

Homelessness Action Strategy and Implementation Plan For New Westminster

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Prepared for the City of New Westminster and the
Homelessness Coalition of New Westminster

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Homelessness Action Strategy

This Homelessness Action Strategy for New Westminster (the Strategy) is based on gaps in services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness identified through research for in the report, *The Homeless and At Risk Population in New Westminster and a Needs Assessment of Services*,¹ as well as relevant studies, information from service providers and feedback during workshops with the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition. The Strategy sets targeted actions and priorities for New Westminster while remaining consistent with the priorities and objectives of *3 Ways to Home*, the GVRD Regional Homelessness Strategy endorsed by member cities, including New Westminster. *3 Ways to Home* uses varied and extensive approach of the Continuum of Housing and Support as the framework to address homelessness. The Continuum of Housing and Support consists of three main categories, Housing, Income and Support and a number of sub-categories.

The Continuum of Housing and Support for alleviating homelessness

<u>Housing Continuum</u>	<u>Adequate Income</u>	<u>Support Services</u>
Emergency shelters Transition houses Transitional housing Supported housing Independent housing	Employment Employment Insurance Income assistance	Addiction services Drop-in centres Outreach services Mental health services Health services Prevention services

This Strategy also remains consistent with the recently completed *Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy 2006-2015*, which recognizes the increasing prominence in Canada and the United States of the concept of *housing first*. *Housing first* is an approach to addressing homelessness based on the premise that homeless individuals and families can best address the reasons for their homelessness from a position of stable housing. Using the *housing first* approach, homeless individuals are moved directly, and as quickly as possible, into permanent housing, either from the street or from an emergency shelter, and are linked to services to help maintain their housing. *Housing first* leads to an approach to homelessness that focuses on the availability of affordable housing and prevention of eviction. Supported housing is now considered by many to be the key factor (though not the only factor) in addressing homelessness, especially for the chronically homeless.

Even with a *housing first* approach, the complete range of services in the Continuum remain necessary to fully address homelessness. However, not all communities need to offer the entire list. Some services might adequately be delivered either by joint ventures between communities or on a regional basis. It is hoped that the City of New Westminster and the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition will foster working partnerships with neighbouring municipalities to meet the objectives of this Strategy. The Coalition and the City should also work in cooperation with the Greater Vancouver

¹ Prepared for the City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition of New Westminster, 2006

Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, responsible for implementing *3 Ways to Home*.

The Actions in this Strategy largely follow the Continuum of Housing and Support. **Actions are numbered for convenience only, and are not ranked by priority.**

Action	1. The Homelessness Coalition of New Westminster to formalize its mandate to guide it in implementing the Homelessness Action Strategy. As well, the Coalition to elect a chairperson or co-chairs and appoint working subcommittees to assist with implementing actions.
Action	2. The Homelessness Coalition to work in cooperation with homelessness coalitions in neighbouring municipalities such as Burnaby and the Tri-Cities, and appropriate agencies such as Fraser Health, to coordinate services for the homeless and those at risk.
Action	3. The City of New Westminster to work in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, and organizations such as BC Housing, Fraser Health and other appropriate federal or provincial agencies, to establish a mechanism for coordinating services for the homeless and those at risk.

Housing

Action	4. The Homelessness Coalition to develop a model for a continuum of housing and shelter needs for New Westminster.
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Emergency Shelters

In *3 Ways to Home* and the *Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy 2006-2015*, communities in the GVRD are organized by sub-region. New Westminster is in the sub-region called the Inner Municipalities, which also includes Burnaby and Richmond. The three communities have the following existing shelter beds:

New Westminster	46 shelter beds, 34 of which serve men only. Nine cold/wet weather beds, also serving men only. None of the beds are minimum barrier, and there are no beds to accommodate those with pets
Richmond	Seven permanent beds and three cold/wet weather beds
Burnaby	No emergency beds or cold/wet weather capacity

Gap	Action
There is a need for minimum barrier, enhanced*, emergency shelter beds for all populations	5. The Homelessness Coalition to determine how many minimum barrier, enhanced, 24-hour emergency shelter beds are required for which populations (e.g. men, women with or without children who are not fleeing abuse, couples), and take the lead to advocate for new capacity with BC Housing and other appropriate partners.

***Minimum barrier** refers to access to flexible, non-judgemental service based on need, without restrictions to lifestyle, conditions (e.g. intoxicated), eligibility, or number of times receiving the service, in a building that is accessible to everyone regardless of physical condition while acknowledging that the acuteness of health needs, behaviour or level of intoxication may limit the ability of the provider to give service. **Enhanced** means that a full range of services are offered at the shelter.

Service providers in New Westminster noted the especial need for minimum barrier emergency shelter beds for women with or without children not fleeing abuse, and for couples.

