



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Planning Committee **Date:** January 30, 2017  
**From:** Cathryn Volkering Carlile **File:** 11-7000-01/2016-Vol  
 General Manager, Community Services 01  
**Re:** RCSAC Municipal Responses to Child and Youth Poverty Report



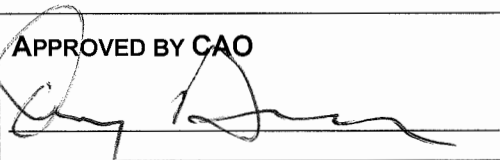
### Staff Recommendation

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 received for information.



Cathryn Volkering Carlile  
 General Manager, Community Services  
 (604-276-4068)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Finance Department Human Resources Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT /            AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> 	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 

## Staff Report

### Origin

At the February 2, 2016 Planning Committee Meeting, the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC) presented a report, "Municipal Responses to Child and Youth Poverty". Following discussion, it was resolved:

*That the report on Municipal Responses to Child and Youth Poverty, from the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee, be received for information and be referred to staff for comment and report back.*

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #2 A Vibrant, Active and Connected City:

*Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs, services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, rich heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active, caring, and connected communities.*

2.1. *Strong neighbourhoods.*

2.2. *Effective social service networks.*

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #5 Partnerships and Collaboration:

*Continue development and utilization of collaborative approaches and partnerships with intergovernmental and other agencies to help meet the needs of the Richmond community.*

5.1. *Advancement of City priorities through strong intergovernmental relationships.*

This report supports the following Social Development Strategy Actions:

*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:*

5.1 *Improve understanding of the characteristics and challenges of low income residents in Richmond. (Short Term 0-3 years and then Ongoing)*

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). (Short Term 0 – 3 years and then Ongoing)*

*Action 6 – Support and encourage community-based initiatives that promote independence and reduce the cost of living for low income households (e.g. community gardens, community kitchens, low income resource directory, social enterprises, and community-based life skills workshops). (Ongoing)*

*Action 12 – Seek opportunities to provide support for children and families through:*

*12.5 Supporting the establishment of family-oriented affordable housing. (Ongoing)*

*12.6 Providing community grants to organizations that offer services to support children and families. (Ongoing)*

*12.7 Providing affordable and accessible child and family-friendly parks, recreation and cultural opportunities, including library programs & services. (Ongoing)*

*12.9 Supporting programs and initiatives that address domestic violence, poverty, mental health and addictions. (Ongoing)*

*Action 35 – Strengthen the City’s already strong collaborative relationship with the Richmond School District, consulting with the district on emerging children, youth and education issues facing the community, advocating for needed programs, and partnering on priority community and social development initiatives. (Ongoing)*

This report responds to the February 2, 2016 Planning Committee Meeting referral identified above.

## **Findings of Fact**

In response to Statistics Canada findings as well as concerns expressed by Richmond front line service providers about children, youth and their families struggling to meet basic needs, the RCSAC prepared a report, “*Municipal Responses to Child/Youth Poverty*” (Attachment 1). While Richmond’s high child poverty rate (24% as reported in the 2016 BC Child Poverty Report Card, highest in Metro Vancouver) is questioned due to possible unreported offshore income based on Canadian and foreign income tax laws, the RCSAC member organizations work with many children, youth and families whose income is insufficient to meet the basic needs of adequate food, clothing and shelter. For example, the Richmond Food Bank served an average of 2,200 people per week in 2016 (1,400 per week through grocery distribution and delivery, and 800 per week through community partner and school meal programs). This is a significant increase from the combined average of 1,350 per week in 2010. The Richmond Food Bank estimates that about one-third of those served are children.

The purpose of the RCSAC report was to explore how various Metro Vancouver municipalities have addressed the needs of low-income families with children and youth, and to inform Richmond service agencies as well as the City of Richmond about measures taken by other municipalities to reduce the impact of poverty on families. Eight municipalities were surveyed

for the study. In addition to Richmond, staff from Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Township of Langley, Delta and New Westminster were interviewed. Topics covered included income subsidies, housing, child care, food security, health, transportation and recreation.

Since the RCSAC research was completed in 2015, some other actions have been undertaken by the municipalities surveyed. The City of New Westminster has endorsed a Community Poverty Reduction Strategy (December 5, 2016), although it must be noted that both the Surrey and New Westminster poverty reduction plans were initiated and funded by non-City sources. The City of Vancouver has also resolved to pursue certification as a “Living Wage Employer” whereby municipal staff and certain contracted workers will be paid the Metro Vancouver Living Wage or more, as determined annually by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, currently \$20.64 per hour including benefits (please note that the City of Richmond currently pays above the 2016 Metro Vancouver Living Wage to all regular City employees, starting at \$26.60 per hour including lieu of benefits and fringe). Of the municipalities surveyed, the City of New Westminster is also a certified Living Wage employer.

As emphasized in the RCSAC report, “Richmond compares favourably in the number and types of services targeted to low-income residents in comparison to other Metro municipalities” (pg. 2, Attachment 1).

### RCSAC Proposed Actions

The RCSAC review of municipal actions resulted in five proposals for Richmond’s consideration:

1. That the City of Richmond makes poverty objectives of the Social Development Strategy a priority for implementation and that this priority is well understood by City Council and staff and communicated to the citizenry.
2. That the City of Richmond works with community based organizations and other partners to develop a process for a made-in-Richmond Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy, using the City of Surrey’s Poverty Reduction Plan (2012) as a guide (Attachment 2).
3. That the City of Richmond Community Grants program funding be augmented with 15% of gaming revenues in order to increase the total funds available for community services agencies.
4. That the City of Richmond engages in discussion with the City of Burnaby and the City of Surrey regarding their innovative programs serving low-income children, youth and families, expressly:
  - Burnaby and Surrey’s cost-sharing agreements for recreational, educational and social programs for vulnerable neighbourhoods, with a view to implementing agreements with School District No. 38 and other funders such as the United Way of the Lower Mainland; and
  - Burnaby’s Youth Hub that provides a youth clinic, alternative school and youth centre, with a view to establishing a Youth Hub in Richmond.

5. That the City of Richmond requests that the Provincial Government adopt a BC Poverty Reduction Plan with targets and timelines.

The following analysis will address these five proposals consecutively, focusing on relevant City of Richmond initiatives.

## **Analysis**

### Social Development Strategy Poverty Objectives

The first RCSAC proposal is:

*That the City of Richmond makes poverty objectives of the Social Development strategy a priority for implementation and that this priority is well understood by City Council and Staff and communicated to the citizenry.*

While all Social Development Strategy (SDS) actions are aimed at improving the quality of life for residents, the themes of social equity and social inclusion, most directly addressing family income disparities, are found in “Goal 1: Social Equity and Inclusion”. Within this first goal of Social Equity and Inclusion, four strategic directions are identified:

- (1) expand housing choices,
- (2) enhance community accessibility,
- (3) address the needs of an aging population, and
- (4) help Richmond’s children, youth and families thrive.

SDS implementation is underway, including many actions that contribute to improving the quality of life for low-income Richmond residents. Some aim to directly address social inequity, while others enhance the quality of life for all residents. These include, but are not limited to:

#### Affordable Housing and Homelessness

- *Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS)* through which subsidized, low-end and market rental units, entry-level home ownership units, and secondary suites/coach houses are secured; a Strategy update is currently underway and will be completed in 2017.
  - Low-end market units are secured in developments larger than 80 residential units in exchange for a density increase; staff work with developers to secure a mix of unit types, including larger 2/3 bedroom units that are suitable for families.
  - Family friendly housing (both rental and ownership) has been identified as a need through community consultation during the first phase of the AHS update; staff will bring policy options forward for Council consideration.
  - Policy encouraging accessible housing will be explored.

- *Homelessness Strategy*, to be updated in 2017, as well as City funding provided for a one-year Homelessness Liaison pilot contract and a centralized housing database.

#### Child Care

- *City-owned Child Care Centres*, negotiated from private developers and leased to non-profit providers at a nominal rate to increase the availability of quality facilities; currently 6 centres operating, with 6 more negotiated that will provide a combined total of 480 child care spaces.
- *Early Childhood Development Hub*, one of these negotiated facilities, will provide between 69 and 81 child care spaces, as well as space for other child development and family programs; estimated construction completion date of 2019.
- *Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy* update is currently underway and will be completed in 2017.

#### Community Grants

- *City Grant Programs (Arts & Culture; Child Care; Health, Social & Safety; and Parks, Recreation & Community Events)* supporting non-profit societies that improve the quality of life of Richmond residents in a multitude of ways (e.g. direct services to low-income children, youth and families; increasing food security; improving the quality of child care operations and facilities; free neighbourhood and cultural events).
- *Operating Grants* to the Richmond Centre for Disability & Richmond Therapeutic Equestrian Society to provide a range of supports (e.g. recreation, employment skills development and social opportunities) to children, youth and families with disabilities.

#### Access to Programs and Services

- *Youth Service Plan: Where Youth Thrive (2015 – 2020)* includes actions targeting low-income and vulnerable youth (e.g. increasing the availability of low cost, no cost programs and services; enhancing life skills and building career training into programs and services; and increasing youth participation in these activities).
- *Seniors Service Plan Update: Action and Healthy Living (2015 – 2020)* and *Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan* (referenced as many seniors are an integral part of extended families, often providing care for grandchildren); both include actions to increase the affordability of social and recreational activities for low-income seniors.
- *Recreation Fee Subsidy Program* for all Richmond residents in financial need, currently being updated and will be presented for Council consideration in 2017.
- *Recreation Access Card*, providing a 50% discount to persons with disabilities.
- “*Low Cost, No Cost*”, a guide to low cost and free programs offered through Arts, Culture and Heritage facilities, Community Centres, and Aquatic and Arenas Services; City and Community Partner events and activities.

- *Barrier Free Richmond*, a guide to a range of accessible City and community resources available to individuals and families living in Richmond, including a section on children and youth.
- *Parks and Park Programs*, including seasonal events in parks throughout the city (e.g. Wild Things at the Richmond Nature Park); over 300 community garden plots; Council-endorsed Richmond Food Charter seeking to increase food security for low-income and other residents.
- *Arts, Culture and Heritage Facilities*, including free entrance to the Richmond Museum, London Heritage Farm, Steveston Museum and Tram, and the Richmond Art Gallery; a range of free events, programs and activities offered at these facilities and in the community, including Culture Days and Family Day Weekend activities.
- *Minoru Place Activity Centre* programs and services, including free events and specialized programs such as the “Wellness Connections” program for frail, isolated seniors.
- *Library Services and Programs* including no-cost Babytimes, Storytimes, Reading Buddies, Homework Clubs and Parenting Programs, some offered in partnership with non-profit societies (e.g. Touchstone, Richmond Family Place, Richmond Youth Service Agency); “pop-up” libraries conducted with Syrian refugee families while temporarily housed at the Executive Inn.
- *Social Service Wellness Programs in Schools* whereby the City provides non-profit organizations with the opportunity to offer wellness programs in school gyms through the City-School Board Partnership Agreement; combined with sport and recreation non-profits, a total of 26 community groups used school facilities in the 2014/2015 school year.
- *Richmond Community Wellness Strategy*, prepared in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and the School District No. 38, including strategic actions aimed at “reducing barriers to living a physically active life for vulnerable populations and people living with a disability”; a Strategy update, including two additional focus areas of mental health and social well-being, is underway and will be completed in 2017.
- *Major Events* with free entrance, including Ships to Shore, the Richmond Maritime Festival and the Richmond World Festival, with additional events planned for Canada150 celebrations.

#### Other Financial Assists

- *Nominal Lease Payments and Permissive Tax Exemptions* for non-profit societies leasing City properties including Richmond Caring Place Society, housing 13 non-profit tenants serving children, youth and families; Richmond Family Place; Richmond Centre for Disability; Richmond Society for Community Living Group Homes; Developmental Disabilities Association and others.

The breadth and depth of these undertakings demonstrates that, as advised by the RCSAC, social equity strategic directions are indeed City priorities in the SDS implementation. A more comprehensive SDS implementation plan and update will be presented in a forthcoming report to City Council in 2017.

Extensive community consultations are currently underway to develop various social equity plans identified in the SDS (Affordable Housing Strategy Update; Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy Update; Recreation Fee Subsidy Program Update), and others will be initiated in

2017 (Homelessness Strategy Update). As these consultations make the SDS very much a “living document” that has the capacity to identify and respond to emerging challenges, issues and trends, staff will continue SDS strategy implementation and communication as an effective means of addressing City roles in supporting low-income residents.

### Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan

The RCSAC’s second proposed action is:

*That the City of Richmond works with community based organizations and other partners to develop a process for a made-in-Richmond Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy, using the City of Surrey’s Poverty Reduction Plan (2012) as a guide.*

While the City of Surrey participated in the development of this plan, it is not a City of Surrey document as indicated in the above recommendation. It was developed and led by Vibrant Surrey, a non-profit society, with funding from the McConnell Foundation to facilitate poverty reduction efforts. The project was guided by a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society, the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force, Fraser Health Authority, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and the City of Surrey. The City of Surrey subsequently adopted the Plan as a guide for City actions within its mandate and available resources, while also identifying the need for community action on this Plan.

Many innovative community initiatives aimed at reducing poverty in Richmond have been undertaken, or are currently in progress, under the auspices of numerous non-profit societies, community tables and statutory organizations. While the actions of specific non-profit societies toward this goal are significant and critically important to low-income residents, they are too numerous to list herein. Examples of projects undertaken by community tables, including non-profit representatives, are described below:

- Richmond Children First

Richmond Children First (RCF) is a committee of organizations serving children and their families funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. RCF conducted an extensive project, “The Face of Child Poverty”, to better understand the circumstances and experiences of low income families, as well as to educate front line staff and stakeholder organizations about these realities. RCF is currently convening a consortium to guide “Avenues of Change”, a project administered by Touchstone Family Association with three-year funding from the United Way of the Lower Mainland (2016 to 2018) that aims to improve access to services and social connections for marginalized families living in the City Centre. RCF membership includes representatives of children and family-serving non-profit agencies, Vancouver Coastal Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, School District No. 38 and City of Richmond staff.

- Richmond Homelessness Coalition

As identified in their Terms of Reference, the Richmond Homelessness Coalition (RHC) aims to end homelessness in Richmond with the understanding that permanent affordable housing options and individualized supports are a primary component of generating a



long-term solution to end homelessness. Membership of the RHC includes representatives from local non-profit housing and service providers, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, RCMP, community organizations and individuals, the faith community, the private sector and City of Richmond staff.

