addition, this has enabled the community to better estimate and plan for the number of individuals who are actively homeless or currently unsheltered at any given time. This enhanced integration is a direct outcome of the creation of these new groups and work will be carried out in collaboration with the City of Richmond’s new Homelessness Outreach Program and the Richmond Homelessness Table. The purpose, scope and current membership of each group is outlined in Table 1.



Table 1: Current Richmond Homelessness-related Groups

Name	Members
<p>Richmond Community Homelessness Table</p>	<p>The table provides advice related to the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy in addition to identifying emerging issues, best practices, opportunities and policy changes. The table aids in identifying support service and housing gaps, and provides strategic advice and professional guidance regarding new initiatives that meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in Richmond.</p> <p>The membership of the table is comprised of the City, Richmond-based, government-funded, non-profit organizations that directly deliver support services and/or housing services to people experiencing homelessness in Richmond and government entities that directly support these programs. Organizational representatives are intended to be Executive Directors or similar leadership, decision-making roles.</p> <p>Current members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC Housing; • City of Richmond; • Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction; • Vancouver Coastal Health; • Chimo Community Services; • Community Builders; • RainCity Housing; • The Salvation Army; and • Turning Point Recovery Society.
<p>Richmond Integrated Outreach Team</p>	<p>The team is engaged in interagency case planning regarding clients who have provided informed consent to share information between member agencies and who would benefit from being served by multiple programs or services. The purpose of the team is to reduce duplication, provide consistency and support individuals to secure appropriate housing, ultimately reducing the number of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Richmond.</p> <p>Membership consists of staff from organizations who are either non-profit operators or government agencies with a mandate to support homelessness and who work directly in a case management role with clients. In addition, all member organizations must have privacy infrastructure and consent practices in place. All agencies are directly involved in homelessness services in Richmond.</p> <p>Current members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Richmond – Homelessness Outreach Team; • Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction – Community Integration Team; • The Progressive Housing Society – Temporary Winter Shelters at the South Arm Outdoor Pool building and Brighthouse Pavilion; • The Salvation Army – Richmond House Emergency Shelter; • Turning Point Recovery Society – Reaching Home Services and Drop-in Centre; and • Vancouver Coastal Health – Substance Use Outreach, Assertive Community Treatment, Transitions Program and Housing Teams.
<p>Homelessness Outreach Worker Network</p>	<p>This network provides a venue for sharing resources, referral options and service details, and supports relationship building, cooperation and communication between individuals engaged in outreach activities in Richmond.</p> <p>Participation is open to any individual, group, organization or government agency that is directly involved in the delivery of street outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness in Richmond.</p> <p>Current members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Richmond – Homelessness Outreach Team (Co-chair); • Vancouver Coastal Health – Substance Use Outreach and Assertive Community Treatment Teams (Co-chair); • Church on Five – Overnight Outreach; • Individual Outreach Volunteers; • Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction – Community Integration Team; • Parish of St. Albans – Outreach; • The Progressive Housing Society – Temporary Winter Shelters at South Arm Outdoor Pool and Brighthouse Pavilion; • The Salvation Army – Richmond House Emergency Shelter and Evening Outreach Meal Program; • Turning Point Recovery Society – Reaching Home Services and Drop-in Centre; and • Union Gospel Mission – Outreach.

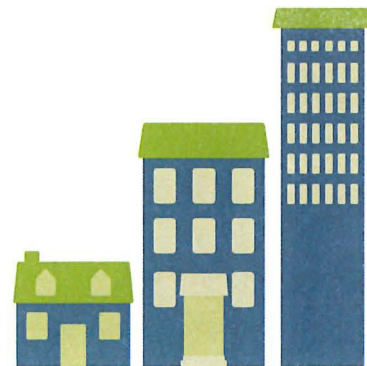
Many organizations and individuals play a role in supporting individuals who are unsheltered or precariously housed in Richmond. The organizations and groups listed are composed of a broad spectrum of service providers who strive to work together, share information and collaborate. The current system of homelessness supports in Richmond, which was significantly enhanced in 2024, provides a range of opportunities for individuals and organizations to share experiences, provide input and work together towards the best outcomes for individuals accessing their services. In 2024, these groups and organizations have directly contributed to enhanced services, expanded outreach capacity and positive outcomes for people experiencing homelessness in Richmond.

Expanded City Initiatives

Throughout 2024, the City continued to implement initiatives to respond to homelessness in Richmond and to identify and secure the resources necessary to support this work. Over the past several years, the City has made significant contributions to support individuals experiencing homelessness and has continued to strengthen its coordinated approach throughout all areas of the organization to respond to and, where possible, reduce homelessness in the community. In recent years, the City has broadened its sphere of influence by expanding services to address community needs that are not provided by senior levels of government or community organizations. These resources currently offered by the City include enhanced winter services such as warming centres in the 2023/24 winter season, the development and implementation of a Homelessness Outreach Program, funding for a drop-in centre and shower program, and use of City spaces to deliver some of these services.

There are a number of examples of expanded City initiatives that began in 2024. Following approval of the 2024 Operating Budget by City Council, the City developed a Homelessness Outreach Program and hired two Homelessness Outreach Workers to support individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Richmond. As part of their role, the Outreach Workers provide community-based street outreach to people experiencing homelessness and are available during the day, evening and on weekends. Furthermore, the Outreach Workers work directly in the community to meet clients wherever they are located in Richmond, giving people access to supports, information and assistance without having to travel to a specific location. It is anticipated that the outcome of this work will reduce the need for more complex interventions from law enforcement and first responders, and reduce service delivery impacts on other City departments. The two new Outreach Workers are part of the Homelessness Team in the Community Social Development Department, which includes a Manager and Program Manager, and complements a larger City interdepartmental team that works together to respond to homelessness in the community.

In 2024, as part of the City's Operating Budget, the City hired four Bylaw Officers to support the City's response to homelessness, including two Bylaw 1 Officers and two Bylaw 2 Officers. The role of the new Bylaw 1 Officer positions is to respond to people living in their vehicles, including camper vans and RVs, and the role of the new Bylaw 2 Officer positions is to respond to people



experiencing homelessness who are living outdoors. These new positions work closely with the Homelessness Outreach Team and focus on rapport building with people experiencing homelessness, using an enforcement approach only as needed.

