

# Master PLAN

FOR HOUSING THE HOMELESS IN SURREY

## Appendix A: Situation Report

PREPARED FOR THE  
City of Surrey

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Situation Report provides background research and context information that will help to inform future planning and policy development on homelessness in Surrey. This report was made possible due to the large number of individuals and organizations that generously contributed their time to meet with the consultant team and to share their insights and local knowledge. A complete list of key-informants is included in the appendix of this report.

Special thanks are also warranted for the members of the project's steering committee, including:

- City of Surrey (Councillor Judy Villeneuve, Jean Lamontagne, Don Luymes, Aileen Murphy, Marlis McCargar)
- BC Housing (Darin Froese, Craig Crawford, Armin Amrolia)
- Fraser Health Authority (Meryl McDowell)

The consultant team included Noha Sedky, Andrew Hiscox, and Kate Lambert of CitySpaces Consulting Ltd. The research and strategic directions are the result of the consultants' work and do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Surrey or BC Housing.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Surrey and BC Housing have partnered on an initiative to develop a Master Plan for Housing the Homeless in Surrey. The initiative aims to respond to the city's needs for long-term housing and support services for the homeless and at-risk of homelessness as well as the need for emergency shelters and related services. This Situation Report provides background information and context details to inform the development of this Master Plan and is based largely on key-informant interviews as well as research and analysis of earlier documents and data.

### The Numbers:

According to service providers, the number and type of shelter and supportive housing beds available in Surrey do not adequately respond to the demand.

- There are a total of 85 beds for adults at three emergency co-ed shelter sites located in Whalley, Newtown and Cloverdale. There are 26 beds available in women's shelters, 12 of which can accommodate women and children. Additional beds are available at safe houses for women in crisis and at-risk youth.
- There are 691 transitional and supported housing beds and units for individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. This includes housing for women, youth, individuals with addictions and mental health issues and other at-risk groups.
- There are approximately 4,600 units of non-market housing in Surrey, of which 1,800 are dedicated to low-income seniors and 155 are for Aboriginal households. The remaining 2,700 are for low-income families and individuals who are able to live independently.
- 400 homeless people were counted in Surrey according to the 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count, which accounts for 15% of the regional homeless population. This demonstrates little change since 2008. In 2011, the majority (58%) of the homeless population in Surrey was "unsheltered", that is individuals who were sleeping outside, in camps or vehicles or other arrangements.

### Key Population Groups:

The majority of the homeless population counted in 2011 consisted of single men (63%) and, as such, many of the emergency service providers target single men as the primary target group. However, service provider agencies also identified the following at-risk groups to be particularly vulnerable of repeat homelessness and would benefit from dedicated housing and services.

- Of the homeless population counted, 37% were women, and they were often not well served by traditional shelters and emergency services. Single women leaving transition houses, women with children and sex-trade workers were noted to be in particular need of second stage, supportive or transitional housing.

- Children are found among Surrey's homeless population. Additional shelter and housing for homeless families with children was identified as an immediate need as families with children are being turned away from the one existing shelter facility.
- Agencies reported a growing percentage of homeless or vulnerable youth, in particular Aboriginal and immigrant youth. The need for a continuum of housing and services dedicated to youth was stressed, including shelter, supported transition housing and appropriate/affordable independent housing options. There is also a perceived lack of trained staff available in mainstream or adult-oriented facilities to provide appropriate support services to at-risk youth.
- Of the homeless population in Surrey, 24% identified themselves as Aboriginal, representing 15% of the region's entire Aboriginal homeless population. This is disproportionate to the City's total population where 2% are Aboriginal. Aboriginal homeless people have a unique set of needs and circumstances and have greater success when services are tailored to their cultural needs. Aboriginal-specific housing and services are needed.
- The "situational homeless" or working poor were identified as a growing segment of the homeless or at-risk population. This includes people who have full or part time employment and lower income seniors, who are unable to make ends meet and are increasingly accessing food bank and other basic services.

### Housing Gaps:

Service providers and stakeholders reported a shortage of adequate housing and shelter options in Surrey that are appropriate to meet the needs of the city's homeless population. This includes emergency shelter, temporary housing, supportive housing and affordable and appropriate market housing. Essentially, housing options across the entire housing continuum were identified, with sub-sets to meet the specific needs of women, youth and Aboriginal people.

- **Shelters.** While a vast expansion of shelter capacity is not warranted, there is a need for a better alignment of emergency services to the homeless population. This includes a centrally-located low-barrier shelter that can provide longer-term accommodation with support service linkages to users. An expansion of existing services, including an expansion of hours, resources and staff training, can help to better meet the needs of other vulnerable groups who do not access traditional shelters.
- **Transitional or Second Stage Housing.** Temporary housing (for a few months or years) that helps individuals to transition from a situation of homelessness or crisis to the next stage of housing and greater independence. This type of housing provides an opportunity for tenants to learn or re-learn basic lifeskills that can help them to maintain their housing as well as have time to deal with situations of stress and trauma in a supported environment.