- Richmond Poverty Response Committee

The Richmond Poverty Response Committee (RPRC) has received funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Richmond Community Foundation to conduct a project, “Eliminating Barriers to Participation for People Experiencing Poverty” that will identify and propose local Richmond solutions to persistent barriers that effectively bar low-income people from participating fully in society. The project aims to establish a self-advocacy network of those with lived experience of poverty; facilitate awareness with local service providers; and provide opportunities to bring people together as engaged citizens (e.g. community forums). Organizational representatives, including City staff, will participate as this project progresses.

This list is by no means exhaustive. As reported in the RCSAC 2016 Annual Report and 2017 Work Plan, there are 38 committees or community tables currently meeting in Richmond, many of which are dedicated to improving child, youth and family well-being in the face of financial and other challenges. As illustrated, the City participates in many of these community undertakings, and staff will continue to be involved in such collective action.

### Community Grant Funding

The RCSAC’s third proposed action is:

*That the City of Richmond Community Grants program funding be augmented with 15% of gaming revenues in order to increase the total funds available for community service agencies.*

As part of a 2011 City Grant Program Review, the overall City Grant budget was increased by 35% based on an assessment of appropriate funding levels. Even before this increase, the City’s grant funding compared favourably with that provided by other municipalities based on a comparative analysis conducted as part of the Grant Program Review. Furthermore, since 2011, the City has increased the City Grant budget annually with a Cost of Living increase to ensure that City Grant levels keep pace with rising costs. In 2016, a total of \$834,655 was distributed through the City Grant Program.

### Burnaby and Surrey’s Cost-Sharing Agreements for Vulnerable Neighbourhoods

The RCSAC’s fourth proposed action is:

*That the City of Richmond engages in discussion with the City of Burnaby and the City of Surrey regarding their innovative programs serving low-income children, youth and families, expressly:*

*Burnaby and Surrey's cost-sharing agreements for recreational, educational and social programs for vulnerable neighbourhoods, with a view to implementing agreements with School District 38 and other funders such as the United Way of the Lower Mainland.*

The RCSAC report refers to Community Schools in Surrey and Burnaby. In Community Schools, the school serves as a hub offering a range of programs, services and supports to children, youth, and their families based on partnerships between the school and community service providers.

While the Community School model has not been pursued in Richmond, the City and School District, as well as non-profit agencies, collaborate in many School District and community initiatives (e.g. the annual Learning and the Brain conference; Richmond Children First; and Collaborative Opportunity for Resources, a VCH committee to coordinate family mental health services).

The City and School District No. 38 also have a partnership whereby schools may be used for community recreation activities when not in use for school purposes, in exchange for City services (e.g. grass-cutting). Initiated in 1988 and originally limited to City and community sport and recreation organizations, this partnership was expanded in 2013 to include social service agencies. In the 2014/2015 school year, a total of 26 community groups including the Multicultural Helping House Society and the Richmond Centre for Disability made use of school facilities through this agreement. The agreement is currently undergoing an administrative review.

With respect to other cost-sharing agreements for recreation programs, the City of Richmond's Recreation Fee Subsidy Program (RFSP) is currently under review. The RFSP provides low-income children and youth with access to activities provided by the City and Community Partners through subsidized admissions and program registrations. Staff are currently consulting with Community Partners about the program update, including options that would provide better support to low-income residents through cost-sharing by the City and Community Partners. A report to City Council is anticipated in 2017.

### Burnaby's Youth Hub

The RCSAC also proposes that the City engage in discussion with the City of Burnaby regarding:

*Burnaby's Youth Hub that provides a youth clinic, alternative school and youth centre, with a view to establishing a Youth Hub in Richmond.*

Recently, the BC Integrated Youth Services Initiative, funded by Vancouver Coastal Health, issued a Request for Proposal to establish a new youth services centre in the Metro Vancouver area. Richmond Addiction Services, in partnership with other youth-serving agencies, submitted a proposal to establish such a centre in Richmond. The City of Richmond participated in this process. While the Richmond proposal was not selected, significant collaboration and planning went into the development of the proposal, leaving Richmond well-positioned should another opportunity arise. The City also works in collaboration with Richmond Community

Associations, School District No.38, Vancouver Coastal Health, RCMP, Touchstone Family Association, Richmond Addictions Services, Richmond Youth Service Agency and others to implement the City's Youth Services Plan through an asset development, relationship-based approach.

### BC Poverty Reduction Plan

On May 24, 2016, Richmond City Council endorsed a resolution for submission to the UBCM calling on the Provincial Government to develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy, with subsequent UBCM endorsement of a similar resolution at their 2016 Convention. In May 2014, the City also endorsed a UBCM resolution requesting that the Province develop a Social Policy Framework "that will set out key policy directions, values, priorities, roles and expectations, and guide the creation of public policy to meet our social needs now and into the future". The City has also advocated to the Province on many other occasions on behalf of residents needing financial relief (e.g. April 2016 letter seeking the elimination of additional bus pass fees for Persons with Disabilities; October 2016 letter requesting the re-instatement of tuition-free status for all Adult Basic Education courses). However, British Columbia remains the only province or territory in Canada without a poverty reduction strategy.

The Province has worked with select communities around the province to develop local poverty reduction plans. The City of Surrey, as well as New Westminster, participated in the BC Government's "Community Poverty Reduction Strategies" initiative to create or build on local poverty action plans. The project began as a partnership with the UBCM Healthy Communities Committee for administering the program. This partnership, initiated in 2012, included seven communities from around the province and was intended to expand to 40 more over the subsequent two years, although this did not occur. While some variation in local challenges emerged, communities concurred that an overarching provincial vision was needed. UBCM withdrew from this partnership in October 2015, indicating that UBCM would continue to advocate for a provincial poverty plan, deemed to have the greatest potential to effectively reduce poverty in BC.

While acknowledging the critical importance of taking action within municipal mandates, as illustrated by Richmond's many actions, staff concur with the UBCM's assertion that a provincial plan has vastly greater potential for effective poverty reduction. With no direct mandate or funding source to substantively address income disparity, the cost of living or social service provision, municipalities are better positioned to play supporting roles, and Richmond has made significant commitments in this regard.

### Next Steps

Staff will continue to develop, implement and update the many strategies and initiatives outlined in the SDS that aim to improve the quality of life for low-income children, youth and families. Given the number of community consultations currently underway to update social equity strategies, staff do not recommend establishing a separate Poverty Reduction Plan at this time. With respect to the Youth Hub, community stakeholders have laid the groundwork for such a centre through recent collaboration and the City will continue to support such an endeavour, as well as continue to work with various stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to

youth. The City will also continue to participate in community-based initiatives aimed at reducing child, youth and family poverty, currently lead by non-profits, community tables and other levels of government, in partnership with funders and stakeholders. Council will be apprised as reports come forward from these various initiatives.

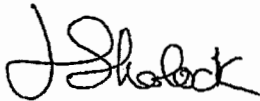
**Financial Impact**

None.

**Conclusion**

The RCSAC has provided a valuable scan of Metro Vancouver municipal actions to reduce poverty for children, youth and their families. The RCSAC also recognizes that Richmond compares favourably in comparison to other Metro Vancouver municipalities with respect to programs and services aimed at reducing poverty. Many SDS actions with the goals of equity and inclusion are currently underway, and others will be implemented as resources permit.

Through City actions, including advocacy to senior governments and staff participation in numerous community initiatives, the City will continue to seek ways to make Richmond “the best place in North America to raise children and youth” and to mitigate the significant challenges facing families struggling with insufficient resources.



Lesley Sherlock  
Social Planner  
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- Att. 1) RCSAC Communication Tool and Report, “Municipal Responses to Child/Youth Poverty”
- 2) Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan, July 2012

**RICHMOND COMMUNITY SERVICES ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE (RCSAC)**

**REPORT  
TO RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL  
ON  
MUNICIPAL RESPONSES TO  
CHILD AND YOUTH POVERTY  
DECEMBER 2015**



**Richmond Community Services  
Advisory Committee**

To: Mayor Brodie and Councillors  
 From: Daylene Marshall and Alex Nixon, Co-Chairs, RCSAC  
 CC: Cathy Carlile, Kim Somerville and Lesley Sherlock  
 Date: December 10, 2015  
 Re: **Municipal Responses to Child/ Youth Poverty Report 2015**

Issue	Potential impact	Agency or individuals affected	Suggested action
<p>The RCSAC commissioned the Richmond Poverty Response Committee (PRC) to investigate and report back on municipal responses to child and youth (ages 0-18) poverty in a number of Metro Vancouver municipalities. Cities chosen for the study were: Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond, Coquitlam, Township of Langley, Delta and New Westminster. Criteria compared were: income subsidies, housing, childcare, food security, health, transportation and recreation. The report supports <i>Richmond's Social</i></p>	<p>The study compared responses that municipalities have adopted to address the needs of low-income families with children and youth. The report found that although the City of Richmond has a comparable number and types of services targeted to low-income families, other municipalities have better integrated approaches and more responsive programs and services. <u>Since Richmond still has the highest level of people living in poverty (22.4%) compared to the other municipalities and the Metro Vancouver average (17.4%), the report shows there is still work to be done.</u> The report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various Departments of the City of Richmond; and</li> <li>• Low-Income families that include children and/or youth; and</li> <li>• Richmond service agencies that provide services and programs for low-income families.</li> </ul>	<p>That Richmond City Council accept the report's findings and recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make poverty objectives in <i>Richmond's Social Development Strategy</i> a priority for implementation;</li> <li>2. Work with community based organizations and other partners to develop a process for a made-in-Richmond Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy, using the <i>City of Surrey's Poverty Reduction Plan (2012)</i> as a guide, see link: <a href="http://www.surrey.ca/community/11554.aspx">http://www.surrey.ca/community/11554.aspx</a>;</li> <li>3. Augment the Community Grants program funding with 15% of gaming revenues in order to increase the total funds available for community service agencies;</li> <li>4. Engage in discussion with the Cities of Burnaby and Surrey on their innovative programs serving low-income children, youth and families with a view to implement same,</li> </ol>

<p><i>Development Strategy, Equity and Inclusion and Goal 1 Action 5 that "initiates a process to improve the characteristics and challenges of low-income residents in Richmond."</i></p>	<p>recommends we follow other municipalities' best practises to improve the lives of our residents.</p>		<p>expressly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burnaby and Surrey's cost-sharing agreements for recreational, educational, and social programs for vulnerable neighbourhoods; and</li> <li>• Burnaby's Youth Hub with a youth clinic, alternative school and youth centre;</li> </ul> <p>5. Request that the Provincial Government adopt a B.C. Poverty Reduction Plan with targets and timelines.</p>
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**RCSAC REPORT ON  
MUNICIPAL RESPONSES TO CHILD/YOUTH POVERTY  
SEPTEMBER 2015**

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## Executive Summary and Recommendations

### Background

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal # 2: A Vibrant, Active and Connected City: "Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs and services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active caring, and connected communities."

This RCSAC report was commissioned to investigate and report back on municipal responses to child/youth poverty in a number of Metro Vancouver municipalities. Cities included in the study were: Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond, Coquitlam, Township of Langley, Delta and New Westminster. Criteria studied were: income subsidies, housing, childcare, food security, health, transportation and recreation.

### Summary

The purpose of this report is to review and compare responses that these eight (8) municipalities have adopted to address the needs of low-income families with children and youth. Richmond compares favourably in the number and types of services targeted to low-income residents in comparison to other Metro municipalities. However Richmond still has the highest level of people living in poverty at 22.4% compared to all the studied cities and the Metro Vancouver average of 17.4%. In addition, subsequent to the completion of this report, the "My Health, My Community" report was released and it reports that Richmond residents' "overall general and mental health is significantly lower compared to health authority and regional averages." It also reports that 38% of residents have a household income of less than \$40,000/year. This result, combined with a higher child/youth poverty rate indicates that there is still work to be done.

Data from this report may be used by Richmond service agencies and the City of Richmond to further support services and programs that lessen the impact of poverty on Richmond families. The report will also be shared with the other Metro Vancouver cities for their information and action.

### Richmond's Strengths

- Low Income Resource Directory administered by Richmond Cares Richmond Gives
- Roving Leaders outreach and recreation program for vulnerable youth;
- Current review of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program;
- Low Cost/ No Cost recreation activities brochures;
- Community Grant program for community non-profits delivering \$2.2 m in 2015;
- Affordable Housing Strategy securing 500 affordable rental units;
- Nine (9) community gardens on City-owned land;
- 200 childcare spaces in City-owned facilities;
- Adoption of the Richmond Children's Charter;
- Ongoing operation of the Garrett Wellness Centre;
- Richmond Social Development Strategy.

## Building on Richmond's Strengths

Richmond Social Development Strategy in particular, directly addresses the criteria chosen for the study. The First Theme is: *Equity and Inclusion—e.g. improving efforts to reduce financial barriers to participation in City programs, finding ways to address affordable housing and homelessness concerns in Richmond.*

Goal 1 Action 5 also states: *Acknowledging that income data from Statistics Canada and other sources alone does not present a complete or fully reliable picture of poverty in Richmond, work with community based organizations, senior governments and other partners to initiate culturally-sensitive process to: (5.1) improve the characteristics and challenges of low income residents in Richmond and (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 (i.e. job readiness programs, affordable housing measures).*

### Recommendations:

1. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond makes poverty objectives of the Social Development Strategy a priority for implementation and that this priority is well understood by City Council and Staff and communicated to the citizenry.
2. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond works with community based organizations and other partners to develop a process for a made-in-Richmond Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy, using the City of Surrey's Poverty Reduction Plan (2012) as a guide. See link: <http://www.surrey.ca/community/11554.aspx>
3. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond Community Grants program funding be augmented with 15% of gaming revenues in order to increase the total funds available for community service agencies.
4. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond engages in discussion with the City of Burnaby and the City of Surrey regarding their innovative programs serving low-income children, youth and families, expressly:
  - Burnaby and Surrey's cost-sharing agreements for recreational, educational and social programs for vulnerable neighbourhoods, with a view to implementing agreements with School District 38 and other funders such as the United Way of Lower Mainland; and
  - Burnaby's Youth Hub that provides a youth clinic, alternative school and youth centre, with a view to establishing a Youth Hub in Richmond.
5. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond requests the Provincial Government to adopt a B.C. Poverty Reduction Plan with targets and timelines.

