

DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
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16.2.

COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	July 6, 2022
From:	Arleta Beckett, Community Services & Community Development Manager
Subject:	North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative Report
File:	2620-01

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report dated July 6, 2022 titled North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative Report be received for information.

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an account of the work completed by the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (2021-2022).

2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

Addressing Homelessness in Metro Vancouver (2017) uses a conceptual framework to develop recommendations and strategies to prevent region-wide homelessness, to serve people who are homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness. In 2019, the Province of British Columbia introduced *TogetherBC*, its first poverty reduction strategy which aims to make life more affordable for people struggling to get by through reducing costs and increasing incomes.

Strategies in the *Blueprint for Social Responsibility and Change (2017)* help support the District of West Vancouver (District) to anticipate and meet community needs as demographic changes occur. These strategies include participation in regional and tri-municipal planning tables and joint funding initiatives to share knowledge and implement sustainable strategies for addressing priority issues.

3.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan

Council Strategic Plan

The District Council's Strategic Goal 1.0 supports housing by setting objectives to fulfill the goal to significantly expand the diversity and supply of housing including housing that is more affordable.

Official Community Plan

The District's Official Community Plan (OCP) recognizes community health and social sustainability as critical tenets of the overall social fabric

of a community. Housing is central to social and community health. The OCP provides Council with a range of policies to provide greater housing options including the creation of new market and non-market rental, seniors, and supportive housing. This includes the following:

- 2.1.15 Prior to the adoption of a local area plan, consider proposals within the local area plan boundary by:
 - b. Requiring the proposal's contribution to rental, non-market, or supportive housing, or its ability to forward the public interest or provide other community benefits as determined by Council.
- 2.1.16 Support existing purpose-built rental housing stock and renter households by:
 - e. Considering financial incentives for non-market rental units (e.g. the reduction of development fees or charges, tax incentives);
 - g. Securing market and non-market rental housing units in perpetuity through Housing Agreements and available zoning tools.
- 2.1.17 Secure new purpose-built market and non-market rental, seniors, and supportive housing units in appropriate locations close to transit and amenities by:
 - a. Incentivizing new rental units through bonus density, increased height, and available zoning tools;
 - b. Considering cash-in-lieu contributions to the District's Affordable Housing Fund when preferable for meeting the District's housing objectives;
 - c. Considering financial incentives for non-market rental units (e.g. the reduction of development fees or charges, tax incentives);
 - d. Reducing off-street parking requirements; and
 - e. Securing market and non-market rental housing units in perpetuity through Housing Agreements and available zoning tools.
- 2.1.19 Work with non-profit housing groups and senior levels of government in the maintenance of existing and creation of new non-market rental, seniors or supportive housing, particularly in areas close to transit service.
- 2.1.21 Use surplus District-owned lands to increase the availability of more diverse and affordable housing.
- 2.9.11 Explore opportunities with community partners including Vancouver Coastal Health, senior levels of government, schools, community organizations, and non-profit service providers to

provide a full continuum of support services to address needs related to physical, mental and social health, addictions, health services, emergency response, housing, homelessness, employment and food security.

- 2.9.13 Support measures to increase community resiliency during emergencies, disasters and extreme weather events and mitigate impacts for vulnerable areas and populations (e.g., children, seniors, homeless and people with disabilities).

The District's *Housing Needs Report (2020)* focuses on current and projected housing needs in West Vancouver. The report highlights the divide between incomes and housing costs which is evident in the number of households in core and extreme core housing need, and the lack of housing diversity that impacts options available to various demographics. The report also highlights the importance of meeting the demand for market and non-market rental housing; seniors housing; special needs and/or accessibility designed housing; and more diverse and affordable ownership options.

4.0 Financial Implications

On July 20, 2020, Council approved the recommendations from the staff report on Cross-Jurisdictional Action on Homelessness which included identifying specific required District resources. The North Shore Homelessness Action Project's Terms of Reference (since replaced with the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI) Terms of Reference) required that each municipality provide staff to sit on the NSHAI Working Group, as well as administrative support to the NSHAI Steering Committee.

5.0 Background

At its July 6, 2020 regular meeting, Council passed resolutions "to develop a framework for a North Shore Cross-Jurisdictional Steering Committee and Working Group that would develop short, medium, and long-term actions that are focused on clear, comprehensive, and coordinated strategies to prevent homelessness; to serve people who are currently homeless/trapped in the poverty cycle; and to create pathways out of homelessness".

On February 22, 2021, Council endorsed the Terms of Reference for the NSHAI, an assembly of North Shore public officials with a mutual commitment to enhancing coordination and action to prevent and alleviate homelessness on the North Shore. The structure of the NSHAI includes a Steering Committee comprised of elected and appointed government officials and a Working Group consisting of staff from each municipality.

On March 5, 2021, organizations that would go on to be members of the NSHAI Steering Committee were invited to a forum for coordination with North Shore officials having direct and indirect authority for homelessness

actions, supportive policies, funding, and capital investments. This cross-jurisdictional group became the NSHAI Steering Committee and a Terms of Reference (**Appendix A**) was shared at their first meeting.

5.1 Previous Decisions

Council, at its July 20, 2022 regular meeting, passed a resolution to participate on the NSHAI's Steering Committee and Working Group. NSHAI is a cross-jurisdictional committee formed in 2020 to address homelessness on the North Shore. NSHAI provides a forum for coordination amongst governments and agencies with direct and indirect authority for homelessness initiatives, supportive policies, funding, and capital investments.

Council, at its February 22, 2021 regular meeting, endorsed the Terms of Reference for the NSHAI.

Council, at its February 14, 2022 regular meeting, received a report on the updated activities of the NSHAI.

5.2 History

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) was formed in 1998 in response to reports of people living on the street. The NSHTF is an open service network on the North Shore that works together to address issues relating to homelessness and poverty on the North Shore. The NSHTF focuses on areas related to support services, communications, information, and advocacy. In 2021, through a grant from the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, the NSHTF completed their Strategic Plan 2022-2032 and the 2021 Situation Analysis Report.

In 2020, the North Shore municipal Councils each approved a resolution directing staff to create a Cross-Jurisdictional Steering Committee and Working Group to develop actions that are focused on clear, comprehensive, and coordinated strategies to prevent homelessness, to serve the people who are currently homeless and to create pathways out of homelessness.

The Working Group convened during the fall and winter of 2020-2021 and the first meeting of the NSHAI Steering Committee took place in March 2021.

The NSHAI served as a forum for coordination amongst the First Nations, municipal and other levels of government and agencies with direct and indirect authority for homelessness initiatives, supportive policies, funding, and capital investments.

6.0 Analysis

6.1 Discussion

The NSHAI is an assembly of North Shore officials with a mutual commitment to enhancing coordination and action to prevent and alleviate

homelessness on the North Shore. Between March 2021 and June 2022, the NSHAI met five times and the following specific work was achieved:

- approved a Terms of Reference
- explored housing provision models
- completed an inventory of North Shore housing opportunities
- confirmed a NSHAI vision and set of principles
- produced the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative Report 2022 (**Appendix B**) which summarizes initiatives undertaken and actions for moving forward

Homelessness is a complex topic that has many compounding influences, issues, and challenges. While housing people who are homeless is the mandate of the provincial government, there are opportunities for municipalities, First Nations, the federal government, and other organizations to support and take action.

NSHAI Principles

Principles were created to evaluate priority actions and to support collaboration. The principles that guided the NSHAI work are:

1. **Prioritize Dignity:** Ensure services and facilities are designed to be inviting, inclusive, accessible, and physically and culturally safe spaces that treat each client with dignity.
2. **Decisions are People-Focused:** Be informed by peoples' lived experience, and consider the extent to which decisions will meet their diversity of needs.
3. **Accepting Change:** Existing practices are underserving those experiencing homelessness on the North Shore, and we need to be willing to accept changes and innovate our approach.
4. **Create a Sandwich, not Spaghetti:** Coordinate services across the North Shore to deliver distinct services and facilities with clear purposes (like layers in a sandwich) and avoid duplication, gaps, and ambiguity (like spilled spaghetti).
5. **Each NSHAI Partner has a Role:** Show leadership and timely commitment to action by identifying and committing resources (operating, capital, staff) to implement the NSHAI priority actions.

NSHAI Objectives

The five objectives that drove the work undertaken by the NSHAI are taken from the NSHAI Terms of Reference:

1. **Understanding each Community's Needs:** Review and consider community needs pertaining to homelessness in close coordination with service providers, relevant community agencies, and First Nations.

2. **Inventory of Opportunities and Actions:** Inventory opportunities and existing planned actions across jurisdictions on the North Shore.
3. **Explore Alternative and Coordinated Delivery Mechanisms:** Explore alternative and coordinated delivery mechanisms for services, supports, and responses to issues, including the potential for a North Shore-wide approach to resourcing recommended initiatives related to homelessness.
4. **Communications and Advocacy:** Launch a coordinated and ongoing communications and advocacy strategy outlining key North Shore achievements, challenges, needs, and partner commitments including reporting out on priority actions to the community and other levels of government.
5. **Priority Actions:** Develop a concise list of priority actions and partner roles in advancing the respective actions, with a focus on identifying opportunities for investments in permanent supportive housing.

Achievements

Over the 18-month term, the NSHAI have achieved the following:

- have a shared understanding of the issues, complexities, policy, and housing needs related to homelessness
- supported commitments to better communication for staff, the public and advocacy efforts
- developed an inventory of all the work related to homelessness within the five North Shore jurisdictions for staff to use to better support and collaborate with one another
- created 12 priority actions that focus on opportunities to achieve better data and understanding of community needs, working together, advocacy, improved communications, and more public awareness and dialogue
- reviewed and considered multiple models and examples of housing and supports and selection of two key paths forward – single point of entry and housing first

Moving Forward

The Steering Committee, which has completed its mandate, remains committed to increasing coordination and supporting initiatives, policies, funding, and capital investments to better support individuals experiencing homelessness and those who are at risk of homelessness. The Working Group has established close working relationships and will continue to meet as needed to support initiatives related to homelessness on the North Shore.

Other Community Initiatives Beyond NSHA

On the North Shore, several other actions are underway to help alleviate the impacts of being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless.