- **Supportive Housing.** Surrey has a limited stock of supportive housing, that is, housing with integrated support services, a vital piece of the housing continuum.
- **Low-Barrier Housing.** Service providers noted the difficulties in finding low-barrier housing that is suitable for their clients facing multiple barriers. Most commonly, individuals with a mental illness, drug and alcohol addictions or those with a criminal record or history of criminal activity were noted to face the greatest difficulties.

## Service Gaps

While a broad range of service gaps were identified, the following areas were most frequently noted.

- **Housing Outreach and Follow-Up Services.** Individuals living in scattered private market rental units have been able to successfully maintain their housing and independence through housing outreach and follow-up services. An expansion of these services is warranted.
- **Health, Mental Health & Addictions Services.** A shortage of health drop-in services was noted, including clinical and dental services, addictions-related services such as detox treatment and withdrawal management, and mental health services and training for front line staff.
- **Discharge Services.** Resources are needed to help individuals when they are leaving health care facilities, treatment programs and the criminal justice system.
- **Meal Programs.** Having a broader range of food programs that provide access to regular, nutritious meals and food lifeskills is a key service that should more frequently be included in the toolkit of solutions.
- **Prevention Services.** A variety of financial tools could be developed or expanded to assist people to manage independently, as well as to prevent people from becoming homeless. For example, streamlining income assistance applications and procedures; adapting and expanding the rent supplement program; and facilitating access to local rent banks.

## Top Priorities

Based on the background research to date, including the research on good practices; document and data review; and key-informant interviews; seven priority areas have emerged. They provide initial direction and focus for the City of Surrey, BC Housing, other government agencies, local service providers and the private sector to consider. These priority areas will inform the development of the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless.

1. A suitable **replacement facility** in Whalley that includes an emergency shelter, transitional housing units as well as health care and other basic services.

2. Expansion of **drop-in and shelter services** provided by local service providers, with a particular focus on groups that are not well served by traditional shelters, i.e. youth, women, Aboriginal individuals and the working poor.
3. **Transitional and supportive housing** in a mix of forms including conversions and new builds.
4. Expansion of **outreach and housing follow-up services** to provide continual contact and support to previously-homeless and at-risk individuals living in private market rentals.
5. Review and update of **municipal bylaws and regulations** to support special needs housing projects and to protect tenants living in substandard conditions.
6. Establishment of ongoing **liaison groups** with the business community and service providers at a city-wide and neighbourhood level.
7. Continued **partnerships** and collaboration between BC Housing, the Fraser Health Authority, Ministry of Social Development and other agencies to introduce/improve key services and new initiatives.



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## INTRODUCTION

### Project Overview

The City of Surrey has identified homelessness to be a high priority issue and has partnered with BC Housing in developing a Master Plan for Housing the Homeless. The Master Plan aims to respond to the immediate needs related to emergency shelter and services for the homelessness, but it will equally focus on the long-term housing and support service solutions needed throughout Surrey's neighbourhoods and to minimize the need for shelters in the future.

This project builds on several policy and planning initiatives that have taken place to date. First, a city-wide social planning process was undertaken in 2004 to 2006 that identified key issues and priorities. Second, the City embarked on the development of a Housing Action Plan in 2010. The Master Plan for Housing the Homeless in Surrey will build on these and other past initiatives in a targeted attempt to address homelessness and housing affordability.

As a plan that prioritizes "Housing First", the Master Plan will address the need for emergency shelters, while prioritizing the need for permanent housing solutions as a means of eliminating homelessness in Surrey's neighbourhoods.

The project is divided into two main stages:

- Stage 1 - Background Review & Preliminary planning, and
- Stage 2 - Housing Procurement Action Plan.

Stage 1 involved research, analysis and stakeholder consultation that is compiled in this Situation Report. This background document serves to set the context and identify the key priority issues in Surrey. Accompanying this Situation Report is a briefing paper that describes various practices from other municipalities and jurisdictions, highlighting some of the strategies and approaches used by other communities for reference and consideration when developing a Master Plan for the City of Surrey.

Stage 2 includes the identification of priority projects and program models and the development of an implementation plan for acquiring these units. This is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2012.

A steering committee comprising representatives from the City of Surrey, BC Housing, and Fraser Health was established to review and oversee the research and planning process. The members of the steering committee are listed in the Acknowledgments at the beginning of this report.

## Purpose of Situation Report

This Situation Report presents an overview of the background research. Specifically, the report aims to inform the development of targeted actions and implementation plan by:

- describing the current capacity of service delivery and housing for the affected population groups;
- identifying the gaps in housing and emergency services;
- identifying the population groups that are most in need and will require priority attention in future initiatives;
- presenting a set of considerations for future planning, including opportunities and challenges that were identified by local stakeholder groups; and
- describing innovative solutions and strategies.