**Report prepared by Lynda Brummitt,  
Project Coordinator, Richmond Poverty Response Committee**

## **Introduction**

Child Poverty in British Columbia and Richmond in particular has remained stubbornly high since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As provinces across the country have initiated Poverty Reduction Strategies with targets and timelines to address systemic issues relating to poverty, the call for a similar strategy for BC has gone unheeded by the provincial government. In the place of provincial strategy, community poverty reduction pilot projects were put in place in 2012 by the BC Government, in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities, in seven BC communities. Two of the communities, Surrey and New Westminster, are included in this current study. The first progress report on the pilot communities was released in spring 2014. The communities selected for the pilot benefitted from funding for coordination for development of community action plans and 72 families of 108 referred, benefitted from tailor-made strategies out of poverty. The report itself acknowledged “that families cannot forge a path out of poverty until their most basic needs – including food, shelter and health care – are addressed”.<sup>1</sup> This is the same challenge that faces local municipalities, the level of government closest to the children living in poverty, with the least means to make the systemic changes contributing to poverty in their community.

Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC) and Richmond Poverty Response Committee (RPRC) share an interest in where the City of Richmond fits with other Metro Vancouver cities, with regard to finding workable responses that assist families living in poverty. The purpose of this report is to review and compare the responses that the selected municipalities of the lower mainland (study municipalities) are adopting to address child/youth poverty issues in their communities. The data from this report may be used by RCSAC member agencies to further support programs and services that lessen the impact of poverty on Richmond families. The report will also be shared with the City of Richmond and other Metro Vancouver cities for their information and action.

## **Parameters of Study**

As requested by the RCSAC Executive, the Richmond PRC agreed to undertake a study to review municipal responses to child/youth poverty. The age demographic is birth to 18 years and geographic scope is municipalities with similar populations. Initiatives were included in areas such as: income subsidies, housing, childcare, food security, health, transportation and recreation.

Prior to commencing this project, a consultation was held with a task group of Richmond PRC and the Child Poverty Action Team of Richmond Children First to review the criteria and determine the lower mainland communities to be included in the study. By population, compared to Richmond, the municipalities of Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby Coquitlam, Langley and Delta were selected (three communities of higher population and three of lower population). Giving consideration to the social planning capacity of lower mainland communities, it was agreed to include New Westminster, which has a much smaller population than the seven others, but has a social planner on staff. The criteria

for collecting information was expanded to include community grants, and information to be gathered included process, policy and programs, as each apply to the criteria selected.

### Child Poverty in Study Municipalities

*Poverty is: Not having breakfast sometimes; being afraid to tell your mom that you need new shoes; sometimes really hard because my mom gets scared and she cries; not being able to take swimming lessons; not getting to go on school trips; being teased about the way you are dressed; (Grade 4 & 5 children- ISARC: 1998)<sup>ii</sup>*

In Metro Vancouver, using the low-income after tax measure (LIM-AT), 395,095 individuals are considered to be living in poverty, or 17.4% of the total population. Metro Vancouver is slightly higher than the provincial rate of 16.4%. The following table compares the general poverty rate between the study municipalities, using the after-tax low income measure.<sup>iii</sup> Six of the study municipalities have a higher proportion of their population living in poverty compared to the provincial rate of 16.4%. However, when compared to the poverty rate in Metro Vancouver of 17.4%, only 3 of the study municipalities, Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond have higher proportions of people living in poverty.

	Population/private households for income status	In low income in 2010 based on LIM-AT	Prevalence of low income in 2010 based on LIM-AT (%)
Province BC	4,245,795	696,850	16.4%
Metro Vancouver	2,272,730	395,095	17.4%
Vancouver	590,210	121,020	20.5%
Surrey	463,340	71,695	15.5%
Burnaby	220,260	46,360	21%
Richmond	189,305	42,365	22.4%
Coquitlam	125,015	21,620	17.3%
Township of Langley	103,145	11,730	11.4%
Delta	98,745	10,105	10.2%
New Westminster	65,090	10,980	16.9%

*National Household Survey Community Profiles 2011*

When considering child poverty, the picture is slightly different. Among the study municipalities, 4 have higher proportions of their populations under age 18 living in poverty compared to the BC and Metro Vancouver average. At 25.4%, Richmond has the highest proportion of children under 18 living in poverty, followed by Burnaby (23.1%), Vancouver (22.4%) and Coquitlam (21.1%). In absolute numbers, the City of Surrey has the most children, 20,355, living in poverty but proportionally, it represents 18.7% of children under the age of 18.

The table below considers the child poverty rate for children under the age of 18. It does not show proportion of the subset of children under 6 living in poverty. For all study municipalities, except New Westminster, the proportion of children under 6 living in poverty is less. In New Westminster, the proportion of children under 6 living in poverty is 18.9%, while the proportion of children under 18 living in poverty is 17.2%. This is of particular concern given the influence of early years of life on a child's future health and development.

	Population in Private households for income status u/18 &	Prevalence of low income in 2010 based on after-tax measure u/18	Prevalence of low income in 2010 based on LIM-AT (%)
Province BC	823,410	157,250	19.1
Metro Vancouver	439,425	85,535	19.5
Vancouver	88,470	19,855	22.4

Surrey	109,045	20,355	18.7
Burnaby	38,215	8,835	23.1
Richmond	34,790	8,820	25.4
Coquitlam	26,150	5,515	21.1
Township of Langley	24,080	3,415	14.2
Delta	21,980	2,720	12.4
New Westminster	10,360	1,780	17.2

National Household Survey Community Profiles 2011

To add to our understanding of poverty within Metro Vancouver and the study municipalities it is helpful to note the mapping information that is provided in the 2014 Child Poverty Report Card issued by First Call<sup>iv</sup>. Based on the LIM-AT 2012, poverty data was mapped by census tract and illustrates where the children living in poverty live. The following table compares the study municipalities using the two extreme categories – proportion of children living in poverty of >40% and proportion of children living in poverty <10%.

	# of Census Tracts >40% Child Poverty	# of Census Tract <10% Child Poverty
Vancouver	5	2
Surrey	2	3
Burnaby	2	0
Richmond	2	0
Coquitlam	1	1
Township of Langley	0	3
Delta	0	4
New Westminister	0	0

Source: Fact Sheet #10: Child Poverty in Metro Vancouver

It is generally accepted that growing up in a poor household negatively affects children, not only in the short term but potentially across the life-cycle. These effects also have implications for society which means it is important that local governments take into account the plight of children and youth living in poverty within their jurisdiction.

*“The economic benefits of investing in children have been extensively documented. Investing fully in children today, will ensure the well-being and productivity of future generations for decades to come. By contrast, the physical, emotional and intellectual impairment that poverty inflicts on children can mean a lifetime of suffering and want - a legacy of poverty for the next generation...”* Carol Bellamy, Executive of UNICEF, 1995-2005<sup>v</sup>

## FINDINGS FROM STUDY MUNICIPALITIES

*Local governments have a unique and important role in building communities that matter. They shape the conditions that attract people and capital and ensure funding is used effectively to build attractive and sustainable communities that offer opportunities to all residents. A municipality’s services, programs and facilities form a social infrastructure upon which people rely to earn a living and raise their families.<sup>vi</sup>*

The above quote is taken from a report by Vibrant Communities Canada, based on the results of work done in 13 communities across Canada, over 10 years. The report notes that while senior levels of government control the majority of political levers that influence prosperity, the full benefit of such of those policies can not be realized without the coordination at the city-region level. The report goes on to identify and provide illustrations of ways in which municipal governments across Canada have raised awareness and changed attitudes, addressed needs of those currently living in poverty and focused on changing public policy to break the cycle of poverty.

Through the process of gathering information for this report, it was identified that several municipalities have developed overarching social planning strategies that have helped to “connect the dots” and knit together other strategies and initiatives that contribute to addressing quality of life and well-being, including poverty. It is interesting to note that all four municipalities with social planning strategies also have social planners and/or social planning departments. The development of the strategies included information gathering and data sharing as well as extensive community consultation and poverty was included as an important community concern. Each of the documents is comprehensive and reflects the high level priorities of each city or municipality. The following are some interesting notes relating to poverty reduction and alleviation.

- The City of Vancouver, A Health City for All. This strategy is a long-term, integrated plan to improve the health of people, the community and the environment. Vancouver’s strategy was adopted in September 2014, with 13 major goals and targets for each goal. There is a goal for “Making Ends Meet” and the targets are to reduce the poverty rate by 75% and increase the median income by at least 3% per year.
- City of Surrey, Plan for Society Wellbeing of Surrey Residents. The City of Surrey’s Social plan was adopted in 2006 and has five priority areas that include community development and inclusion, housing and homelessness and poverty reduction strategy. The poverty reduction strategy was developed by a community group Vibrant Surrey. The City of Surrey and other community partners participated in the development and it was adopted by Council in 2012. Council receives regular staff progress reports on the social plan. Continued participation in the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition and implementation of the poverty reduction plan was identified as a priority for 2015-2017 in latest progress report.
- City of Richmond, Building our Social Future. Council adopted the Social Development Strategy in 2013. Future steps include developing the work plan for implementation and regular monitoring and reporting. The needs of people living in poverty are woven within the goal for social equity and inclusion - expanding housing choices, enhancing community accessibility and acknowledging working with community-based organizations and senior levels of government to understand the characteristics of people living in poverty and supporting initiatives to help families move out of poverty, as well as poverty alleviation initiatives.
- City of Burnaby, Social Sustainability Strategy. The strategy was adopted in 2011 and an implementation plan was adopted in 2013. Priority actions for phase 1 include economic security and affordable, suitable housing, and leasing of city-owned properties for non-market supportive housing.

The City of Surrey and New Westminster are participating in the community poverty reduction pilot project of the Province of BC. City of Surrey, has adopted a poverty reduction strategy and New Westminister is in the process of developing a poverty reduction strategy. In the City of New Westminister the social planner was able to provide support to the working group that was formed. The initial work has identified 6 priority areas, several of which are poverty related – childcare, access and inclusion and affordable housing. The remaining study municipality with social planning capacity is the City of Coquitlam which has identified 2 priorities – housing affordability and multiculturalism.

## Study Results

The following table provides an overview of the results of this study with the details in the following paragraphs.

	Vancouver	Surrey	Burnaby	Richmond	Coquitlam	Langley	Delta	New West
Social Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓				
1.Recreation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.Grants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3.Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
4. Food Security	✓	✓	✓	✓				

5. Childcare	✓		✓	✓				✓
6. Health			✓	✓		✓		
7. Income Subsidy	✓							✓
8. Transit								

## 1. Recreation

**Vancouver:** The City of Vancouver has the Leisure Access Program for low income residents and provides access to basic recreation programs – pools, rinks, fitness centres and participating community Centres. The subsidy is loaded on the “OneCard” (used by all residents regardless of income) for discounted access to facilities. Included is free admission and rentals for skating and swimming, 50% discounts for admissions/passes for recreational facilities and programs and local attractions. Youth also are able to receive discounts for fitness centre admissions and the “flexipass” (1, 3 and 12 month passes) for swimming pools, ice rinks and fitness centres although costs may be prohibitive). A Leisure Access Agency pass is available for non-profit staff and volunteers when they accompany and assist clients and foster parents when they supervise their foster children.

Community-based youth workers provide additional supports and resources to youth ages 8 to 18, with a broad range of developmental issues facing youth. Programming varies across the city and is designed and led by local youth in consultation with staff and youth volunteers.

**Surrey:** The Leisure Access Program in Surrey includes one-year full facility passes for children and youth that includes swimming, skating (including free helmet and skate rental), weight room, fitness classes, and sports drop in. Discounts of 75% are offered for most registered programs. In addition to the Leisure Access Program, information about Kidsport grants and Jumpstart are made available to families for children/youth who want to participate in organized sports or recreation programs.

Surrey has seven youth centres with drop-in lounges, registered programs and activity-specific nights. Free annual memberships provide preteens and youth free access to the youth lounge and drop-in activities. Drop-in activities include video games, foosball, air hockey, gym activities, sports equipment and pool tables. Youth Engagement Projects Teams support youth to plan events that they have developed or support small projects developed by youth. The youth centres also offer pre-teen activities. In addition there are eight Youth Parks for BMX and skateboarding. The City provides year road programming called Surrey Rides and hosts special skateboarding events and camps.

The Community-Schools Partnership (C-SP), an initiative of the school district in collaboration with the City of Surrey, involves community partners working alongside schools in addressing vulnerabilities and creating opportunities for all children to flourish. This initiative supports 25 identified schools, (22 elementary, 3 secondary). The C-SP staff work with schools and partners to develop activities that best meet the needs of the school. Programs include afterschool extended enrichment and learning, recreation and culture programs, parent engagement, youth transition, English Language Learning, school break programming and early learning. In addition to C-SP staff, school and City staff support is provided.

**Burnaby:** The Recreation Credit program provides financial assistance for low income residents. The program is set up by Burnaby but the application process is administered by designated non-profit agencies. A credit amount for one year is registered in the computer system for the individual who can then use the credit to access swimming pools, skating rinks, fitness classes, indoor cycling, or weight rooms. Information about the Fitness and Arts Tax Credit (federal), is also available on the City of Burnaby website along with a list of Burnaby programs that qualify for the tax credit and links to the relevant Government of Canada website. For grade five students, who are residents of Burnaby, a “Be Active” pass provides free access to a number of activities such as swimming, skating, golf and activities at community centres.

Burnaby has five city-operated youth centres or lounges located in town centres. Depending on the facility, free drop-in activities include a variety of recreational activities, including a pool table, foosball, outdoor games, open gym time,

computer, board games, cards, TV, and access to kitchen space. Programming is geared to both preteen (10-12) and teen (13-18). Special events are also organized.

In addition to the youth centres, The City of Burnaby has a cost sharing agreement with the School District for coordination of seven community schools to offer a variety of programs and services to meet specific educational, recreational and social needs of the neighbourhood. Most schools are located in more vulnerable neighbourhoods.

**Richmond:** The Recreation Subsidy Program is available to low income families for admissions and program registration. Each child within a family may access one activity or program per quarter. The fee subsidy program is complemented by a range of free events such as the Arts Centre Truck, Youth Media Arts Lab, Summer Park Program, outdoor movie nights, community festivals and events. The City of Richmond also provides a Grade 5 Activity Pass to all grade 5 students who are Richmond residents. For one year, grade five students have free admission to drop-in swim and skating sessions at Richmond facilities, pre-teen drop-in at local community centres and pitch and putt. In addition, City of Richmond staff are involved in the administration of Kidsport and JumpStart programs that provide further financial assistance for access to organized sports and other costs relating to participation in physical activity such as fees, transportation and equipment.

Currently the Recreation Subsidy program is under comprehensive review as an initiative of the Social Development Strategy. The review will consider fee subsidies within the context of enhanced community accessibility and consideration will be given to program expansion for low income residents, increasing opportunities for participation, better communication about the program, alternate administration and technology improvements.