Through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Strengthening Communities' Services Program grant (intake #1), almost \$2 million in funding has helped to improve the health and safety of unsheltered people through a partnership among the District, City of North Vancouver (CNV), District of North Vancouver (DNV), Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, North Shore Neighbourhood House, CNV Library, and Lookout Housing & Health Society.

To follow-up on this work, the CNV has applied to UBCM for a second intake of the Strengthening Communities' Services Program grant of almost \$900,000 to continue to improve the health and safety of unsheltered homeless people on the North Shore.

The North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy, funded through a \$75,000 UBCM grant, is anticipated to complete in fall 2022 and come forward to Council with an implementation plan in winter 2023. This project involves the District, CNV, DNV, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation. To address some of the root causes from the North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy community consultations, a second application in the amount of \$150,000 has been submitted to UBCM.

The NSHTF completed a Community Action Strategy (2021) which is a community-informed plan for reducing the impacts of poverty and homelessness. The NSHTF also produced an updated "Keeping Safe" card to provide a North Shore directory for shelter, assistance, food, and engagement. These cards are used by front-line staff for referrals and to connect with resources by those impacted by homelessness.

6.2 Sustainability

Addressing homelessness and housing needs is one element of a sustainable community. The NSHA Steering Committee has completed its mandate and remains committed to increasing coordination and supporting initiatives, policies, funding, and capital investments to better support individuals experiencing and those who are at risk of homelessness. The Working Group will continue to meet as needed to support this work and undertake priority actions.

6.3 Other Communication, Consultation, and Research

The staff Working Group will continue to maintain an inventory of existing actions, seek opportunities to collaborate, support advocacy efforts, and support training and education related to homelessness and housing. They will undertake the Homelessness Response Protocols project to improve on the ground communications, equity, and consistency in municipal and First Nations response across the North Shore.

7.0 Options

7.1 Recommended Option

THAT the report dated July 6, 2022 titled North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative Report be received for information.

7.2 Considered Options

Council may request further information or provide further direction.

8.0 Conclusion

The efforts of the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative over the past 18 months have resulted in a shared understanding of the issues, complexities, policy, and housing needs related to homelessness. Through these achievements, there remains a commitment to increasing coordination and supporting initiatives, policies, funding, and capital investments to better support individuals experiencing homelessness and those who are at risk of homelessness.

This update on the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative has been provided for Council's information.

Author:



Arleta Beckett, Community Services & Community Development Manager

Concurrence:



Jill Lawlor, Senior Manager, Community Services

Appendices:

Appendix A: North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative Terms of Reference

Appendix B: North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative Report 2022

APPENDIX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NS-HAI) is an assembly of North Shore officials with a mutual commitment to enhancing coordination and action to prevent and alleviate homelessness in our communities.

FUNCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative is a forum for coordination amongst officials and agencies with direct and indirect authority for homelessness actions, supportive policies, funding and capital investments. This Initiative aims to:

- Review and consider community needs pertaining to homelessness in close coordination with service providers, relevant community agencies, and First Nations;
- Inventory opportunities and existing planned actions across jurisdictions on the North Shore;
- Develop a concise list of priority actions and partner roles in advancing the respective actions, with a focus on identifying opportunities for investments in permanent supportive housing;
- Explore alternative and coordinated delivery mechanisms for services, supports, and responses to issues, including the potential for a North Shore-wide approach to resourcing recommended initiatives related to homelessness;
- Produce a Report for the North Shore Councils with the outcomes of the Initiative; and,
- Launch a coordinated and ongoing communications and advocacy strategy outlining key North Shore achievements, challenges, needs, and partner commitments including reporting out on priority actions to the community and other levels of government.

The initiative duration is anticipated to be twelve months and will officially launch in Q1 of 2021. It may be extended at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The work of the NS-HAI will be directed by a Steering Committee comprised of elected and appointed government officials or delegates including:

- (1) City of North Vancouver Mayor
- (1) District of North Vancouver Mayor
- (1) District of West Vancouver Mayor
- (1) Tsleil-Waututh Nation Council Member
- (1) Squamish Nation Council Member
- (1) Vancouver Coastal Health Board Chair
- (1) BC Housing Board Chair
- Provincial and Federal elected Members of Parliament and the Legislative Assembly (involved at key intervals to support advocacy and to review findings and investments)

The Steering Committee's deliberations will be supported by information provided by a Staff Working Group, Partners, and by invited presentations from selected agencies, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations with direct involvement in the delivery of public health initiatives, social services, housing, real estate, finance and other services.

WORKING GROUP

A Working Group, comprised of staff from each jurisdiction, will support the work of the Steering Committee. The Working Group will include:

- City of North Vancouver staff representative(s)
- District of North Vancouver staff representative(s)
- District of West Vancouver staff representative(s)
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation staff representative(s)
- Squamish Nation staff representative(s)

The Working Group, or selected members of the Working Group, will be convened to advance business as directed by the Steering Committee.

PARTNERS

A number of Partners have been identified to support the work of the Steering Committee and Staff Working Group. They are comprised of key not-for-profit organizations and stakeholders:

- North Shore Homelessness Task Force
- Lookout Housing and Health Society
- North Shore Crisis Services Society
- Canadian Mental Health Association (North Shore branch)
- Hiḡám̓ ta Sḡwḡwú7mesh Housing Society

- Hollyburn Family Services Society
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- BC Housing

The Partners, or selected members, will be convened to participate in discussions and advance business as directed by the Steering Committee and Staff Working Group.

MEETINGS AND STAFF SUPPORT

- A Chair will be determined by the membership of the Steering Committee at the first meeting.
- Steering Committee meetings will be held quarterly at the call of the Chair and hosted by the Chair's jurisdiction. This will include organizing meetings, taking and distributing any minutes.
- Should the Initiative be extended past 12 months, the Chair will be selected annually.
- Working Group meetings will be held as required.
- Each organization will provide in-kind staff support to the Project.
- Each organization will identify financial resources to be committed to the Action Project's objectives and implementation.
- Consensus shall be the method of conducting business.
- Roberts Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary procedures for the Steering Committee.
- A quorum of the Steering Committee shall be a minimum of **three** members. A meeting shall not proceed if a quorum cannot be achieved.
- A quorum of the Working Group shall be a minimum of **two** members.

COMMUNICATIONS

Any reports, statements or communications that are presented or prepared by the Steering Committee and/or Working Group will be treated as **confidential** and are not for distribution unless otherwise specified by the Chair. The designated spokesperson in public communications for all work being completed through the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative is the Chair, unless alternative spokespersons are approved by the Chair.

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NORTH SHORE
HOMELESSNESS ACTION
INITIATIVE REPORT 2022

NSHAI



TSLEIL-WAUTUTH NATION
PEOPLE OF THE INLET



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.

The North Shore is a diverse and complex place with many interconnected jurisdictions. This initiative, working across jurisdictional boundaries, has enabled better dialogue, understanding, connection, and commitment to supporting people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness living on the North Shore.

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHA) is an assembly of North Shore officials with a mutual commitment to enhancing coordination and action to prevent and alleviate homelessness in our communities. The work that was undertaken with this initiative would not have been possible without the dedicated time and efforts from all jurisdictions. Please see *Appendix 1 Terms of Reference* for further information.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee was comprised of elected and appointed government officials or delegates from each of the local jurisdictions including the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation, and Səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation, as well as Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, and Provincial and Federal elected Members of Parliament and the Legislative Assembly.

Mayor Linda Buchanan	City of North Vancouver
Mayor Mike Little	District of North Vancouver
Mayor Mary-Ann Booth	District of West Vancouver
Chair Khelsilem	Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation
Chief Jennifer Thomas	Səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation
MLA Bowinn Ma	North Vancouver-Lonsdale
MLA Susie Chant	North Vancouver-Seymour
MLA Karin Kirkpatrick	West Vancouver-Capilano
MLA Jordan Sturdy	West Vancouver-Sea to Sky
MP Jonathan Wilkinson	North Vancouver
MP Terry Beech	Burnaby North-Seymour
MP Patrick Weiler	West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country
Sean Parr	Vancouver Coastal Health
Cassie Doyle	BC Housing

ALTERNATES

Bob Chapman	Vancouver Coastal Health
Naomi Brunemeyer	BC Housing
Heidi Hartman	BC Housing

STAFF WORKING GROUP

Staff from each of the local jurisdictions: City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation, and Səlílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Mayor, Linda Buchanan

A Message from the NSHAI Chair City of North Vancouver Mayor Linda Buchanan

The right to safe, suitable, and affordable housing is a fundamental human right we all share.

But for too long people haven't had access to the homes they need to support themselves and their families.

The past few years have been hard for everyone, but for some people in our community it has been harder than we can even imagine. The number of people who are experiencing homelessness, or those who are at risk of homelessness, on the North Shore is increasing.

For many years we have found ourselves in an affordability crisis that has created extreme challenges for people as they try to make ends meet. The COVID-19 pandemic, and now the extreme inflation we are seeing on essential items and food, have only exacerbated these challenges.

The NSHAI Steering Committee was convened in 2020 to enhance the coordination of services, implement measures that would prevent people from experiencing homelessness, and alleviate homelessness across our communities.

Despite many social and health services being available, a fragmented system has created the gaps in which our community's most vulnerable are able to slip through. Together we looked upstream and through our conversations it became clear that in order to support people, we must adopt a model that allows for a single point of entry.

Creating a single point of entry for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness will allow people to access the exact services and accommodation they need. To transition to this model, senior levels of government, health authorities, and non-profit agencies must work with municipal and First Nations governments in investing in the housing, health and social supports needed. Together we are committed to building a framework that includes identifying a single contact who will assist people in navigating available supports.

Through collective action we can support people and create better health outcomes for everyone. This work is not easy, but it is necessary.

I want to thank the many members of the Steering Committee for engaging in this process. As we move forward I am excited to work in tandem with other governments and agencies on a range of investments and policies. Now is the time for communities across the North Shore to work together towards a single point of entry service model so that we can be an inclusive, healthy, vibrant, and prosperous place for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda C. Buchanan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Linda Buchanan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI) is an assembly of North Shore officials with a mutual commitment to enhancing coordination and action to prevent and alleviate homelessness in our communities.