## Approach to the Research

Service providers and stakeholders have an intimate understanding of the priority issues and gaps in housing and services in Surrey. As such, the qualitative research forms the backbone of this report. The report also refers to existing data sets and inventory on the homeless population and available housing and services. Specifically, the research involved the following:

- A review of the City of Surrey's current policies and practices that are most relevant to housing and homelessness.
- Estimates of the homeless population in Surrey, based on 2011 homeless count information as well as other service provider statistics.
- A listing of the emergency services and relevant non-market housing units available in Surrey.
- Interviews with key stakeholders who work with individuals and families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. A list of the individuals interviewed is included in Appendix A of this report.

## Key Definitions

This report and subsequent Master Plan is a response to the needs of individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The report and plan will be premised on a “housing first” philosophy, which includes emergency services and long-term housing.

For clarification, key definitions are included here:

<p><b>Absolute Homeless</b></p>	<p>Individuals and families who are living in public spaces without legal claim (e.g. on the streets, in abandoned buildings, in tent cities); a homeless shelter; or a public facility or service (e.g. hospital, care facility, rehab or treatment centre, correctional facility) and cannot return to a stable residence. This definition also includes individuals and families who are financially, sexually, physically or emotionally exploited to maintain their shelter.</p>
<p><b>At-Risk of Homelessness</b></p>	<p>Individuals and families who are living in temporary accommodation where: a) they do not have control over the length and conditions of tenure (e.g couch surfing, name not on lease); b) they do not have adequate personal space; c) tenancy is expected to be terminated (e.g. given an eviction notice); or d) they are living in a facility or centre and do not have permanent housing to move to (e.g. leaving a hospital or corrections facility).</p>
<p><b>Housing First</b></p>	<p>Involves the direct placement of homeless individuals into stable housing. Support services are made available to tenants through direct engagement, but active participation in these services is not required. Sobriety is not a precondition and relapses into drug or alcohol use do not result in tenants losing their housing or access to services.</p>
<p><b>Continuum of Supports</b></p>	<p>An approach to addressing the needs of homeless individuals where it is recognized that a range of supports and services are needed to assist individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The continuum includes drop-in services, emergency shelters, outreach, addiction services, transitional housing, and a range of support and prevention services.</p>
<p><b>Gateway Services</b></p>	<p>Gateway services facilitate the movement of shelter clients along the housing continuum and act as a bridge to more stable housing and support services. Gateway services include assessment, case planning, information and referrals that assist clients to access key support services in their community. These services may be provided on-site, but are more typically provided by other agencies outside the shelter.</p>
<p><b>Harm Reduction</b></p>	<p>Harm reduction refers to policies, programs and practices that aim primarily to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of the use of legal and illegal substances without necessarily reducing the level of consumption. Harm reduction benefits people who use drugs, their families and the community.</p>

# Emergency Services & Supportive Housing Continuum

A housing continuum typically spans the spectrum from emergency services and non-market housing through to market-based rental or ownership housing. Compared to elsewhere in the region, Surrey has been successful in its ability to provide a diversity of market rental and ownership housing. This array of housing has provided low, moderate and higher income residents with some choice in the housing market. With the focus of this report and subsequent Master Plan being on the homeless and the most at-risk groups, only the most relevant housing forms and related services are included in the continuum to be used as part of this project.

The continuum begins with temporary services and shelter that help to connect individuals without housing to key supports. It then progresses to short and medium-term housing for individuals who would benefit from treatment or a stabilization period. Other forms include medium or long-term supportive housing for those who require support services in order to maintain their housing. Lastly, housing units that are available through the private market through rent supplements, outreach and housing follow-up, as well as other mobile service teams.

The following continuum does not include market or non-market housing for low-income individuals and families who are able to live independently. It is presumed that these forms will be addressed through other plans and initiatives.

**Figure A - Emergency Services and Housing Continuum**

	<b>DROP-IN SERVICES</b>	<b>EMERGENCY SHELTERS</b>	<b>TRANSITIONAL HOUSING &amp; PROGRAMS</b>	<b>LONG-TERM HOUSING WITH SUPPORTS</b>	<b>RENT SUPPLEMENTS + MOBILE SERVICES</b>
<b>HOUSING</b>	No Housing Component	Seasonal extreme weather beds and year-round shelters	Safe houses, second stage, treatment programs, longer term housing	Non-market housing for the homeless and at-risk	Units in market rental housing
<b>SERVICES</b>	Access to basic services e.g. laundry, phone, food, counselling	Gateway services connect users to key supports	On-site services focus on stabilization, e.g. crisis management, income, health, advocacy, life skills	High - moderate - low Levels of support	Outreach, follow-up and other mobile services tailored to individual, if required

In Surrey, the majority of available services and housing is operated by non-profits. Each agency has its own philosophy or mandate, resulting in a variety of service approaches and program models. In order to meet the varied needs of the at-risk population, it is valuable for a community to have a variety of housing options, but it is also valuable to

have a mix of service approaches so that it can best to respond to the needs of different population groups.