The Drop-in Centre and Shower Program at the Brighthouse Pavilion, a City-owned facility, continued to operate throughout 2024. Funded by the province through the UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services grant from December 2021 to March 2024, the City continued to fund this program through the 2024 Operating Budget starting in April 2024. The Drop-In Centre and Shower Program are currently operated by Turning Point Recovery Society, a local non-profit service provider, and offer critical resources, referrals and supports for people experiencing homelessness in the community, including access to shower and laundry facilities, lunches and service navigation referral supports.

During the winter season, additional supports and shelter spaces have been made available for people experiencing homelessness in the community. During the 2023/24 winter season, with the support of City Council, the Drop-in Centre at Brighthouse Pavilion expanded its days and hours of operation to 12 hours per day, seven days per week. To help support individuals from being exposed to the cold, wet or snow overnight, the City also expanded the operations of the Warming Centres located at the Brighthouse Pavilion and the South Arm Outdoor Pool building during the 2023/24 season. These programs operated 12 hours per night, every night, instead of only operating on nights of extreme winter weather. During the 2024/25 winter season, there are two nightly Temporary Winter Shelter options for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Temporary Winter Shelter at the Brighthouse Pavilion offers 15 spaces and is funded by the City and BC Housing. The Temporary Winter Shelter located at the South Arm Outdoor Pool building has 20 spaces and is funded exclusively by BC Housing. Both of these shelter options are open every night over the course of the winter season and are operated by The Progressive Housing Society.

In an ongoing effort to connect community members to resources which can reduce poverty and prevent homelessness, the City, in partnership with the Richmond Public Library, continued to host monthly Community Services Pop Ups and launched the Community Services Connectors Program. The Pop Up events provide low-income Richmond residents with consistent access to a wide variety of social service supports and resources from approximately 15 different community organizations. The Connectors Program provides peer-led navigational supports to residents in areas outside the city centre and outside of typical business hours.

Through these substantial enhancements to City services, the City's capacity to respond to homelessness in Richmond continues to increase. By working together, in a collaborative, cross-functional way, the City and its partners continue to deliver a range of important, high quality initiatives to support individuals experiencing deep poverty and complex situations that have resulted in homelessness.

Completion of the Union of BC Municipalities Strengthening Communities' Services Grant

In 2024, the City concluded a number of noteworthy initiatives made possible by \$3.35 million in provincial funding received through the UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services Program Grant. This work took place between December 2021 and March 2024. These initiatives addressed homelessness in multiple ways including improving the well-being of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Richmond, improving the coordination of supports among service providers, and increasing staff capacity to use a trauma-informed approach to work with unhoused Richmond residents. A brief description of the initiatives that continued in 2024 is provided below.

1. Drop-in Centre at Brighthouse Pavilion

This initiative supported the operation of a Drop-in Centre for people experiencing homelessness, and provided operating funding for the non-profit service provider, Turning Point Recovery Society. The Drop-in Centre continues to play an important role by providing enhanced homelessness services and referrals, basic counselling supports, access to computers and the internet, and a daily lunch program.

2. Shower Program at Brighthouse Pavilion

This initiative provided funding for Turning Point Recovery Society to operate a Shower Program for people experiencing homelessness. The Shower Program continues to provide access to shower and laundry services; replacement clothing; and access to toiletries and personal hygiene supplies.