Homelessness is a complex topic that has many compounding influences, issues, and challenges. While housing and homelessness are the mandate of the Provincial Government, there are opportunities for municipalities, First Nations, the Federal Government, and other organizations to support and take action.

In the summer of 2020, the North Shore municipal Councils each passed a Resolution directing staff to create a cross-jurisdictional Steering Committee and Working Group to develop actions that are focused on clear, comprehensive, and coordinated strategies to prevent homelessness, to serve the people who are currently homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness.

PRINCIPLES:



1. Prioritize Dignity: Ensure services and facilities are designed to be inviting, inclusive, accessible, and physically and culturally safe spaces that treat each client with dignity.



2. Decisions are People-Focused: Be informed by peoples' lived experience, and consider the extent to which decisions will meet their diversity of needs.



3. Accepting Change: Existing practices are underserving those experiencing homelessness on the North Shore, and we need to be willing to accept changes and innovate our approach.



4. Create a Sandwich, not Spaghetti: Coordinate services across the North Shore to deliver distinct services and facilities with clear purposes (like layers in a sandwich) and avoid duplication, gaps, and ambiguity (like spilled spaghetti).



5. Each NSHAI Partner has a Role: Show leadership and timely commitment to action by identifying and committing resources (operating, capital, staff) to implement the priority actions identified in this report.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The North Shore is seeing increasing numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness – both visibly homeless and hidden homeless.
- More housing options are needed to support a broad spectrum of individual needs, including options that are culturally appropriate, and include both mental and physical health supports.
- The North Shore needs additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.
- The North Shore is advocating for the implementation of a single point of entry and a housing first model.
- It is critically important to keep working together in partnership across jurisdictions and with partner organizations.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT'D)

NORTH SHORE ACTIONS UNDERWAY:

- Almost \$2 million Strengthening Communities' Services Program Grant (Intake #1) to improve the health and safety of unsheltered homeless people in partnership between CNV, DNV, DWV, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, NSNH, City Library, and Lookout. This includes outreach services and cultural supports, indigenous outreach services, a community hub program, shower programs, and other supports and activities.
- Applied for almost \$900,000 Strengthening Communities' Services Program Grant (Intake #2) to continue to improve the health and safety of unsheltered homeless people on the North Shore.
- North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy – \$75,000 Grant to address inequities and reduce poverty on the North Shore.
- Applied for \$150,000 North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy Action and Implementation Grant to support action out of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The North Shore Homeless Task Force (NSHTF) completed a Community Action Strategy which is a community-informed plan for reducing the impacts of poverty and homelessness.
- Ongoing advocacy for more housing options.
- Ongoing outreach, supports, and programs by non-profit organizations and partners.
- The North Shore Homelessness Task Force produced updated 'Keeping Safe' Cards to provide a pocket-sized North Shore Directory for Shelter, Assistance, Food, and Engagement.

SUMMARY OF PRIORITY ACTIONS MOVING FORWARD

LEADERS WILL:

1. Advocate for and focus efforts on **delivering emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.**
2. **Advocate for and implement the systemic changes needed** to move towards a single point of entry and housing first model.

STAFF WILL:

3. Work in **partnership** to move towards a **single point of entry and housing first model.**
4. **Develop housing options** that support individuals experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.
5. Undertake the **'homelessness response protocols'** project to improve on the ground communications, equity, and consistency in municipal and First Nations response across the North Shore.

6. **Develop policy options** that support and address access to basic needs, individuals living in vehicular or boat accommodation, a more consistent and people-centred approach, and the provision of housing options.
7. **Pursue grant funding** for projects and policy related to homelessness.
8. **Support advocacy** efforts related to homelessness and housing.
9. **Continue the working group** informally to maintain coordination and collaboration efforts.
10. Maintain the **Inventory of Opportunities and Actions.**
11. **Collect and monitor data** to understand current and future needs.
12. Share data on community needs and available information to **support better public awareness and dialogue.**

1 ABOUT THE NORTH SHORE HOMELESSNESS ACTION INITIATIVE (NSHAI)

Homelessness is a complex topic that has many compounding influences, issues, and challenges. While housing and homelessness are the mandate of the Provincial Government, there are opportunities for municipalities, First Nations, the Federal Government, and other organizations to support and take action.

In the summer of 2020, the North Shore municipal Councils each approved a Resolution directing staff to create a cross-jurisdictional Steering Committee and Working Group to develop actions that are focused on clear, comprehensive, and coordinated strategies to prevent homelessness, to serve the people who are currently homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness.

The resolution was written in response to the fact that the number of people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness is increasing and that COVID-19 has further exposed the lack of services and supports available to those experiencing homelessness.

The Working Group was convened during the fall and winter of 2020 to begin the organizing and information gathering to prepare a *Terms of Reference* for the Steering Committee. At its first meeting on March 24, 2021, the *North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI) Terms of Reference* was approved by the Steering Committee.



1.1 FUNCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The NSHAI Terms of Reference is provided in Appendix 1.

The NSHAI functioned as a forum for coordination amongst First Nations, municipal, and provincial governments and agencies with direct and indirect authority for homelessness initiatives, supportive policies, funding, and capital investments. The Initiative aimed to:

- Review and consider community needs pertaining to homelessness in close coordination with service providers, relevant community agencies, and First Nations.
- Inventory opportunities and existing planned actions across jurisdictions on the North Shore.
- Develop a concise list of priority actions and partner roles in advancing the respective actions, with a focus on identifying opportunities for investments in permanent supportive housing.
- Explore alternative and coordinated delivery mechanisms for services, supports, and responses to issues, including the potential for a North Shore-wide approach to resourcing recommended initiatives related to homelessness.
- Produce a Report for the North Shore Councils with the outcomes of the Initiative.
- Launch a coordinated and ongoing communications and advocacy strategy outlining key North Shore achievements, challenges, needs, and partner commitments including reporting out on priority actions to the community and other levels of government.

1.2 TIMELINE

The Initiative was undertaken between January 2021 and July 2022, with the Steering Committee meeting five times. The following timeline provides an overview of the different activities that were undertaken by the NSHAI as well as key related cross-jurisdictional efforts and collaboration:

	NSHAI Steering Committee Meeting #1 MARCH 24, 2021	NSHAI Steering Committee Meeting #2 JUNE 24, 2021	NSHAI Steering Committee Meeting #3 NOVEMBER 10, 2021	NSHAI Steering Committee Meeting #4 FEBRUARY 9, 2022	NSHAI Steering Committee Meeting #5 JUNE 15, 2022
NSHAI SPECIFIC WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSHAI Assembled • Approved Terms of Reference • Inventory Work Begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore housing models with wrap-around supports • Understanding Community Needs (includes Housing Needs Reports) • Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Application (Intake #1) • North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy Grant Application (Part #1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory Completed • Explore Housing Models • Vision / Principles • Proposed NSHAI Actions • Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Application (Intake #1) – Approved, begin implementation • North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy Grant (Part #1) – Approved, begin policy work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision / Principles • NSHAI Actions Discussion • Housing Needs Reports Completed • NSHTF – North Shore Homeless Community Action Strategy – Completed • North Shore Poverty Reduction Action Grant Application (Part #2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report • Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Application (Intake #2)
HOMELESSNESS RELATED WORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) – North Shore Homeless Community Action Strategy – Begin action plan work 				



2 CONTEXT OF HOMELESSNESS ON THE NORTH SHORE

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural, or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.¹

The complexities of homelessness make it difficult to get accurate data and a clear picture of how many people are experiencing homelessness or might be at risk of homelessness. This is because people can move in and out of homelessness and/or through the varying forms of homelessness.

The homeless population on the North Shore is dispersed throughout the three municipalities, and within the traditional territories of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, with notable concentrations in urban, semi-urban, parks, and deep woods locations. An increasing number of individuals living in vehicles and on boats has also been observed. The homeless population on the North Shore is not static, with many individuals regularly moving across jurisdictional boundaries to access services, income, food, and other necessities. While there are distinct issues within each jurisdiction, the majority of needs-serving organizations operate across the North Shore.

The [2020 Point-In-Time Homeless Count](#), a Federal initiative, which took place in March just prior to the initial COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns, revealed 121 homeless individuals on the North Shore. Of these, 46 people (38%) were unsheltered. However, the North Shore 2020 Extended Count Pilot project, a local initiative, revealed higher numbers with 212 homeless individuals recorded. It is important to note that the 2020 count took place just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic therefore it is likely that the data does not adequately reflect the extent of homelessness on the North Shore given the economic impacts and policy responses stemming from the pandemic.

In 2021, the Lookout Housing and Health Society (Lookout) connected with 580 homeless individuals on the North Shore (an average of 48 homeless individuals per month), supporting their primary needs and providing shelter, medical and hygiene referrals. Lookout estimates that approximately 40% of contacts are Indigenous individuals. While the majority of recorded homeless individuals are male², over the past few years there has been an increase in the number of women, families with children, and seniors within encampments due to the lack of available alternatives.

While homeless counts can offer some valuable indicators, they are widely acknowledged as significantly underestimating the number of homeless people in a community, and those reachable by a homeless count do not represent the true diversity of identities and experiences in the homeless population. At the same time there is a growing and diverse need for housing, there is only one co-ed emergency shelter on the North Shore offering 45 beds. Service providers indicate existing supports are often at capacity, and the number of beds/units available on the North Shore are not enough to meet current and growing needs.

2.1 IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON THE NORTH SHORE HOMELESS POPULATIONS

COVID-19 has had substantial negative implications for people experiencing homelessness, with the closure of the majority of locations where the unsheltered homeless populations would regularly access services and resources as well as increased costs associated with mask use and other preventative measures. There was an increased fear of using the North Shore Shelter because of social distancing and increased vulnerability associated with the higher risks of contracting COVID-19 due to poor health conditions.

Family and friends of homeless individuals who previously may have been willing to open their doors to those in need were unable to do so due to the risks associated with COVID-19. This particularly impacted Indigenous individuals leaving institutional settings. As a result, since March 2020, Squamish Nation has been supporting individuals who would otherwise be unsheltered by providing accommodation in hotel rooms.

