

This Isn't Working

2024 Call for
Government Action to
End Homelessness



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Thank you

To the houseless people that we talked to on the street, all the people that interviewed and were interviewed for this project, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention Society, PACE Society, Carnegie Community Centre Association Board, Carnegie Housing Project Lunch Group, DTES Neighbourhood House, Our Homes Can't Wait, Watari, Aboriginal Front Door Society, Our Streets, Embers, Eastside Works, Coordinated Community Response Network, Poverty Reduction Coalition, Heart Tattoo Society, Lama Mugabo, Sarah Blyth, Wendy Pedersen, Ethel Whitty, Gilles Cyrenne, Kit Rothschild, Chris Livingstone, Vince Tao, Anne Roberts, Elana Mabrito, Norm Leech, Celine Mauboules, Kathy Shimizu, Fiona York, Phoenix Winter, Max Harper Campbell, Craig Hathaway, and all those who have fought for better living conditions in this neighbourhood over decades.

Land Acknowledgement

The Downtown Eastside neighbourhood is on the ancestral, unceded, stolen territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples who steward this land since time immemorial. We are grateful to be able to live and work here and are committed to Indigenous people's reclamation of their right to sovereignty and self-determination.

This report was written and produced by Jean Swanson and Devin O'Leary of the Carnegie Housing Project, a project of the Carnegie Centre Community Association in Vancouver, BC. Feb, 2024. Cover photo taken by Sarah Blyth

Dedicated to Dino Bundy (Boomer)

This report is dedicated to Dino Bundy (Boomer), an orphan from the age of five, son of a Black father and Indigenous mother. Boomer was evicted from his SRO by a landlord who wanted to raise the rent. In 2023 he was unhoused and died in a fire in an electrical closet he had fixed up to be a secure place to sleep. Boomer was a well loved, active member of several Downtown Eastside groups working for safety and dignified housing. As Rhonda Stephens said in a CBC “The National” memorial video, “He made a family here but died by himself. Boomer’s story is so important. He represents every person who lives down here.” Boomer’s death is also a reminder that people who are unhoused houseless have about half the life expectancy as housed people in BC.



Introduction

Unless governments act to build and save housing that low income people can afford, the number of houseless people in Vancouver is on track to increase from about 3,150 today to about 4,700 people by 2030, causing ever more personal suffering, social anxiety, illness and preventable early deaths.

This report offers 42 recommendations for what government needs to do to end houselessness and support unhoused people in the meantime. The recommendations came from conversations with people who are unhoused and organizations who serve them, as well as from research into what governments are doing or saying they are doing about houselessness.

Because the issue is so urgent, housing takes so long to build, and needs are so great, our recommendations are divided into short term actions for immediate humanitarian aid, recommendations for the 2024 provincial budget, and longer-term actions for building enough adequate housing that prioritizes people with low-incomes.

What the DTES Situation Is

The Downtown Eastside (DTES), often called “Canada’s poorest postal code,” is a Vancouver neighbourhood with a strong community spirit and a lot of poverty. About 2,000 people who use DTES welfare offices have no fixed address. (2) Hundreds of people have to stay on the street because there are about 1,000 fewer shelter spaces than houseless people. Over half of the DTES population has low incomes, compared to about 14% for the rest

of the city. (3)

Average rents for vacant bachelor apartments are over \$2,000 a month in Metro Vancouver. Social assistance and disability rates for a single person provide only \$500 a month for shelter. People on basic Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement get a maximum of \$1,811 a month and can afford only about \$543 a month for rent. As a result, virtually anyone who depends on these income sources has to find social housing (or, in Vancouver, a single room occupancy hotel room, or supportive housing), unless they have help from family or friends.

“It’s not easy. Being out here myself I see a lot of people try hard every day to get a place. It’s not easy, it’s pretty hard out here. I’m not lazy. I try to do something every day to try to make money. It’s a hard lifestyle. It’s not easy to live like this. If someone helps me I’ll help them. I’ve met a lot more real people out here on the streets than working in a big company. They’re being themselves and they’re genuine. I prefer people like that.”

Process for Developing Recommendations

Starting to plan with people who are houseless

In early 2023, the Carnegie Housing Project (CHP) started talking to people living in tents on Hastings Street and in CRAB Park. We weren't trying to do a scientific study. We didn't take a random sample or ask exactly the same questions to everyone. We just asked folks what kind of housing they'd like; what would be better than what they have now if they couldn't get housing, what their source of income was, why they thought they were houseless, what services they needed and if they had anything else to say. Not everyone answered every question.

We met with focus groups and attended meetings with the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction, Overdose Prevention Society, PACE Society, Carnegie Board, DTES Neighbourhood House, Our Homes Can't Wait, Watari, Aboriginal Front Door, Our Streets and Embers. We wanted their feedback on what people who are unhoused told us and to include their recommendations on what governments should do to end houselessness and what should be done while waiting for it to happen.

We also listened to, transcribed, and categorized 90 interviews previously done by these and other DTES groups with people living on the street. We've shared some of their quotes throughout this report.

After this, we held more focus group meetings to get feedback on recommendations that were emerging from our community and to refine them. We asked people who are homeless and people working in groups that serve them what interim solutions could help while we

advocate for and wait for the housing we need. We also asked about longer-term recommendations and took emerging recommendations back into the community for feedback at four well-attended DTES town hall meetings .

We did research into the numbers of social assistance shelter rate housing units Vancouver is losing versus gaining, and what government programs are promising for the future of low-rent non-market housing.

“ I just want freedom and to be happy, not to live on the streets in the winter, in the cold. ”

“ Staying outside is hard. The first day we were evicted we stayed outside by the church. We didn't sleep, we basically just laid there all night. Then my dad said we could stay at his place. But that was rough. I don't know how people can do it for years and years.” ”

These meetings and the research we did resulted in three sets of recommendations for what governments need to do to support unhoused and precariously housed people. Each set of recommendations was voted on and approved by community members at three separate well-attended town halls.

At this point, there is a large group of DTES residents ready to start working to convince all levels of government to commit to adopting a plan to make these changes as well as to properly fund the work to end houselessness.

What the Research Found

How many people are unhoused in Vancouver?

There are three sources of information about the number of people who are unhoused in Vancouver. The 2023 homeless count, which is considered an under-count, found that 2,420 people are unhoused in Vancouver, a 16 per cent increase over 2020.(4) In addition, the provincial Ministry of Social Development reports that approximately 3,150 people receiving income assistance in Vancouver get an additional \$75 a month that goes to folks with no fixed address. BC Housing reports that over 3400 people are on the waitlist for supportive housing in Vancouver. (5)

How much affordable housing are we losing?

Losing SROs to rent increases

Vancouver has about 6,567 SRO rental units, mostly in the DTES, which are often called the last resort before homelessness (6). They are usually one room, often about 100-120 square feet with a wash basin and a bed. The washroom is down the hall, shared by everyone on the floor. Sometimes, there is a community kitchen. Some are well-maintained; some are poorly maintained, with bed bugs, rodents and dirt, and some are in-between. While some are poorly maintained, they need to be preserved, hopefully with better maintenance, until sufficient good quality housing is available.

About half (3,393) of SROs are owned by non-

profit housing societies, Chinese Benevolent Societies and governments.

About 3,174 SRO units (48%) in 93 buildings are privately owned and are increasingly unaffordable to folks who rely on social assistance or Basic Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement.