**Figure B - Low to Medium Barrier Program Models**

HIGH BARRIER	MEDIUM BARRIER	LOW BARRIER
Conditional access, abstinence only	Active substance use - rules and restrictions apply to access housing/service	Substance use not prohibited; harm reduction approach applied

One of the critical aspects of a program model is how an agency deals with substance use on the premises. Figure B presents a spectrum of approaches from a high barrier facility that requires users/tenants to be sober at all times to one that is low or minimal barrier where substance use is permitted and a harm reduction approach is followed. It is valuable for a community to have a mix of high to low barrier sites.

## CITY OF SURREY'S CURRENT POLICIES & PRIORITIES

To set the context for the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless, it is valuable to understand the policy and planning context at the City of Surrey. The Master Plan takes as its starting point a number of city-wide policy initiatives and programs that are of particular relevance to this work. The top initiatives are described in this section.

### Official Community Plan Policies

The current Official Community Plan (OCP) has policies to "Build Complete Communities" and to "Improve the Quality of Community," which call for a range of housing types in Surrey to accommodate different ages, incomes, tenures, household compositions and abilities (special needs).

The OCP is being updated with final adoption anticipated in the fall of 2013. The new OCP will include a more comprehensive set of policies on affordable housing. Appendix C outlines the affordable housing policies in the June 2013 draft of the new OCP.

### Sustainability Charter

The Sustainability Charter was adopted by Council in September 2008 as a framework to guide the City's actions and decisions. The Charter identifies housing as a key component of "Socio-cultural Sustainability" and articulates a vision of a sustainable Surrey as being a city with "livable communities that provide a range of affordable and appropriate housing options" that "meet the needs of households of various sizes, compositions, and income levels" and where "those with special needs will have the supports they need to enable them to live as independently as possible." The development of a Housing Action Plan is listed as one of the immediate actions to be undertaken to advance the Vision and Goals of the Charter.

### Plan for the Social Wellbeing of Surrey Residents

Council adopted the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents (Social Plan) in February 2006, to provide strategic direction for the City's actions on social issues in Surrey. The Social Plan identified housing and homelessness as a priority issue and noted that there were significant gaps between the supply and need for emergency shelter beds, transition and supportive housing and low-income housing in Surrey. The Social Plan also identified the need for homeless outreach services, employment programs and addictions treatment services.

### Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society

The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Fund was established in 2007 with the allocation of over \$9.5 million in funding from the City of Surrey. The Fund is managed by the



Vancity Community Foundation on behalf of Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society (the Society). The aim of the Society is to raise, manage and distribute funds to support initiatives that address homelessness. The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society, with a community-based board of directors, was established to oversee the Fund.

The Society was officially launched in April 2008. An inaugural, one-time grant of \$1 million was awarded in October 2008 to Atira Women's Resource Society toward the development of Maxxine Wright Place in Surrey. Maxxine Wright Place addresses homelessness among at-risk women who are pregnant and/or parenting new babies.

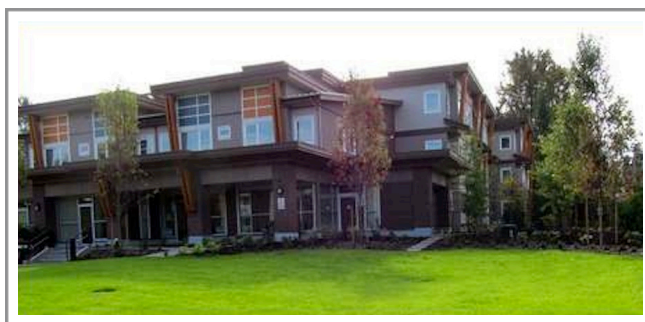
In 2009, the Society initiated its Annual Grants Program. Each year, the Program aims to distribute \$200,000 which represents the earnings from the endowment fund. To date, the Society has awarded over \$2 million in grants.

The Society also provides "responsive grants". These grants are awarded outside of the regular annual granting cycle in response to an emergency, such as where the health and safety of Surrey residents are in jeopardy, or when there is a compelling opportunity that may otherwise be missed.

## Partnerships with BC Housing

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the City of Surrey and BC Housing in March 2008 to develop two supportive housing projects, was strengthened in October 2008 with the addition of a third site that is part of the Olympic Legacy Affordable Housing initiative. Under the terms of the MOU, the City has committed to long-term lease of City property at a nominal rate and to waive municipal development cost charges and fees. The City also committed to expediting the approval process for these housing projects.