¹ Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. (2012.) Canadian Definition of Homelessness. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. www.homelesshub.ca/homelessdefinition

² BC Non-Profit Housing Association (2020). *2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver*. Prepared for the Greater Vancouver Reaching Home Community Entity. Vancouver, BC: Metro Vancouver.

For services that have been maintained there was, and may still be, reduced capacity or changes in location or type of service delivery. Whereas unsheltered homeless individuals previously would have had multiple options for accessing supports and services (both specialized drop-in services and broader services through each of the North Shore libraries and community centres), they are now reliant on fewer locations. With facility closures there was a lack of access to public and semi-public washrooms, showers, and sources of drinking water, all of which made it difficult for unsheltered individuals to meet basic human needs with dignity. In addition, library closures and capacity limitations reduced access to services, technology, internet connectivity, and other information. Due to social distancing requirements, the Emergency Weather Response (EWR) had to be moved from Lookout's Shelter to the North Shore Neighbourhood House (NSNH). This relocation of EWR service was challenging to communicate and for people in need to access the new location.

The suspension and adaptation of free community meal programs eliminated access to food relied on by many unsheltered individuals. When meal programs resumed with COVID-safe measures, meals were provided as takeaway and heat-at-home meals in place of onsite meals. The heating and storage of take away meals is problematic for unsheltered individuals and can present health and safety concerns.

Public health orders issued during COVID-19 have been difficult, if not impossible, for those experiencing homelessness to comply with, creating additional barriers in connecting individuals to the services they need to survive. For those individuals who may have avoided going to mainstream services even in normal times, COVID-19 has pushed them further into isolation and there are likely many individuals who have become completely disconnected over the past two years.

All of the above changes have resulted in significantly reduced options for homeless individuals to meet their basic needs or access resources and support services. This has led to a disruption in already precarious social relationships and further marginalization in the public sphere; at the same time that the visibility and number of homeless individuals has increased, support networks have been limited.

The locational and geographical challenges of homeless service provision on the North Shore and the systematic inequalities facing Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness have also been exacerbated by COVID-19. As service providers and partner organizations shifted their operations to COVID-19 response, this has diverted focus away from or paused initiatives that were in development to support homeless individuals, despite the need for enhanced service provision during the pandemic. The pandemic has left a notable capacity gap within partner organizations which has been detrimental for coordination amongst those working on housing, homelessness and service provision. For example, prior to COVID-19, Lookout and Squamish Nation had been investigating the potential of partnership to design a collaborative pilot project to provide outreach/in-reach that is inclusive and culturally safe and supports Squamish Nation Members and Indigenous people to thrive with positive holistic outcomes. This was stalled due to the diversion of Squamish Nation resources to response activities following a COVID outbreak in the community. Squamish Nation members and other Indigenous individuals who have experienced past trauma and are currently homeless have become extremely vulnerable during COVID-19 as there are less supports in place.

For North Shore community and social service organizations that support unsheltered individuals, COVID-19 has increased operational costs (for example, increase in cleaning supplies and protocols, changing ways of offering service, needing computer and technology upgrades). This has exacerbated the lean budgets and strained capacity of organizations that were already stretched. In addition to the increased costs, these organizations are serving more individuals in the community since the pandemic's socio-economic impact has hit many people who would not previously have drawn on their services for support.

At a more fundamental level, COVID-19 demonstrated the fragility of existing supports for the unsheltered homeless population. Support for individuals is delivered by multiple organizations who, while they have a vast amount of expertise in their area and the will to deliver in a coordinated way, do not have the resources to facilitate a comprehensive, North Shore wide response to COVID-19. There is no spare capacity within organizations involved in service delivery to take on an operational role in regards to coordination and collaboration between partners and across jurisdictions, yet it is this operational role that sits at the core of an effective and efficient crisis response, including the ability to shift from crisis to recovery actions.

3 VISION AND PRINCIPLES

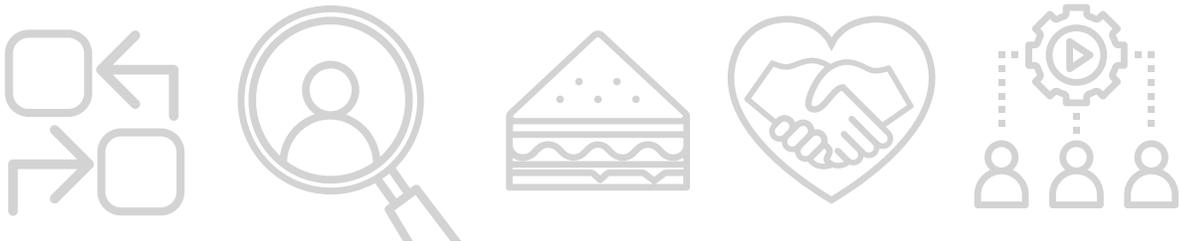
To further support the NSHAI work and establish a common view, the Steering Committee created a vision and principles to evaluate priority actions and to support collaboration.

3.1 VISION

The NSHAI is an assembly of North Shore officials with a mutual commitment to enhancing coordination and action to prevent and alleviate homelessness in our communities.

3.2 PRINCIPLES

- 1. Prioritize Dignity:** Ensure services and facilities are designed to be inviting, inclusive, accessible, and physically and culturally safe spaces that treat each client with dignity.
- 2. Decisions are People-Focused:** Be informed by peoples' lived experience, and consider the extent to which decisions will meet their diversity of needs.
- 3. Accepting Change:** Existing practices are underserving those experiencing homelessness on the North Shore, and we need to be willing to accept changes and innovate our approach.
- 4. Create a Sandwich, not Spaghetti:** Coordinate services across the North Shore to deliver distinct services and facilities with clear purposes (like layers in a sandwich) and avoid duplication, gaps, and ambiguity (like spilled spaghetti).
- 5. Each NSHAI Partner has a Role:** Show leadership and timely commitment to action by identifying and committing resources (operating, capital, staff) to implement the priority actions.



4 OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The following sections describe a key objective, as outlined in the Terms of Reference in Appendix 1, the work undertaken, and actions for moving forward:

4.1 UNDERSTANDING EACH COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

4.2 INVENTORY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIONS

4.3 EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE AND COORDINATED DELIVERY MECHANISMS

4.4 COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

4.5 PRIORITY ACTIONS

4.1 UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Objective: *Review and consider community needs pertaining to homelessness in close coordination with service providers, relevant community agencies, and First Nations.*

In 2019, the British Columbia government mandated that municipalities and regional districts are required to complete Housing Needs Reports by April 2022, and every five years thereafter.

Housing Needs Reports are intended to help communities better understand their current and future housing needs. They help to identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data and information about local demographics, economics, housing stock, and other factors.

The three North Shore municipalities and both Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and Səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations have completed Housing Needs Reports. Based on these reports, the prominent themes related to homelessness on the North Shore include:

- **Increasing Numbers:** An increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on the North Shore – both in people who are visibly homeless, and those experiencing hidden homelessness.
- **More Options are Needed:** There is a broad continuum of individual needs, requiring a wider range of options to meet those needs – for example, a need for enhanced provision for youth, women and children fleeing violence, seniors, and those with mental health issues. There is a need for additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.
- **Indigenous Individuals are Overrepresented:** Indigenous individuals are overrepresented in the homeless population, and further work is required to better understand and define culturally appropriate options to meet shelter and support needs.

It is important to note that much of the data for the Housing Needs Reports were from the previous census year (2016) and also prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on data collected from non-profit and other service organizations throughout the pandemic, it is evident that the number of individuals at-risk of homelessness are also increasing. For example, the Foodbank, at the North Shore Neighbourhood House, has seen an increase from approximately 200 individual families per week to approximately 700. Additional supports focused on prevention of homelessness are also needed.

What Does This Mean For The North Shore?

In relation to homelessness, additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing is needed. Further, there are some specific areas of focus such as additional beds for youth and seniors, non-mixed gender options, daytime provision, transition housing, and more to support people out of emergency shelter and specialist housing (women, youth, mental health, and substance use).

• Emergency Shelter Provision

- » North Shore Shelter and safe houses (youth, seniors) operate at capacity. There is a need for additional beds and more options that are not mixed gender and are designed to meet the needs of marginalized community members who are highest at risk.
- » The Emergency Weather Response requires a location that is not linked to the Shelter.
- » There is a need for more daytime provisions, where people can go during the day.

• Transition and Supportive Recovery Housing

- » Residents at the North Shore Housing Centre have very limited options to transition to, regardless of tenure (non-market, supportive, or private rental), there is a need for transitional and supportive recovery housing.
- » Specialist housing providers (women, youth, mental health, substance use) require additional locations for small-scale provision, generally 6-10 beds or up to 6 self-contained units within one building.

• Permanent Affordable and/or Supportive Housing

- » Need for significantly more non-market affordable housing, as well as permanent supportive housing with on-site operator space and service provision (e.g. complex care).



Assembling care and hygiene kits and handing these out starts a dialogue. This can create opportunities to offer support like counselling, rehabilitation, or first aid.



Community Access
Coordinator (funded by
provincial Strengthening
Community Services' North
Shore Grant)

In addition to the above, through various engagements on the topic of homelessness, the following observations were shared:

- There is a need for more provision of clean water, supplies, and spaces for individuals who are homeless to meet their basic needs with dignity (water, shower, laundry).
- Palliative care, medical respite, and other health-supports for people who are homeless and are discharged from the medical system are needed.
- A lack of choice can create challenges for those at greater risk of becoming victimized to find safe shelter space.

MOVING FORWARD

- Staff will continue to collect and monitor data related to homelessness and poverty to understand current and future needs.
- Staff will continue to seek opportunities to work across jurisdictions to develop housing options that support individuals experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.
- Leaders will advocate and focus efforts on delivering emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.

4.2 INVENTORY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIONS

Objective: *Inventory opportunities and existing planned actions across jurisdictions on the North Shore.*

There is a significant amount of work that has been and continues to be undertaken across the North Shore to support individuals experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. In order to better understand the potential networks, policy, housing, and programs and services gaps it was necessary to undertake a substantive review of the existing frameworks and conditions.