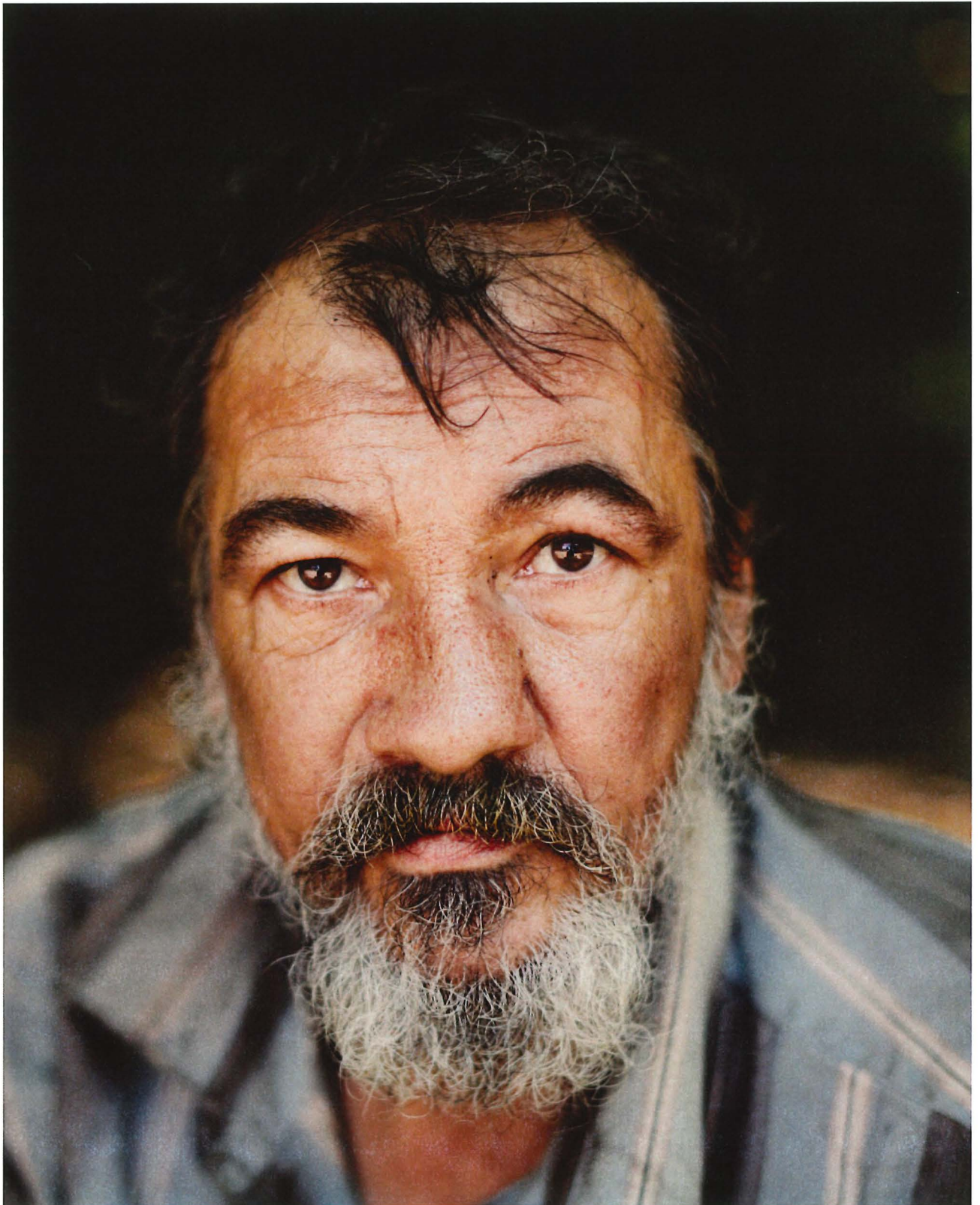
3. Enhanced Winter Services

This initiative supported the operation of Winter Warming Centres over the 2023/2024 winter season at both the South Arm Outdoor Pool building and at the Brighthouse Pavilion. These spaces continue to be used as places for individuals experiencing homelessness to rest and have warm drinks and snacks overnight during the winter months.

4. City Training Program

This initiative initially included the development of a two-part custom staff-training program to support City employees and partner organizations to provide trauma-informed and inclusive customer service. These courses, which were developed in partnership with the Homelessness Services Association of BC, continue to be offered through the City's Human Resources Department.

Funding received from the UBCM grant allowed the City and its partners to implement a wide range of initiatives to address homelessness in the community over a 27-month period. When grant funding concluded in March 2024, many of the initiatives it had supported continued as noted through alternative funding sources or in a modified format, continuing to provide ongoing benefits to the community. For example, programs such as the Drop-in Centre and Shower Program continue to operate through the City's operating budget, with other programs such as the Winter Shelters continue to operate through other funding sources. See Appendix A for a table outlining the outcomes of each of the grant initiatives and the continuation of these initiatives following the conclusion of UBCM grant funding.



HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY HIGHLIGHTS IN 2024

Strategic Direction 1: Prevent Pathways into Homelessness

The City and community partners are committed to taking a proactive approach to homelessness prevention. Prevention practices include reducing structural barriers (such as low income and lack of affordable housing options), providing intervention measures for households at risk of experiencing homelessness (such as rent supplements), and providing supportive housing and services for people who have experienced homelessness to help stabilize their experience and break the cycle of homelessness. This strategic direction aligns with the City of Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy and the City of Richmond Market Rental Policy, and aims to create affordable rental options across the housing continuum. Prevention also involves coordinated local outreach and intake processes to help reduce barriers to navigating and accessing critical supports and services before a crisis deepens. From a municipal standpoint, the role of the City is to ensure the appropriate mix of housing options are available to meet the housing needs of vulnerable residents and to facilitate collaboration among community partners to develop prevention services.

Actions and Achievements

- In 2024, the construction of the Pathways Affordable Housing development, a six-storey, 80-unit affordable housing building, commenced. Located on City-owned land at 5491 No. 2 Road, the project is a partnership between the City, BC Housing and Pathways Clubhouse Society of Richmond. The development will offer affordability at three levels including affordable market rental, rent-geared-to-income, and deep subsidy units, which will help provide housing stability for low-income residents who cannot afford market rental housing, including those who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing homelessness. Construction completion is targeted for the end of 2027.
- In 2024, construction of the affordable housing project on City-owned lands at 4831 Steveston Highway began. This project is funded by \$9.1 million funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative program in addition to capital and operating funding from BC Housing. The City has contributed the land for this project. The development will provide 25 units of affordable housing for women, including women with children, experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Turning Point Housing Society, a non-profit housing operator with a long-standing connection to Richmond, will manage the building. The project is targeted for occupancy in early 2025.



- In 2024, the City, in partnership with the Richmond Public Library and community service providers, held monthly Community Services Pop Ups at the Brighthouse Library. The Pop Ups, which received honorable mention at the 2024 Union of BC Municipalities Community Excellence Awards, provided 941 Richmond residents with the opportunity to access a wide variety of supports and resources from a range of community organizations. These resources included information about accessing affordable rental housing, mental health and substance use resources, community food supports and support to access government benefits.
- The City and Richmond Public Library launched the Community Services Connectors Program in 2024 to provide increased navigational supports to residents in areas outside the city centre and outside of typical business hours. This program includes two components: weekly peer-led drop in sessions to help residents navigate social service and government systems, and workshops facilitated by local community organizations focused on topics relevant to low-income Richmond residents. A total of 370 individuals participated in the Connectors Program in 2024.
- In 2024, the City transitioned the Affordable Housing section of the Community Social Development Department into a stand-alone Housing Office and committed additional resources to advance initiatives that will help deliver housing along the housing continuum. The Housing Office will continue the work previously initiated in the Affordable Housing section, through funding received through the federal government's Housing Accelerator Fund and will oversee the development of non-market housing intended to serve those who require supports to maintain housing stability. In addition, the Housing Office will work with homebuilders to leverage private sector residential development to secure low income, moderate income and market rental housing. The City of Richmond is recognized as a leader in bringing housing options to the community and with additional resources, new opportunities are being explored to address the growing and diverse needs of Richmond residents.



Strategic Direction 2: Support Residents who are Experiencing Homelessness

As each person's experience of homelessness is unique, communities require a variety of different services and supports to meet the diverse needs of residents experiencing homelessness. Richmond continues to strengthen its network of homelessness service providers that offer coordinated, compassionate, non-judgmental access to necessary programs and services to increase stability, health and safety for residents experiencing homelessness. Under this strategic direction, the City's role is to facilitate partnerships and collaboration among service providers and continue to advocate to senior levels of government for sustainable resources to support the complex needs of this population.