- *Quibble Creek Health and Phoenix Transition Housing Centre* – Quibble Creek accommodates a substance use counselling clinic and a health clinic, a 25-mat sobering and assessment centre, 15 short-term transitional recovery beds, and 52 supportive housing units for men and women recovering from addictions. This facility is located in the Surrey Memorial Hospital precinct.
- *Timber Grove* – A partnership between the Province, VANOC and the City of Surrey, this project involved the relocation and conversion of modular units from the Olympic Games into 52 studio apartments at a City-owned site as permanent supportive housing. Coast Mental Health operates the housing project, located in



Coast Mental Health - Timber Grove Supportive Housing

Whalley, which provides supportive housing for seniors (50+ years) who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness or people with disabilities. The project focuses on individuals dealing with mental health issues. Fraser Health provides on-site mental health services and one daily meal to residents.

- *Alder Gardens* – This is a partnership between the Province, City of Surrey and the YWCA of Metro Vancouver. The project, located in Newton, now provides 36 supportive housing units for single women with dependent children who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.



YWCA - Alder Gardens Supportive Housing

## Housing Action Plan

Council authorized staff to proceed with the development of a Housing Action Plan (HAP) in March 2009. The initial phases of developing the Housing Action Plan have been completed. These include research and analysis of demographic and housing stock data and consultations with community stakeholders on housing needs and issues in Surrey, as well as suggested remedying actions. The background research and results of the consultation process to date are available on the City's website: [www.surrey.ca/social-planning](http://www.surrey.ca/social-planning). The HAP will articulate a vision, guiding principles and a plan for achieving the goal of an adequate supply of housing to meet the full range of incomes and needs in Surrey. This is relevant in that it identifies the efforts on the part of the City to fulfill the broad spectrum of housing needs beyond those of the homeless and at-risk groups.

In addition, eliminating homelessness was clearly identified as a priority issue by stakeholders involved in the HAP consultations. The need for additional transition/supportive housing and low income rental housing to accommodate this population was a suggested solution. The Master Plan represents a response to this community stakeholder feedback.

## Key Provincial Initiatives in Surrey (2006-2012)

A number of relevant projects and initiatives have been introduced in Surrey in the past seven years (since the Social Plan was adopted). These include:

- BC Housing's **Homeless Outreach Program** was introduced in 2006. Surrey now has six outreach workers who work out of three community-based agencies linking homeless people to housing and other support services.

- BC Housing's **Extreme Weather Response Program** was introduced in 2006 in communities where the number of homeless people exceeds the shelter beds available. The Program funds time-limited temporary shelter spaces on mats in churches and community agencies during periods when the temperature or weather conditions threaten the health and safety of homeless people. Surrey has its own Extreme Weather Coordinator who develops an Extreme Weather Plan and coordinates its implementation.
- In 2009, Keys Housing and Health Solutions' (formerly called South Fraser Community Services Society) **Gateway Shelter** moved to BC Housing's new enhanced emergency shelter model. In other words, the shelter was to be open 24-7 on a year-round basis, include the provision of daily meals, and access to support services. Previously, the Gateway Shelter had been a "cold wet weather shelter" that was only open from November to March.
- Under the leadership of the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD), the Province initiated the **Homeless Integration Project** in March 2009 in five BC communities, including Surrey. Its purpose was to focus on the chronically homeless population and integrate resources across community agencies and government. A team was set up in Surrey that includes representatives from Ministry of Social Development (MSD), BC Housing, Fraser Health, agencies with homeless outreach workers, Surrey Homelessness and Housing Task Force, the RCMP and the City. From March 2009 to December 2010, 356 homeless people were moved off the street or from shelters and into more permanent housing as a result of this new initiative. Data collection was discontinued in 2011.
- In February 2012, Fraser Health initiated the **Surrey Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Program**, a specialized outreach program that provides "wrap-around services" in a community setting to adults with serious mental illness. This includes comprehensive assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and support activities. Most of the clients will receive services directly in their homes, in emergency shelters, drop-in centres or parks. The ACT team has capacity to support 80 to 100 individuals.

# INVENTORY OF NON-MARKET HOUSING & EMERGENCY SERVICES

According to the City of Surrey's updated inventory of non-market housing units, there are approximately 7,700 housing units available for low income and special needs households in Surrey. This inventory provides the base of units upon which future emergency shelter services, housing conversions, new builds and other types of housing will be considered.

## Emergency Services

There are a total of 165 emergency shelter beds located throughout Surrey. For homeless adults, there are 85 shelter beds at three co-ed emergency shelter sites located in Whalley, Newtown and Cloverdale. There are 26 emergency shelter beds for women, and women with children. In addition, there are six beds in a safe house for youth and 48 beds in women-only facilities.

**Table 1 - Summary of Emergency Shelter Facilities in Surrey**

Emergency Shelters	# Beds				
	Youth	Women	Men	Unspecified	Total
Hyland House				35	35
Gateway Shelter		8	32		40
Cloverdale Shelter				10	10
Cynthia's Place (women only)		14			14
Sheena's Place (women and children)		12			12
All Nations Youth Safe House	6				6
Women's Safe Houses/Transition Houses		48			48
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>165</b>

## Transition and Supportive Housing

There are a total of 528 beds and/or units in the form of transitional or medium-term housing for at-risk individuals and families. Some of this housing is in a group home setting with shared kitchens and bathrooms and others include self-contained units where residents can live independently within a supportive environment and while participating in a program. This housing is located throughout Surrey, largely in residential neighbourhoods.