An estimation of needed beds

Shelter Net BC recently completed a ten-year emergency shelter plan for the Greater Vancouver Region. While the focus of the *Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy* is on 'housing first' solutions to homelessness, i.e. moving homeless people quickly into permanent housing with supports, it recognizes that emergency shelters are an important crisis response and that there are gaps in available shelter resources for certain sub-populations.² It also recognizes that an adequate distribution of resources is necessary to meet the needs of all persons who are homeless.

The following statement describes the major assumption under which the *Shelter Strategy* was prepared and applies to the whole region:

All levels of government will take responsibility for providing between 678 and 976 permanent housing units in 10 years to meet some of the accommodation needs of homeless persons. If this does not occur, then there will be more street homeless, and the shelter strategy will need to be amended to address the shortfall.

The *Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy* recommended a number of new emergency shelter beds to be provided in the period 2006-2010 for the Inner Municipalities region.

Client group	Number of beds/units
Seniors (55+)	15
Adult men and women	44
Youth (19-24)	43
Single women	30

² Jim Woodward & Associates Inc, et al, *From shelter to home...Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy 2006-2015*, May 2006

Further emergency shelter gaps

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for a protocol with the New Westminster Humane Society to shelter a pet while the owner stays in a New Westminster shelter or enters a treatment facility.	6. The Homelessness Coalition to negotiate a protocol with the New Westminster Humane Society to shelter pets while the owner stays in a New Westminster shelter or enters a treatment facility.
Current shelter beds may not always be able to respond to the needs of seniors.	7. The Homelessness Coalition , in consultation with appropriate seniors services agencies, to assess whether existing shelter capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors

Adults over the age of 65 receive federal pensions whereas the shelter system is provincially operated. Older adults do not have access to the shelter portion of BC Income Assistance to pay for their accommodation.

As well, a majority of shelters are not equipped for people with age-related mobility issues, such as using a wheelchair or a walker. Many shelters also have a policy whereby clients must be out of the shelter during the day, which is inappropriate for most older adults. Some shelter providers have stated that older clients present with too many health issues to be accommodated on their premises.

NB: Pending a final decision on future plans for the redevelopment of the Garfield Hotel site, there may be a reduction in the number of current emergency shelter beds in New Westminster for men. This might then constitute a further gap to be addressed by in Action 5. However, if Actions in the Strategy such as the development of transitional and supported housing are realized, this may reduce the need for additional shelter capacity. As well, if neighbouring communities establish shelter capacity, this may also reduce the need in New Westminster.

Transitional and Supported Housing

3 Ways to Home refers to transitional and supported housing as affordable housing that includes ongoing supports and services to residents who cannot live independently and may not become fully self-sufficient. This form of housing may be located in a purpose-designed building or in scattered site apartments. Added support services may include providing life skills, training and support with housekeeping, meal preparation, banking

support and access to medical care, counselling, referrals, crisis response and intervention. Housing of this type enables individuals to stabilize their personal situation and re-establish connections with the community.

- **Transitional housing** accommodates residents for a particular time period, most often somewhere between six months and two years, although extensions may be possible.
- **Supported housing** is intended to be permanent and different types meet different needs. For example, supported housing is an important resource for people with special needs including those with severe and persistent mental illness. It is also an important part of the continuum for addiction treatment. Research has shown that supported housing is very effective in reducing homelessness.

Chronically homeless

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for services to the chronically homeless.	8. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition to coordinate a Housing Outreach Strategy.
	9. The City of New Westminster to coordinate outreach to people who are street homeless to assist eligible people to access BC Employment and Assistance benefits and other sources of income and help connect people who are street homeless to a Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance Resources worker and those of other services.
There is a need for a minimum barrier, harm reduction supported housing facility for the chronically homeless.	10. The Homelessness Coalition to determine an appropriate model for a minimum barrier, harm reduction, supported housing facility for the chronically homeless in the City and to take the lead to advocate with BC Housing and other potential funding partners for such a facility.

City staff estimate that between 20 and 30 homeless individuals who have multiple challenges such as addictions and mental health issues are chronically homeless on the streets of New Westminster. In 5½ months in 2006, the New Westminster's Bylaw Officer moved 58 different homeless individuals sleeping on the City's streets.

Adults and youth who are homeless and at risk

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for additional transitional and permanent supported housing for adults and youth who are homeless and at risk.	<p>11. The Homelessness Coalition to prioritize actions for filling the gap of additional transitional and permanent supported housing for adults and youth who are homeless and at risk.</p>
	<p>12. The Homelessness Coalition to support New Westminster housing providers in their applications for transitional and supported housing developments and assist with appropriate strategies to ensure that applications for rezoning are approved. If required, the Coalition may decide to prioritize proposals and make recommendations.</p>

- At the Cliff Block there are transitional residents who have come to the end of their term, but cannot live independently. There are few options for these people.
- Currently there are only five transitional beds for youth in New Westminister located at Agape House.
- There are 14 mental health clients on the waiting list for Supported Independent Living units.