With growing DTES gentrification, over 900 of the privately owned SRO rooms are already off-limits to low-income people with rents now at \$700 and more per month. Other rooms are increasingly at risk of higher rents because there is no vacancy control law in BC. When tenants leave or die, landlords often renovate slightly and then raise rents to as high as \$1,700 or \$1,800 a month. The Lotus Hotel is a prime example. That leaves a total of 2,263 privately owned rooms for low-income people if the landlords keep the rents low.

In Feb, 2024, the court defeated the city's attempt to secure vacancy control in SROs,

“ Knowing that I have a place to sleep is one thing that would make a difference in my life. ”

saying the city didn't have the jurisdiction to implement rent control. The Province, however, does have the jurisdiction and could implement vacancy control and stop the increases.

In addition, Vancouver is currently losing an average of 90 SRO units per year because of fires or habitability issues.

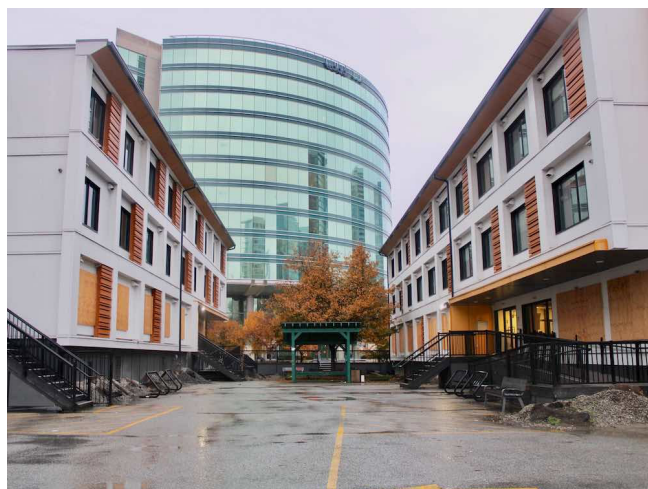
Losing modular housing to lease expiration

The City of Vancouver's website lists 860 units of so-called Temporary Modular Supportive Housing.(7) The temporary part is the land; the buildings can last for decades, longer than the old SROs will probably last. The modulares were designed to be moved and reoccupied. Most people prefer modular housing to shelters and SROs because they are newer, bigger and cleaner and have washrooms, kitchen facilities and more privacy. Rents in modular housing are set at the shelter portion of social assistance, or \$500 a month.

Currently, 46 modular units are in storage and 98 are sitting, boarded up and vacant, at Dunsmuir and Cambie. The 39 unit building at

Jackson and Powell is due to be emptied in the spring of 2024. Most of the remaining buildings could lose their land leases by 2028.

In July 2023, Vancouver City Council defeated a motion asking staff to investigate extending leases or finding new sites for these buildings. (8) This means the city, and more importantly, houseless people, could lose over 800 nice modular units by about 2030 unless leases are renewed or new sites found.



Above: The Little Mountain modular supportive housing building with 46 shelter rate units was removed in 2021. (1)

Left: 98 shelter rate units in the Larwill Place modular housing site were boarded up in the summer of 2023. They are still there today as the site awaits construction of the new Vancouver Art Gallery. (2)

How much affordable housing are we gaining?

It takes years to get new social housing buildings built. For example, in 2016, the social housing building was proposed for 1015 E. Hastings (9). It is now, in 2024, under construction. In December 2022, City of Vancouver staff estimated that about 1,500 shelter rate social housing units were in some stage from planning to construction and could be built by 2030. A recent email from housing planner Jessie Singer estimated only about 1,125 to 1,200 of these shelter rate units would be proceeding (10). Since then, the province announced that it bought Chalmers Lodge with 115 shelter rate units and 41 W. Pender, which is to be renovated to add 40 units for seniors, bringing the expected total

to 1,280-1,355 new shelter rate units in Vancouver by 2030 (11) (12).

In short, the best case scenario is: The city finds land and extends leases for all supportive modular housing, the province enacts vacancy control so we don't lose SROs to gentrification, no units are lost to fire or city orders, and the expected number of new shelter rate units are built. We could see homelessness drop from the current 3150 to about 1795 by the year 2030.

The worst case scenario (and most likely at this point): The city doesn't extend modular leases or find new sites, we don't get vacancy control, fires and city orders close more buildings, but we still get the planned number of new shelter rate units: Homelessness could increase from 3,150 today to about 4,700 by the year 2030. For calculations, sources and notes see Appendix 3.

Being stuck on waitlists

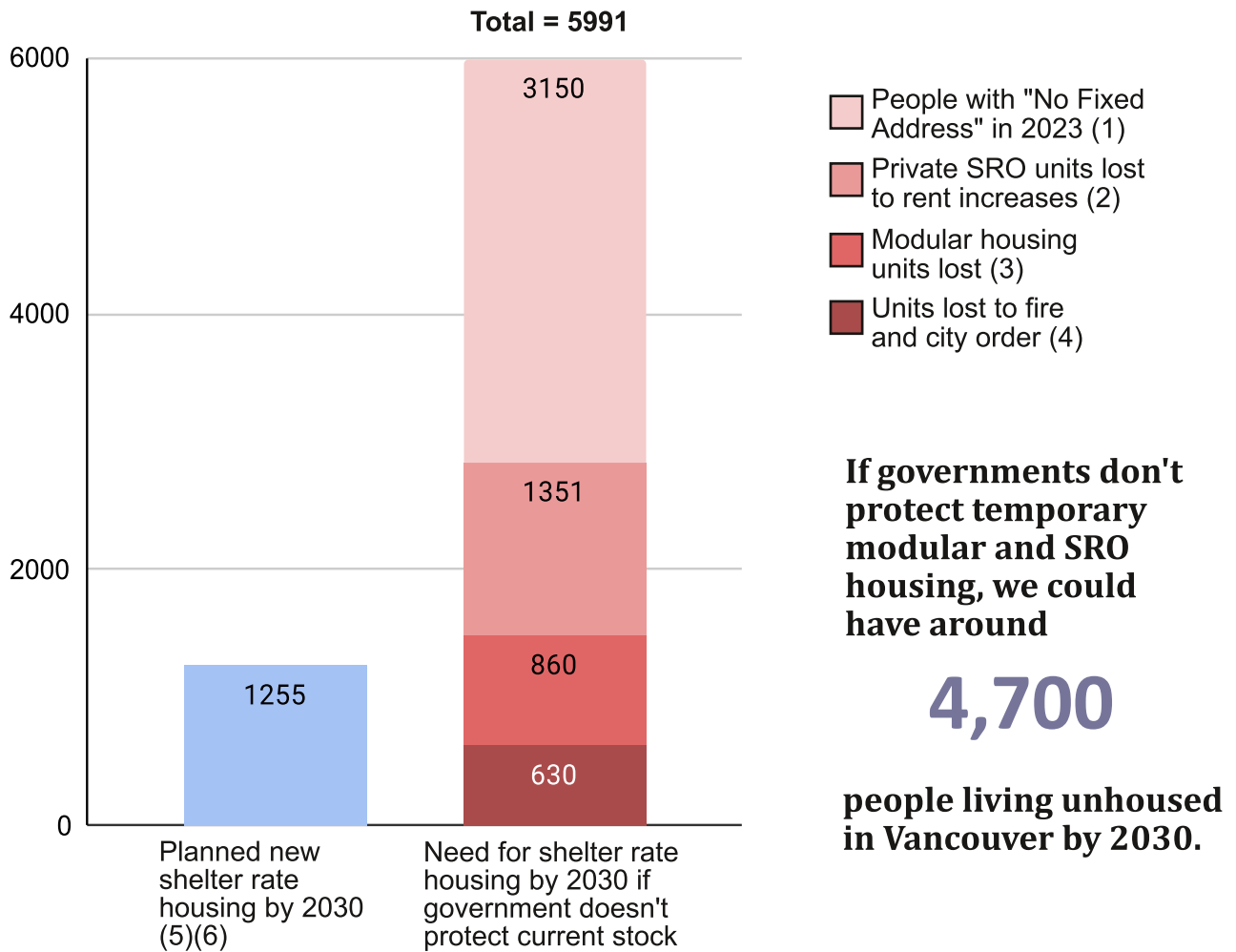
“ I’ve filled out 5-7 applications with low-income rental places in and around Vancouver all the way to Burnaby and I still haven’t gotten any answers to that. I think that there are some things that could be improved at some of those places. ”