The transitional housing typically has a time limit which varies from program to program, ranging from several months to several years. In Surrey, there are 378 beds/units for people recovering from addictions; 43 for men who are exiting the federal corrections system; 20 units for men and women transitioning out of homelessness; 83 beds/units for women fleeing abuse or other crisis situation; and 4 beds for at-risk youth.

In Surrey, there are currently 163 self-contained units of supportive housing located at four sites, providing long-term housing for homeless or at-risk households. These projects target single moms, individuals with mental health issues and other at-risk groups.

**Table 2 - Summary of Transition/Second Stage & Supportive Housing in Surrey**

Transition / Second Stage & Supportive Housing	# Beds / Units				
	Youth	Women	Men	Unspecified	Total
Addictions		17	277	84	378
Corrections			43		43
Homeless/At-Risk of Homelessness				20	20
Women's Second Stage Housing		83			83
Youth	4				4
<b>Transition / Second Stage Subtotal</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>528</b>
Supportive Housing (Long-Term)		28		135	163
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>691</b>

Table 2 only includes housing for people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness, and does not include any supportive housing for other population groups. There are over 400 beds in group homes throughout Surrey for people with other special needs such as mental health and developmental disabilities. These have not been included in this summary.

## Non-Market Housing

There are approximately 4,600 units of non-market housing in Surrey (Table 3). Roughly 1,800 of these units are dedicated to low-income seniors and an additional 155 are specifically dedicated to Aboriginal households. An additional 2,700 units are in the form of social housing for low income households or co-op housing — units that do not include any support services and are tailored for individuals and families who are able to live independently.

**Table 3 - Summary of Non-Market Housing Units in Surrey**

Non-Market Housing	# Units
Low-income Seniors	1,760
Non-Profit and Co-op	2,701
Aboriginal Housing	155
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,616</b>

Figure C shows the location of emergency shelters and transitional and supportive housing units in Surrey. It does not include, however, the location of transitional/ supported facilities that provide beds to youth, women and people with addictions as many of these locations are confidential. Figure D shows the rest of the non-market housing stock including non-profit and co-op housing for individuals, families, seniors and Aboriginal households.