Older adults

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for transitional and supported housing capacity to serve older residents.	<p>13. The Homelessness Coalition in consultation with seniors services providers, to assess whether the existing transitional and supported house capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors and those at risk.</p>

Independent Housing

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for additional affordable independent housing.	<p>14. The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminister to strongly advocate with the provincial government to restore its social housing supply program and the federal government to expand funding for social housing.</p>

	<p>15. The City of New Westminster to take leadership to assist with meeting affordable housing needs through various means such as fast tracking of development applications where there are benefits to the City, density bonuses, secondary suite policies, relief of development costs charges and taxes, and other appropriate means.</p>
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- The number of projected shelter beds contained in the Greater Vancouver Shelter Strategy is predicated on a minimum number of permanent housing units to be built in the next ten years throughout the region.
- As of August 2006, 541 households who list their last permanent address as New Westminster were on the BC housing registry list waiting for social housing units. Of these, 89 were homeless.
- For the fiscal year April 2005 through March 2006, the housing support worker at Fraserside Community Services saw approximately 180 clients from New Westminster.

“Scattered addresses” market rental subsidies for mental health clients

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for additional “scattered addresses” market rental subsidies for mental health clients.	<p>16. The Homelessness Coalition to support service providers in their efforts to increase the number of “scattered addresses” market housing rental subsidies available to mental health clients living in New Westminster.</p>

- There are few affordable housing options available in New Westminster for mental health consumers. “If there were more, such as from BC Housing or ‘scattered addresses’ subsidies, then the stock of mental health housing could better serve clients with support/skill developmental needs. People sometimes are kept in SIL units and transitional housing options far longer than is necessary because to move them would involve moving them into poverty and unaffordable housing.”³
- Unlike the SAFER program, where any senior who qualifies can receive a housing subsidy, the scattered housing subsidies for mental health clients, administered in New Westminster by CMHA-Simon Fraser, are limited to 20. This is clearly inadequate, as the waiting list has been closed because there is almost no turnover.

³ From survey of New Westminster service providers.

“Scattered addresses” rental subsidy program that is not limited to mental health clients

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for a “scattered addresses” rental subsidy program that is not limited to mental health clients, but is open to those who are homeless or at risk with challenges in their lives but who can live independently.	17. The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminister to advocate with the province for a rental subsidy program for those who are homeless or at risk with challenges in their lives who can live independently but who do not qualify for the recently announced Rental Assistance Program or do not live with a mental illness.

Coalition members identified the need for independent housing options for those with challenges such as Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and brain injuries.

Income

BC Income Assistance and shelter allowance.

GAP	ACTION
There is a need to increase the BC Income Assistance and shelter allowance.	18. The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition , in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase support benefits available through the BC Employment and Assistance program to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.
	19. The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition , in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate the provincial government to raise the shelter component of income assistance to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.

Minimum wage

GAP	ACTION
There is a need to increase minimum wage.	<p>20. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase the minimum wage so that people who are employed can afford housing without paying more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.</p>
	<p>21. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to eliminate the \$6 training wage rate</p>
	<p>22. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to advocate with the provincial government to monitor the minimum wage and update it periodically so that it keeps pace with increases in the cost of living.</p>

BC Shelter Allowances are considerably lower than average rents in New Westminster. As well, a single person earning minimum wage, currently \$8/hour, falls below the core need income thresholds⁴ for any sized apartment in New Westminster. They also fall below the Low Income Cut-Off for a single-person household. As can be seen from the following table, current shelter allowances and minimum wage rates make finding adequate, affordable accommodation in New Westminster largely impossible.

Rental affordability by unit type, New Westminster

Unit type	Average rental costs, 2005	Core Need Income Thresholds by unit size	Monthly income needed to reach affordability*	Minimum Housing Wage: Hourly wage needed to reach affordability**	Monthly Shelter Allowance from BC Government Income Assistance	
Bachelor	\$543	\$27,500	\$2,291	\$13.22	Single person	\$325
1-Bedroom	\$656	\$31,000	\$2,583	\$14.90	2 adults	\$520
2-Bedroom	\$826	\$37,500	\$3,125	\$18.02	Single mother, 2 children of same gender	\$555
3-Bedroom	\$1,043	\$44,000	\$3,667	\$21.15	2 adults, 5 children	\$695

* Affordability is paying 30% of gross income on shelter costs

** Based on earning the hourly wage for 52 weeks and a 40-hour week

⁴ Core Need Income Threshold refers to the income a household needs to rent the average, appropriate-sized unit in the private market, where the rent is no more than 30% of gross income. It is the income used by BC Housing to determine if a household is eligible for social housing.

Access to BC Income Assistance and shelter allowance.