“ The wait is like four months for approval; you feel defeated. ”

“ They kept losing my application. I had to apply four times. Even my mental health worker lost his shit on them because they lost the application. I never did get housing out of them after a year. ”

“ Unless someone passes away, that’s one of the only ways you get into housing. If it’s a new place you can go in, otherwise there’s hundreds of us just waiting for someone to die. Whether it’s overdose or natural causes. And that sucks. ”

Likely Vancouver Houseless Count by 2030



Even if the temporary modular and SRO units are protected and all the planned projects are funded and built, Vancouver could still have nearly 1,800 unhoused people by 2030 unless governments also build significantly more shelter-rate housing.

See sources, notes and explanations for this graph in Appendix 3.

It is difficult to calculate how many new people will become unhoused in the coming six years, but between 2020 and 2023 the official homeless count found an increase of 16% in Vancouver.

Why Government Programs Have Failed To End Houselessness

What follows is an examination of the biggest roadblocks stopping us from ending houselessness, what federal, provincial and Vancouver programs are available to help reduce houselessness, and what needs to happen with the tri-level government SRO strategy to ensure that it actually reduces houselessness.

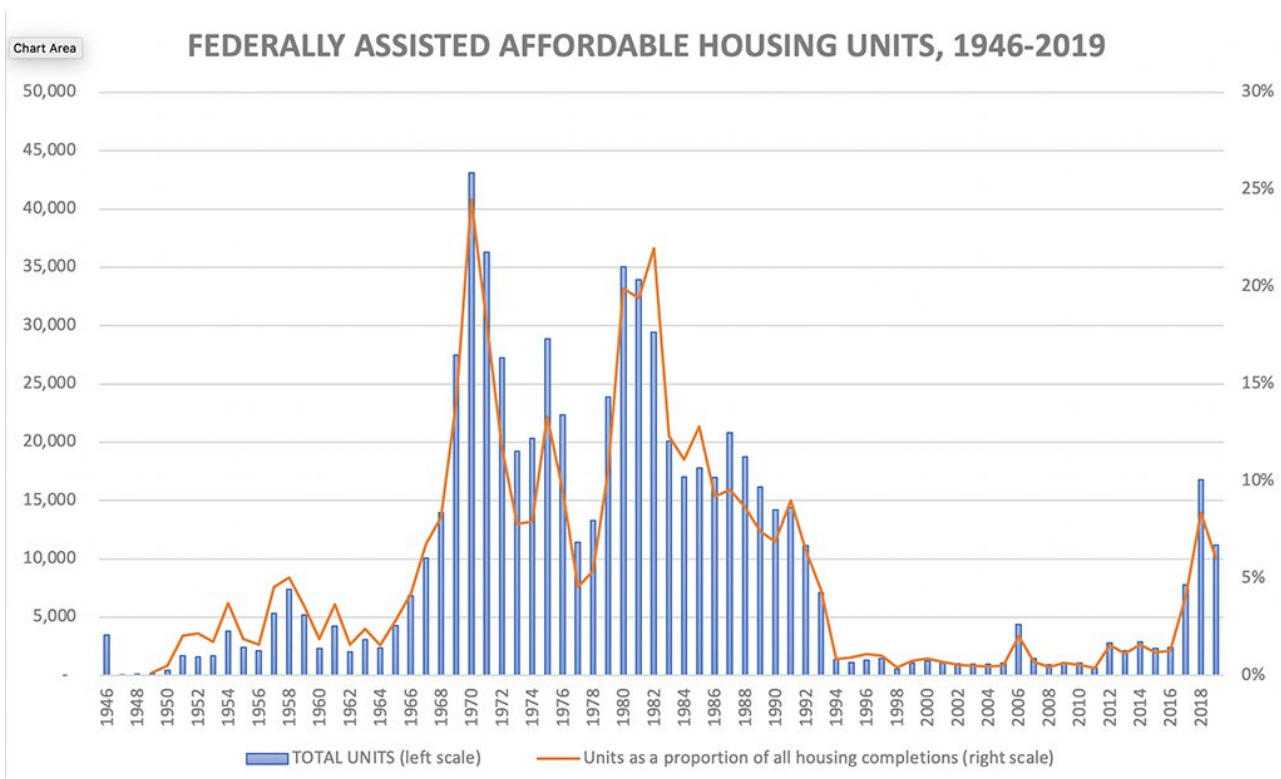
Federal Government

Federal Government Cutbacks

The biggest cause of houselessness in Canada today is the federal government's austerity cuts to social housing programs in the 1990s. These cuts cascaded over the past 30 years into the ever-increasing houselessness situation that we see, not just in the DTES and

Vancouver, but across Canada.

The graph below shows that federal funding for social housing declined drastically since the 1970s when over 30,000 units of social housing a year were built across the country. In the early '90s, federal housing funding almost completely stopped. This is a large part of the explanation for why so many people in Canada don't have a place to live now. While the graph shows federal expenditures increasing in the last few years, most of the federal programs are targeted to housing for middle-income, not people who are unhoused.



Complex funding and approval mechanisms

The systems for getting social housing for lower income people built are extremely cumbersome for the non-profit groups that sponsor that housing. For example, in 2018 there was a big announcement that the City of Vancouver would build more than 1,000 co-op and social housing units on seven city sites by 2021. By 2023, only two buildings were complete. The one at 177 W Pender Street is still a vacant lot as the non-profit developer awaits government funding for lower-income rents. According to Thom Armstrong of the Co-op Housing Federation, which is developing the site, their organization has to “apply for funding for its co-op proposals that compete against other affordable housing models.”

"The province received 13,000 applications during the last call for proposals, and funded 2,400." (15)

In September 2023, the federal government announced \$74 million to build 2,000 homes in London, Ontario. Given it costs \$400,000 per unit, \$74 million would only fund about 185 units. (16) For 2,000 units to get built, the builder probably has to cobble together land and funds from a provincial government, cities, charities, its own equity, and take out loans to get the full amount needed.

When one level of government announces that it will provide funds to build X number of units and another level of government announces it will be building units, too, there's a good

chance they could be talking about the same units.