The Inventory (Figure 1), summarized below, includes a wide range of plans, strategies, policies, and studies; the various housing and facilities across the north shore; the programs and services; and the existing committees and networks that are available for people experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness. It will be used by staff to better coordinate and support efforts across all jurisdictions.

Figure 1. Summary of Opportunities and Existing Actions Inventory



It is important to acknowledge that much of the work noted above is done in partnership and collaboration between First Nations, municipal, provincial, and federal governments, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders. The focus of NSHAI's work has been specifically on the governmental and First Nations roles and how they can better support the upstream mechanisms necessary to support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Plans, Policies + Studies

There are over 20 plans, policies, strategies, initiatives, and studies across the North Shore that address homelessness. These include:

- Housing Action Plans which provide policies on housing and homelessness. Examples include the [City of North Vancouver’s Housing Action Plan](#), the [District of West Vancouver’s Housing Action Plan](#), and the [District of North Vancouver’s Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy](#).
- Strategies such as the [North Shore Homelessness Task Force’s Strategic Plan \(2022-2032\)](#) which is designed to address issues relating to homelessness and poverty on the North Shore.
- Studies and Reports to inform policy and decision-making, including the [2020 Point in Time Homelessness Count](#) and the various municipal Housing Needs Reports.
- Policies to guide decision-making such as the [District of North Vancouver’s Residential Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy](#) and the [City of North Vancouver’s Below Market Rental in New Market Rental Development Policy](#).
- Protocols such as the North Vancouver Municipal Homeless Protocol and the Extreme Weather Response Protocol.
- Federal and Provincial level plans such as the Federal government’s [Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy](#) and a number of initiatives at the [Provincial government level](#).

These initiatives and funding programs influence and support local work.

Housing + Facilities

The North Shore has emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive recovery housing intended to provide a pathway out of homelessness.

- Emergency shelters offer night by night emergency accommodation.
- Transitional housing is intended to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing and typically has length of stay limitations.
- Supportive recovery housing is subsidized housing with on-site supports for single adults, seniors and people with disabilities to help people find and maintain stable housing.

Existing Housing and Facilities on the North Shore

EMERGENCY SHELTERS (Nightly accommodation)	TRADITIONAL HOUSING (Time-limited accommodation)	SUPPORTIVE RECOVERY HOUSING
North Shore Shelter (45 beds, co-ed)	North Shore Housing Centre (25 studios)	Addiction Recovery: Dovercourt Group Home (20 beds) NS Men’s Recovery House (9 beds) NS Women’s Recovery House (9 beds)
COVID/Temporary Shelter (24 rooms)	SAGE Transition House (18 beds, women)	
Seasonal EWR (20 mats, co-ed)	SAGE Second Stage Transition (6 beds)	
Youth Safe House (4 beds)	HOPE’s Second Stage Transition (2 units)	CMHA Group Homes (6 homes)
Seniors Safe House (5 beds)	Youth Transition Houses x 4 (12 beds)	LEGEND
Mental Health Emergency (7 beds)	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>■ Permanent Shelter Locations</p> <p>■ Temporary Shelter Locations</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>■ Youth-Oriented Locations</p> <p>■ Seniors-Oriented Locations</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>■ Health Support Locations</p> <p>■ Women-Oriented Locations</p> </div> </div>	

In addition to the above:

- Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation created a non-profit housing society called “Hiyám ta Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw Housing Society,” which means “The Squamish Are Coming Home.” The Society currently has six sites for affordable rental housing that will provide much-needed equitable and diverse housing options.
- Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation builds and rents subsidized housing to members. The Nation’s Public Works Department plans, develops, and manages social housing projects on reserve land. They also manage an on-reserve seniors housing program, which helps elders with rent subsidies or maintaining or repairing their privately-owned homes. Most recently, the Nation created a non-profit housing society for the newest multi-unit residence.
- Both Nations offer a variety of member services to support indigenous individuals who are in crisis, experiencing homelessness, or are at risk of homelessness.

Programs + Services

There are over 30 community-based programs and services available across the North Shore to assist people to meet their housing needs or provide other supports including:

- Outreach (Canadian Mental Health Association, Hollyburn Family Services, Lookout Housing and Health Society, North Shore Crisis Services Society, Salvation Army).
- Hotlines for distress, safety, and health issues.
- Health Services (Addiction Recovery, Vancouver Coastal Health’s Health Connections Clinic, Community Psychiatric Services).
- Mental Health Support Services (Car 22, Peer Assisted Crisis Team).
- Seniors Supports (Seniors One Stop, Silver Harbour Centre, West Vancouver Seniors’ Activity Centre).
- Food Assistance Programs (meal programs, food banks, grocery store gift cards).
- Financial Supports (North Shore Rent Bank offered by Harvest Project).
- Drop-in hygiene programs.
- Other supports (household goods).

In addition to the above, both Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) and Səlílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations have a broad spectrum of member services to provide supports for Indigenous individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These supports can include emergency shelter, crisis services, housing, education, income support, and other forms of assistance.

“One cold morning in February we were at the Emergency Weather Response Shelter and two individuals were heading out and we were there to offer hand warmers, gloves, toques and a hot drink.”

Community Access Coordinator
(funded by provincial
Strengthening Community
Services’ North Shore Grant)

Committees + Networks

The following cross-jurisdictional, inter-agency, and issue-based committees, task forces, and networks exist across the North Shore:

- Committees and Task Forces:
 - » North Shore Substance Use Standing Committee.
 - » Metro Vancouver Regional Planning and Advisory Committee on Social Issues.
 - » Community Housing Action Committee (CHAC).
 - » North Shore Homelessness Task Force.
- Network of Community Organizations:
 - » Squamish Nation Streamline Meeting.
 - » Squamish Nation, Tseil-Waututh Nation, Vancouver Coastal Health Patient Discharge Working Meetings.
 - » North Shore Community Resources Society Inter-Agency Network.
 - » City of North Vancouver Balanced Housing Lab.
 - » Foundry North Shore Society Youth Urgent Response Team (YURT).

These committees and networks offer knowledge and information sharing, connection, collaboration, partnership, and provide an opportunity to acknowledge gaps within policy, programs, and service provision, as well as work towards solutions.

IDENTIFIED POLICY GAPS IN EXISTING ACTIONS

Throughout this work and discussions of the Steering Committee, there were a few policy areas that were identified as gaps that require additional review and consideration:

- A policy framework that would support access to basic needs with dignity including water, hygiene facilities (showers, laundry), public washrooms, etc.
- A policy framework that would address and support parking and provision of access to facilities and supports in recognition of the increasing number of individuals living in vehicular or boat accommodation.
- A policy framework that provides a more consistent and people-centred approach across jurisdictions.
- A policy framework to enable and support the provision of additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.

MOVING FORWARD

- Staff will maintain the Inventory of Opportunities and Actions to support individual and cross-jurisdictional work.
- Leaders and staff will continue to seek opportunities to work across jurisdictions to develop policy options that support individuals experiencing homeless or who are at risk of homelessness including policy frameworks that:
 - a. Support individuals' access to basic needs with dignity including water, hygiene facilities (showers, laundry) and public washrooms.
 - b. Address and support individuals living in vehicular or boat accommodation.
 - c. Provide a more consistent and people-centred approach across jurisdictions.
 - d. Enable and support the provision of additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.

4.3 EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE AND COORDINATED DELIVERY MECHANISMS

Objective: Explore alternative and coordinated delivery mechanisms for services, supports, and responses to issues, including the potential for a North Shore-wide approach to resourcing recommended initiatives related to homelessness.

Over the 18-month term of the NSHAJ, many local, provincial, national, and international examples of mechanisms to respond to homelessness were explored. These examples included single project interventions such as the Health and Housing Project in Prince George, BC to the single point of entry system in Perth, Australia, to Housing First systemic change projects in Medicine Hat, AB and Finland. See Appendix 2 for highlights of these projects. The common elements of success throughout the examples included:

- Delivery of services and housing within a prevention-based framework – stopping individuals from becoming homeless in the first place.
- Centralized assessment system focused on understanding and meeting client needs.
- Multiplicity of options – not a ‘one-size fits-all’ approach, acknowledging complexity.
- Providing additional housing supply at all points along the housing continuum.
- Providing timely options for delivery of services and housing provision.
- Provision of culturally appropriate and trauma informed response and supports.

In addition to the research of various models, the five local North Shore jurisdictions have been working on five policy and action-based projects specific to homelessness and those at risk of homelessness through grants provided by the Provincial Government and administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

GRANT	VALUE	PURPOSE	ACTIVITIES
Strengthening Communities’ Services Program (Intake #1)	\$1.97 M – UBCM Underway 2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the health and safety of unsheltered homeless people and address related community impacts • Partnership between CNV, DNV, DWV, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, NSNH, City Library, and Lookout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach services and cultural supports • Urban indigenous outreach services • Open door community hub program • Shower programs • Mobile outreach vehicle • Other supports and activities
Strengthening Communities’ Services Program (Intake #2)	\$0.9 M – UBCM Application Submitted April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to improve the health and safety of unsheltered homeless people and address related community impacts • Partnership between CNV, DNV, DWV, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, NSNH, City Library, and Lookout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach services and cultural supports • Urban indigenous outreach services • Open door community hub program • Shower programs • Other supports and activities
North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy	\$75,000 – UBCM Underway 2021/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address inequities and reduce poverty on the North Shore • Partnership between CNV, DNV, DWV, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Consultation • North Shore Poverty Reduction Task Force • Create strategies and actions
North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy Action and Implementation	\$150,000 – UBCM Application Submitted Feb 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support action out of the Poverty Reduction Strategy • Partnership between CNV, DNV, DWV, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solutions Navigator position to provide individuals one-to-one support, navigation, and access to community resources
North Shore Homeless Task Force (NSHTF) Community Action Strategy	\$25,000 – SPARC Completed 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSHTF created a community-informed plan for reducing the impacts of poverty and homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Situation Report • NSHTF Strategic Plan (2022-2032) • NSHTF Relationship Map

Key learnings from work funded under these grants, so far include:

- North Shore residents benefit from an excellent non-profit sector.
- Clarity and understanding of needs and gaps related to program and service provision.
- Better understanding of on-the-ground implementation needs in order to be successful.
- Non-profit organizations and partners are better able to tackle service provision than municipalities.