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for a less complicated access to BC Income Assistance and shelter allowance.	<p>23. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the provincial government to revise eligibility criteria and the applications process for BC Employment and Assistance to enable easier access for those needing income assistance, including immediate temporary access until proof of eligibility can be obtained.</p>
	<p>24. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to provide additional outreach assistance to adults and youth with multiple challenges who wish to apply for benefits.</p>
	<p>25. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities and other homelessness coalitions, to encourage the provincial government to reinstate the exemption of a portion of earnings as an incentive for Income Assistance recipients to seek employment.</p>

In April 2002, several changes were made to the BC Employment Assistance program income support system that affect the ability of individuals to obtain assistance. People who intend to apply for assistance must:

- Contact a BC Employment and Income Assistance office, and complete an appointment form;
- Obtain the work search guidelines information sheet;
- Receive an intake interview date, typically within three weeks;
- Conduct a three-week work search and complete an orientation session while awaiting an intake interview;
- Attend the intake interview, where a worker will determine the applicant's eligibility; and,
- Complete an orientation interview as part of the application process.

As a result, an applicant must wait at least three weeks before being eligible for assistance, except perhaps in exceptional cases, and the review process may take more than three weeks. As well, other changes have affected the ability of individuals to access or maintain benefits, and many applicants find the whole process too daunting and give up applying.

Supports

Addiction Services

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for more addictions services.	26. The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster seek information from Fraser Health regarding planned changes in addiction services capacity for New Westminster residents and strongly advocate for increased services such as detox and other addiction services.

There are generally 12-16 people on the waiting list for addiction services at Fraserside. In overcoming substance abuse, it is important to have services available when the person is ready and willing to accept treatment.

Drop-In Services

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for more comprehensive, minimum barrier drop-in services in New Westminster.	27. The Homelessness Coalition to review examples of comprehensive minimum barrier homeless drop-in facilities such as those under development in Victoria ⁵ to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine the appropriate type of facility and whether it should be integrated with a housing facility; ▪ Determine how to select a service provider to operate facility; ▪ Determine appropriate location; ▪ Identify funding partners; and ▪ Support an application for funding by the service provider

There is no minimum barrier service in New Westminster for all person to come in off the street to shower, use laundry facilities, access meal service, telephones and connect to other services. Several of the homeless and formerly homeless interviewed for the report stated that without access to a telephone it is difficult to find housing.

Outreach Services

⁵ Our Place, the Our Place Society in Victoria.

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for sufficient multicultural services and integration opportunities for immigrant women who have left their homes because of abuse.	28. Monarch Transition House to detail the requirement for multicultural services and integration opportunities for immigrant women who have left their homes because of abuse and enter into protocol arrangements with service providers to link women to appropriate support from other providers in the community.

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for service providers to recognize the specific trauma experienced by women and their children who are fleeing abuse and having to leave their homes, and be flexible in providing appropriate services to this population.	29. The Monarch Transition House to develop an educational program that details the issues facing women and their children fleeing abuse and having to leave their homes. This program will include a series of recommended initiatives to help service providers adapt services to meet the special needs of women and children using transition house services.

Monarch Transition House identified the need for appropriate services for immigrant women and children fleeing abuse.

Health Care

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for primary care services for adults without a Care Card.	30. The Homelessness Coalition to strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of delivering primary care services to adults without a Care Card.

Homeless people have an increased risk of dying prematurely. One factors contributing to this early mortality is a delay in seeking care. A Toronto study of the homeless found that individuals visited an emergency room three times more than did housed formerly homeless individuals. In New Westminster, there is a Fraser Health drop-in youth clinic operated by Lower Mainland Purpose Society for youth under 21 that provides primary care and does not require a care card. There is no comparable facility for adults. As well, Royal Columbian Hospital reports that many of their patients with no fixed address do not have Care Cards, preventing them from accessing general practitioners and walk-in clinics.

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for comprehensive dental care to adults who are unable to afford a dentist.	31. The Homelessness Coalition strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of providing dental care to adults who are unable to afford a dentist.

All available dental health programs in the city are for children, and they are limited.

Prevention Services

GAP	ACTION
There is a need for prevention services for households facing eviction such as legal services or financial assistance such as a rent bank.	32. The Homelessness Coalition to determine how best to deliver additional prevention services for households facing eviction such as legal services or financial assistance such as a rent bank. (These services may best be delivered on a regional basis.)

From *3 Ways to Home*, the updated Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver:

“Prevention services are defined as programs or services aimed at helping to prevent people from becoming homeless. This is a particularly important area because the benefits of these services can help reduce future financial and human costs.

The most obvious way to prevent homelessness is to ensure that the full continuum of housing and supports are in place and that everyone has adequate affordable housing, income and support services. Prevention efforts can be direct, as in helping a family that is about to be evicted because they can’t afford next month’s rent by providing them with the necessary funds, or providing counselling that helps prevent the breakdown of a family in crisis. Indirect prevention services address collective needs, such as advocacy work to protect tenants’ rights.”