Actions and Achievements

- In response to the increased number of individuals experiencing homelessness and increasingly complex challenges related to homelessness in Richmond over the past several years, the City developed a Homelessness Outreach Program and hired two Homelessness Outreach Workers. In addition, the City expanded the supports available through the Community Bylaws and Licencing Department with the hiring of four new Bylaw Officers, which were approved in the City's 2024 Operating Budget. The two new Homelessness Outreach Workers provide community street outreach to people experiencing homelessness during the days, evenings and weekends and provide support and referrals to individuals located throughout the city. The four new Bylaw Officers respond to people experiencing homelessness in the community, including individuals living in their vehicles and those living outdoors.
- In March 2024, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Strengthening Communities' Services Grant program funding concluded. Between 2021 and 2024, the City implemented a range of programs and services to support Richmond residents experiencing homelessness using the \$3.35 million in provincial funding received through this grant. More information about the grant achievements and outcomes is outlined in the introductory section of this document and in Appendix A.
- The City's Homelessness and Emergency Programs teams worked closely together in 2024. This included ensuring that community outreach workers received resources on how to respond to extreme heat events and air quality advisories, and were aware of the adverse impacts on individuals who are sheltering outside, have other health conditions or may use a range of substances. In addition, these two teams worked closely together in anticipation of the Chilcotin landslide debris flow reaching Richmond in order to monitor the potential impact on individuals experiencing homelessness. This included monitoring areas where individuals experiencing homelessness could be sheltering or accessing the shoreline and potentially placed at risk should this event



have had damaging effects when it reached Richmond. Planning for this event included consideration of the needs, locations and risks for individuals experiencing homelessness, which could then be conveyed to the Richmond Outreach Worker Network. Through this approach, staff were able to quickly disseminate information and ensure that no individuals were at risk of injury from this event. This experience will help inform future operations and emergency responses in Richmond to ensure that the needs of individuals who may be sheltering outside are considered and addressed when preparing for disasters or community wide-emergencies.

- Between May and December 2024, the number of individuals experiencing homelessness who were connected to and accessed services through the new Richmond Integrated Outreach Team, increased from 52 individuals in the month of May 2024 to 75 individuals in the month of December 2024. This increase in individuals connected to the team demonstrates the success of this joint case management initiative in supporting individuals to access multi-agency supports. It is important to note that these numbers reflect the cumulative caseload once those who are no longer actively experiencing homelessness are removed from the list and also includes individuals who are informally or precariously housed. Of the 75 individuals connected to this team in December 2024, 61% of people were experiencing unsheltered homelessness, such as people sleeping on the street or in tents, 15% of people were living in a vehicle and 18% of people were informally or precariously housed, however were not considered to be unsheltered. During this same period, 77 people exited from unsheltered homelessness in Richmond, including 51% who moved into housing or supportive housing, 19% who entered into a treatment or detox program and 10% who left Richmond or reunified with friends or family. Furthermore, in December 2024, 51% of individuals involved with the team had an identified housing plan that they were working towards.
- In 2024, the City continued to work closely with many organizations, including the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR), Richmond RCMP and Vancouver Coastal Health, to provide coordinated outreach to connect individuals experiencing homelessness with critical supports and services in the community. This included work with the Richmond RCMP Detachment's dedicated Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) whose mandate includes outreach to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. In 2024, VPU conducted outreach in partnership with these other organizations on 47 occasions.

- The City’s Joint Operations Team (JOT) currently serves as the primary group to coordinate and respond to concerns, complaints or issues that have an intersection with homelessness. This inter-agency team consists of City representatives from Community Bylaws, Building Approvals, Community Social Development, Community Safety Administration, Parks Operations, Richmond Fire Rescue, Richmond RCMP, RCMP Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU), BC Emergency Health Services, MSDPR and Vancouver Coastal Health. In 2024, the JOT provided an integrated response to 19 complex homeless files. Sixteen of these files were successfully closed as the individuals involved moved on to other areas or other forms of shelter or housing.
- The Drop-in Centre and Shower Program for individuals experiencing homelessness located in the Brighthouse Pavilion building and operated by Turning Point Recovery Society, continued operations in 2024. These services operated Monday to Friday during the day and provided daily meals, access to computers and the Internet, service navigation and referrals, as well as shower and laundry services to Richmond residents experiencing homelessness. From January to March 2024, the core services of the Drop-in Centre and Shower Program operated with provincial funding through the UBCM Strengthening Communities’ Services Grant. From December 27, 2023 to April 15, 2024, the City provided additional funding to expand services and the Drop-in Centre extended operations to seven days per week, 12 hours per day. On April 16, 2024, the program reverted back to its previous hours and days. Following the end of UBCM grant funding at the end of March 2024, the City funded the ongoing operations of the Drop-in Centre and Shower program. Information on the services delivered is outlined in Tables 2,3 and 4.

Table 2: Brighthouse Drop-in Centre Visits by Month in 2023 and 2024

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
2023	454	490	547	398	562	531	552	680	568	887	902	747	7,318
2024	1,053	804	778	512	383	303	370	370	315	405	357	506	6,156

Table 3: Lunches Served at the Brighthouse Drop-in Centre by Month in 2023 and 2024

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
2023	983	941	841	631	900	968	770	1,018	755	640	920	708	10,075
2024	806	625	702	581	498	515	655	534	444	526	412	440	6,738

Table 4: Showers Provided at the Brighthouse Drop-in Centre by Month in 2023 and 2024

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL
2023	118	93	108	137	169	173	105	173	142	138	142	88	1,586
2024	83	68	67	46	44	35	51	55	53	51	63	92	708



- On October 17, 2024, Homeless Connect, a community-led event coordinated by volunteers, faith-based organizations and community service providers, took place in Brighthouse Park and at the Caring Place. During the event, individuals experiencing homelessness could access a hot breakfast, haircuts, foot care, hearing tests, flu shots and receive hygiene kits, take away snacks and pet supplies. The event involved approximately 20 organizations that provided resources and information throughout the event and leadership from the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition. The City of Richmond’s Homelessness Outreach Team, Community Bylaws and Recreation and Sport staff participated to support the event’s success. The event was attended by 42 guests in total with 22 of these identifying as seniors aged 51–60+ years.
- In 2024, four City facilities, City Centre Community Centre, South Arm Community Centre, Minoru Centre for Active Living and Minoru Arena, remained open on Christmas day to ensure safe, warm spaces were available for residents 365 days a year. Individuals who may be experiencing homelessness or have unstable or inconsistent housing continue to access Richmond’s community centres throughout the year including throughout the holiday season when many other programs are closed. In addition, the Drop-in Centre also remained open on all statutory holidays in December to ensure that support and resources continued to be available.
- Winter Shelter Options for the 2023/24 winter season - The temporary options available for overnight shelter for people experiencing homelessness were comprised of one Winter Warming Centre and one site offering combined Winter Warming Centre and Extreme Weather Response Shelter services.