Governments aren't providing enough funds to meet the need. That means the non-profit groups have to raise their own funds, apply and reapply for inadequate amounts of government funds, wait for rejections while at the same time interest rates and other costs go up. Patrick Stewart, an architect with Lu'ma Native Housing in Vancouver, says that one of their projects had funding from 27 different sources. (17)

But, with political will, adequate funding is possible. In 2017, the City of Vancouver and the Province of BC announced that they would build 600 units of modular housing with a \$66 million contribution from the province on 10 sites provided by the city. (18) The projects, which ended up with 663 units, were done in less than two years.

Federal government programs exclude low income people

In 2017, the federal government announced the creation of a National Housing Strategy. One of its goals was to reduce chronic homelessness by 50 percent in 10 years. Definitions of "chronic" vary, but it's a significantly smaller group than the estimated 150,000 to 300,000 people who are homeless for varying periods each year in Canada. (19)

In the Downtown Eastside, the number of houseless people has virtually doubled in that time, so, the federal government's minimal goal of reducing only chronic homelessness by only 50 percent is a dismal failure, six years into the 10 year plan. (20)

The federal government has several housing programs. The Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) was the best for houseless people. (21) It provided funding to create new affordable housing units and convert existing non-residential buildings like hotels into housing units. In 2021, the City of Vancouver and province used RHI funds to buy five hotels for low income residents. (22)

Federal Housing Advocate, Marie-Josée Houle, has called on the government to expand and provide "long-term funding for the Rapid Housing Initiative, the most effective program in the Strategy for creating new homes that are affordable and accessible to those in deepest need;" but the RHI website said in August, 2023 that "The application window is now closed." (23)

One federal program that is useful to people who are unhoused is Reaching Home, whose objective is to "streamline access to housing and supports for people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, by coordinating local services to achieve community-wide outcomes using real-time data." (24) Reaching Home funding is typically used for rent supplements for people at risk of being unhoused, capital upgrades to facilities of groups that serve people who are unhoused, other supports for people who are unhoused, and small amounts for housing and

shelter construction projects.

The three other federal programs, the National Housing Co-investment Fund, the Rental Construction Financing Initiative and the Housing Accelerator Fund don't support building housing that people who are houseless can afford. (25) (26) (27) However, if the Co-Investment Fund, which also provides funds for renovations, changed its criteria slightly to include privately-owned Single Room Occupancy Hotels, the fund could be used to provide desperately needed renovation funds if paired with rent controls. While this wouldn't create new units, it could help delay the loss of affordable SRO units and prevent more houselessness.

In other words, except for the now-expired Rapid Housing Initiative, federal programs that fund new housing actually exclude people on welfare, disability and Guaranteed Income Supplement because rents are too high.

The Federal Housing Advocate released this statement just after the federal government's March 28th budget was released: "Budget 2023 completely misses the mark on addressing the most pressing housing crisis this country has ever seen. There are no new ideas, and not nearly enough new money announced for housing. The homelessness crisis was not even mentioned. This is simply unacceptable. The Budget's investments drastically fall short of what is required to stem the tide of housing loss and homelessness that is sweeping across the country. It also fails to deliver on Canada's commitment to the human right to housing and does not even mention housing as a human right." (28)

More Words Than Action

BC programs relevant for people who are houseless include Homes for People, Belonging in BC, and Supporting the Downtown Eastside as well as the BC Indigenous Homelessness Strategy.

Homes for People is about housing for all BC residents, including middle-income renters and homeowners. Some of its parts, like the Community Housing Fund could help people who are unhoused because 20 percent of units built using this fund have to rent at the social assistance shelter rate. (29)

"Belonging in BC, a plan to prevent and reduce homelessness" says the need for action is "urgent," says the province wants to make homelessness rare, brief and one-time, talks a lot about ending encampments, the need for more and better coordinated services, the need to consult with affected groups and individuals, the need to prevent the flow of people from jails, hospitals and income assistance into homelessness, and measuring and reporting on progress annually. The report also calls for prioritizing "people with distinct needs – Indigenous, Métis, Inuit, First Nations, urban, rural, racialized and immigrant populations, youth, /seniors, women and 2SLGBTQIA+ people with disabilities." (30)

This provincial plan definitely targets dealing with homelessness, is more detailed than the federal plan, and includes a commitment to measure outcomes and report on them annually. It calls for increasing the number of affordable and supportive housing units and does provide some funds to accomplish this.

In addition, the province says it supports the BC Indigenous Homelessness Strategy developed by the Indigenous Homelessness Strategy Steering Committee. (31) This report "highlights that Indigenous experiences of homelessness are often a result of the current system of capitalism, government, and not

taking care of each other. It is rooted in colonialism, the Indian Act, intergenerational trauma associated with residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, the Millennium scoop, racism, and loss of land."

The strategy asserts that "Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions." It notes that "despite the significant over-representation of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness in BC, only 21 percent of BC Housing Homeless Outreach Programs are delivered by Indigenous organizations with Indigenous-specific perspectives and approaches."

The Indigenous Strategy also prefers using the term "unhoused" to "homelessness" because homelessness

a) "does not adequately reflect the historical drivers - economic, social, imperial, colonial, genocidal - underpinning the Indigenous unhousing process", and

b) large segments of the Indigenous Street Family prefer other terms, such as "the unhoused."

The Indigenous strategy concludes with 33 recommendations including that Indigenous groups be able to administer 40% of the money for most if not all categories of funding for unhoused people.

The Indigenous Strategy also calls for "focusing on critical transition points at which Indigenous Peoples and families are especially vulnerable to experiencing being unhoused as a preventative measure. These critical transition points include:

a) Indigenous youth and young adults transitioning from care, recognizing that Indigenous youth are 17 times more likely to be in care than non-Indigenous youth;

b) Indigenous Peoples being discharged from hospitals, including mental health and substance use bed-based, supportive recovery, or acute care settings;

c) Women and children fleeing violence, recognizing that Indigenous women are more likely to experience violence in their lifetime versus non-Indigenous women.

d) Indigenous Peoples being detained in and transitioning from correctional centres, recognizing that Indigenous Peoples represent 35 percent of those in government custody despite representing under 6 percent of the BC population."

Focusing on these transition points could help stem the flow of non- Indigenous people into homelessness, too.

In March of 2023, Premier Eby announced the "Supporting the Downtown Eastside: Provincial Partnership Plan", representing the Province's intent to "help DTES residents access integrated housing, health, social and cultural supports. (32) It will also resolve and prevent unsafe encampments, improving the community for all residents and visitors." This plan calls for transitioning people to indoor spaces [not called housing], working with the city on the SRO Revitalization plan and expanding the number of year-round shelters.

The working plan is taking a "Housing First " approach to homelessness, according to the provincial government, which recognizes that people are better able to access supports when they have safe, stable shelter and their basic needs are met. This plan "respects people's human rights and agency."

"The Province recognizes the unique history and culture of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and the value of maintaining community-based affordable housing and honouring established support networks."

“When they kicked us off the block and whatever happened on Hastings that's where I was living. I didn't want to leave. They took all my belongings. I didn't want to let them take it. They ripped everything out of my hands and put it in the dump truck. It was very emotional. I wasn't mad, I was in shock. ”

The DTES plan promises

- to ensure information about the plan and housing are shared regularly with the community
- to work with local organizations to help people access peer employment
- to continue work with the City on the SRO Revitalization Plan
- to ensure there is sufficient shelter space (mentioned 3 times)
- to explore tiny homes

The plan talks about updating the City's DTES Plan, including the redevelopment of the Balmoral and Regent blocks.