ACTIONS BY RESPONSIBILITY

Formalize/ Determine/Negotiate/ Assess/ Prioritize/Review/Support/ Take Leadership/Coordinate	Advocate
HOMELESSNESS COALITION	
#1 The Homelessness Coalition of New Westminister to formalize its mandate to guide it in implementing the Homelessness Action Strategy. As well, the Coalition to elect a chairperson or co-chairs and appoint working subcommittees to assist with implementing actions.	#30 The Homelessness Coalition to strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of delivering primary care services to adults without a Care Card.
#2 The Homelessness Coalition to work in cooperation with homelessness coalitions in neighbouring municipalities such as Burnaby and the Tri Cities, and appropriate agencies such as Fraser Health, to coordinate services for the homeless and those at risk.	#31 The Homelessness Coalition strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of providing dental care to adults who are unable to afford a dentist.
#4 The Homelessness Coalition to develop a model for a continuum of housing and shelter needs for New Westminister	
#5 The Homelessness Coalition to determine how many minimum barrier, enhanced, 24-hour emergency shelter beds are required for which populations (e.g. men, women with or without children not fleeing abuse, couples), and take the lead to advocate for new capacity with BC Housing and other appropriate partners.	
#6 The Homelessness Coalition to negotiate a protocol with the New Westminister Humane Society to shelter pets while the owner stays in a New Westminister shelter or enters a treatment facility	
#7 The Homelessness Coalition, in consultation with appropriate seniors services agencies, to assess whether existing shelter capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors	
#10 The Homelessness Coalition to determine an appropriate model for a minimum barrier, harm reduction, supported housing facility for the chronically homeless in the City and to take the lead to advocate with BC Housing and other potential funding partners for such a facility.	
#11 The Homelessness Coalition to prioritize actions for filling the gap of additional transitional and permanent supported housing for adults and youth who are homeless and at risk	
#12 The Homelessness Coalition to support New Westminister housing providers in their applications for transitional and supported housing developments and assist with appropriate strategies to ensure that applications for rezoning are approved. If required, the Coalition may decide to prioritize proposals and make recommendations.	
#13 The Homelessness Coalition in consultation with seniors	

Formalize/ Determine/Negotiate/ Assess/ Prioritize/Review/Support/ Take Leadership/Coordinate	Advocate
services providers, to assess whether the existing transitional and supported house capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors and those at risk.	
#16 The Homelessness Coalition to support service providers in their efforts to increase the number of "scattered addresses" market housing rental subsidies available to mental health clients living in New Westminster.	
#27 The Homelessness Coalition to review examples of comprehensive minimum barrier homeless drop-in facilities such as the one under development in Victoria to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine the appropriate type of facility and whether it should be integrated with a housing facility; ▪ Determine how to select a service provider to operate facility; ▪ Determine appropriate location; ▪ Identify funding partners; and Support an application for funding by the service provider.	
#32 The Homelessness Coalition to determine how best to deliver additional prevention services for households facing eviction such as legal services or financial assistance such as a rent bank. (These services may be best delivered on a regional basis.)	
CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER	
#3 The City of New Westminster to work in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, and organizations such as BC Housing, Fraser Health and other appropriate federal or provincial agencies, to establish a mechanism for coordinating services for the homeless and those at risk.	
#9 The City of New Westminster to coordinate outreach to people who are street homeless to assist eligible people to access BC Employment and Assistance benefits and other sources of income and help connect people who are street homeless to a Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance Resources worker and those of other services.	
#15 The City of New Westminster to take leadership to assist with meeting affordable housing needs through various means such as fast tracking of development applications where there are benefits to the City, density bonuses, secondary suite policies, relief of development costs charges and taxes, and other appropriate means.	

Formalize/ Determine/Negotiate/ Assess/ Prioritize/Review/Support/ Take Leadership/Coordinate	Advocate
HOMELESSNESS COALITION + CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER	
#8 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition to coordinate a Housing Outreach Strategy	#14 The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster to strongly advocate with the provincial government to restore its social housing supply program and the federal government to expand funding for social housing.
#26 The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster seek information from Fraser Health regarding planned changes in addiction services capacity to New Westminster residents and strongly advocate for increased services such as detox and other addiction services.	#17 The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster t to advocate with the province for a rental subsidy program for those who are homeless or at risk with challenges in their lives who can live independently but who do not qualify for the recently announced Rental Assistance Program or do not live with a mental illness
	#18 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase support benefits available through the BC Employment and Assistance program to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.
	#19 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate the provincial government to raise the shelter component of income assistance to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.
	#20 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase the minimum wage so that people who are employed can afford housing in New Westminster without paying more than 30% of their income in shelter costs.
	#21 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to eliminate the \$6 training wage rate.