Winter Warming Centres: During the 2023/24 winter season, Turning Point Recovery Society operated two Winter Warming Centres, one at Brighthouse Pavilion and the other at the South Arm Outdoor Pool building. At the start of the season, each centre provided 15 spaces on nights of extreme winter weather, provincially funded through the UBCM Strengthening Communities’ Services Grant. In December 2023, the City provided additional funding to expand services at both locations to operate every night until April 15, 2024. In addition, the capacity increased to 21 spaces at the South Arm Outdoor Pool building. A summary of the usage is outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Winter Warming Centre (WWC) Usage October 2023 to April 2024

Location	Dates	Average Individuals Per Night	Total Visits
WWC at Brighthouse Pavilion	October 15, 2023 to April 15, 2024	13	1,914
WWC at South Arm Outdoor Pool Building	November 28, 2023 to April 15, 2024	14	1,625
Total Visits			3,539

Extreme Weather Response Shelter: During the 2023/24 winter season, the City continued to work with BC Housing and The Salvation Army to support the operation of the community’s permanent shelter, Richmond House Emergency Shelter. During this time, an additional 10 Extreme Weather Response spaces were provided at Richmond House, which were available on nights of extreme winter weather. At the end of the winter season, BC Housing and The Salvation Army confirmed that these additional 10 spaces would be permanently funded, increasing operations to 55 permanent shelter beds. With these additional spaces, Richmond House provides a total of 55 permanent shelter beds, three meals a day, showers, laundry facilities, and assistance in locating housing, services and recreational opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness in Richmond.

- *Winter Shelter Options for the 2024/25 winter season* - There are two Temporary Winter Shelters available for overnight shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness in Richmond, operated by The Progressive Housing Society, an experienced shelter and housing provider in Metro Vancouver. Temporary Winter Shelters are low-barrier shelters open every night during the winter season that provide cots, snacks and beverages, washrooms and shower access to clients.

The Temporary Winter Shelter at the South Arm Pool building provides 20 spaces for men and women and is open every night between November 10, 2024 and mid-April 2025. The Temporary Winter Shelter at the South Arm Pool building is funded by BC Housing. Between November 10 and December 31, 2024, there were a total of 789 visits to the shelter with an average of 15 individuals a night.

The Temporary Winter Shelter at the Brighthouse Pavilion provides 15 spaces available every night between November 19, 2024 and mid-April 2025. The City and BC Housing have both contributed funding to the operation of this program. Between November 19 and December 31, 2024, there were a total of 404 visits to the shelter with an average of 9 individuals a night. A summary of shelter and warming centre options is outlined in Table 6.



Table 6: Shelter and Warming Centre Options in Richmond, Winter 2023/24 and Winter 2024/25

Facility and Programs	2023/24	2024/25
Richmond House Emergency Shelter and Extreme Weather Response Spaces	Capacity was 45 permanent shelter beds funded by BC Housing. Additional 10 weather-activated spaces, which provided overnight, warm space on nights of extreme weather were available until April 15, 2024 funded by BC Housing.	Increased capacity to 55 permanent shelter beds funded by BC Housing. No additional weather-activated spaces.
Warming Centre and Temporary Winter Shelter at South Arm Outdoor Pool	Winter Warming Centre with expanded access of up to 21 mats open on nights of extreme weather from November to December 2023, and open on a nightly basis from December 2023 to April 15, 2024.	Temporary Winter Shelter with 20 beds open on a nightly basis from November 10, 2024 to mid-April 2025. Funded by BC Housing.
Warming Centre and Temporary Winter Shelter at Brighthouse Pavilion	Winter Warming Centre with up to 15 mats open on nights of extreme weather from November to December 2023, and open on a nightly basis from December 2023 to April 15, 2024.	Temporary Winter Shelter with 15 beds open on a nightly basis from November 19, 2024 to mid-April 2025. Funded by the City of Richmond and BC Housing.
Drop-in Centre at Brighthouse Pavilion	Expanded access to a daily warm space. Open Monday to Sunday from 8am to 8pm until April 15, 2024.	Open Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm until January 2025 when hours expanded to 8am to 8pm for the duration of the winter season.

Strategic Direction 3: Provide Pathways out of Homelessness

Individuals are best able to transition out of homelessness when a range of types of housing and support services are available. The Housing First approach prioritizes moving people from homelessness into housing and then providing individualized supports and services as needed. This approach provides stability, which allows individuals to easily access resources and attend to their physical and mental health, education or employment goals. The City works with service provider organizations to coordinate service delivery and to advocate to the provincial and federal governments for increased funding for shelters and affordable housing in Richmond.

The increase in homelessness over the past several years, combined with the increased complexity of individual needs, requires expanded affordable housing and housing with supports. A lack of a range of housing options in the community prevents movement along the housing continuum and creates a significant barrier for individuals seeking to transition out of homelessness. Significant work continues in Richmond on the expansion of this continuum of housing. A summary of the current options is outlined in Table 7.

Actions and Achievements

- The Homelessness Outreach Workers engaged in one-on-one, individualized case planning with individuals in the community who were experiencing unsheltered homelessness and helped to connect them to resources and referrals including facilitating access to income assistance or other government benefits, rental subsidies or rent banks, and housing. Since the inception of the Homelessness Outreach Program in April 2024, a total of 81 people have received individualized assistance and referrals and 12 individuals have been supported to obtain housing or enter treatment through the involvement of the Outreach Workers.
- The new Richmond Integrated Outreach Team, a collaborative interagency group, successfully supported 77 people to exit from unsheltered homelessness in Richmond, including 51% who moved into housing, 19% who entered into a treatment or detox program and 10% of people who left Richmond or reunified with friends or family. In December 2024, 51% of individuals involved with the team had a housing plan that they were working towards.