Youth recreation services are provided through a network of area and youth development coordinators (based at local community centres) and partnerships with youth-serving community organizations. The youth development coordinators, in partnership with the local community association, plan a broad range of youth recreation and activity opportunities for the local area. Several locations have created dedicated youth spaces. At five sites, Nightshift, a free Friday night drop in, is offered that includes activities and gym time. Pre-teen Hangout, is a similar program for pre-teens. Several city facilities have created dedicated youth spaces for youth programming. The media lab at the Richmond Cultural Centre offers the Richmond Youth Media Program.

Local youth programming also supports positive development through leadership development and volunteer opportunities for youth. Several community centres have youth councils or leadership groups. The Roving Leaders program is done city wide, on an outreach basis, to connect with vulnerable youth (which may include low income youth). Youth are mentored and guided through the program and may ultimately end up participating in more traditional youth programs.

The Roving Leaders program provides outreach to vulnerable youth, including low income youth. The focus is to connect and establish positive relations with unaffiliated youth (13 to 18). Youth are mentored and guided through the program with bridging of recreation and cultural activities and/or appropriate services. Youth may be referred to this program and service is individualized to the interests and needs of the youth.

**Coquitlam:** Get Connected, Get Active is the financial assistance program for recreation activities. Applicants may choose one of three options – 50 free drop-in admissions, 50% off 4 programs over a year or 2 free programs over one year. Each family member may choose the option that best meets their needs. Grade 5 Get Active, Grade 6 Stay program provides free access to recreation programs. In Grade 5, the cardholder has access to all drop-in activities during the school year and in Grade 6 the cardholder has 12 free admissions. The subsidy program is complemented by once a month free swimming and skating sessions, sponsored by a credit union.

Coquitlam offers a Youth Leadership Committee, at two sites. It is no cost and provides bi-weekly meetings for leadership development and volunteer opportunities at community events.

**Township of Langley** – financial assistance is available through an application process available at local community centres. Financial assistance is in the form of reduced admission or program fees. In addition to financial assistance, reduced admission community swims and swim and gym activities are offered weekly throughout the year. Information about Kidsport and Jumpstart programs is available in the Leisure guide. At one community centre, a weekly youth



lounge drop in and preteen hangout program is offered. A monthly Just Boys and Just Girls session is offered at the same centre for a nominal fee.

**Delta:** The Leisure Access Assistance Program access to drop-in land and aquatic fitness classes, weight room sessions, public swims, open gyms and public skating. The applications to the program are administered through a central location. Information about Kidsport and Jumpstart is available on the website and in the Leisure Guide. In addition Delta has two memorial funds that provide complete or partial funding for swimming lessons (ages 6 months-12) and introductory recreation programs (ages 6-18) for children. In addition to financial subsidy, Delta has Grade 5 and 6 free Admission Passes for public skate, swim or open gym sessions and for Grade 7 students, a free 10-Admission Pass card. Children's Fitness Tax Credit information is also available.

**New Westminster:** New Westminster has an income assistance program that provides low income residents with a 50% discount on most programs offered in the Active Living Guide throughout the year. The program is administered by Fraserside Community Services on behalf of the City.

For youth, there is a centrally located youth centre (co-located with Seniors Century House). This youth centre includes a computer lab, full kitchen, multipurpose room for sports and special events, laundry and shower facilities, and a youth lounge. Seniors access the space during the day, and youth have after school/evening access. The Youth Centre is open daily and has a \$15.00 annual membership. An exercise room is on site with weight and cardio equipment. There is a \$1.00 drop in fee or \$10.00 monthly fee for use of this room. Acting as a hub, there are also youth programs in four neighbourhoods throughout New Westminster. Leadership opportunities are offered through the Youth Centre Committee and other committees organized around interests (music, arts, advisory, etc).

## 2. Community Grants

**Vancouver** – The grant program is design to strengthen communities and is a comprehensive program with grants provided in 15 areas of funding. In relation to child poverty, the following grant areas are relevant: social innovation, direct social service grants, small capital projects, childcare, neighbourhood organizations (mainly neighbourhood houses), organizational capacity and vantage point bursaries (access to workshops for staff/board members on non-profits.

**Surrey:** The grant program in Surrey includes the areas of community promotion, cultural and recreational, environment and taxes. The grants are in two categories – on-going from year to year and one time only. A global grant budget is established for each year.

**Burnaby:** Community grants in Burnaby support volunteer assistance groups including (non-profit community groups) as well as cultural and athletic organizations. Non-profit groups may apply for start-up funding towards overhead but not for salaries or wages.

Community grants falls within a larger program, "Community Capacity Building and Support". This program is based on citizen participation and includes:

- Citizen Plaza Pavers - a community project that celebrates the City and raises funds to benefit Burnaby based charities and non-profits
- Burnaby Interagency Council – for networking and partnership opportunities
- Festivals Burnaby – grants to support neighbourhood and City wide events
- Community Resource Centres – four community resource centres owned by City and other properties provide affordable office space/programming space for non-profits (lease grant to offset lease costs)
- Free meeting space – free or low cost meeting space in municipal facilities for non-profit groups
- Community Benefit Bonus Policy – develops community amenity space including non-profit office space, childcare centres and affordable housing in Burnaby's four town centres.

- Community Schools – cost of the coordinator (at each of seven schools) is shared with school district and municipality
- Establishing Business Associations

**Richmond:** The goals for the community grant program clearly state the intention to assist Council with achieving term goals and adopted strategies, to improve quality of life, assist Richmond based community groups to provide programs to residents and build community and organizational capacity. City grants fund in the areas of arts and culture, child care, health, social and safety and parks, recreation and community events. Each grant area has its own criteria and allocation budget. One and three year grants are awarded. An annual cost of living increase is also factored into the community grants awarded.

**Coquitlam:** The annual grant program supports community groups and non-profits in the areas of arts, culture and heritage, sports and community. The grant program will fund events, programs, equipment, public art and capital expenditures. A current initiative included in the grant program is Spirit 125 related to the City's upcoming 125<sup>th</sup>. Eligible expenses include staff/volunteer training, program supplies, marketing and special event costs. On-going operating expenses are ineligible. In addition to the formal community grant program, the City of Coquitlam provides an annual service grant of \$25,000 to Share Family and Community Services, an organization that provides most of the poverty-related services in Coquitlam.

**Township of Langley:** The annual grant program consists of grants for events and projects and capital improvements (for community halls only). The grants for events and projects have four categories – general, dry grad, major festival grant, scholarship (for each secondary school) and “Nothing without Effort” grant. The general grant is for special events and projects that benefit the Township and involve local residents, has a limit of \$2,500 and funds must not be used for administrative salaries. “Nothing without Effort” is a community matching grant for which a poverty related project could possibly be eligible. The Township will match up to \$5,000 per community (7) for a project that is planned, initiated, and implemented by community members in partnership with the Township. The funds raised by the group in initiating the project may include cash as well as in-kind volunteer labour, donated materials or professional services.

**Delta:** There is no formal community grant program in Delta. However there are annual service agreements with two Delta community agencies relevant to this report. One agency provides poverty related supports and another provides family resources centres and social/recreation club programs for children and youth. The service agreement for the former includes a grant of \$29,000 and municipal property tax exemption amount. The service agreement for the latter includes a grant for \$113,000 and the municipal property tax exemption amount. This agency also has a license renewal (5-year term) for access to the building where their programs are held.

There is a Facility Rental Fee Grant up to \$1000 that community groups providing an event of benefit to Delta and its residents may access. The grant maybe used for the facility fee or showstage rental. Dry Grads are included in this grant and may receive a grant up to \$1200.

**New Westminster:** The community grant program has eight funding areas. Those most relevant to children and youth are community grants, childcare and city partnership grants. Community grants support both new and established organizations with start-up or projects on a one-time basis. Eligible activities include special programs, events, community workshops, seed funds for new initiatives and specialized equipment but grant must not be used for operating costs. Child care grants assist licensed, non-profit child care operators with capital expenditures. City partnership grants are designed specifically to assist non-profit, incorporated organizations with the delivery of major services to the community. Non-profit organization involved in poverty reduction and poverty alleviation related activities would be eligible. The focus of the funding is community livability, and social equity, vibrant economy, arts and culture and environmental leadership. Funding is available for one to three years and allows for operating grants.

### 3. Housing

**Vancouver:** In the "Healthy City for All" strategy the goal for housing is to have a range of affordable housing choices available for all Vancouver residents. The strategy has housing targets that include 2,900 supportive housing (for specific populations including women and youth), 5,000 new social housing units and 5,000 new units of secured market rental by 2021. Strategies include leveraging City assets to build more affordable housing, and target shelters and supportive and social housing to underserved neighbourhoods. In July 2013 a Chief Housing Officer was appointed by Council to oversee the affordable housing strategy. In July 2014 The Affordable Housing Agency (city owned housing authority) was formed. The goal of the agency is to expedite affordable housing with a focus on incremental non market/ social housing (leveraging city land and partners land), renewal and increased capacity and sustained affordability of aging public social housing stock and private market rental stock, rezoning for new mixed income affordable housing with an emphasis on 2-3 bedroom family housing.

Market rental housing will likely not be affordable for low income families. Within the housing and homelessness strategy, protecting existing supply of affordable rental housing and secondary suites in single family areas will support purpose build rental and provide accommodation for low to moderate income families are included. Specifically related to children and families, in December, 2013 Council appointed the YWCA Metro Vancouver as a lease holder for 31 units of non-market rental housing as part of the New Fire Hall No. 5 building. Low to moderate-income single mothers and their children will be housed in 2 and 3 bedroom units.

In support of the above, Vancouver owns market rental housing and vacancies are posted on the website, along with a database of non-market rental and co-op housing inventory available on line to assist with locating subsidized housing. There is also information available for rental properties with health and safety issues. The City of Vancouver also operates a rent bank. The rent bank aims to increase housing stability by preventing evictions or loss of essential services. One-time interest free loans are available to low income people in temporary financial crisis.

**Surrey:** The Social Plan for Surrey identified affordable housing and homelessness as a critical component of a healthy community. Implementing the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless is a priority for 2015 to 2017. The Master Plan for Housing the Homelessness has identified women with children and youth among the group of at-risk populations. Council allocated \$9 million+ from the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to seed the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Fund. The fund is to support made in Surrey solutions to homelessness and housing. The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society was established by Council to oversee the management and growth of the fund and to make recommendations for awarding grants. Approximately \$200,000 to \$240,000 in grants are awarded annually.

Housing is also included in the Poverty Reduction Plan that was approved by Surrey Council. The biannual 2012-2014 report on the Social Plan, included a report on the Housing First Landlord Project which facilitates a connection between private landlords and the health and services agencies that support people who are chronically or episodically homeless. The Poverty Reduction Coalition hosted a breakfast session with landlords to increase their awareness and understanding of the issue homelessness and experience of the service providers. This event was sponsored by The Surrey Board of Trade.

**Burnaby:** Affordable and suitable housing is identified in the Social Sustainability Strategy as foundation strategy for achieving economic security. Actions included developing and clarifying criteria for use of the Housing Fund to fill gaps in the city's housing continuum, continue to lease City-owned properties for non-market and supportive housing which is affordable for low income households and advocate the seniors levels of government for programs and policies that reflect a full continuum of housing options and make it easier for municipalities to support affordable and suitable housing.

Previous to the Social Sustainability Strategy Burnaby had adopted polices such as fast-track approvals process, permit fees deferral for non-market housing, grants from the Housing Fund, reduced parking standards, requirement that 20% of units in newly developing community of publicly owned land be affordable.

The Community Benefit Bonus Policy (BBP) is a tool for securing community amenities through development that is occurring in Burnaby's four town centres. This policy has been applied for security affordable/special needs housing. Under this program 6 units of affordable housing, 2-bedroom were secured for families and a nine-unit second stage transition house for women and children fleeing violence (maximum stay 18 months) Housing Fund disbursements have also been made to advance affordable housing within Burnaby.

**Richmond:** Expanding housing options is included in the social planning strategy as a means for social equity and includes development of a shelter for women and children and using the Affordable Housing Reserve for land acquisitions that will facilitate provision of subsidized housing. The Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted by Council in 2007. The strategy identified 5 policy areas for responding to the need for affordable housing - identified priority housing types and annual targets for each priority, regulatory tools to facilitate the creation of affordable housing, preservation and maintenance of existing rental housing stock, incentives, building community capacity and advocacy, the position of Affordable Housing Coordinator and maintains a housing reserve fund.

Under the affordable housing strategy, the following has been secured for families and children. Subsidized rental – 15 units to support lone-parent families, with access to child care; Affordable rental housing – 16 3 and 4 bedroom units for women and children will be included in Storeys development; and low end market rental units 238 low end market rental units and an additional 70,857 square feet of floor space in large phased developments which equates to approximately 80-130 units.

**Coquitlam:** An Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted in 2007 and an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund in 2008. The Affordable Housing Strategy is currently being reviewed. The goal is to work with partners from the non-profit, private and public sectors to ensure a wide variety of housing types, sizes, tenures and prices to meet future housing needs. A draft Housing Affordability Strategy has been developed for discussion purposes.

**New Westminster:** An Affordable Housing Strategy was prepared in 2010 that includes actions in support of developing affordable, non-market and rental housing. A Tenant Displacement Policy was adopted in 2011 which includes procedures for dealing with displaced tenants. In 2013 a Secure Market Rental Housing policy was adopted that includes strategies and actions aimed at retaining and renewing and enhancing the supply of market rental housing. There is a non-profit rental (100 units)/market rental (80 units) development with Onni Development in progress.

To support the above initiatives, an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund has been established which receives 30% of density bonus revenues. An Inter-Departmental Affordable Housing Review Committee was established to review affordable housing proposals for purposes of coordination, expediting approvals and fast tracking approvals. A Secondary Suite Readiness Guide to assist homeowners with legalizing a suite or building a new one.

#### 4. Food Security

**Vancouver:** A goal in the Health City Strategy is "Feeding Ourselves Well" and a target for food security includes increasing city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% over 2010 levels by 2020. Food assets include community gardens and orchards, community kitchens, community produce stands, etc. The Vancouver Food Strategy has five goals, one being to improve access to health, affordable and cultural diverse foods for all residents. The Vancouver Food Policy Council, provides input to Council regarding the development of food security policies and assists the City with community engagement. The Council also works cooperatively with other agencies to initiate and develop relevant projects.