Formalize/ Determine/Negotiate/ Assess/ Prioritize/Review/Support/ Take Leadership/Coordinate	Advocate
	#22 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to advocate with the provincial government to monitor the minimum wage and update it periodically so that it keeps pace with increases in the cost of living.
	#23 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the provincial government to revise eligibility criteria and the applications process for BC Employment and Assistance to enable easier access for those needing income assistance, including immediate temporary access until proof of eligibility can be obtained.
	#24 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to provide additional outreach assistance to adults and youth with multiple challenges who wish to apply for benefits.
	#25 The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, and other homelessness coalitions, to encourage the provincial government to reinstate the exemption of a portion of earnings as an incentive for Income Assistance recipients to seek employment.
MONARCH TRANSITION HOUSE	
#28 Monarch Transition House to detail the requirement for multicultural services and integration opportunities for immigrant women who have left their homes because of abuse and enter into protocol arrangements with service providers to link women to appropriate support from other providers in the community.	
#29 Monarch Transition House to develop an educational program that details the issues facing women and their children fleeing abuse and having to leave their homes. This program will include a series of recommended initiatives to help service providers adapt services to meet the special needs of women and children using transition house services.	

New Westminster Homelessness Action Strategy Implementation plan

The following Implementation Plan is a recommendation only. No formal discussion has yet been undertaken with funders nor has endorsement been obtained regarding funding.

Actions		Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
Action	1. The Homelessness Coalition of New Westminster to formalize its mandate to guide it in implementing the Homelessness Action Strategy. As well, the Coalition to elect a chairperson or co-chairs and appoint working subcommittees to assist with implementing actions.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition	January 2007	N/A
Action	2. The Homelessness Coalition to work in cooperation with homelessness coalitions in neighbouring municipalities such as Burnaby and the Tri Cities, and appropriate agencies such as Fraser Health, to coordinate services for the homeless and those at risk.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition	June 2007	N/A
Action	3. The City of New Westminster to work in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, and organizations such as BC Housing, Fraser Health and other appropriate federal or provincial agencies, to establish a mechanism for coordinating services for the homeless and those at risk	City of New Westminster	June 2007	N/A
Housing				
Action	4. The Homelessness Coalition to develop a model for a continuum of housing and shelter needs for New Westminster.	Homelessness Coalition	March 2007	N/A
Emergency shelter system				

Actions		Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
Action	5. The Homelessness Coalition to determine how many minimum barrier, enhanced, 24-hour emergency shelter beds are required for which populations (e.g. men, women with or without children not fleeing abuse, couples), and take the lead to advocate for new capacity with BC Housing and other appropriate partners.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition	March 2007	BC Housing and other appropriate funders
	6. The Homelessness Coalition to negotiate a protocol with the New Westminster Humane Society to shelter pets while the owner stays in a New Westminster shelter or enters a treatment facility	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and Humane Society	March 2007	N/A
	7. The Homelessness Coalition, in consultation with appropriate seniors services agencies, to assess whether existing shelter capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and seniors services	March 2007	N/A
Transitional and Supported Housing				
Action	8. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition to coordinate a Housing Outreach Strategy.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster	Ongoing	N/A

Actions	Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
9. The City of New Westminster to coordinate outreach to people who are street homeless to assist eligible people to access BC Employment and Assistance benefits and other sources of income and help connect people who are street homeless to a Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance Resources worker and those of other services.	City of New Westminster and MEIA	Ongoing	MEIA
10. The Homelessness Coalition to determine an appropriate model for a minimum barrier, harm reduction, supported housing facility for the chronically homeless in the City and to take the lead to advocate with BC Housing and other potential funding partners for such a facility.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition	February 2007	BC Housing, MEIA and other partners to be identified
11. The Homelessness Coalition to prioritize actions for filling the gap of additional transitional and permanent supported housing for adults and youth who are homeless and at risk.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition	April 2007	N/A
12. The Homelessness Coalition to support New Westminster housing providers in their applications for transitional and supported housing developments and assist with appropriate strategies to ensure that applications for rezoning are approved. If required, the Coalition may decide to prioritize proposals and make recommendations.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster	Ongoing	N/A
13. The Homelessness Coalition in consultation with seniors services providers to assess whether the existing transitional and supported house capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors and those at risk.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and seniors services providers	March 2007	N/A