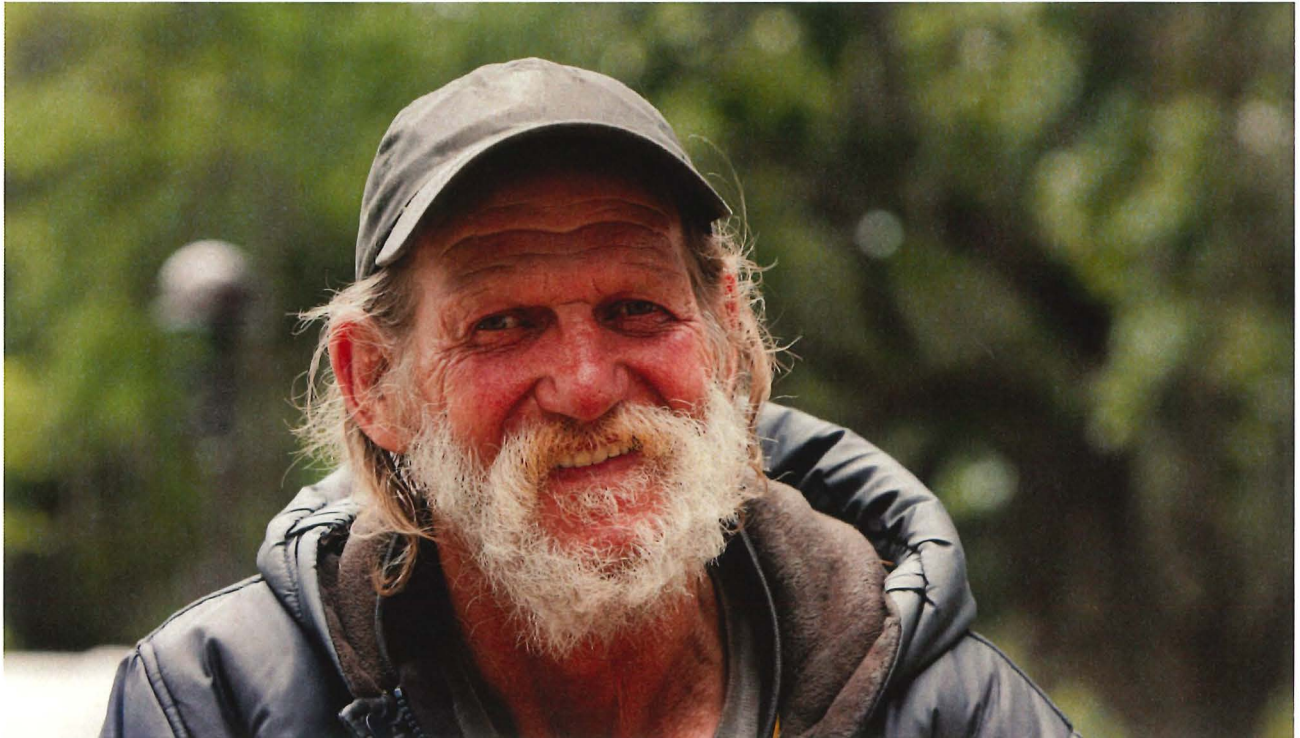


Table 7: Continuum of Supportive and Affordable Housing Options in Richmond

Program or Service	Recent Initiatives
Alderbridge Supportive Housing	40 units – Occupied These rental homes include supportive services such as breakfast and a hot meal each day, life-skills training, access to primary health and mental health services and 24 hour on-site staff.
Aster Place Supportive Housing	40 units – Occupied These rental homes include supportive services such as breakfast and a hot meal each day, life-skills training, access to primary health and mental health services and 24 hour on-site staff.
Pathways Non-Market Housing	80 units – Under construction The 80 unit building will provide a mix of housing options including 24 studios, 36 one-bedroom units, 15 two-bedroom units and five three-bedroom units. Five per cent of the units will be fully accessible for people living with disabilities and rent will be geared to low-income and moderate-income households. Construction began in 2024. Anticipated occupancy in 2027.
Rapid Housing Initiative Affordable Housing Project – Steveston Highway and Railway Avenue	25 units – Under construction The 25 unit building will include 15 studios and 10 two-bedroom units for women and women with children who have low-income. Construction began in 2024. Anticipated occupancy in 2025.

Strategic Direction 4: Foster Collaboration and Community-building among Partners

Homelessness is a complex and multifaceted issue that cannot be resolved by one level of government or organization alone. Collaboration among government agencies, homelessness service providers and individuals with lived experience is essential to meeting the needs of residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Working together to coordinate services, share information and align resources is the most efficient and cost-effective means of meeting community need and enhancing community-based service delivery capacity. The City's role related to this strategic direction includes providing leadership for a Community Homelessness Table, Outreach Worker Network and Integrated Outreach Team, which connect relevant key homelessness service providers, support collaboration and alignment on an ongoing basis, and reduce the duplication of services.

Actions and Achievements

- In 2024, the City provided a total of \$138,693 towards homelessness and food security-related initiatives through the Health, Social and Safety (HSS) Grants.
- The City provided one-time, additional funding to three Richmond organizations to enhance their food programs security initiatives. These organizations also received funding through the HSS Grants. This funding included:
 - \$54,560 to Church on Five to support its After Hours Outreach Program delivering hot meals and essential items to the homeless population in Richmond;
 - \$12,210 to Parish of St. Alban's to continue to operate various meal programs supporting people living on low income and those experiencing homelessness; and
 - \$24,097 to Pathways Clubhouse towards a meal program providing its members with healthy meals at affordable prices.
- The Richmond Community Homelessness Table, comprised of government agencies and government-funded community-based homelessness service providers, met regularly throughout 2024. The Table's primary role continues to be the provision of a strategic venue for collaboration amongst intergovernmental partners and government-funded service providers in order to advance cross-sectoral initiatives and policies.