The community grant program includes sustainable food system grants to non-profits. The focus of the grant program is to support projects that increase access to food, promote inclusion and participation or build sustainable food systems. The Park Board has developed a Local Food Assets Task Force that makes policy recommendations for expanding food assets within Vancouver parks and recreation systems. Neighbourhood food networks are coalitions of citizens, organizations and agencies that act on food security policies - community based food programs that include food

building, education and awareness, engagement opportunities. Asset maps identify community gardens, food programs, kitchen spaces, food stores (particularly for those at risk of food security). Examples of work by the neighbourhood food networks include mobile pocket markets and community food markets that provide fresh food in “food deserts” or lower income areas of the city where access to health, and affordable food is limited., meals programs and bulk buying and community kitchens and food skills training.

**Surrey:** In the Surrey Sustainability Charter, food and farming is identified as an economic pillar. Recent work has focussed on farming and agriculture business but the City has four established and one proposed community gardens in Surrey parks, with an invitation on its website to community groups to start new ones.

**Burnaby:** Within the Social Sustainability Strategy, meeting basic needs is the first priority. Updating and relaunching the Healthy Community Initiative is identified as an action as well as working with multiple sectors of the community to develop community gardening and development of a food strategy.

Currently Burnaby has a network of community gardens administered by several non-profit organizations. The information about the location, number of plots, etc is available on the City website. A representative of the City of Burnaby sits on the Burnaby Food First, a group of individuals and community organizations working on food Issues. The City of Burnaby partners The City is also a partner in the bi-annual Empty Bowls Fundraising Gala, which raises money to feed hungry people in Burnaby through a variety of community programs. New community spaces owned by the City include kitchens for programming.

**Richmond:** Food security is identified in the Building Our Social Future social plan. Among the proposed actions is encouraging development of community gardens and farmers markets along with working with community partners to facilitate food security initiatives. In another section of the plan that focuses on social equity and inclusion, food initiatives such as community gardens and community meals, are identified as community initiatives that promote independence and reduce the cost of living for low income households.

In Richmond there are nine community gardens throughout Richmond. Developed on City properties, the City contributes to on-going development, maintenance and supplies for the sites. The Richmond Food Security Society administers the community gardens. Development of a Food Charter is on-going, led by Richmond Food Security Society. Representatives of City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and other community partners are involved in this project.

In the remainder of the study municipalities, food security initiatives are less formalized and/or led by local non-profits or community groups. Coquitlam and the Township of Langley have demonstration gardens, in Langley it is a partnership with Langley Environment Partners (LEPS). LEPS also runs community gardens. On the Corporation of Delta website information is posted about local community gardens operated by a local groups. Delta also has a service agreement with Earthwise Society to manage a community garden of eight plots located in a Delta park. The City of New Westminster has a partnership with the New Westminster Community Gardening Society for community gardens located in two parks.

## 5. . Childcare

**Vancouver:** “A Good Start and a Healthy Childhood” is the first goal in the Healthy City Strategy. In achieving this goal, the City of Vancouver has comprehensive childcare and child development strategies. Childcare is recognized as a public amenity and partnership with non-profit organizations to deliver quality, affordable and accessible childcare. The City role includes facilitating the development of infrastructure to support integrated childcare services, including both licensed group care and other family support services, use of financial tools to leverage facilities and land and offset some operation costs. Within the community grant program there are separate funding streams for childcare enhancement, childcare program development, childcare program stabilization, childcare research, policy development and innovation and school-age care expansion projects.

The Joint Childcare Council, made up of City, Park Board and School District (who work together to provide childcare) along with business and academic institutions have a target of 500 new childcare spaces in Vancouver over 3 years.

**Burnaby:** The City of Burnaby has a Child Care Policy, since 1993, that outlines a commitment to the critical social and economic role quality childcare has in community well-being. The policy includes municipal mechanisms (planning rezoning, etc) for improving availability, access and affordability. The policy also established the Child Care Resources Group as an advisory body to the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee of Council and also sets out policy for the City of Burnaby, as an employer in relation to personnel practises and options for employees in meeting their childcare needs.

Through the Community Benefit Bonus Policy, five city-owned childcare facilities (143 spaces), have been created. Each centre is leased on a rent free basis to non-profit child care providers for quality reasonably-priced child care. In 2014 The Lease Grant Guidelines Agreement was signed with the school district that will create up to 12 new childcare centre (potentially 500-600 new spaces).

**Richmond:** In the social plan childcare infrastructure is acknowledged as important to the health and wellbeing of children and families. A key action is supporting the establishment of high quality and safe childcare. In a commitment to childcare document the City outlines a comprehensive child care development policy that includes: child care development advisory committee to advise council on quality, affordable and accessible childcare; the child care statutory reserve fund for child care facility development; city-owned child care facilities that are leased to non-profit childcare providers at a nominal rate; within the city grant program, two grant streams - child care capital grant and child care professional and program development grants available to non-profit child care providers; and regular childcare needs assessments for planning. The City also has a full time Child Care Coordinator to manage City childcare initiatives.

Currently city owned facilities offer 195 licensed childcare spaces, five additional child care facilities have been negotiated which will increase the inventory by 200 and the number of City-owned facilities to nine. In addition, the City of Richmond endorsed the Richmond Children's Charter, developed by Richmond Children First.

**New Westminister:** The City of New Westminister prepared a child care needs assessment in 2007, and a strategy in 2008, which assisted in creating over 500 licensed child care spaces. In 2014 a new needs assessment was completed that has identified community needs for affordable child care (particularly infant/toddler), lack of licenses spaces, limited availability of flexible, occasional and part-time care, and inability of child care subsidy and special needs supplement to bridge the affordability gap between a parent's ability to pay and the actual cost of child care.

The City of New Westminister has a number of childcare initiatives. Child Care Protocol between the city and school district to provide child care together. The Civic Child Care Grant Program and Reserve Fund, with the former providing \$147,898 to non-profit childcare providers since inception in 2011. The development of the Queensborough Child Education Hub, with 25 spaces for childcare is the first of four planned hubs. The City has endorsed the New Westminister Children's Charter and the Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning (\$10/day Childcare).

## 6. Health

**Burnaby:** Burnaby Youth Services developed in 1974 was intended to serve as an alternative to youth court. This service provides short term guidance and counselling for youth and their parents, with a view to preventing future criminal activity. The City of Burnaby is also a partner in the Youth Hub, a multi-sectoral collaborative, integrated youth resource that provides a youth health clinic, alternate school and youth centre.

**Richmond:** The Garrett Wellness Centre is a community health partnership. It is owned by the City of Richmond and operated by Vancouver Coast Health. The purpose of the centre is to promote independence and empower people to

improve or maintain health status through increased awareness and access to health promotion services. Children, youth and family programs are included. The centre acts as a hub for community wellness.

**Township of Langley:** Jointly operated by the City and Township of Langley, provides counselling and intervention for children and youth up to age 17 to prevent anti-social behaviour and conflict with the law.

## 7. Income subsidies

There were no cities or municipalities that had income subsidies for low income families. The City of Vancouver provides financial aid through a Rent Bank Program which provides one-time, interest-free loans to low income people in temporary financial crisis. The City of New Westminster implemented a Living Wage Bylaw in 2011 which ensures that municipal staff, as well as contracted workers, are paid enough to meet basic, locally calculated living expenses.

Many of the study municipalities however, provide low cost, no cost information in the form of brochures and information on websites. Many of the study municipalities however, provide low cost, no cost information in the form of brochures and information on websites.

- The City of Surrey in particular, through the information services of the Surrey Library have a comprehensive list of such brochures in the areas of Education/ESL/Citizenship, Employment and Income, Food and Transportation, Health Services, Housing, Household Goods, Legal Services, Activities in the Community, Activities in the Library. This information is also available on line.
- The City of Richmond provides a seasonal low cost no cost brochure both in hard copy and on line. In addition the Library in partnership with Volunteer Richmond Information Services maintains an on-line Low Income Resource Directory.
- City of Coquitlam has the low cost recreation activities posted on its website.
- City of New Westminster has an Affordable Active Living brochures which lists free and low-cost parks, culture and recreational programs. The "Helping Hand" brochure that covers broad social services and "Survival Guide" includes drop in and food services.

## 8. Transit

There were no transit/transportation services found that were directed towards low income families. The planning for transit is done at the Metro Vancouver level and the Mayor's Council prepared a transit plan that will be decided by plebiscite. As low income people are higher users of public transit, the outcome of the plebiscite will have an impact on low income families and their access to transit.

Several of the study municipalities have identified active transportation as a priority thorough their social plans or other documents. Safe pedestrian and bicycle lanes and paths provide more options for low income families to get about in their communities.

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<sup>i</sup> Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Projects 2014 Progress Report, page ii

<sup>ii</sup> The Impact of Poverty on the Health of Children and Youth, Rachel Singer, April 2003, page 2

<sup>iii</sup> National Household Survey, Community Profiles 2011

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<sup>iv</sup> 2014 Child Poverty Report Card, British Columbia, First Call Coalition, BC Child Poverty in Maps

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.doonething.org/quotes/children-quotes.htm>

<sup>vi</sup> Creating Shared Prosperity: Cities that Lead, Succeed, Vibrant Communities Canada, 2014, page 5





January 25, 2016

To: Mayor and Council, City of Richmond.

TO: MAYOR & COUNCIL  
COUNCILLOR  
FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
Re: Feb 2 Planning - Item 1

CFUW Richmond (Canadian Federation of University Women) has been part of the Richmond community since 1967. CFUW has developed national policy on issues relating to poverty which are supported by clubs in every province. We are aware that BC is the only province without a poverty reduction strategy.

CFUW BC Council has focused on child poverty for the last 4 years. CFUW Richmond has brought our concerns to MLA's and provincial cabinet ministers.

Locally, our club has had members on the Richmond Poverty Response Committee and members served on the Richmond Children First committee looking into child poverty. It produced a Report entitled "It's Not Fair" which told stories of what it is like for families in Richmond living in poverty. We are currently involved in the breakfast program at Brighthouse school as we know that feeding children who live in poverty will contribute to their success in school.

We are here today in support for the report from the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee. The health of our community and especially its children would benefit greatly from a coordinated plan to reduce poverty.

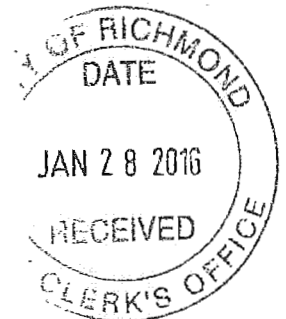
The health of our community and especially its children would benefit greatly from a coordinated plan to reduce poverty..

CFUW Richmond encourages you to work with community partners to develop a Richmond poverty reduction strategy and to support the development of such a plan for the province of BC.

Regards,

Fran Mitchell

CFUW Richmond President.