Actions		Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
Independent Housing				
Action	<p>14. The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster to strongly advocate with the provincial government to restore its social housing supply program and the federal government to expand funding for social housing.</p> <p>15. The City of New Westminster to take leadership to assist with meeting affordable housing needs through various means such as fast tracking of development applications where there are benefits to the City, density bonuses, secondary suite policies, relief of development costs charges and taxes, and other appropriate measures.</p> <p>16. The Homelessness Coalition to support service providers in their efforts to increase the number of "scattered addresses" market housing rental subsidies available to mental health clients living in New Westminster</p> <p>17. The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster to advocate with the province for a rental subsidy program for those who are homeless or at risk with challenges in their lives who can live independently but who do not qualify for the recently announced Rental Assistance Program or do not live with a mental illness.</p>	<p>New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster</p> <p>City of New Westminster</p> <p>New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and providers</p> <p>New Westminster Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>May 2007</p>	<p>BC Housing</p> <p>To be determined</p> <p>BC Housing</p> <p>BC Housing</p>
Income				

Actions		Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
Action	18. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase support benefits available through the BC Employment and Assistance program to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.	City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities	Ongoing	MEIA
	19. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate the provincial government to raise the shelter component of income assistance to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.	City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities	Ongoing	MEIA
	20. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase the minimum wage so that people who are employed can afford housing in New Westminster without paying more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.	City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities	Ongoing	Province of BC

Actions	Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
<p>21. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to eliminate the \$6 training wage rate.</p>	<p>City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Province of BC</p>
<p>22. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to advocate with the provincial government to monitor the minimum wage and update it periodically so that it keeps pace with increases in the cost of living.</p>	<p>City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Province of BC</p>
<p>23. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the provincial government to revise eligibility criteria and the applications process for BC Employment and Assistance to enable easier access for those needing income assistance, including immediate temporary access until proof of eligibility can be obtained.</p>	<p>City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MEIA</p>

Actions		Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
	24. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to provide additional outreach assistance to adults and youth with multiple challenges who wish to apply for benefits.	City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities	Ongoing	MEIA
	25. The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities and other homelessness coalitions, to encourage the provincial government to reinstate the exemption of a portion of earnings as an incentive for Income Assistance recipients to seek employment.	City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition and other homelessness coalitions and municipalities	Ongoing	MEIA
Supports				
Action Addiction Services	26. The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminster seek information from Fraser Health regarding planned changes in addiction services capacity to New Westminster residents and strongly advocate for increased services such as detox and other addiction services.	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition, City of New Westminster and Fraser Health	September 2007	Fraser Health

Actions		Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
Action Drop-In Services	<p>27. The Homelessness Coalition to review examples of comprehensive minimum barrier homeless drop-in facilities such as the one under development in Victoria to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine the appropriate type of facility and whether it should be integrated with a housing facility; ▪ Determine how to select a service provider to operate facility; ▪ Determine appropriate location; ▪ Identify funding partners; and ▪ Support an application for funding by the service provider. 	New Westminster Homelessness Coalition	May 2007	N/A
Action Outreach Services	<p>28. Monarch Transition House to detail the requirement for multicultural services and integration opportunities for immigrant women who have left their homes because of abuse and enter into protocol arrangements with service providers to link women to appropriate support from other providers in the community.</p> <p>29. Monarch Transition House to develop an educational program that details the issues facing women and their children fleeing abuse and having to leave their homes. This program will include a series of recommended initiatives to help service providers adapt services to meet the special needs of women and children using transition house services.</p>	Monarch Transition House	March 2007	N/A

Actions		Responsibility	Time Target	Potential Funding Partners
Action Health Care	<p>30. The Homelessness Coalition to strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of delivering primary care services for adults without a Care Card.</p> <p>31. The Homelessness Coalition strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of providing dental care to adults who are unable to afford a dentist.</p>	<p>New Westminster Homelessness Coalition</p> <p>New Westminster Homelessness Coalition</p>	<p>October 2007</p> <p>October 2007</p>	<p>Fraser Health</p> <p>Fraser Health</p>
Action Prevention Services	<p>32. The Homelessness Coalition to determine how best to deliver additional prevention services for households facing eviction such as legal services or financial assistance such as a rent bank. (These services may be best delivered on a regional basis.)</p>	<p>New Westminster Homelessness Coalition in coordination with other homelessness coalitions</p>	<p>October 2007</p>	<p>To be determined</p>