It talks about more investments in supportive housing, shelters, rent supplements, acquisitions and complex care, recognizing "that, for many, self contained modular units with supports are preferable to SROs or shelter options."

What's missing from the provincial plan?

While the words in the provincial plans are promising, they are very general, and it's not clear if there is a budget for implementing them. For example, the words say, "We learned from the Vancouver decampments of Oppenheimer Park in 2020 and Strathcona Park in 2021 how best practices resulted in transitions to stable housing for the majority of those sheltering and real-time wrap-around health and social supports available throughout the process." Then it goes on to talk about a new team that will "identify the needs of people facing homelessness so they

can quickly access health, mental health, addictions and social services, and support transitions to indoor spaces as a pathway to appropriate housing options." But Oppenheimer and Strathcona Park camps were taken down when housing was available for almost all the campers. Hastings Street was decamped when there was virtually no stable housing for campers.

The words say, "Increased communication and transparent planning," but community groups can't get answers to questions about what will happen to unhoused people this winter.

The words say, "for many, self-contained modular units with supports are preferable to SROs or shelter options," but 46 modular units are in storage and 98 more are boarded up, and there is no plan for what to do with hundreds more modular units when their land leases expire.

The words say three times in the DTES plan that more shelter space will be created, but

winter is almost past when this report is being written, and we still are still hundreds of shelter spaces short of meeting the need.

The words say "The Plan includes support for people sheltering along Hastings Street, in CRAB Park and in other areas, to stay safe, healthy and connect to indoor spaces and housing" but doesn't say where the indoor spaces and housing are or what the support is while they wait.

The words focus a lot on services and coordination which are important but can't be a substitute for providing actual self-contained decent housing.

The words talk about support for people sheltering outside but people aren't allowed to have tents, and still need washrooms, shelter from rain and snow, and heated and cooling spaces.



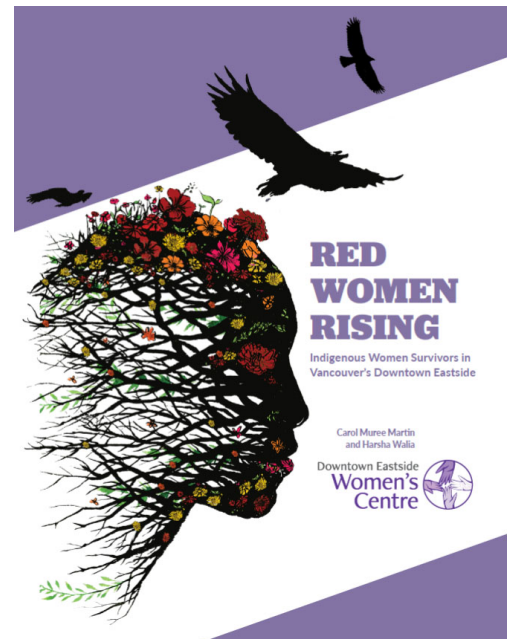
CRAB Tent City is the first and only currently legal encampment in Canada. They are setup in the park next to a usually vacant lot owned by the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, an agent of the federal government. (3)



39 units in the Aneki modular housing building currently at the intersection of Jackson and Powell are planned to be disassembled in Spring 2024 with no plan to use them elsewhere in Vancouver. (4)(5)

The DTES Partnership Plan also says that it supports the Red Women Rising report. But where is the action and funding for these and other Red Women Rising recommendations which were made four years ago?

- End the criminalization of homelessness by eliminating bylaw infractions and criminal charges for sleeping or tenting in public spaces, and end the displacement of tent cities.
- Change government definitions of social housing and affordable housing to mean rates that are affordable to people on social assistance, and rents that are income-g geared not market-g geared.
- Amend the provincial Residential Tenancy Act to cover all housing and to strengthen tenants rights. Amend the provincial Human Rights Code and Residential Tenancy Act to make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of social condition including health status and drug use.
- Implement an Indigenous reparations tax on top of property taxes on residential, commercial, and industrial properties, with all revenues going to implementation of an Indigenous poverty reduction plan. (34)



Cover of the Red Women Rising report (6)

These three provincial government plans don't identify how many new housing units and/or rent subsidies will be necessary to end houselessness, or have a plan and budget to build or subsidize the actual number of new units that will be needed to keep people from being houseless. And the plans don't mention a cheap and fast way to prevent the loss of SROs and apartments to rent increases, such as vacancy control to prevent rent increases on tenant turnover.

City of Vancouver

Several City of Vancouver policies and actions affect DTES homelessness. DTES residents worry that the City's DTES Plan could be changed to push out low-income people, that the city won't find sites for modular housing whose leases expire, that funding for the SRO revitalization strategy won't happen, and that the vacant Regent and Balmoral Hotels won't be redeveloped fast enough.

Revisiting the DTES plan

Two parts of the City's DTES local area plan are helpful to low-income residents. One virtually prohibits condos in the area surrounding Oppenheimer Park and extending down Hastings Street to Columbia Street. This helps lower property values and make social housing more affordable to build and so rents can be reduced.

The plan also requires that one-third of the social housing in the DTES be rented at shelter rate. In the rest of the city and province, there is no requirement for any shelter rate housing.

In 2023, Vancouver city council passed a motion to update the DTES Area Plan. (36)

If updating the DTES plan results in getting rid of the one-third shelter rate requirement or permitting condos in the Oppenheimer District, more low-income people could be pushed to the streets and fewer new social housing units will be available for low-income people.

Preserving SROs

For decades, the city has attempted to preserve SRO hotel rooms in the DTES for low-income people. About half of the SROs have been bought by government or non-profits, but the others are privately owned and at risk for low-income renters. In 2021, the city realized that investors were buying up hotels, evicting low-income tenants, doing slight upgrades and then renting them at much higher rents. The city then passed a vacancy control bylaw, but that was overturned in court and lost on appeal on the basis that it was the province's and not the city's jurisdiction. This means landlords will be able to raise rents as much as they like after a tenant leaves voluntarily, dies, is bought out, or evicted. In Vancouver's tight housing market, that puts more than 2,000 SRO rooms, the housing of last resort before homelessness, at risk as housing for low-income tenants.

Both profit and non-profit SROs are also vulnerable to fires which have ravaged several buildings in the last few years.



Pensioners paying under \$600 a month at the Lotus have been offered up to \$15,000 to move so their gentrifying landlord can raise rents to \$1800. (7)

The Regent and Balmoral

In 2017 the Regent, with 153 rooms and the Balmoral with 171 were closed by the city due to maintenance and structural issues. All tenants were evicted and those tenants were rehoused. Six years later, both buildings are still vacant.

In 2023, the city, which now owns both sites, began to demolish the Balmoral. Once demolished, the site will be redeveloped into new social housing together with the two adjacent sites (163 and 169 E. Hastings Street) recently purchased by the city. The city and BC Housing are also finalizing the lease agreement for the Regent Hotel, with the purpose of renovating the closed rooms into self-contained social housing units (37). It is still unclear if this redevelopment will result in all of the new units being affordable at shelter rate or only a portion of them. And there is no timeline for when the buildings will be ready for tenants.