# this

/ TRANSPORTATION / HOUSING / INCOME / SUPPORT /

IS HOW WE  
END POVERTY  
IN SURREY

TRANSPORTATION

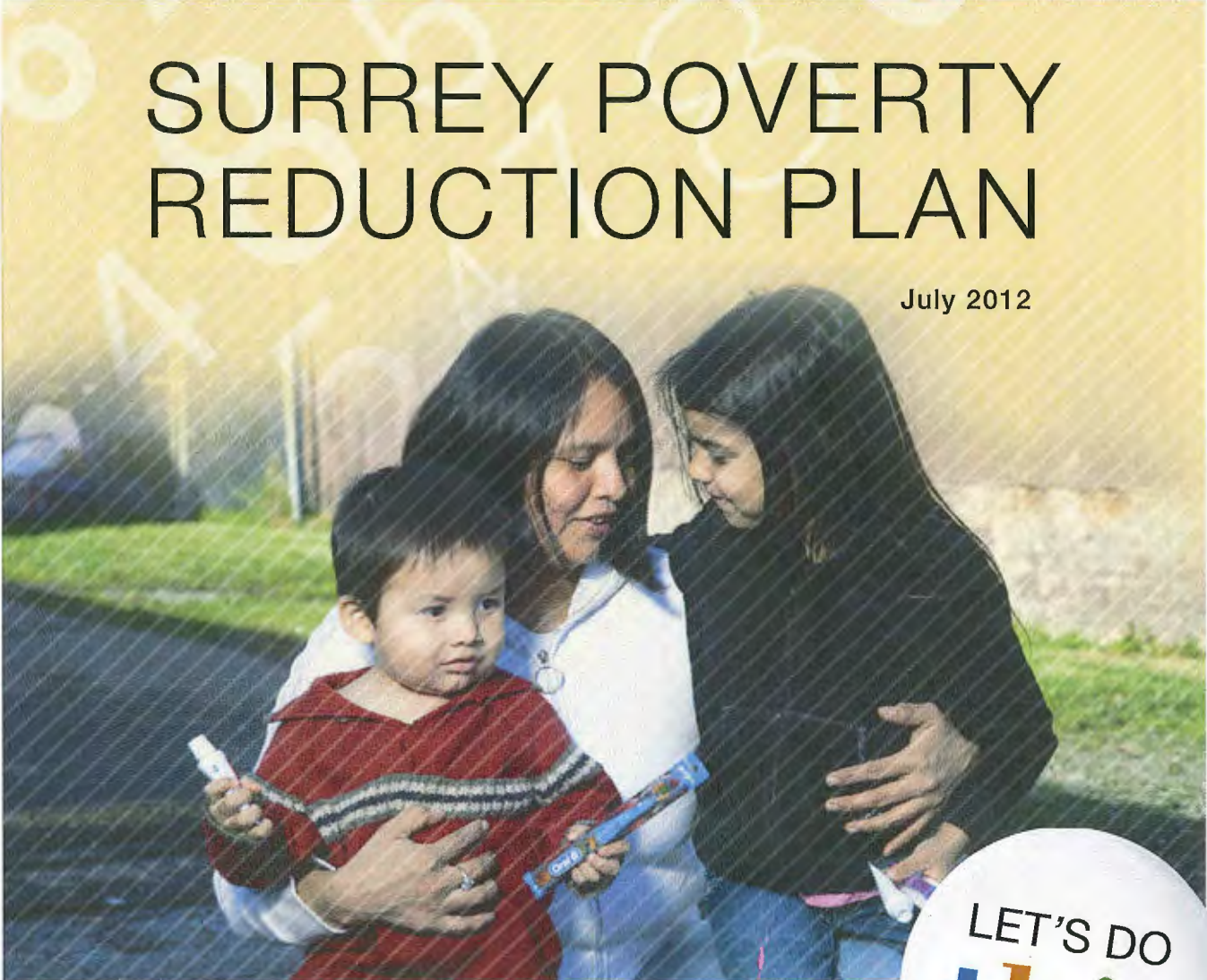
HOUSING

INCOME

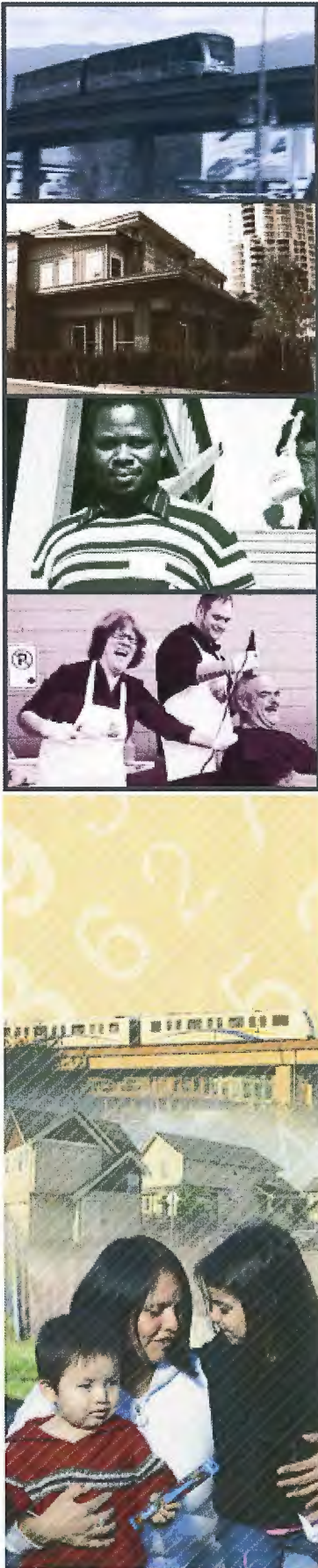
SUPPORT

# SURREY POVERTY REDUCTION PLAN

July 2012







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## Acknowledgements

**this** is **How We End Poverty in Surrey** could not have happened were it not for the contributions of more than 100 concerned citizens and professionals who came together to develop a practical strategy to end poverty in Surrey. During two community consultation exercises we heard from non-profit and government agencies, faith based groups and engaged citizens who wanted to roll up their sleeves and help. We are truly thankful for all their contributions. We look forward to working with the community to ensure that the recommendations featured in this Plan have every opportunity to see the light of day.

We would also like to acknowledge the partnership that came together to implement the consultation process and to develop the final Plan. With Vibrant Surrey as the lead, this Plan reflects a true partnership between Vibrant Surrey, City of Surrey, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research: Community Learning and Engagement (CIR:CLE) at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC), Fraser Health Authority Aboriginal Health, Surrey Homeless and Housing Task Force and Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society. That such a diverse coalition came together to produce the Plan is reflective of the reality that the eradication of poverty is everyone's concern.

A project of this magnitude would not have been possible without the generous financial support from multiple sources. We would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by the following:

- **Vibrant Surrey Poverty Reduction Society**
- **Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society**
- **United Way of the Lower Mainland**
- **City of Surrey**
- **Vancouver Foundation**

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the leadership of Councillor Judy Villeneuve, who has worked tirelessly for more than 20 years to support the needs of persons living in poverty. Throughout the development of this Plan Councillor Villeneuve made sure we were all aware that we were doing more than writing a Plan — we had a mandate to produce something that would be of practical value to those most directly affected by poverty. We thank Judy for keeping us grounded to the reality that there are 71,000 real human faces behind the statistics about poverty in Surrey.



## Executive summary

### Moving to eradicate poverty in Surrey

**this** is **How We End Poverty in Surrey** provides a comprehensive set of recommendations to move towards the eradication of poverty in Surrey. The Plan is based on a series of community consultations and is grounded in a set of twelve fact sheets developed to ensure an evidence based understanding of poverty in Surrey. **this** refers to the four broad policy areas or themes that were used to help categorize the recommendations: transportation, housing, income and support.

The main priorities within each **this** category are provided below. In the body of the Plan the recommendations are further developed and include key facts derived from the fact sheets, examples of initiatives already underway in Surrey (we make no claim that this is a comprehensive list), and recommended actions. The recommended actions identify level of responsibility based on federal, provincial, municipal and community categories. In this context community responsibility refers to a wide spectrum of stakeholder groups including the private sector, non-profit, faith based groups and the general citizenry.

## PRIORITIES

### transportation

- Develop higher density, transit-oriented communities
- Promote walking and cycling
- Advocate for increased transit services
- Advocate for more affordable and accessible transit services

### housing

- Advocate for a national housing strategy
- Address homelessness
- Maintain and increase the supply of non-market and social housing
- Ensure market rental housing is accessible and affordable for low income households
- Support the provision of affordable and appropriate housing for all

### income

- Advocate for federal and provincial policy and program improvements
- Increase awareness about income services and supports
- Promote local economic development
- Encourage employers to adopt a living wage

### support

- Promote healthy children and youth
- Support education and literacy
- Increase access to post-secondary education
- Build a healthy and inclusive community
- Improve health outcomes
- Support the settlement of recent immigrants



Participants provide feedback at the March 2012 Poverty Dialogue.

The Plan represents a starting point — a commitment by the community to take action.



## Introduction

According to census data, one in five Surrey residents, about 71,000 people, live in poverty. This is 71,000 too many.

Some population groups are especially vulnerable to poverty. Single parent families, people with disabilities, recent immigrants and refugees, one-person households and Aboriginal people are over-represented among those living in poverty.

Place also matters. Increasingly there is a trend toward more concentrated pockets of poverty in cities across Canada. This is also the case in Surrey where some neighbourhoods have high levels of poverty and deprivation.

And while the focus of the recommendations of this Plan is on the needs of the 71,000 Surrey residents living in poverty, we know there are multiple consequences of poverty that affect us all. According to a recent federal government report:

*“...poverty costs us all. Poverty expands healthcare costs, policing burdens and diminished educational outcomes. This in turn depresses productivity, labour force flexibility, life spans and economic expansion and social progress, all of which takes place at huge cost to taxpayers, federal and provincial treasuries and the robust potential of the Canadian consumer economy...”*

*We believe that eradicating poverty and homelessness is not only the humane and decent priority of a civilized democracy, but absolutely essential to a productive and expanding economy benefitting from the strengths and abilities of all its people.”\**

If we are all affected by poverty then a key question is this: who is responsible for the eradication of poverty? While the impacts of poverty are most acutely felt at the community level, eradicating poverty requires a serious commitment from both the federal and provincial levels of governments. It is these levels of government that have responsibility for the policies and programs that could effectively increase income levels and provide the social supports to transition individuals and families out of poverty.

Indeed, national and provincial groups have developed comprehensive recommendations for addressing poverty. These include:

- *In From the Margins*, Federal Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 2009;
- *Child Poverty Report Card*, First Call BC, 2011; and
- *A Poverty Reduction Plan for BC*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2008.

\* Source: *Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada*, Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, November 2010, 40th Parliament, 3rd Session.

Eradicating poverty is not only the humane and decent priority of a civilized democracy, but absolutely essential to a productive and expanding economy.

## Purpose

The aim of **this is How We End Poverty in Surrey** is to provide a comprehensive and practical set of recommendations to eradicate poverty in Surrey. The Plan does not duplicate the efforts of national and provincial recommendations, but it has drawn inspiration from these documents. While this Plan recognizes a local role to advocate for federal and provincial action, the Plan is primarily focussed on actions that the City of Surrey and local community groups can take to tackle poverty.

The purpose of Surrey's Poverty Reduction Plan is to provide strategic direction for addressing poverty in Surrey. The Plan represents a starting point — a commitment by the community to take action. It is expected that the Plan will evolve as other good ideas and opportunities emerge.

## About the Plan

**this is How We End Poverty in Surrey** is focussed in four policy areas — transportation, housing, income and support. Access to affordable housing and transportation, an income that covers living expenses, and supports and opportunities that promote health and well-being and inclusion in the community are key features for addressing poverty among all people and families who are living on very low incomes.

We are hopeful that this Plan, and the set of fact sheets, will be useful to community groups in their proposal writing efforts and to thus bring more financial support to agencies working hard to eradicate poverty in Surrey.

The Plan is organized by the four policy areas or themes — transportation, housing, income and support (**this**). Each theme includes:

- key facts taken from the Fact Sheets that were developed as part of this project;
- example initiatives highlighting work that is already underway in Surrey to address poverty; and
- priorities and recommended actions.

A word of caution about the examples that were selected to highlight ongoing work. We note that by highlighting one particular initiative we have systematically excluded others that could just as easily have been mentioned. The citation of examples is not meant to suggest what we deem is better or best. Rather, the examples provided are merely meant to recognize that efforts to eliminate poverty are ongoing and rapidly evolving.



The Plan is primarily focussed on actions that the City of Surrey and local community groups can take to tackle poverty.

For each recommendation, we have identified the level of government (federal, provincial or municipal) that we see as responsible for implementation. We have also identified community as a source of responsibility for some recommendations. Here community refers to multiple possibilities including the private sector, non-profit, faith based organizations and the general citizenry. The transportation section also includes Translink. Finally, please note that municipal refers to both the City of Surrey and Surrey Public Library.

Where primary responsibility lies with the federal and/or provincial levels of government, the City of Surrey and community agencies can take action by: advocating to seek resolution to issues; understanding or acquiring and maintaining knowledge about the issue; and supporting the implementation of solutions through actions that are within the City's and/or community's responsibilities or mandates.

Recommendations that indicate both municipal and community responsibility are actions for which either could take the lead to implement. For example, the City of Surrey may choose to take the lead in implementing a recommendation related to food security. Likewise, a community agency may apply for a grant to undertake a food security project.

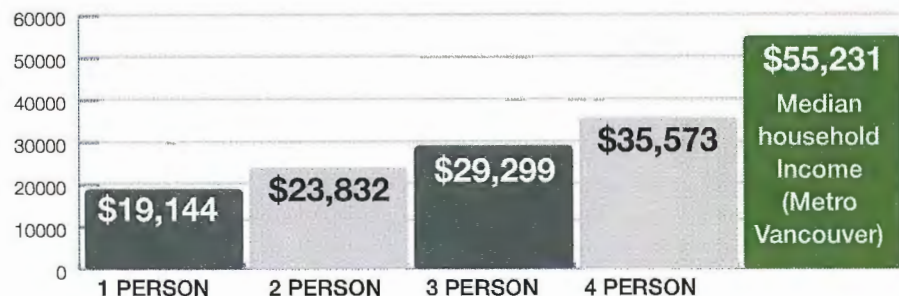
## Defining poverty

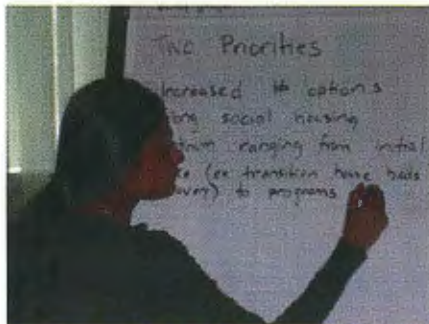
Statistics Canada calculates the income threshold that determines if a household is living in poverty. This calculation takes into consideration differences in family and household size, community size and incomes in community. The graph below shows the low-income cut-offs (LICO) for households of different sizes.

## What are the low income cut-offs?

LOW INCOME CUT-OFFS BY FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE COMPARED TO THE REGIONAL MEDIAN INCOME

For a city the size of Surrey, households below these income levels are considered to be living in poverty.





The March 2012 Poverty Dialogue engaged the community in developing the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan

## Background and methodology

The need for a comprehensive poverty reduction plan for the City of Surrey has been long expressed by numerous stakeholders. It was also acknowledged that a credible plan would need to be supported by authoritative evidence that describes the statistical reality of poverty in Surrey.

In the fall of 2010, the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force (SHHTF) and Vibrant Surrey Poverty Reduction Society took the lead on the initiative. They invited a small group of stakeholders including the City of Surrey, the Fraser Health Authority (Aboriginal Health) and the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society (SHHS) to actively participate in the community collaboration. This initiative aligned with the City of Surrey's Social Planning Advisory Committee's (SPAC) priorities as SPAC had identified poverty reduction as a priority for their 2010-2011 Work Plan.

This steering committee was successful in attracting the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to conduct the research, and with financial contributions from Vibrant Surrey and SHHS the project got underway. Rather than conduct new research, the methodology was to compile data that already exists from a variety of sources including the Census, labour market surveys and the Community Social Data Strategy database housed with Metro Vancouver and SPARC BC. The result of this work was the production of twelve fact sheets in late 2011.

A preliminary dialogue with community stakeholders on November 8, 2011 brought together 22 participants who generated initial feedback on the draft fact sheets and provided input to the development of an Action Plan.

The **this is How We End Poverty in Surrey** fact sheets were prepared to provide an evidence-base for the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan. The fact sheets compile existing census and other data related to poverty in Surrey including:

- *The Facts on Poverty in Surrey*: Key facts and figures, focusing on four policy areas — transportation, housing, income and support.
- *Living in Poverty in Surrey*: Seven fact sheets focusing on vulnerable population groups — families, seniors, people with health and activity limitations, women, men, Aboriginal people, and immigrants.

In 2011, Vibrant Surrey secured United Way of the Lower Mainland funding to develop the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan through a comprehensive consultation with a wide range of community partners. The steering committee was expanded to include the Surrey Women's Centre and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research: Community Learning and Engagement (CIR:CLE) at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.



Roundtable discussions at the March 2012 Poverty Dialogue

Place-based strategies that build upon assets and resources at the neighbourhood level can help to lift low income families and individuals out of poverty.

On March 30, 2012, the Poverty Dialogue, a full-day community consultation, was held to engage stakeholders in the development of the Poverty Reduction Plan. Approximately 100 people, representing diverse community and government agencies, participated. The objectives of the dialogue were to: inform stakeholders about the fact sheets and identify how these can be used for advocacy, program development and evaluating progress; and consult with stakeholders on strategies and actions that should be included in the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan.

Two subsequent focus groups helped to guide the development of the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan. The Plan was written through the collaborative efforts of CIR:CLE, SPARC BC, City of Surrey Social Planning, Vibrant Surrey, SHHTF and SHHS.

### Implementation of the Plan

Vibrant Surrey will coordinate the implementation of this Poverty Reduction Plan through a collaborative community process. This will involve a number of activities, outlined below in General Recommendations.