**Figure C - Map of Emergency Shelters and Transition/Supportive Housing**

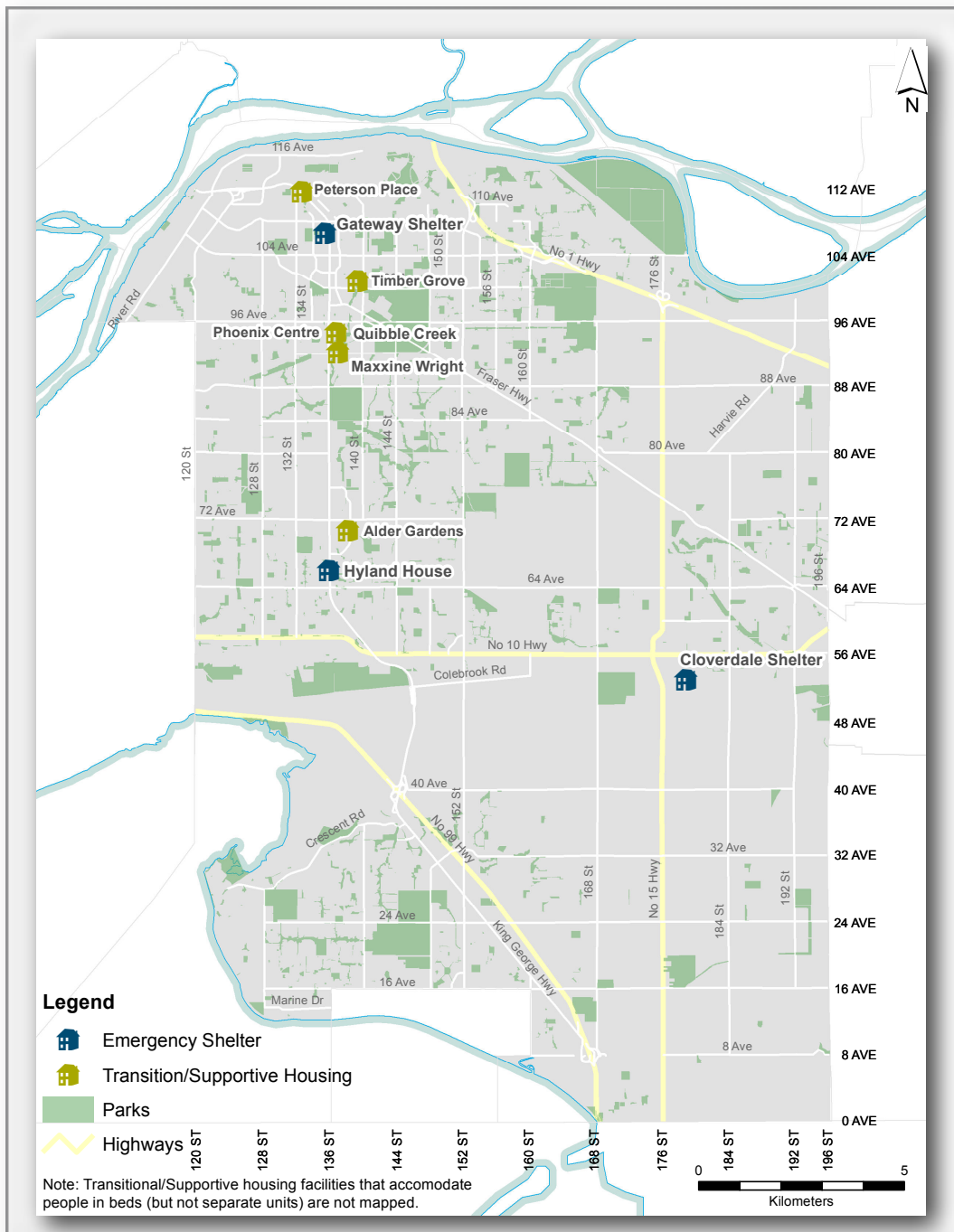
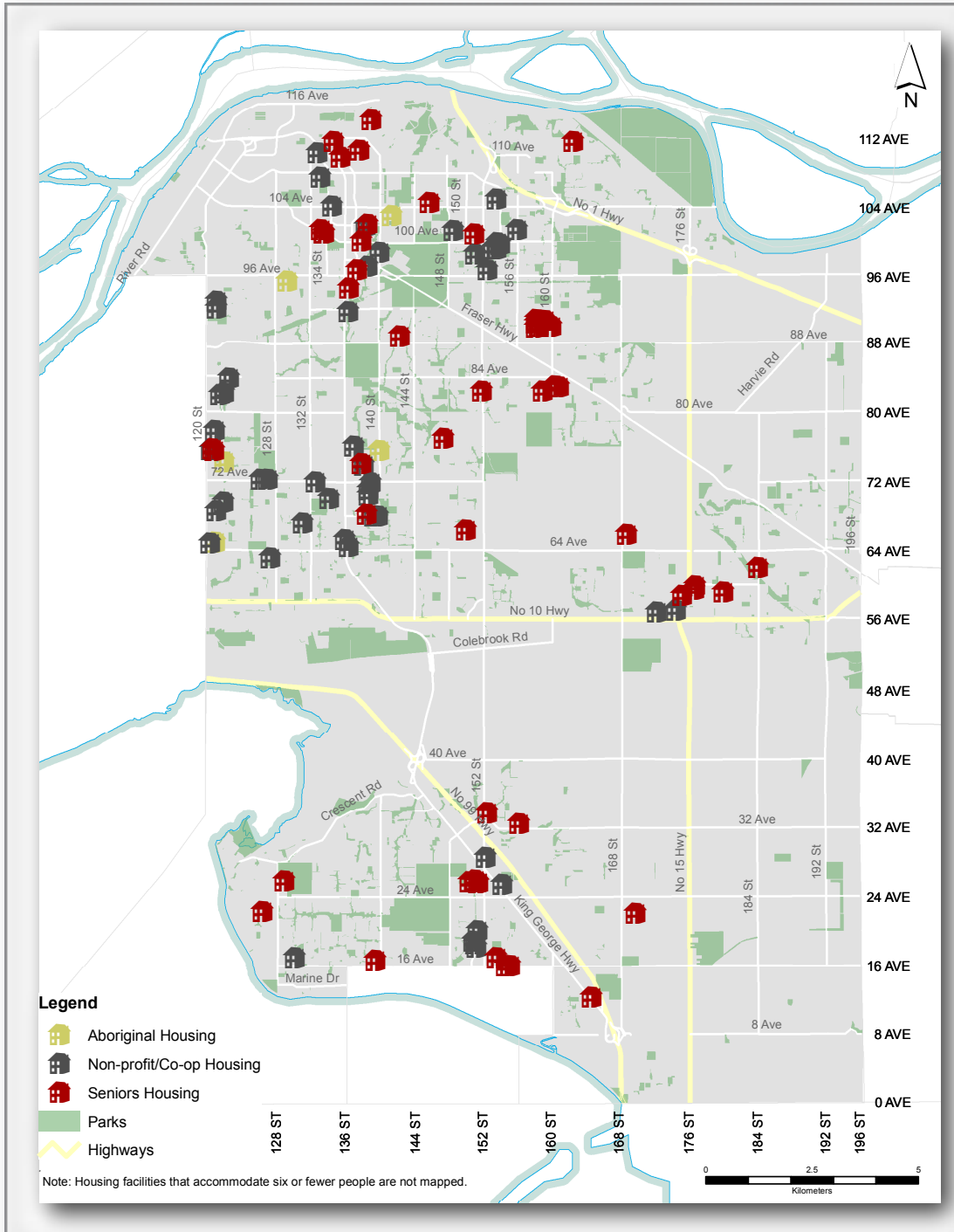