The Balmoral and Regent SRO buildings with no public plans for renovation or redevelopment at the time of writing this report. Photo Dan Toulgoet (8)

The Tri-Level SRO Revitalization Strategy

Vancouver, the province, and the federal government are in talks about a billion dollar SRO strategy to preserve and or rebuild SROs. An April, 2023 city report explains the plan: "Staff from the City of Vancouver, BC Housing, the provincial government and CMHC have been collaborating on the development of an investment strategy to replace the SRO stock in Vancouver. As the basis for investment decisions by all levels of government, the SRO stock will be reviewed as a portfolio to identify risks, opportunities and priorities for renewal and redevelopment."

"Each level of government has committed to funding a third of the estimated \$2 million budget for staffing and consultancies to

develop the investment strategy over an 18-month period. BC Housing will lead the building prioritization work (including selection of SROs for building condition assessment, feasibility/ environmental studies) and the City of Vancouver will lead engagement with key stakeholders such as building owners (including Chinese Benevolent Societies), non-profit housing and service providers, community and advocacy organizations, and SRO tenants. The project is being overseen by a project team comprised of Arts, Culture and Community Services staff and two BC Housing staff, with support from staff from CMHC and the BC Ministry of Housing. Consultancies for the respective streams of work will be procured in the

However, there are three key issues yet to be resolved:

a) will the three levels of government actually provide the funds necessary to do the work?

b) will the resulting housing will be affordable to low-income DTES residents, given the city's definition of social housing that only requires one-third at shelter rate?

c) where will people displaced from the SROS live while projects are under construction?

coming months. Oversight is being provided by an Executive Committee, who will then report to their respective government bodies.”(37)

In August 2023, BC Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon asked the federal government to match BC's financial commitment to the strategy. Kahlon also said the province could “go it alone” if the federal government refuses. (38)

This plan is in addition to the Balmoral and Regent and has a potential for renovating and/or rebuilding hundreds of units of social housing.

Another key question affecting all three governments is what will happen to the site of the derelict Coastal Health-owned building at Gore Avenue and Hastings Street? This

publicly owned site which has been an eyesore for decades should be turned into housing and medical facilities for the community as soon as possible.

By rebuilding the Regent, Balmoral and Hastings and Gore sites first, governments could provide additional housing without the displacement required by rebuilding occupied SROs.

The Gore and Hastings Temple has been vacant since 2001 when it was purchased by Vancouver Coastal Health. In 2018, the province announced funding to build on this site, but nothing has happened since. Local urban Indigenous and Chinese community groups are proposing that it be turned into affordable senior's housing with a health clinic at the ground floor. (9) Photo by Devin O'Leary



Housing Management

The way housing, mostly supportive housing, is managed, is a key issue with DTES residents. Interviews with unhoused people revealed that many people don't like rules imposed on them in their buildings; some have often been evicted for not obeying the rules. By preventing these types of evictions, houselessness could be reduced. On the other hand, many talked about having lived in unsafe housing and the importance of being safe. Some told us they specifically wanted housing with supports and rules. Thousands have signed up to get on the supportive housing wait list. The following section is what people told us about rules and housing management and their suggestions for how it could be improved. Figuring out a system or systems of management and tenant rights for these situation could be the subject of future research.

Quotes from DTES residents about housing management

"Rules and regulations trigger their trauma; not treated as if they belong; need a community building where people are treated as extended family; with housing for guests without being policed."

"Need to support people in SROs; not with white savior complex."

"Housing operators don't build community; they just see a bunch of people needing help."

"When we create spaces that are respectful people will respect them."

"Before contact everyone was supported; that's what housing could look like; how do we make them more respectful and the people who live there make them feel welcome in the community."

"We need different rules in different places for different people."

"Could have one building for people who want to detox and another for folks who don't."

"People need to be more aware of their rights, for example, to have guests; need buildings that help people transition from street to good housing."

"We need to legalize tenant unions and have tenant groups in every building."

"If you make sure the place is clean and well maintained when folks move in that sets a standard that's easier to maintain than if you go into a building that is dirty and wild and noisy"

"Could have services for folks who live in the building like activities, and letting them have input into how things are run. Need to work with each tenant on options that work for them, like with the SRO-C plan: tenants cook and deliver food and tenants are paid to help clean."

"On site nurses in SROs would help cause a lot of managers aren't trained in how to deal with crises."

Community-Created Alternatives

Groups in the DTES community are already working on solutions which need government support to be expedited

The DTES Community Land Trust (CLT)

The CLT is asking the province to create a \$200M “SRO Protection Fund” to acquire 1,000 units in privately owned SRO hotels. The proposed fund will provide capital to help the CLT purchase existing, occupied SRO hotels – with the goal of keeping tenants’ rents at existing levels and ensuring housing stability and security until enough shelter-rate social housing is built to replace the existing SRO units. The CLT will use a unique, innovative peer-led support program in each building. This model, pioneered by the DTES SRO Collaborative in 2017, has a proven history of success and delivers overdose prevention, cleaning and repairs, food preparation and delivery, and cultural reconnection, among other peer-led programming. This is a very popular housing model in the DTES, causing loud cheers and applause when explained at Town Hall meetings.

Building Community Society (BCS)

BCS has proposed a program for people with serious mental or physical health issues. It now has an Indigenous partner and is ready to go with proper funding. This project would have outreach workers find people in trouble on the street and help them with individualized housing and supports that they choose for themselves. \$30-50K would be budgeted annually to support each person.

Overdose Preventions Society (OPS)

OPS operates a harm reduction site that supports 100 people a day in the summer and up to 1000 people a day on the coldest days of the winter. They also operate two of the very

few public washrooms in the neighbourhood. They are working on finding more hangout spaces for people to go to during the day to rest, have a coffee, and get connected to what they need.

CRAB Park Tent City

Canada's first legal tent city, the CRAB community established itself in CRAB park in the spring of 2021 after the Strathcona Park tent city was disbanded. In the summer of 2023, residents proposed to operate a tiny home village on the parking lot adjacent to CRAB Park. They need help acquiring the site and funding the project.

Our Homes Can't Wait (OHCW)

OHCW was very active in organizing people living in tents along Hastings before the decampment. They had successful town hall meetings to promote fire safety in tents and in SROs to prevent death and loss of homes to preventable fires.

Aboriginal Front Door Society (AFDS)

AFDS stepped up to support those who were displaced by the Spring of 2023 Hastings Street decampments and continues to support through offering daytime storage of people's belongings because they don't have a home to keep them in. This past winter, they opened up their limited space for 58 unhoused people to sleep each night that an Emergency Weather Response was activated by Homelessness Services Association of BC. They are asking for funding to operate the shelter year round, because under their current classification, they won't be able to open after April 15th.

DTES Recommendations for Supporting Unhoused and Precariously Housed Residents

For decades DTES groups have been making recommendations to improve our community for its low income residents. The DTES Womens' Centre wrote Red Women Rising with 135 recommendations that have been mainly ignored for four years. The Carnegie Action Project wrote annual reports for 9 years with recommendations that have not been implemented. What's different now is that the situation is much more urgent. Far too many people are literally dying on the street. And the number of groups supporting our recommendations and eager to work for them is large. And we have at least one level of government, provincial, that is talking like it wants to deal with houselessness. So here's what the DTES community says needs to be done:

Recommendations for Immediate Action

1. Open 500-1500 more shelter beds, mostly low barrier

In Vancouver we have about 3100 people with no fixed address and only about 1500 shelter beds.