#### General Recommendations

- **Communicate the data and strategies** to the broader community including Surrey City Council, Surrey Board of Trade, Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force and other coalitions working to address poverty and its impacts, as well as government agencies such as Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Children and Family Development.
- **Make the Fact Sheets accessible** for community groups to support program development, advocacy and measuring and reporting on community outcomes and needs.
- **Establish a collaborative community roundtable** with key government, business, non-profit, and other groups to implement the Plan.
- **Convene community forums** to share progress, determine actions and support community-level decision making.
- Where possible, **update the Fact Sheets with new data** from the 2011 Census and other sources.
- **Monitor and report on implementation** of the Plan on a regular basis.
- **Participate in the Cities Reducing Poverty Learning Community** – a national network working collaboratively to reduce poverty.



# transportation

Many people in Surrey need to rely on their cars to get to and from work, school, shopping, recreation and medical appointments. For many low income households the cost of transportation can be significant.

Exploring choices to reduce the cost of transportation for low income families and individuals and facilitate greater mobility within and across the region is an important focus of Surrey's Transportation Strategic Plan.<sup>1</sup> This includes promoting and supporting communities that are safe, healthy, and child-friendly and working with community partners and other levels of government to ensure that transportation choices are available to support the well-being and inclusion of all residents.



## Key facts

- Households in Metro Vancouver spend an average of \$803/month on transportation-related expenditures.<sup>2</sup>
- The majority of workers who live in Surrey rely on their car to get to and from work. This includes approximately 85% of all workers in Surrey compared to 74% of all workers across the Metro Vancouver region.<sup>3</sup>
- Public transit can reduce transportation costs for Surrey residents with a three-zone transit pass costing significantly less than owning and operating a vehicle. For example, for a family of three (2 adults and a child), transportation costs can go from approximately \$803 per month using a private vehicle to \$349 per month using public transit.
- 11% of Surrey residents take public transit to get to work. Aboriginal people (19%), people with disabilities (13%), and recent immigrants (19%) are more likely to take public transit to get to work.
- Discounted transit passes targeted to specific households and population groups in the community make a real difference for families and individuals struggling to make ends meet.

<sup>1</sup> 2010 Report on Transportation. Surrey, BC: City of Surrey.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. (2009). Survey of Household Spending.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. 2006 Census.



11% of Surrey residents take public transit to get to work.

### KEY FACT

The majority of workers who live in Surrey rely on their car to get to and from work.

### Current initiatives

Below are some examples of initiatives underway:

- Surrey's Transportation Strategic Plan<sup>4</sup> addresses access to transit, improved walking and cycling opportunities within the City, and greater connectivity across the region.
- So far, sixteen Surrey schools have taken part in the HASTE HUB program for Active School Travel.<sup>5</sup> This program focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging alternative modes of travel to and from school including walking or cycling instead of driving.
- The City of Surrey Engineering Department has an on-going Safe & Active Schools program to create a safe and friendly environment for children and youth. This program includes traffic and pedestrian safety audits for all public elementary and secondary schools in Surrey supported by an annual program of improvements such as traffic calming, parking controls or new crosswalks.<sup>6</sup>
- In a typical year, 12 new kilometers of cycling routes are constructed in Surrey. With additional one-time funding, 18 kilometers of new cycling routes were either approved or started construction in 2010. Two pedestrian and cycling overpasses above Highways 1 and 99 were also completed in 2010.<sup>7</sup>
- Two post-secondary institutions in Surrey, Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Kwantlen Polytechnic University, participate in Translink's U-Pass program. Participating in this program allows post-secondary students to have unlimited access to transit for \$30/month.
- Translink offers monthly concession fares of \$46.50 for a 3-zone bus pass for seniors, secondary school students (14 to 19 with a valid GoCard), and children 5 to 13. Children 4 or younger ride for free.<sup>8</sup>
- Special discounted fares and accessible transportation is also offered to people with disabilities through Translink's HandyDART and HandyCARD programs.

<sup>4</sup> Surrey (City of). 2010. *2008 Transportation Strategic Plan*.

Available on-line: <http://www.surrey.ca/files/2010-Transportation-Report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> HASTE Hub for Active School Travel. 2012. *Action Showcase – View by School District*.

Available on-line: <http://hastebc.org/showcase/mapped-data-school-district>

<sup>6</sup> Surrey (City of). 2012. *Safe and Active Schools*.

Available on-line: <http://www.surrey.ca/city-services/4791.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Surrey (City of). 2010. *2010 Report on Transportation*.

Available on-line: <http://www.surrey.ca/files/2010-Transportation-Report.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Translink. 2012. *U-Pass FAQ*.

## Priorities and Recommended Actions

# transportation

	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE				
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	TRANS LINK	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Develop higher density, transit-oriented communities</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create mixed use, compact communities that will allow people to access destinations closer to home and reduce their need to travel, as well as provide them with convenient access to transit services.</li> </ul>			✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider reduced parking standards for new residential developments with good transit access (to reduce the cost of housing).</li> </ul>				✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the provision of shared vehicles in new multi-family residential developments in order to minimize the need for privately owned vehicles.</li> </ul>				✓	✓
<b>Promote walking, cycling and other transportation alternatives</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle by raising awareness of walking and cycling opportunities.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that residents have the opportunity to choose safe, healthy non-motorized transportation modes for many of their trips through implementation of the City of Surrey's Walking Plan and Cycling Plans.</li> </ul>				✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the provision of convenient and secure parking and storage for bicycles in new developments, existing public spaces and public facilities.</li> </ul>				✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design new developments that are walkable.</li> </ul>				✓	✓
<b>Advocate for increased transit service</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the City of Surrey Transportation Strategic Plan and South of Fraser Area Transit Plan.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community shuttles in areas that cannot support conventional large bus routes.</li> </ul>			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the demand and supply of custom accessible transit (HandyDART), to ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet the mobility needs of those not able to use the conventional system.</li> </ul>			✓		

TABLE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE				
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	TRANSLINK	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Advocate for increased transit service — continued</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that overcrowding does not limit the mobility of people with accessibility challenges when using the conventional transit system.</li> </ul>			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Light Rail Transit connecting communities South of the Fraser.</li> </ul>			✓		
<b>Advocate for more affordable and accessible transit services</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a group that includes the City, Translink, and community stakeholders to work on developing transit solutions for low-income families/individuals.</li> </ul>			✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a more equitable transit fare structure for people traveling around Metro Vancouver Region (eg. from Surrey to Vancouver), including exploring a distance-based pricing system and a longer duration before bus tickets expire.</li> </ul>			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a discounted transit pass rate for individuals and families who are receiving Income Assistance, and for non-profit agencies that provide transit passes to low-income people using their services.</li> </ul>			✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all bus stops, buses, rapid transit stations and services are accessible for people with mobility limitations.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore potential partnerships between supermarkets, transportation providers and other key stakeholders to increase transportation options for low-income families/individuals who face barriers to accessing food.</li> </ul>			✓		✓



# housing

Access to safe, affordable housing plays an essential role in supporting the economic and social well-being of families and individuals. While housing in Surrey is more affordable when compared to other parts of the Metro Vancouver region, there are still too many families and individuals living in Surrey who are unable to find housing that is affordable with the resources that they have available.

As one of the single largest expenditures in a household's budget, access to affordable housing plays an important role in helping to break the dynamics of poverty and low income. Not only does Surrey's Social Plan<sup>9</sup> identify housing affordability and homelessness as a priority for the City but the City has taken an active role in working to identify strategies and partnerships that can help to provide an expanded range of housing options for those who need it most.



## Key facts

- While many households will aspire to own their own home, for some households renting is their only option. Approximately 35% of all households across Metro Vancouver are renters compared to approximately 25% of all households in Surrey.
- Approximately 1 in 3 renter households in Surrey were in core housing need in 2006. This represents approximately 10,430 renter households across the City who are facing challenges in finding suitable housing that costs less than 30% of their household income.
- Approximately 3,495 renter households in Surrey were in "worst case need." These are households that are in core housing need and spending at least 50% of their income on their housing costs.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents (March 2006). Surrey, BC: The Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC). <http://www.surrey.ca/files/SocialPlanFinalReport2006.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada. 2006 census.



## KEY FACTS

1 in 3

Approximately 1 in 3 renter households in Surrey were in core housing need in 2006.

- The 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count identified 400 individuals in Surrey who were without a place to live on the night of the count. This includes 230 individuals who were sleeping outside at the time of the count.<sup>11</sup>
- The existing inventory of subsidized housing and the rent assistance available through the Province's RAP (Rental Assistance Program) and SAFER (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters) program make a real difference to households in need. There are currently 1,068 families and 1,285 seniors in Surrey helped by BC Housing's Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) programs and approximately 4,376 households living in social housing.
- As of June 2011, there were approximately 1,320 Surrey families who were on BC Housing's Applicant Registry (waiting list) and who were eligible for social housing.

### Current initiatives

Below are some examples of initiatives underway:

- In 2007, Surrey City Council established the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society<sup>12</sup> with a commitment of \$9.5 million to help work toward solutions for ending homelessness in the City of Surrey.
- The City of Surrey entered into an MOU Agreement with BC Housing in 2008 to leverage opportunities to expand the supply of transitional and supportive housing units available to people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Through this Agreement, 140 housing units and 40 beds have been opened or are under development on City-owned properties.<sup>13</sup>
- The City of Surrey is currently working on the development of a Master Plan for Housing the Homeless in Surrey. It will provide strategic direction for facilitating the provision of housing and services for people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness in Surrey.
- Local service providers across the City actively work to provide housing, services and supports to help those who are homeless as well as work on strategies and initiatives to prevent homelessness. This includes initiatives like the Homeless Connect Day held every year in partnership with the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness as well as initiatives like the Surrey Rent Bank which provides short-term assistance to families and individuals who are in crisis and who are at risk of becoming homeless.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Metro Vancouver. 2012. *Metro Vancouver 2011 Homeless Count Report*.

<sup>12</sup> Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society. 2012. *History*. Available on-line: <http://surreyhomelessnessandhousing.org/about/history/>

<sup>13</sup> Surrey (City of). 2011. *PLAN for the SOCIAL well-being of Surrey residents*. 2010 annual report.

<sup>14</sup> Newton Advocacy Group. 2012. *Surrey Rent Bank*. Available on-line: <http://www.newtonadvocacygroup.ca/main/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/SRB-Brochure.pdf>

## Priorities and Recommended Actions

## housing

	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE			
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Advocate for a national housing strategy</b>				
• Develop and implement a national housing strategy.	✓			
<b>Address homelessness</b>				
• Sustain and increase the funding focussed on homelessness until a combined strategy on housing and homelessness is developed to guide federal and provincial investment.	✓	✓		
• Coordinate among all government departments and agencies the policies and programs that address issues related to homelessness such as: justice, health, income, employment etc.	✓	✓		
• Maintain and increase the funding for the Unlicensed Supportive Recovery Home Program to enable additional beds to be funded through this program.		✓		
• Complete and implement the City of Surrey Master Plan for Housing the Homeless in Surrey.			✓	
• The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society to continue providing grants for projects that provide solutions to homelessness in Surrey. The Society will also raise funds to enhance its ability to have an impact on homelessness in Surrey.				✓
• The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force to continue to provide a leadership role by coordinating services, building the capacity of local non-profits, engaging the business community, and identifying gaps and solutions to homelessness in Surrey.				✓
<b>Maintain and increase the supply of non-market and social housing</b>				
• Provide funding to maintain and increase the supply of non-market and social housing in Surrey.	✓	✓		
• Plan and create the capacity and conditions necessary to develop new social housing projects in Surrey that respond to the needs of diverse population groups.	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Commit funds to maintain and develop additional housing for urban Aboriginal people.	✓	✓		
• Contribute surplus federal and provincially owned lands in Surrey for the development of social housing at a reduced cost or no cost.	✓	✓		

TABLE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE			
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Ensure that market rental housing is accessible and affordable for low income households</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness of the Rental Assistance Program (RAP), Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER), Home Adaptations For Independence (HAFI) and other housing services and programs that are available for low-income households.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and increase the funding levels available for rent supplement programs, including the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) for low-income working families.</li> </ul>		✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustain and enhance housing stability strategies such as the Surrey Rent Bank.</li> </ul>	✓	✓		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend the Residential Tenancy Act such that the Residential Tenancy Branch's (RTB) dispute resolution services are more accessible to low income renters and more effective in responding to their needs, and that decisions are enforced by the RTB, and in a timely manner.</li> </ul>		✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce taxation changes that will stimulate the development of new purpose-built rental housing.</li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Support the provision of affordable and appropriate housing</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement a City of Surrey Housing Action Plan that will identify housing issues and strategies for municipal actions that will ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing to meet the full range of incomes and needs in the city.</li> </ul>			✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a residential rehabilitation program to replace the federal RRAP program, which was terminated in 2011 at the same time that federal funds were transferred to the Province for renovation programs.</li> </ul>		✓		



# income

Surrey's Social Plan recognizes that "an inclusive city is one where everyone can participate and benefit from opportunities offered, regardless of economic means."

While there is the potential for families and individuals living in Surrey to benefit from the economic and social opportunities that come with the growth and change that the City is experiencing, there is also the need to work actively to ensure that such opportunities are available to everyone. For some, this might mean improving access to training programs and other initiatives designed to provide greater financial stability to low income families and individuals who are living from pay cheque to pay cheque. For others, it might mean working to strengthen and enhance the social safety net.



## Key facts

- Some households are at greater risk of poverty and exclusion. This includes single parent families, recent immigrants and single person households (senior and non-senior).
- Households relying on income assistance are living well below the Low Income Cut-offs. For example, a single person on income assistance receives only \$610 per month, or \$7,320 per year, to live on. This is considerably below the low-income cut-off of \$19,144 per year for a single person household. Likewise, a couple with two children receives \$1,101 per month, or \$13,212 per year, below the low income cut-off of \$35,575 for a family of four.
- Income assistance rates have not increased since 2008 while the cost of food, shelter and other basic essentials has continued to increase.
- A minimum wage of \$9.50 per hour, assuming a 37.5 hour week, translates into an annual income of \$18,525. This income level represents approximately 97% of the poverty line for a single person household, and 77% of the poverty line for a single parent with one child.
- Targeted initiatives like the Federal Child Tax Benefit and OAS/GIS can play a critical role in helping to lift low income families and individuals out of poverty and help to provide the foundation needed for moving forward.



There is significant variation in the employment and economic opportunities available to different groups and sectors of the community.

Targeted initiatives like the Federal Child Tax Benefit and OAS/GIS can play a critical role in helping to lift low income families and individuals out of poverty.