- The Homelessness Outreach Worker Network was formed in 2024 and provides an opportunity for outreach workers across Richmond to gather, network and share information in order to build relationships, share resources and ultimately, better support individuals experiencing homelessness. This group has met on a monthly basis since June 2024 and is open to any individual, group, organization or government agency that is directly involved in the delivery of street outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness in Richmond. Current members include the City of Richmond Homelessness Outreach Team and Vancouver Coastal Health who coordinate the meetings, as well as other organizations and individual volunteers that provide outreach services to people experiencing homelessness in the community.
- In 2024, leadership and supervisory staff from several City departments, Community Associations and Societies, the Richmond Public Library and the Richmond Olympic Oval received enhanced support resources and information in order to deliver consistent, person centred, customer service for individuals who may be experiencing homelessness within their areas of focus. This work will continue in 2025 with the development of a Supervisory Toolkit to support leadership staff to implement staff engagement, education and discussion through readings, activities and scenario-based questions that can be used individually, in staff meetings or in small groups to extend the knowledge and skills of front line and customer facing staff.
- Advocacy to senior levels of government continued in 2024. Richmond has a need for additional shelter spaces and a mix of housing options along the housing continuum, enhanced outreach from other government entities, and increased access to mental health and substance use support including detox and treatment options.
- To further support individuals experiencing homelessness, the City updated and disseminated resources to improve access to information and referrals. This information included the Homelessness Resource Guide, a new crisis support mini-reference card, information on the drop in centre and shower program, information on low cost/no cost meals, locations of drinking fountains and details on how to access warming centres or shelters. In addition, through regular coordinated outreach conducted by members of the Joint Operations Team and the Homelessness Outreach Team, vulnerable individuals received this information as well as referrals to a range of programs to address housing, physical or mental health issues, substance use treatment and harm reduction supports.

Strategic Direction 5: Communicate, Research and Monitor Homelessness

Richmond is committed to creating an inclusive community for all residents. Because homelessness is not always visible, many residents may not be aware of the needs and circumstances of fellow community members who are experiencing homelessness. Where there is a lack of understanding, there can be misconceptions and stigma, which can act as barriers for individuals experiencing homelessness in accessing critically needed services and housing options. The City's primary role in this strategic direction is to promote opportunities to increase awareness and understanding relating to homelessness. Enhancing public awareness helps to foster a more welcoming, inclusive and safe community for all residents. Ensuring that the City and local service providers are up-to-date with information related to Richmond's residents experiencing homelessness helps to equip partners with the necessary information to align resources and effectively advocate to senior levels of government to meet Richmond-specific needs.

Actions and Achievements

- The City continued to liaise with local service providers to monitor ongoing trends related to homelessness, particularly the changing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. Information regarding estimated rates of homelessness, as well as the characteristics and identified needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in Richmond informed the City's advocacy with senior levels of government throughout 2024.
- In 2024, the City offered two virtual targeted awareness and education programs that are a continuation of programs initially funded using UBCM grant funding.
 - *City Staff Homelessness Training*: By the end of 2024, 434 City staff have completed the virtual, self-paced Level 1 training course 'Working with People Experiencing Homelessness'. This training program was developed by City staff in partnership with the Homelessness Services Association of British Columbia (HSABC).
 - *Community Conversations*: In 2024, the City finalized an online self-guided community dialogue series. This is hosted on the City website and is available to the Richmond community. The series, entitled *Home: A Community Conversation on Homelessness*, provides the opportunity for community members from diverse backgrounds to be educated about the complexities and common misunderstandings associated with the circumstances and experiences of homelessness.
- October 13–19, 2024 was proclaimed Homelessness Action Week in Richmond. The Proclamation included recognition that effective action to reduce homelessness and promote social inclusion requires all levels of government to work with individuals, non-profit organizations, Indigenous and community groups and private sector representatives to find solutions that will bring down barriers that hold people back, deliver supports that lift people up and make Richmond better and more inclusive for everyone.



CONCLUSION

The Homelessness Strategy is guided by the vision that:

By 2029, homelessness in Richmond is rare, brief and non-recurring. Richmond is an inclusive community that works in collaboration to provide a continuum of housing and support services.

During this past year, the collaborative actions described in this report contributed towards achieving the Homelessness Strategy's vision. In 2024, the City, other government agencies, local service providers and individual members of the community continued to work together to make notable progress towards addressing the strategic directions and actions identified in the Council-adopted Homelessness Strategy. Over the first five years of the Homelessness Strategy, substantial progress has been made to advance the actions and, to date, 24 of the 32 actions have been initiated and are either complete or in progress.

While significant progress was made towards achieving a number of actions outlined in the Homelessness Strategy, homelessness remains a critical and growing issue in the community. The City of Richmond is committed to using its role as a leader to respond to the needs of Richmond residents at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. Richmond-based service providers are well connected, understand the unique needs of members of the community who are experiencing homelessness and continue to build capacity to meet their evolving needs. In 2025, the City will continue to advocate to senior levels of government for affordable housing and supports for vulnerable Richmond residents who are experiencing homelessness towards the goal of ending homelessness in Richmond.



APPENDIX A

UBCM Grant Initiative Outcomes and Program Continuation

Name of Initiative	Initiative Outcomes	Status
Drop-in Centre at Brighthouse Pavilion	December 2021–March 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21,442 lunches served • 12,620 drop-in centre visits 	Funding continued through City operating budget, program remains operational.
Shower Program at Brighthouse Pavilion	December 2021–March 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,668 showers provided • 80 ponchos, 60+ rain jackets and rain suits, and hundreds of pairs of socks, sweat suits and underwear distributed 	Funding continued through City operating budget, program remains operational.
Enhanced Winter Services	December 2021–March 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,490 visits to the Winter Warming Centres at Brighthouse Pavilion and the South Arm Outdoor Pool building 	For the 2024/2025 winter season, BC Housing funded a Temporary Winter Shelter with 20 spaces and the City and BC Housing co-funded a second Temporary Winter Shelter with an additional 15 spaces.
City Training Program	October 2022–July 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 434 staff completed the Level 1 training • 155 staff completed the Level 2 training 	The Level 1 Training is available online for City staff as a self-directed training course, initiative continues.