2. Extend the leases or find modular housing sites in Vancouver

There are 144 units of nice modular homes that are boarded up and the rest of the 700 plus units whose leases will expire in the next few years.

3. Build a tiny home village for people living in the CRAB park community.

This is what the CRAB Community wants. There is no other place for them to go. It would be safer than what they have now.

4. Fund the Lifeline program proposed by the Building Community Society

This would provide support funds and housing for the most vulnerable and isolated living on the street. Many folks on the street have complex problems and need a lot of help. This

voluntary program could do outreach to find them and help.

5. Open one or more hangout spaces

People living on the street need a place they can go during the day to sleep, eat, use the washroom, shower, etc. This is a desperate need as many of the shelters close during the day.

6. Require landlords to get Residential Tenancy Branch approval and have a homeless prevention plan before evictions from social, supportive and SRO housing

This is a popular recommendation for people who have been evicted with nowhere to go.

7. Increase medical outreach in the DTES

Lots of folks living on the street need medical help but don't have transportation or know where to go to get it.

8. Increase laundry and shower services in the DTES

Many people living on the street asked for this.

9. Put a neighbourhood services information kiosk at Main and Hastings and Pigeon Park

People living on the street asked for this as many don't know which services are available or where they are.

Recommendations for 2024 Provincial Budget

1. Fund the DTES Community Land Trust with \$200M to buy and renovate SRO hotels and operate them using their tenant-led organizing model

This is a very popular program with DTES residents who like the tenant-led organizing model and the fact that the community would own the housing.

2. Find sites for housing modules from Larwill, Little Mountain, and Jackson and Powell and move ASAP

Many people can't understand why the government would board up nice housing during a housing crisis.

3. Find sites for and fund enough shelter spaces for all houseless people

This is similar to the recommendation for immediate action that didn't happen at the

beginning of winter and is still essential.

4. Require that all social housing be accessible to very low income people on social assistance and pension

Funding and implementing this recommendation could create about 1000 more shelter rate units in Vancouver before 2030 and ensure that low income people are not excluded from social housing.

5. Rent parking lot from the Port and set up and fund a tiny home village for the CRAB community

This recommendation from the first set was not implemented immediately but is still important to the DTES community.

6. Fund and speed up building 100 percent shelter/pension rate self-contained housing at Regent, Balmoral and Gore and Hastings temple sites

It's important to renovate or rebuild on these vacant sites first, before renovation or rebuilding SROs that have tenants who will have to be evicted. That way, government investment will result in additional better housing, not just better housing.

7. Fund the Lifeline program

This program was described in the immediate recommendations and could be implemented with provincial funding.

8. Raise social assistance rates to \$2300 a month (CERB plus inflation til 2023) and tie to inflation

Poverty is the biggest cause of houselessness and could be significantly reduced if social assistance rates were increased.



Community members respond to the Provincial Budget recommendations at the third Carnegie Housing Project Town Hall in November 2023. Photo Jean Swanson

Longer-Term Recommendations

Recommendations for All Levels Of Government Working Together

1. Fund Affordable Housing Advocacy

Provide sustained and adequate funding for community groups across BC to work for dignified housing that low income people can afford;

2. Fund a strategy to eliminate houselessness with adequate, dignified housing for all

The strategy should take into account the number and voices of people who are currently unhoused and their specific needs, the number of affordable units we are losing, the number we are gaining, the number of new people becoming unhoused and the services required.

4. Build at least 1 million Non-Market Housing units over the next 10 years in Canada

This could provide stable housing for the 2.4 million Canadians currently living below the poverty line. Consider having the government build the housing directly.

5. Ensure that low-income people can afford new non market housing by

Designate at least half of all non-market housing for people living on social assistance and basic pension.

6. Tax the rich to fund affordable non-market housing

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has some good recommendations for how to do this. (39)

Recommendations for Federal Government

7. Restore and drastically scale up the Rapid Housing Initiative to provide new homes that people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can afford

The Rapid Housing Initiative is the federal program that funded cities and provinces to buy hotels during COVID.

8. Change the criteria for the National Housing Co-investment Fund so that privately-owned SRO's can benefit from the funding if they keep rents at shelter/pension rate

This change could help preserve SROs until we get enough new housing to replace them.

9. Create a National Fund for Community Land Trusts to buy and build community-owned housing that low income people can afford

This could ensure that the community has housing they can afford in perpetuity, even if a government that wanted to sell off social housing was in power.

Recommendations for Provincial Government

10. Develop specific plans to stop the flows of people into homelessness from hospitals, jails, kids aging out of care, as outlined in the BC Indigenous Homelessness Strategy and recognized in Belonging In BC

11. Provide a \$200 million Fund to the DTES Community Land Trust to buy, own, and run SROs that are in relatively good shape to operate under their tenant leadership model

Also explore funding other land trust groups in the DTES. This recommendation is extremely popular in the DTES.

12. Bring in province-wide vacancy control

This would help stop the loss of affordability in SROs and other rental housing. Without vacancy control we could lose affordability in up to 200 DTES SRO units per year.

13. Provide more rent supplements, including increasing the SAFER limit to the actual cost of rents

SAFER is a senior rent supplement designed to ensure that seniors renting market housing don't have to pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent. But with current rules, that only works if your rent is \$803 or less in Vancouver, way lower than average rents. Other rent supplements are small in number and it's hard to figure out how to access them.

14. Amend the Transit Oriented Development legislation to require a certain percent of new development be at shelter/pension rate

This will ensure that displaced tenants are rehoused in appropriate housing at their current or lower rents as well as help increase the total stock of these affordable units. There is a danger that this policy will cause displacement of hundreds DTES SRO residents close to the Main St. skytrain station.

15. Work with Supportive and Transitional Housing Residents and Operators to better align funding, Operating Agreements, Tenant Agency and Accountability, and RTA Protections

This is a complex issue that deserves more attention and coordination between government, housing operators, tenants, and advocates.

16. Massively scale up funding for tenant advocates

Tenants told CHP they have a hard time finding help when their landlord wants to evict them. First United is one of the few organizations that offers tenant support in these situations.

Recommendations for city government

17. Extend the leases for all modular supportive housing or provide land for all modular housing when their leases expire

We can't afford to lose these desperately needed, self-contained units.

18. Stop displacement due to gentrification caused by St. Paul's hospital, Transit oriented development, and other pressures to use the DTES for expensive housing.



Community members meet in small groups to discuss each list of longer-term recommendations at the fourth Carnegie Housing Project Town Hall hosted in January 2024. Photo Jean Swanson.

Recommendations for the tri-level SRO Revitalization Strategy

19. Commit to adequate funding for SRO strategy from all levels of government ASAP

20. Ensure all SROs are redeveloped into shelter-rate non-market housing.

There is a danger that if SROs are redeveloped, two-thirds of the units could rent at above the shelter allowance. This would reduce the number of units available to low income people.

21. Start with renovating or rebuilding empty SROs like the Balmoral, Regent, and Gore and Hastings site

This needs to happen before tenanted SROs to make sure that we maintain a net increase in housing to reduce homelessness.

22. Work with groups like the SRO-Collaborative to support tenant-based initiatives and community building in redeveloped buildings

Buildings with tenant-based initiatives report a high level of trust and interdependent relationships. They also foster better relationships with landlords.

Recommendations for Housing Management

23. Create a fund that organizations who support specific communities can use to develop their own housing operation agreements

This could include Chinese seniors, sex workers, people who use drugs, people who are trying not to use drugs, Indigenous elders, women and men and could lead to better housing programs that suit specific communities.