From the above common elements of success and key learnings, the Steering Committee determined that the path forward for the North Shore to better support individuals experiencing homelessness or those who are at risk of homelessness would be to focus on moving towards a single point of entry and a housing first model.

SINGLE POINT OF ENTRY

A single point of entry system would provide a centralized and coordinated intake and information hub to help individuals access the supports they need and limit or mitigate the multiple referrals to different agencies to seek various supports.

“Recently a young person left one of the shelters and was feeling quite ill. Shelter staff had been unable to locate him and had become concerned for his wellbeing. He was spotted by bylaw officials and through enhanced communication and coordination he was identified as the person that shelter staff had been trying to locate.”

Community Access
Coordinator (funded by
provincial Strengthening
Community Services' North
Shore Grant)

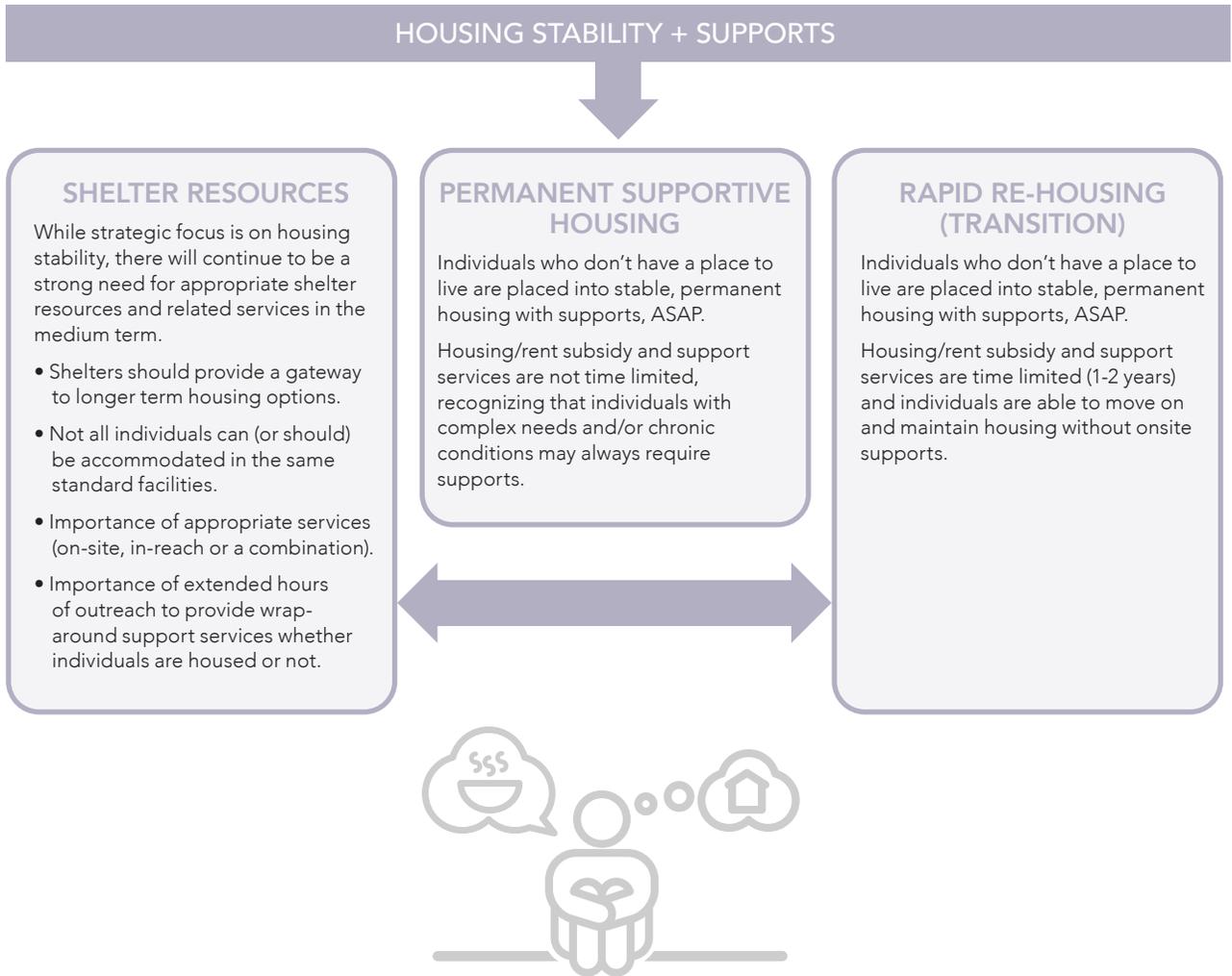


The information system should also have a public facing online/phone component to help those needing information for themselves or to support others navigate the system.

HOUSING FIRST

The Federal Government has endorsed a Housing First model defined as: “moving people experiencing homelessness – particularly people experiencing chronic homelessness – rapidly from the street or emergency shelters into stable and long-term housing, with supports. Stable housing provides a platform to deliver services to address issues frequently faced among the chronically and episodically homeless. The goal is to encourage housing stability and improved quality of life for persons served by Housing First and, to the extent possible, foster self-sufficiency.”

For the North Shore, this means a focus on increasing emergency shelter spaces, transition housing options, and supportive housing choices. In addition, it means a clear focus on both physical and mental health supports and services. Health and housing must go hand-in-hand.



MOVING FORWARD

- Staff will continue to look for opportunities to pursue grant funding for projects and policy related to homelessness in partnership and individually.
- Staff will continue to work with government and external partners (Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, and not-for-profit service providers) to move towards a single point of entry and housing first model.
- Leaders will advocate for and implement the systemic changes needed to move towards a single point of entry and housing first model.

4.4 COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Objective: Launch a coordinated and ongoing communications and advocacy strategy outlining key North Shore achievements, challenges, needs, and partner commitments including reporting out on priority actions to the community and other levels of government.

One of the key objectives of the NSHA was to improve collective communications and advocacy related to homelessness. With three municipal governments, two First Nation governments, three fire departments, two police agencies, multiple non-profit organizations, (including those that are faith-based), Vancouver Coastal Health, and BC Housing providing programs and services on the North Shore, there are challenges to coordination and providing consistent and appropriate responses to support unsheltered individuals.

At the Steering Committee (political level) it was important to have everyone working from the same information and building a mutual understanding of local issues – not only about the homeless population but also the various political, financial, and mandate positioning and challenges.

At the Working Group (staff level), it was important to build relationships, understand each jurisdictional context – policy and studies, housing and facilities, programs and services, and committees and networks – and look for opportunities to collaborate.

Homelessness Response Protocols

To support better on the ground communications, equity, and consistency in response across the North Shore, an update of cross-jurisdictional homelessness response protocols was proposed:

PROJECT:	Update the multi-jurisdictional “Homelessness Response Protocols”
WHAT:	The “Response Protocols” is a document for staff that outlines available tools and responses to issues, challenges, and situations to better support people experiencing homelessness in public spaces.
HOW:	It is intended to provide or support: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A framework for coordinated and consistent approaches• Information and guidance on appropriate responses/actions for a variety of situations• Information on available services/supports for people in need• Communication protocols for responding to businesses and community concerns• Closer working relationships amongst staff across jurisdictions
WHO:	Staff from Bylaws, Police, Fire, Parks, Engineering, Planning, Public Safety, Member Services, Recreation, Community Services and other front-line workers or people that have interactions with homeless individuals from across the North Shore. It will be updated to include expertise and resources from community partners and service agencies.

Updated or new homelessness response protocols would better equip staff for the variety of situations that can occur in public spaces. It would enable better response, access to supports, and outcomes for all involved.

The intent would be to move from a more enforcement based approach to a people-centred approach.

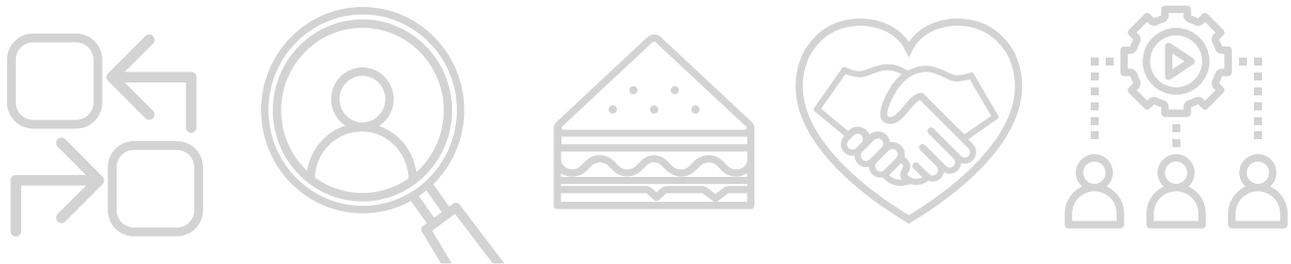
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Three areas of commitment were endorsed:

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS	ADVOCACY	PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue the working group informally• Maintain inventory of existing actions• Seek opportunities to collaborate• Encourage and support training and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on a shared vision for service provision• Focus on additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share community needs, data, and statistics regularly• Share information on services and supports• Share achievements• Support greater public awareness

Key Takeaways

- The North Shore is seeing increasing numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness – both visibly homeless and hidden homeless.
- More housing options are needed to support a broad spectrum of individual needs, including options that are culturally appropriate, and include both mental and physical health supports.
- The North Shore needs additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.
- The North Shore is advocating for the implementation of a single point of entry and a housing first model.
- It is critically important to keep working together in partnership across jurisdictions and with partner organizations.



MOVING FORWARD

- Staff will continue to support advocacy efforts related to homelessness and housing.
- Staff will continue the working group informally to maintain coordination and collaboration efforts.
- Staff will undertake the 'homelessness response protocols' project to improve on the ground communications, equity, and consistency in municipal and First Nations response across the North Shore.
- Staff and leaders will share data on community needs and available information to support better public awareness and dialogue.