Name of Initiative		Initiative Outcomes	Status
Homelessness Clinical Support	<i>The VCH Clinical Support Program</i>	October 2021–July 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 clients were housed • 18 Vulnerability Assessment Tools were completed for clients applying to Aster Place Supportive Housing 	VCH secured sustainable funding to continue the program, initiative continues.
	<i>The Salvation Army's Clinical Support Program</i>	April–August 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 clients received 26 oral care treatments • Clients were provided with medical equipment including wheelchairs, other mobility aids and personal hygiene supplies 	Program concluded.
	<i>Turning Point's Clinical Support Program</i>	May–August 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 189 people received haircuts • Nine people received foot care • Two people received critical dental services • One person received updated prescription and glasses • Eight people participated in art therapy • Clients were provided with medical supplies and mobility supports 	Program concluded.
Discharge Planning and Referral Process		Recommendations were provided for improving Richmond's discharge planning for people experiencing homelessness	Ongoing collaboration amongst community service providers and VCH continues without UBCM funding.
Community Awareness and Dialogue		Spring 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three dialogue sessions engaged 73 participants Spring 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six sessions engaged 134 participants 	A virtual, self-guided version of the Community Awareness and Dialogue sessions is final and is available on the City website.
Food Outreach Program		October 2021–July 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average of 146 unique clients served per month • 24,642 meals delivered to individuals in critical need 	Food outreach programs continue to operate in the community funded through various not-for-profit organizations and community grants, including the City's Health, Social and Safety Grant program.



City of Richmond

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Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029 – 2024 Status of Actions

The following table provides a status update on the actions defined in the Homelessness Strategy as of December 31, 2024.

Legend

Status of Actions	
Not yet initiated	Work towards this action has not yet begun.
In Progress	Work towards addressing this action is underway.
Complete	Work towards this action has been accomplished.
Ongoing	Work towards this action has been initiated and will be continuous.

Timeframe and Status of Actions		
Strategic Direction 1: Prevent pathways into homelessness		
Action	Timeframe	Status
1.1 Continue to create affordable housing rental options across the housing continuum.	Ongoing	Ongoing
1.2 Facilitate the creation of a collaborative homeless prevention program in Richmond.	Short-term	In Progress
1.3 Work with Vancouver Coastal Health and other community partners to explore opportunities to enhance wrap-around supports to increase housing stability.	Ongoing	Ongoing
1.4 Explore solutions for discharge planning practices for individuals leaving Richmond-based institutions.	Medium-term	In Progress
Strategic Direction 2: Support residents who are experiencing homelessness		
Action	Timeframe	Status
2.1 Ensure accurate and up-to-date information on supportive services is available.	Short-term	Complete
2.2 Coordinate a Front-line Service Provider Working Group to coordinate support for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness.	Short-term	Complete
2.3 Secure permanent space and sustainable operating funding for an enhanced drop-in program for individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.	Short-term	In Progress
2.4 Enhance coordination of food programs and outreach for residents experiencing homelessness.	Ongoing	Ongoing
2.5 Advocate to senior levels of government to secure funding for the Extreme Weather Response Program or a Winter Shelter.	Short-term	Complete

2.6 Monitor outreach services available in the community and advocate to senior levels of government for additional resources as needed.	Ongoing	Ongoing
2.7 Explore the use of City spaces as Warming Centres.	Short-term	Complete
2.8 Dedicate appropriate resources in order to enhance service provision at City facilities for individuals experiencing homelessness.	Ongoing	Ongoing
2.9 Continue to refine the City's approach to responding to individuals experiencing homelessness on City-owned property.	Ongoing	Ongoing
2.10 Explore opportunities to address storage needs for people experiencing homelessness.	Medium-term	In Progress
2.11 Create shelter and transitional beds for youth experiencing homelessness in the community.	Short-term	Not yet initiated
2.12 Explore opportunities to address the need for culturally-appropriate supports, services, and housing for people experiencing homelessness.	Ongoing	Ongoing
Strategic Direction 3: Provide pathways out of homelessness		
Action	Timeframe	Status
3.1 Enhance the existing coordinated access and referral system in Richmond.	Medium-term	Ongoing
3.2 Work with service providers to create a Supportive Housing Action Plan.	Short-term	In Progress
3.3 Explore the potential of creating a Housing First program in Richmond.	Short-term	In Progress
3.4 Secure funding and a permanent site for supportive housing in Richmond.	Short-term	In Progress
3.5 Ensure that emergency housing services focus on achieving long-term housing options.	Ongoing	Ongoing
Strategic Direction 4: Foster collaboration and community-building among community partners		
Action	Timeframe	Status
4.1 Dedicate appropriate staff resources for homelessness service coordination at the City of Richmond.	Short-term	Complete
4.2 Develop a Community Homelessness Table for collaboration among agencies working to prevent or addressing homelessness.	Short-term	Complete
4.3 Engage with residents with lived experience when designing and implementing significant policies or programs related to addressing homelessness in Richmond.	Ongoing	Ongoing
4.4 Continue the annual Health, Social and Safety Grants to support local homelessness services.	Ongoing	Ongoing
4.5 Monitor and pursue funding opportunities for support services for residents at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Strategic Direction 5: Communicate, research and monitor homelessness

Action	Timeframe	Status
5.1 Implement a local data system to track trends and the changing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness.	Short-term	In Progress
5.2 Provide training regarding homelessness service provision to City and community partner staff working in City facilities.	Short-term	Ongoing
5.3 Raise awareness and educate the community of the factors contributing to homelessness and the benefits of affordable housing and supportive services.	Short-term	In Progress
5.4 Work with community partners to ensure volunteer opportunities are communicated to the public.	Ongoing	Ongoing
5.5 Advocate to senior governments regarding the changing needs of people experiencing homelessness in Richmond and the need for additional funding.	Ongoing	Ongoing
5.6 Report out annually on the progress of the Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029.	Ongoing	Ongoing