24. Reduce drug-related crime in buildings by regulating a safe supply of drugs for people who use drugs

One of the most commonly heard reasons why people choose not to live in SROs and prefer being outside is due to the danger of violence related to drug debts.

25. Fund Tenant Associations

These were funded in the 80's and early 90's and it was a good program for giving tenant's agency in their buildings and in tenant policies. This should be re-considered to meet the needs of tenants today.

Appendices

Appendix 1: What Are Social and Supportive Housing?

Social Housing

Social housing: The housing arm of the federal government, CHMC, doesn't have a definition of social housing. Instead, they talk about "affordable" housing which they define as housing that costs less than 30 percent of a person's after-tax income. That housing can be in "private, public and non-profit sectors. It also includes all forms of housing tenure: rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing." (40)

British Columbia defines social housing as housing that the government subsidizes and either government or a non-profit organization owns and operates. There is no requirement for affordability. (41)

The City of Vancouver says social housing "requires that 100 percent of units in the building must be owned by a non-profit or government agency, with at least 30 percent of units affordable to incomes at or below Housing Income Limits (HILs) set by BC Housing. The Housing Income Limits table, which sets out that households in 2023 have to earn less than \$58,000 a year if renting a bachelor or one-bedroom unit to \$107,500 a year for a four-bedroom unit. (42) While "less than HILs" could technically include people with only \$500 a month for rent, in reality, there is a separate category of "shelter rate" for very low-income people.

In Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the Official Development Plan requires that "at least one-third of the dwelling units are occupied by persons eligible for either Income Assistance or a combination of basic Old Age Security pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement and are rented at rates no higher

than the shelter component of Income Assistance." (43) So, only in the DTES do a small portion of social housing units have to be affordable to low-income people.

Governments at all levels have failed to make even most social housing affordable to low income people. Shockingly, except for the DTES where one third of social housing has to be affordable at social assistance shelter rate, there is no other government requirement that the CHP can find that requires social housing or even a portion of it be affordable to low income people.

Supportive Housing

The City of Vancouver says "Supportive housing is affordable housing that provides a range of on-site supports to residents, such as life-skills training, and connections to off-site services such as primary health care, mental health, or substance use services." (44)

BC defines supportive housing, "as a rental unit that:

- is located in residential property that is operated by a supportive housing operator,
- is occupied by a tenant who has been assessed by the operator as someone who is experiencing or at risk of homelessness and would benefit from housing stability support,
- has at least one tenant in the unit who has housing stability supports provided on-site by the operator accessible to them,
- is not provided on a temporary basis." (45)

People on social assistance and basic pension can afford rents in supportive housing which are generally pegged at the social assistance shelter rate.

Some people who are houseless have had experience with supportive housing and like it.

Some don't like it, mostly because they think there are too many rules and because they don't have the legal rights of tenants that forbid wellness checks, guest policies, and quiet enjoyment.

Some supportive housing buildings have "programs" that people must agree to before being accepted as tenants. Some are "transitional." Sometimes prospective tenants have to sign leases saying they don't have tenant rights or they won't be accepted to live in a building.

In Vancouver, all of the Temporary Modular Housing units are supportive housing. In addition, there are many other buildings run by non profits like Atira, Portland Hotel Society, Lookout, and Mental Patients Association that are also supportive housing.

Appendix 2. What people who are houseless and precariously housed said about their situation

What It Feels Like to Be Houseless

"Having a place would make a huge difference. Being on the street you always have to hustle to keep up with addiction and food. No place to rest, so constantly tired."

"I don't have hope. I've jumped through every hoop, been on housing list for ten years"

"I think everyone who become homeless, at that point either your ego's been knocked down or you've been hit personally. You need that extra bit of help. You can't say no you don't need it then realize you did. It might not be your fault that you're homeless, but during that whole cycle of being homeless, you're definitely going to take a psychological hit personally even if you don't say it out loud."

"Staying outside is hard. The first day we were evicted we stayed outside by the church. We didn't sleep, we basically just laid there all night. Then my dad said we could stay at his place. But that was rough. I don't know how people can do it for years and years."

How It Feels to Be on the Housing Waitlist

"Being on the BC Housing list is a fairy tale."

"There is no access to BC Housing directly. They separate you to all these programs. You can't get housing without BC Housing."

"The wait is like four months for approval; you feel defeated."

"I don't know any places that help anybody. I've tried to get help and haven't gotten any. I keep getting told to come back or get pushed aside. Haven't been able to get a place for years. Don't know why."

"Places to go. Trying to figure out which place is which. I guess you could get a list. I think it would be nice if there was someone attached to you who could help you through it all and the applications."

"BC Housing is fucking everybody. There's a definite river there between us homeless and the people who are trying to work with us."

How Being Unhoused Contributes to Drug Use

"Understand that having no home is a really really bad situation. It's dangerous. It's depressing, it's sad, it elicits a lot of feeling, and a lot of people turn to substance use when they have no home."

"Five years ago I was working and then I was homeless for three weeks and it was unbearable and I picked up fentanyl and it made it fucking manageable. It was really hard to do sober."

"I look around and see a bunch of useful people that should be at home with their wife and kids and instead they are in a park. They got addicted after they were homeless. They weren't shooting coke when they left the house. It's the situation that breeds."

Appendix 3. Likely Vancouver Houseless Count by 2030 Chart Sources and Explanations

1) Email to Jean Swanson from Ministry of Poverty Reduction re: number of people (approximately 2000) using DTES welfare offices who receive the \$75 stipend because they have no fixed address; and number of people in the rest of the city who receive this stipend (approximately 1150). While this figure could include a handful of people who have a residence but haven't informed the Ministry yet, that number is probably quite small. In addition, some people who are homeless don't receive welfare or disability and wouldn't be included in this number.

2) This city report (<https://council.vancouver.ca/20230530/documents/r4.pdf>) says 23 privately-owned SRO buildings containing 911 rooms had average rents of \$700 or more in 2023. That leaves 1925 rooms with average rents under \$700. The welfare shelter rate is \$500 /mo so \$700 is too expensive for people on welfare and disability. How fast will the rooms that are under \$700 increase in rent? Without vacancy control they will probably become unaffordable every time a tenant leaves. If there is a 10 % turnover every year (like there is in purpose built rentals) , we would lose about 190 rooms per year to rent increases.

3) City information on temporary modular housing here: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/temporary-modular-housing.aspx>

4) This council report says that 362 SRO units were lost to fire and city order between 2019 and 2023, or 90 units per year on average. <https://council.vancouver.ca/20230530/documents/r4.pdf>

5) Aug 4, 2023 Email to Jean Swanson from Jessie Singer, Vancouver city housing planner with addition of 115 units from the recent announcement of Chalmers Lodge below and 40 units for 41 W Pender for a total of approximately 1280-1355.

6) <https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/1450-west-12th-avenue-vancouver-chalmers-supportive-housing> .

7) 2030 was chosen because of a city report here: [:https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2022-12-23-anticipated-non-market-housing-projects.pdf](https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/2022-12-23-anticipated-non-market-housing-projects.pdf) This report lists housing developments coming in Vancouver until about 2030 and how many of them will be at shelter rate.

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What the Downtown Eastside (DTES) houseless situation is

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Notes

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