### Current initiatives

Below are some examples of initiatives underway:

- The City of Surrey has taken a leadership role in advocating for the federal government to terminate the transportation loan program for government assisted refugees (GARs). Currently GARs, who are humanitarian refugees in desperate need of protection, are required to repay the costs associated with their transportation to Canada and their pre-entry medical costs.
- The Metro Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy (MVUAS) helped to facilitate a partnership between the City of Surrey, the City of Vancouver and ACCESS (an Aboriginal employment agency) to create opportunities for Aboriginal people to develop skills needed to access administrative opportunities within local government including positions within the library system.<sup>15</sup>
- The Surrey Public Library, in partnership with OPTIONS, organizes an employment workshop for newcomers, which helps to provide them with the information and skills that they need to find suitable and appropriate work.<sup>16</sup>
- The Employment Centre for Persons with Disabilities (ERCPD), located in Surrey, provides employment services to assist people with disabilities to attach to the labour market.<sup>17</sup>
- Federal initiatives such as the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), the Child Care Tax Benefit (CCTB) and BC's Family Bonus have helped improve the economic situation of many low income families with this support often lifting a family out of poverty.
- The assistance available through the Federal government's OAS/GIS programs and the indexing of this assistance has helped to provide greater economic stability and reduce the depth of need among many low income seniors living in poverty.

<sup>15</sup> ACCESS. 2012. *ACCESS Funded Programs*. Available on-line: <http://programs.accessfutures.com/>

<sup>16</sup> OPTIONS. 2012. *OPTIONS homepage*. Available on-line: [options.bc.ca](http://options.bc.ca)

<sup>17</sup> BC Centre for Ability. 2012. *Employment Centre for Persons with Disabilities (ERCPD)*. Available on-line: <http://www.centreforability.bc.ca/?page=25>

## Priorities and Recommended Actions

**income**

	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE			
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Advocate for federal and provincial policy and program improvements</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately cancel all outstanding refugee transportation loan debt and cease seeking repayment of transportation costs for new government assisted refugees coming to Canada.</li> </ul>	✓			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make improvements to policies and programs that impact low income individuals and families including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Income Assistance and Disability Benefits</li> <li>o Minimum Wage</li> <li>o Employment Standards</li> <li>o Training Programs for People with Disabilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make improvements to policies and programs that impact low income individuals and families including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Child and Family Benefits</li> <li>o Employment Insurance (EI)</li> <li>o Income Guarantees (at or above LICO )</li> <li>o Employment Programs for Aboriginal People</li> <li>o Live-In Care Giver Program.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	✓			
<b>Increase awareness about income services and supports</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness among low income individuals and families of the Surrey Public Library's services including free job search and resume writing workshops, and free access to computers and the Internet for job search activities.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness among low income individuals and families of the need to file an income tax return in order to benefit from tax credits. Promote the availability of free income tax filing services for low income people.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and promote strategies to assist people for whom the new on-line application for Income Assistance is a barrier.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓
<b>Promote local economic development</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new opportunities to assist people facing barriers to employment to gain employment skills and experience.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the sustainability of non-profit agencies through the development of social enterprise and other related initiatives.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓

TABLE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE			
FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY

Promote local economic development — continued				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that government policies and regulations encourage and support small business development and co-operatives.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the development of micro-loan programs.</li> </ul>				✓
Living Wage				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government and other employers to pay their regular and contract employees a living wage that allows them to access a good quality of life in Surrey.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓



# support

Many families and individuals living in low income face real challenges in meeting basic day to day needs.

Access to affordable child care, education and other opportunities can make a real difference in helping families and individuals to overcome the challenges of poverty and low income. Place-based strategies that focus on providing supports to those who are most vulnerable can help to not only address gaps in the social safety net but also to provide low income families and individuals with the kind of stability and support that they need to move forward in their lives.



## Key facts

- Local schools, churches, community centres, recreation centres and libraries all represent an important part of the social infrastructure in communities and play an important role in promoting and supporting the well-being of families and individuals.
- On average, fewer Surrey residents have college or university degrees than in the region as whole. In Surrey, 45% of residents have some post-secondary education (college or higher), as compared to 57% in Metro Vancouver.
- Services provided through the non-profit sector as well as targeted strategies across all levels of government can be part of the solution by responding to gaps in the social safety net and helping vulnerable families and individuals access the services and supports that they need in the community.
- Place-based strategies that build upon assets and resources at the neighbourhood level and target resources and services to those in the greatest need also play an important role in helping to lift low income families and individuals out of poverty.





The Surrey Library offers free services that support literacy.

## KEY FACTS

On average, fewer Surrey residents have college or university degrees than in the region as a whole.

## Current initiatives

Below are some examples of initiatives underway:

- In 2011, the City of Surrey opened a 77,000 square foot library in City Centre, which provides a variety of literacy services, employment programs, and family programs in the Whalley area.<sup>18</sup>
- Strong Start BC early learning programs, sponsored by the provincial Ministry of Education, provide free school-based early learning services for adults and their young children, aged birth to five.<sup>19</sup> Twenty-two elementary schools in Surrey have Strong Start programs.
- The First Steps Early Childhood Development Settlement Program, provided by OPTIONS Community Services in collaboration with DIVERSECity Community Resource Society, and Umoja African Family Services, provides an ECD focussed settlement and developmental support program for young refugee children ages 0-6 years old. This program is offered in both the Whalley and Newton areas.<sup>20</sup>
- Surrey's Community Schools Partnership, starting with just three schools in 2007, now supports more than 25 schools in identifying specific needs of the children and families, and bringing together community resources to meet those needs.
- As a Welcoming and Inclusive Communities project,<sup>21</sup> the Surrey Food Bank in partnership with DIVERSECity's Community Kitchen<sup>22</sup> held workshops with newcomers on how to use Canadian foods typically found in Food Bank hampers to cook culturally familiar, healthy meals.
- The City of Surrey's Parks and Recreation Department's Leisure Access Program enables low income residents to participate in Parks, Recreation and Culture activities at a reduced cost.<sup>23</sup>
- The Sources/Newton Advocacy Group, located in the Newton area, advocates welfare, mental health, and housing issues with all levels of government. It also provides a pro-bono legal clinic and free tax clinic services for low income residents.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Surrey (City of). 2012. *Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents. 2011 Annual Report*. Available on-line: [http://www.surrey.ca/files/Social\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.surrey.ca/files/Social_Plan_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> British Columbia Provincial Government Ministry of Education. 2012. *StrongStart BC*. Available on-line: [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early\\_learning/strongstart\\_bc/](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/strongstart_bc/)

<sup>20</sup> OPTIONS Community Services. 2012. *First Steps ECD Settlement Program*. Available on-line: [http://www.options.bc.ca/program\\_info.php?cat\\_id=4&program\\_id=71](http://www.options.bc.ca/program_info.php?cat_id=4&program_id=71)

<sup>21</sup> Surrey WIC (Welcoming & Inclusive Communities) Project. *Demonstration Projects*. Available on-line: <http://www.wicsurrey.org/demonstration-projects>

<sup>22</sup> Diversecity Community Resources Society. *Food Security Programs*. Available on-line: <http://www.dcrs.ca/index.php?page=Food&section=services&cat=community&sub=2>

<sup>23</sup> Surrey (City of). 2012. *Leisure Access Program*. Available on-line: <http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/1773.aspx>

<sup>24</sup> Newton Advocacy Group. 2012. *About*. Available on-line: [http://www.newtonadvocacygroup.ca/main/?page\\_id=2](http://www.newtonadvocacygroup.ca/main/?page_id=2)

## Priorities and Recommended Actions

## support

	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE			
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Promote healthy children and youth</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with the Ministry of Children and Family Development on their pilot project to reduce child poverty in Surrey.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awareness of and access to free early literacy and school readiness programs available through the library, recreation services and other community agencies.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue and increase efforts to support and encourage vulnerable youth, including Aboriginal youth, new immigrant and refugee youth, and youth from low-income families, to participate in library, recreation, civic engagement and other community activities.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the City of Surrey Child and Youth Friendly City Strategy.</li> </ul>			✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in a high quality, universally accessible child care program.</li> </ul>	✓	✓		
<b>Support education and literacy</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awareness of services offered free of charge at the Library, such as books and DVDS, computers and the Internet, technology training classes, assistance with filling out online forms, story-times for children, etc.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awareness of services offered free of charge at the Library for people with disabilities, including home delivery of books and audio books, specialized computer technology for those with visual impairments, and story-times for adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the Surrey Public Library's Learning for Life Strategy.</li> </ul>			✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the School District No.36 (Surrey) receives an equitable share of provincial education funding, especially for vulnerable students.</li> </ul>		✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the student drop-out rate, especially among Aboriginal students.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the use of cheque cashing and payday loan services by increasing financial literacy.</li> </ul>				✓

TABLE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE			
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Increase access to post-secondary education</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that an equitable share of post-secondary funding goes to support additional spaces for the growing population in the South Fraser area.</li> </ul>		✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop strategies for making post-secondary education more accessible for vulnerable and under-represented groups.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the student loan program to make loans for publically-funded post-secondary institutions more accessible to low-income students, and to ensure that new graduates are not overly burdened by debt.</li> </ul>	✓	✓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and consider ways to address problematic lending practices of financial institutions, facilitated by private post-secondary institutions, which leave some students with high debt levels and low-wage employment prospects.</li> </ul>		✓		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the participation of women in trade schools.</li> </ul>		✓		✓
<b>Build a healthy and inclusive community</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop activities and opportunities that build social connectedness and sense of belonging among all Surrey residents, and that specifically include low income individuals/families and neighbourhoods.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop strategies and/or initiatives that target low income individuals/families or neighbourhoods, and enhance access to recreational, cultural, library and other opportunities that promote health and well-being.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote awareness of the City of Surrey's Leisure Access Pass (LAP) that provides free or reduced price recreation services for low income people. Also promote awareness of free-of-charge community events and other opportunities.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and support initiatives to increase low income households' dignified access to healthy food.</li> </ul>			✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote coordination of food security efforts including the coordination of meal programs.</li> </ul>			✓	✓

TABLE CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

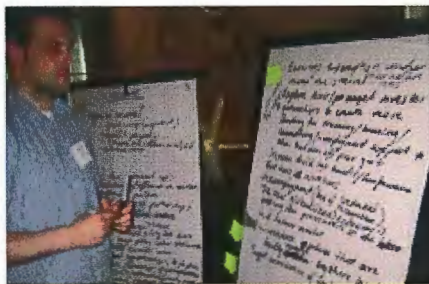
	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE			
	FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	COMMUNITY
<b>Improve health outcomes</b>				
• Increase awareness of the health resources available in the community.			✓	✓
• Adopt “plain language” and translated versions of health education materials and community social service materials.		✓	✓	✓
• Assist low-income individuals/families to access a quality primary care practitioner.		✓	✓	✓
• Ensure that mental health and addictions services are available and accessible for families and individuals who need them. Provide training to those who are supporting people with mental health concerns.		✓		
• Expand home support services for vulnerable seniors.		✓		
<b>Support the settlement of recent immigrants</b>				
• Develop strategies to support the settlement of refugees and other vulnerable recent immigrants.	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Increase new immigrants’ awareness of services and supports that are available to them.	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Support initiatives that address the issue of foreign credential recognition.	✓	✓		✓



## Appendix I

### Steering committee

<b>Councillor Judy Villeneuve</b>	Chair, City of Surrey Social Planning Advisory Committee and President, Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society
<b>Sonya Boyce</b>	Surrey Women's Centre
<b>Lorraine Copas</b>	Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC)
<b>Stephen Dooley</b>	Kwantlen Polytechnic University and The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research: Community Learning and Engagement (CIR:CLE)
<b>Scott Graham</b>	SPARC BC
<b>Laurel Jebamani</b>	The Aboriginal Health Team, Fraser Health Authority
<b>Susan Keeping</b>	Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force
<b>Vera LeFranc</b>	Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society
<b>Marlis McCargar</b>	Social Planning, City of Surrey
<b>Mary Miller</b>	Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society
<b>Aileen Murphy</b>	Social Planning, City of Surrey
<b>Alice Sundberg</b>	Vibrant Surrey Poverty Reduction Society
<b>Charlotte Watson</b>	Engineering Department, City of Surrey



## Appendix II

### Poverty Dialogue participants

Aaron Cheng	Judy Peterson
Adriana Azzolini	Julie Potter
Adrienne Montani	Julie Stephenson
Ahmed Kafafi	Karen Abrahamson
Aileen Murphy	Karen Norman
Alice Sundberg	Kingsley Okyere
Angel Huang	Kulpreet Singh
Bruce Ralston	Lani Caron
Charles Partridge	Laurie Cavan
Charlotte Watson	Lindseigh Lochhead
Christine Mohr	Maddy Carlington
Daljit Gill-Badesha,	Manreet Kainth
Darrell Ferner	Margaret Mubanda
David Kerr	Marlis McCargar
David Pereira	Mary Miller
David Poulette	Mary Pichette
David Woollven	Maxine Larmour
David Young	Meredith Seeton
Denise Darrell	Michel Pouliot
Doris Sai-Boateng	Michelle Orfield
Elaine Clare	Michelle Shaw
Eric Kwon	Mike Lally
Feezah Jaffer	Mishele Blumke
Gary Robinson	Morten Bisgaard
Gurdeep Khaila	Natasha Smith
Helesia Luke	Nina Rihal
Irene McLellan	Nylle Kristine Quines
Jacki Tokaryk	Peter Hill
Janet Kreda	Pooja Khandelwal
Jean Macdonald	Richard Hosein
Jesse Sangha	Rocio Cabrera
Joanne Tang	Ron Savoy
Jonquil Hallgate	CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



## Appendix II - continued

### Poverty Dialogue participants

Sandra Olson  
 Sarjeet Purewal  
 Shayne Williams  
 Sonya Boyce  
 Stacey Rennie  
 Susan Keeping  
 Susan Papadionissiou  
 Susan Woronko  
 Tanya Fink  
 Tiffany Nguyen  
 Trish Garner  
 Vera LeFranc  
 Victoria Barr  
 Wanda Stachura  
 Yazmin Hernandez Banuelas  
 Yves Trudel

### Collaborative community engagement process

The Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan is the product of a dynamic and truly collaborative community engagement process. More than 100 citizens and professionals took time to attend two separate consultations and provided recommendations to which this Plan is grounded. In other words, the recommendations provided in this Plan have a broad base of multi-sectoral support, and we are very hopeful that this support will enhance the viability of implementation.







LET'S DO  
**this**

**The Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan** is dedicated to the over 71,000 individuals in our City who face the daily challenge of living with limited incomes.

We hope that the recommendations in the Plan lead to dedicated action on the part of businesses, community agencies and all levels of government that will have a lasting positive impact on the economic circumstances of people living in poverty.

- transportation
- housing
- income
- support