4.5 PRIORITY ACTIONS – MOVING FORWARD

Objective: *Develop a concise list of priority actions and partner roles in advancing the respective actions, with a focus on identifying opportunities for investments in permanent supportive housing.*

A key objective of the NSHAI has been to agree on actions that partners will take to prevent and alleviate homelessness on the North Shore. In each of the preceding sections, actions have been listed as outcomes for “moving forward”. The 12 priority actions are summarized below. These actions may be advanced by staff and/or leaders in each partner organization. As an outcome of the NSHAI, the staff working group (representatives from the Nations and municipalities), will meet on a regular basis to coordinate and collaborate.

MOVING FORWARD

LEADERS WILL:

1. Advocate for and focus efforts on delivering emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.
2. Advocate for and implement the systemic changes needed to move towards a single point of entry and housing first model.

STAFF WILL:

3. Work with other government and external partners (Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, and non-profit service providers) to move towards a single point of entry and housing first model.
4. Seek opportunities to work across jurisdictions to develop housing options that support individuals experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.
5. Undertake the ‘homelessness response protocols’ project to improve on the ground communications, equity, and consistency in municipal and First Nations response across the North Shore.
6. Seek opportunities to develop policy options that support individuals experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness including policy frameworks that:
 - a. Support individuals’ access to basic needs with dignity including water, hygiene facilities (showers, laundry), and public washrooms.
 - b. Address and support individuals living in vehicular or boat accommodation.
 - c. Provide a more consistent and people-centred approach across jurisdictions.
 - d. Enable and support the provision of additional emergency shelter provision, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.
7. Look for opportunities to pursue grant funding for projects and policy related to homelessness in partnership and individually.
8. Support advocacy efforts related to homelessness and housing.
9. Continue the working group informally to maintain coordination and collaboration efforts.
10. Maintain the Inventory of Opportunities and Actions to support individual and cross-jurisdictional work.
11. Collect and monitor data related to homelessness and poverty to understand current and future needs.
12. Share data on community needs and available information to support better public awareness and dialogue.

5 CONCLUSION

Over the course of 18 months, and in alignment with the stated objectives of the the NSHAI, the Steering Committee has:

- Achieved a shared understanding of the issues, complexities, and the policy and housing needs related to homelessness.
- Supported the creation of an inventory of all the work related to homelessness within the five North Shore jurisdictions for staff to use to better support and understand work in other jurisdictions and to better support one another.
- Created 12 priority actions that focus on opportunities to achieve better data and understanding of community needs, working together, advocacy, improved communications, and more public awareness and dialogue.
- Reviewed and considered multiple models and examples of housing and supports and selected two key paths forward – single point of entry and housing first.
- Supported commitments to better communication for staff, the public, and advocacy efforts.

Going forward, the Steering Committee, which has completed its' mandate, remains committed to increasing coordination and supporting initiatives, policies, funding, and capital investments to better support individuals experiencing homelessness and those who are at risk of homelessness.

The Working Group has established close working relationships and will continue to meet as needed to support this work and undertake the priority actions.



APPENDIX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NS-HAI) is an assembly of North Shore officials with a mutual commitment to enhancing coordination and action to prevent and alleviate homelessness in our communities.

FUNCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative is a forum for coordination amongst officials and agencies with direct and indirect authority for homelessness actions, supportive policies, funding and capital investments. This Initiative aims to:

- Review and consider community needs pertaining to homelessness in close coordination with service providers, relevant community agencies, and First Nations;
- Inventory opportunities and existing planned actions across jurisdictions on the North Shore;
- Develop a concise list of priority actions and partner roles in advancing the respective actions, with a focus on identifying opportunities for investments in permanent supportive housing;
- Explore alternative and coordinated delivery mechanisms for services, supports, and responses to issues, including the potential for a North Shore-wide approach to resourcing recommended initiatives related to homelessness;
- Produce a Report for the North Shore Councils with the outcomes of the Initiative; and,
- Launch a coordinated and ongoing communications and advocacy strategy outlining key North Shore achievements, challenges, needs, and partner commitments including reporting out on priority actions to the community and other levels of government.

The initiative duration is anticipated to be twelve months and will officially launch in Q1 of 2021. It may be extended at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The work of the NS-HAI will be directed by a Steering Committee comprised of elected and appointed government officials or delegates including:

- (1) City of North Vancouver Mayor
- (1) District of North Vancouver Mayor
- (1) District of West Vancouver Mayor
- (1) Tsleil-Waututh Nation Council Member
- (1) Squamish Nation Council Member
- (1) Vancouver Coastal Health Board Chair
- (1) BC Housing Board Chair
- Provincial and Federal elected Members of Parliament and the Legislative Assembly (involved at key intervals to support advocacy and to review findings and investments)

The Steering Committee's deliberations will be supported by information provided by a Staff Working Group, Partners, and by invited presentations from selected agencies, businesses, and not-for-profit organizations with direct involvement in the delivery of public health initiatives, social services, housing, real estate, finance and other services.

WORKING GROUP

A Working Group, comprised of staff from each jurisdiction, will support the work of the Steering Committee. The Working Group will include:

- City of North Vancouver staff representative(s)
- District of North Vancouver staff representative(s)
- District of West Vancouver staff representative(s)
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation staff representative(s)
- Squamish Nation staff representative(s)

The Working Group, or selected members of the Working Group, will be convened to advance business as directed by the Steering Committee.

PARTNERS

A number of Partners have been identified to support the work of the Steering Committee and Staff Working Group. They are comprised of key not-for-profit organizations and stakeholders:

- North Shore Homelessness Task Force
- Lookout Housing and Health Society
- North Shore Crisis Services Society
- Canadian Mental Health Association (North Shore branch)
- Hiḡám̓ ta Sḡwḡwú7mesh Housing Society

- Hollyburn Family Services Society
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- BC Housing

The Partners, or selected members, will be convened to participate in discussions and advance business as directed by the Steering Committee and Staff Working Group.

MEETINGS AND STAFF SUPPORT

- A Chair will be determined by the membership of the Steering Committee at the first meeting.
- Steering Committee meetings will be held quarterly at the call of the Chair and hosted by the Chair's jurisdiction. This will include organizing meetings, taking and distributing any minutes.
- Should the Initiative be extended past 12 months, the Chair will be selected annually.
- Working Group meetings will be held as required.
- Each organization will provide in-kind staff support to the Project.
- Each organization will identify financial resources to be committed to the Action Project's objectives and implementation.
- Consensus shall be the method of conducting business.
- Roberts Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary procedures for the Steering Committee.
- A quorum of the Steering Committee shall be a minimum of **three** members. A meeting shall not proceed if a quorum cannot be achieved.
- A quorum of the Working Group shall be a minimum of **two** members.

COMMUNICATIONS

Any reports, statements or communications that are presented or prepared by the Steering Committee and/or Working Group will be treated as **confidential** and are not for distribution unless otherwise specified by the Chair. The designated spokesperson in public communications for all work being completed through the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative is the Chair, unless alternative spokespersons are approved by the Chair.

APPENDIX 2. PRECEDENTS ON THE HOUSING FIRST AND SINGLE POINT OF ENTRY SERVICES

FINLAND

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Housing policies are built on the foundation of “Housing First”, a principle introduced in 2007 which provides rough sleepers or people who become homeless with a stable and permanent home as soon as possible and then provides them with the help and support they need. Even if people are taking drugs or abusing alcohol they can stay, as long as they are interacting with support workers.
- The [Action Plan for Preventing Homelessness in Finland \(2016-2019\)](#) focuses on the prevention of homelessness built off of Housing First Principles and work done in part with [PAAVO I \(National Programme to Reduce Long-Term Homelessness\)](#) and the [Name on the Door Development Project \(2010-2012\)](#).

RECENT WORK:

- The City of Helsinki provides a homeless support unit responsible for organizing housing services for homeless adults, childless couples, mental health clients, and residents under 65. This includes housing advisory services, placement and evaluation, social work for supported living, and the Hietaniemenkatu Service Centre.
- [Hietaniemenkatu Service Centre](#): 24/7 service centre for the homeless. Rehabilitation-oriented unit that refers people requiring further aid to services they need. Clients are forwarded to more permanent housing or appropriate assistance, including:
 - » Emergency housing services.
 - » Social and Health Care Services.
 - » Accommodation for 15 euros per day.



Permanent Supportive Housing Facility provided by Y-Foundation (non-profit housing provider) under Finland's National Homelessness Strategy

BUDGET:

- 300M euros over the past decade, providing 3,500 new homes for the homeless and more than 300 new support workers.

RELEVANT LINKS:

- [City of Helsinki Allowances and Services for the Homeless Webpage](#)
- [Info on Name on the door – development project \(2010-2012\)](#)
- [AUNE - Action Plan for Preventing Homelessness in Finland \(2016–2019\)](#)
- [The Finnish Homelessness Strategy: An International Review](#)

MEDICINE HAT

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS:

- A [Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 years \(2008\)](#) was a 10-year Alberta-wide plan focused on “ending homelessness rather than managing it”. This plan employed a different approach from simply building shelters and focused on three areas:
 - » Rapid re-housing (housing first).
 - » Providing client-centred supports (single point of entry), and providing the assistance needed to restore stability and maintain housing.
 - » Preventing homelessness.
- Seven cities, including Medicine Hat, are targeting a “Functional Zero” approach to homelessness. This does not mean that there are zero homeless individuals, but rather that homelessness is prevented whenever possible and experiences of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-reoccurring.
- Ending chronic homelessness means that the [Medicine Hat Community Housing Society](#) connects people to housing resources within 10 days of learning that they don’t have a place to live, which is a goal outlined in their Housing First Plan.
 - » Currently aiming to connect people with housing resources within three days, and eventually within 24 hours.



The Champion's Centre

RECENT WORK:

- The Champions Centre provides supports such as free breakfast, storage, and showers.
- The [Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society Housing First Program](#) supports for individuals and families.
- Two Permanent Supportive Housing sites (15 units each, tenancy is not time limited).