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Month	Action #	Action
Jan 07	1	The Homelessness Coalition of New Westminster to formalize its mandate to guide it in implementing the Homelessness Action Strategy. As well, the Coalition to elect a chairperson or co-chairs and appoint working subcommittees to assist with implementing actions.
Feb 07	10	The Homelessness Coalition to determine an appropriate model for a minimum barrier, harm reduction, supported housing facility for the chronically homeless in the City and to take the lead to advocate with BC Housing and other potential funding partners for such a facility.
Mar 07	4	The Homelessness Coalition to develop a model for a continuum of housing and shelter needs for New Westminster.
	5	The Homelessness Coalition to determine how many minimum barrier, enhanced, 24-hour emergency shelter beds are required for which populations (e.g. men, women with or without children not fleeing abuse, couples), and take the lead to advocate for new capacity.
	6	The Homelessness Coalition to negotiate a protocol with the New Westminster Humane Society to shelter pets while the owner stays in a New Westminster shelter or enters a treatment facility
	7	The Homelessness Coalition, in consultation with appropriate seniors services agencies, to assess whether existing shelter capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors
	13	The Homelessness Coalition in consultation with seniors services providers to assess whether the existing transitional and supported house capacity accommodates the age-related issues faced by homeless seniors and those at risk.
	28	Monarch Transition House to detail the requirement for multicultural services and integration opportunities for immigrant women who have left their homes because of abuse and enter into protocol arrangements with service providers to link women to appropriate support from other providers in the community.
	29	Monarch Transition House to develop an educational program that details the issues facing women and their children fleeing abuse and having to leave their homes. This program will include a series of recommended initiatives to help service providers adapt services to meet the special needs of women and children using transition house services.
Apr.07	11	The Homelessness Coalition to prioritize actions for filling the gap of additional transitional and permanent supported housing for adults and youth who are homeless and at risk.
May 07	17	The Homelessness Coalition to advocate with the province for a

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Month	Action #	Action
		rental subsidy program for those who are homeless or at risk with challenges in their lives who can live independently but who do not qualify for the recently announced Rental Assistance Program or do not live with a mental illness.
	27	The Homelessness Coalition to review examples of comprehensive minimum barrier homeless drop-in facilities such as the one under development in Victoria to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine the appropriate type of facility and whether it should be integrated with a housing facility; ▪ Determine how to select a service provider to operate facility; ▪ Determine appropriate location; ▪ Identify funding partners; and ▪ Support an application for funding by the service provider.
Jun 07	2	The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminister to work in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, such as Burnaby and the Tri Cities, and appropriate agencies such as Fraser Health, to coordinate services for the homeless and those at risk
	3	The City of New Westminister to work in cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, and organizations such as BC Housing, Fraser Health and other appropriate federal or provincial agencies, to establish a mechanism for coordinating services for the homeless and those at risk.
Sept. 07	26	The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminister seek information from Fraser Health regarding planned changes in addiction services capacity to New Westminister residents and strongly advocate for increased services such as detox and other addiction services.
Oct. 07	30	The Homelessness Coalition to strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of delivering primary care services for adults without a Care Card.
	31	The Homelessness Coalition strongly advocate that Fraser Health determine the best method of providing dental care to adults who are unable to afford a dentist.
	32	The Homelessness Coalition to determine how best to deliver additional prevention services for households facing eviction such as legal services or financial assistance such as a rent bank. (These services may be best delivered on a regional basis.)
Ongoing	8	The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition to coordinate a Housing Outreach Strategy.
	9	The City of New Westminister to coordinate outreach to people who are street homeless to assist eligible people to access BC

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Month	Action #	Action
		Employment and Assistance benefits and other sources of income and help connect people who are street homeless to a Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
	12	The Homelessness Coalition to support New Westminister housing providers in their applications for transitional and supported housing developments and assist with appropriate strategies to ensure that applications for rezoning are approved. If required, the Coalition may decide to prioritize proposals and make recommendations.
	14	The Homelessness Coalition and the City of New Westminister to strongly advocate with the provincial government to restore its social housing supply program and the federal government to expand funding for social housing.
	15	The City of New Westminister to take leadership to assist with meeting affordable housing needs through various means such as fast tracking of development applications where there are benefits to the City, density bonuses, secondary suite policies, relief of development costs charges and taxes, and other appropriate means.
	16	The Homelessness Coalition to support service providers such as CMHA and Fraserside in their efforts to increase the number of "scattered addresses" market housing rental subsidies available to mental health clients living in New Westminister.
	18	The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase support benefits available through the BC Employment and Assistance program to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.
	19	The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other homelessness coalitions and municipalities, to strongly advocate the provincial government to raise the shelter component of income assistance to at least reflect cost of living increases since 1991.
	20	The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to increase the minimum wage so that people who are employed can afford housing in New Westminister without paying more than 30% of their income in shelter costs.
	21	The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to strongly advocate with the provincial government to eliminate the \$6 training wage rate.
	22	The City of New Westminister and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to advocate with the provincial government to monitor the minimum wage and update it periodically so that it keeps pace with increases in the cost of living.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Month	Action #	Action
	23	The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the provincial government to revise eligibility criteria and the applications process for BC Employment and Assistance to enable easier access for those needing income assistance, including immediate temporary access until proof of eligibility can be obtained.
	24	The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities, to encourage the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to provide additional outreach assistance to adults and youth with multiple challenges who wish to apply for benefits.
	25	The City of New Westminster and the Homelessness Coalition, in coordination with other municipalities and other homelessness coalitions, to encourage the provincial government to reinstate the exemption of a portion of earnings as an incentive for Income Assistance recipients to seek employment.