BUDGET:

- None disclosed, only informal and unsourced, but “estimates on how much it costs to house one homeless (\$20,000) individual versus providing services to them while unsheltered (\$80,000)”.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Alberta Secretariat for Ending Homelessness – A Plan For Alberta \(to end homelessness in 10 years\)](#)
[MHCHS Homelessness Initiatives](#)

SQUAMISH NATION

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS:

- [Squamish Nation's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan](#) sets a goal for the Nation: to house every Squamish person within a generation.
- \$1.1 million budgeted for the housing society to develop affordable rentals.
- Council has allocated (in principle) six sites for consideration for housing.
- Hi'yám Housing is Squamish Nation's non-profit organization mandated to lead the development and management of non-profit housing for the Squamish People. Over the next year, they'll be building up the organization, applying for government funds, developing partnerships with funders, and working with consultant teams to design and develop new affordable housing for the Squamish People.

RECENT WORK:

- Affordable housing complexes on reserve land for Squamish members: BC Housing will be providing funding for on-reserve affordable housing, which will be located at Squamish Nation's Capilano Reserve No. 5 (northwest corner of Welch Street and Mathias Road, just east of Lions Gate Bridge). The building complex will be a 95-unit building consisting of:
 - » 16 studios, 50 1-bedroom units, 20 2-bedroom units, 10 3-bedroom units, and 1 5-bedroom unit.
 - » Mix of rents for a range of incomes (follows BC Housing's Community Housing Fund breakdown):
 - ~ 20% of units deep subsidy (starting at \$375/month for studio or 1-bedroom).
 - ~ 50% of units at Housing Income Limits (starting at \$837 for studio or 1-bedroom).
 - ~ 30% of units as affordable moderate (starting at \$1030 for 1-bedroom).
 - » Multi-generational mix of tenants with 59 units dedicated to elders, and 16 units for vulnerable youth. Including 11 lock-off studios in the townhouses to have potential to be integrated with family units above. Multi-generational housing approach mixing Elders, families, and youth in a holistic community which will foster positive intergenerational relationships.
 - » Will also include solar screens, First Nations blanket pattern on exterior of building entrance, culturally relevant and evocative landscaping and other features.
 - » Will integrate cultural art and dance spaces and a community grocery store operating under a co-op model with the space doubling as an informal community gathering space.
 - » Construction was anticipated to complete by the end of 2023.



Artistic rendering of project

BUDGET:

- Not disclosed, but funding is provided by BC Housing through the Community Housing Fund program.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Squamish Nation's Housing Report \(2008\)](#)

[Bring Squamish Home Project Page](#)

SEATTLE

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Regional homelessness authority explicitly mandates “evidence-based, housing first policies”.
- Low barrier housing began in the 1990s:
 - » 1811 Eastlake serving residents for 17 years, with 17 units of low-barrier housing for homeless men and women with severe alcohol addiction.
 - ~ Provides meals, counselling, and health care.
 - ~ The goal was not to cure drinking problems, but to provide basic needs to the chronically homeless.
- Other programs include diversion funds to people at risk of homelessness to keep them out of the emergency shelter system.

RECENT WORK:

- The Navigation Centre (started in 2017) connects unsheltered individuals with existing services and shelters, staffed by outreach workers and Seattle Police with advanced certification in crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques.
 - » The members of the Navigation Team are the primary access point for people served by the Navigation Center, a dormitory-style living facility that provides showers, bathrooms, and laundry facilities, as well as meals and a place to store their belongings.
 - » Seattle’s Navigation Center is open 24/7 and welcomes pets, couples, and individuals currently struggling with addiction, though no drug use is allowed on-site. The Navigation Center serves up to 75 individuals at one time.
- The City has also passed an ordinance that would allow up to 40 tiny house villages, encampments or parking lot camps. This has enabled Tiny Home Villages to emerge, providing more than 300 people with a tiny house structure that locks, with access to restrooms and showers, case management, a kitchen and managed community.



Tiny Home Village: Lake Union

BUDGET:

- In 2018, Seattle expected to spend about 78 million dollars in direct response to homelessness, directed towards emergency response, (shelter, hygiene, outreach) and housing options (permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing and diversion services).

RELEVANT LINKS:

[Seattle Tiny House Villages](#)

[Office of the Mayor, Feb 23, 2021: City Provides an Update on More Than 350 New Shelter Beds Coming Online, Including Opening of Hotels, Tiny House Villages, and An Enhanced Shelter for Women](#)

VANCOUVER

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS:

- [Building BC's Rapid Response to Homelessness \(2017\)](#) invested \$291 million to deliver permanent and temporary units in response to homelessness across BC. This included:
 - » Construction costs and operating subsidies for non-profit operators.
 - » Delivery of projects and non-profit selection, building handover coordination and tenancing.
 - » Support for homeless/at-risk, including people living on the street and in shelters.
 - » Housing operators providing 24/7 staffing and supportive housing operations and programming.
 - » Rapid re-housing (housing first), client-centred supports (single point of entry), and assistance to maintain housing.
- 10 sites approved under the Rapid Response to Homelessness program between 2017-2019:
 - » 3-storey form on underutilized/vacant land (i.e., City-owned parking lots or developer lands being held for at least three years), 1-2 buildings on each of the 10 sites; 39-52 suites per building.
 - » BC Housing pays for construction and owns the buildings. City or developer leases the land to BC Housing for agreed-upon term.
 - » 606 suites total, each suite is ~320 ft² and includes furnishings, 3-piece washroom, and in-suite cooking facilities. Building amenities include commercial kitchen (2 meals/day provided), free on-site shared laundry room, furnished and programmed indoor space for socializing and activities, landscaped outdoor amenity with healing space/community gardens.
- Supportive Housing to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness:
 - » Trained support workers partner with each resident to develop a customized plan to meet their personal and housing goals. Some supports are offered inside the building while others are offered in the local community.
 - » Residents are selected through a thoughtful and thorough assessment to make sure each person has the housing and support services they need to achieve a successful tenancy.

RECENT WORK:

- Larwill Place is located on an underutilized portion of a City-owned parking lot.
- BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) signed an MOU. Tenancing was a coordinated activity between BC Housing, City of Vancouver, the Non-profit operator, and VCH.
- VCH provides a nurse, mental health worker, and care aide on-site to give residents better coordinated comprehensive care.



Larwill Place

BUDGET:

- \$16.2 million for both of the buildings. Annual operating funding is provided to the non-profit housing society that operates the projects. VCH provides additional operational funding to Larwill Place for 20 units for people experiencing mental health challenges and/or addictions.

RELEVANT LINKS:

[BC Housing and Supportive Housing in your Community](#)

[City of Vancouver and Temporary Modular Housing](#)

[BC Housing news release and backgrounder for Larwill Place](#)

[BC Housing Research page](#) with published studies on resident outcomes conducted post-occupancy

[City of Vancouver's resident outcomes summary](#) based on BC Housing's research

APPENDIX 3. GLOSSARY

At-Risk of Experiencing Homelessness:

Individuals who are in extreme core housing need and spend at least 50% of their income on shelter or , those individuals or families whose current housing situations are dangerously lacking security or stability, and so are considered to [be at risk of homelessness](#).

Chronic Homeless:

Individuals who have experienced at least six months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year and have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days).

Drop-In Services:

[Drop-in Services](#) provide access to meals and amenities that address immediate needs such as showers, laundry, and telephone among others. They often include a safe gathering place with access to information resources and other support services. Drop-in services do not include providing sleeping accommodations.

Episodic Homeless:

[Individuals](#) that have had at least more than one period of homelessness in the last year. This population tends to be younger and often suffer from a type of disabling condition, such as substance use, mental illness, and/or medical challenges.

Extreme Weather Response (EWR) Shelter:

Extreme Weather Response Shelters provide extra beds during extreme weather conditions to ensure those who are at risk have a safe place to sleep. [Extreme Weather Response Shelters \(EWRs\)](#) are operated by Lookout in Abbotsford, Burnaby, Langley, North Shore, Surrey and Vancouver. They are open from November 1st to March 31st during extreme weather nights as called by the City and the EWR response coordinator.

Emergency Shelter:

[Emergency shelters](#) are temporary but immediate places to stay for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Hidden Homelessness:

[Individuals](#) who do not have a home of their own where they have security of tenure, and people who may be staying temporarily in another household (couch surfing). This population is considered to be “hidden” because they are less likely to access homelessness supports and services even though they are improperly or inadequately housed. This can also include people who are deep in forests or parks, and other locations where they are less likely to be seen.

Homeless:

[Homelessness](#) describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.

Housing First:

[Housing First](#) involves moving people experiencing homelessness —particularly people experiencing chronic homelessness—rapidly from the street or emergency shelters into stable and long-term housing, with supports.

Housing Needs Reports:

Municipalities and regional districts in B.C. are required to complete [housing needs reports](#) by April 2022 and every five years thereafter. These reports will help local governments and the B.C. government better understand and respond to housing needs in communities throughout B.C.

Point in Time (PiT) Homeless Count:

A [PiT Count](#) provides an estimate of homelessness in a community within a specified time period, generally 24 hours. A PiT Count is not intended to be a comprehensive research study, nor is it designed to provide the absolute number of individuals experiencing homelessness in a community. Instead, it offers a snapshot of homelessness and when conducted consistently, allows communities to measure their progress in reducing homelessness.

Single-Point-of-Entry:

Single Point of Entry provides a centralized and coordinated intake and information hub to help individuals access the supports they need and limit or mitigate the amount of multiple referrals to different agencies to seek various supports.

Supportive Housing:

[Supportive housing](#) is subsidized housing with on-site supports for single adults, seniors and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness. These supports help people find and maintain stable housing

Transitional Homeless:

Individuals experiencing homelessness, typically for less than a year, as a result of a major life change or catastrophic event.

Transitional Housing:

[Transitional housing](#) refers to temporary accommodation that is meant to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing by offering structure, supervision, support (for addictions and mental health, for instance), life skills, and in some cases, education and training.

Unsheltered Homeless:

[Individuals](#) who are living outside, such as in makeshift shelters or tents, vacant buildings, vehicles, or were staying temporarily indoors (couch-surfing).

PRODUCED BY:

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JUNE 2022

NSHAI

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