Figure D - Map of Non-Market Housing for Seniors, Families and Aboriginal Households in Surrey



## THE HOMELESS POPULATION IN SURREY

As it stands to date, the best estimate for the number of homeless people in Surrey is available through the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count (the Count).<sup>1</sup> However, due to the limitations of counting the homeless population, it is widely recognized that the homeless count numbers are likely an undercount, particularly for those populations who do not always use the traditional shelter system such as women, children and youth. The Count does not include those incarcerated for less than 30 days or people staying in recovery homes.

**Table 4 - Adult Homeless Population in Surrey and Metro Vancouver (2008, 2011)**

Adult Homeless	2008			2011		
	Sheltered	Not sheltered	Total	Sheltered	Not sheltered	Total
Surrey	95	307	402	170	230	400
	24%	76%	100%	43%	58%	100%
Metro Vancouver	1086	1574	2,660	1892	758	2,650
	41%	59%	100%	71%	29%	100%

Note: Those individuals who were “sheltered” include those who were staying in emergency shelters, youth safe houses, transition houses and those who had somewhere to sleep, such as a hospital or a detox centre, but otherwise had no fixed address.

- The 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count found 400 homeless people in Surrey, which accounts for 15% of the regional homeless population. As a point of reference, Surrey is home to 20% of the regional population. Practically the same number of homeless individuals were counted in the 2008 Homeless Count, which also amounted to 15% of the regional population.
- According to the last two homeless counts (2008 and 2011), the majority of the homeless population in Surrey was “unsheltered” — that is individuals who were sleeping outside, in camps or vehicles or other arrangements. In 2011, 58% of the homeless were not sheltered compared to 29% of the homeless in Metro Vancouver as a whole. This is an improvement over the previous 2008 count where 76% of the homeless were not sheltered. It is also important to note that it is easier to count individuals who are staying in shelters than those who are not. For this reason, homeless counts are often believed to present an undercount of the unsheltered.
- In Surrey, the majority of the homeless individuals who were not staying in shelters were found in Whalley (82%). Most of the remaining 18% of unsheltered homeless individuals were found in Newton or Cloverdale. While this clearly indicates a

<sup>1</sup> For the 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count, the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness is planning to use a formula developed in the United States by the Corporation for Supportive Housing to estimate the number of people who are homeless over the course of a year.



concentration of unsheltered homeless individuals in the Whalley area, it is important to note that many homeless individuals who are not in urbanized areas are living in makeshift camp sites or wooded areas that are difficult to find. Many of those living outside of Whalley have also reported to service providers that they do not want to be in Whalley where they are more likely to be preyed upon by drug dealers or other predators. Many individuals prefer being alone and will avoid contact with others, making it particularly difficult to count them. Due to these counting difficulties, it is presumed that the proportion of Surrey's unsheltered homeless population living in Whalley is inflated.

**Table 5 - Homeless Population by Gender in Surrey and Metro Vancouver (2011)<sup>2</sup>**

Gender	Men	Women	Transgender	Total
Surrey	63%	37%	0.6%	100%
Metro Vancouver	69%	31%	0.4%	100%

- Among the homeless in Surrey for which this information was provided (in 2011), there were 125 women counted, representing 37% of the total population surveyed. Comparatively, only 31% of the population surveyed region-wide was female. Surrey in fact represents the largest proportion of “unsheltered” women in the region at 34%, compared to Vancouver at 22% of the unsheltered.
- In 2008, 33% of the homeless population was reported to be female, showing a possible increase in the proportion of homeless women since this earlier count.
- Two individuals were identified in 2011 as being transgendered.

**Table 6 - Aboriginal Homeless Population in Surrey and Metro Vancouver (2011)**

Aboriginal Homeless	Sheltered	Not sheltered	Total Aboriginal
Surrey	25%	75%	100%
Metro Vancouver	50%	50%	100%

- Among those counted in 2011, 24% were reported to be Aboriginal (approximately 100 individuals), a similar proportion as the rest of Metro Vancouver where 27% of respondents identified themselves as Aboriginal. By comparison, Aboriginal people make up 2% percent of Surrey's total population. Of the total number of Aboriginal homeless people counted in the region, 15% were found to be in Surrey.
- The majority of Aboriginal homeless individuals counted in Surrey were found to be living “rough” (75%) rather than in a shelter (25%). By comparison, the Aboriginal

<sup>2</sup> The demographic information available in this table and subsequent tables represents a sample of respondents and is not based on 100% of the homeless population counted. For example, in Surrey, only 341 individuals were surveyed (or observed) to determine their gender. For Aboriginal identity or age-related data, the sample of respondents is smaller.

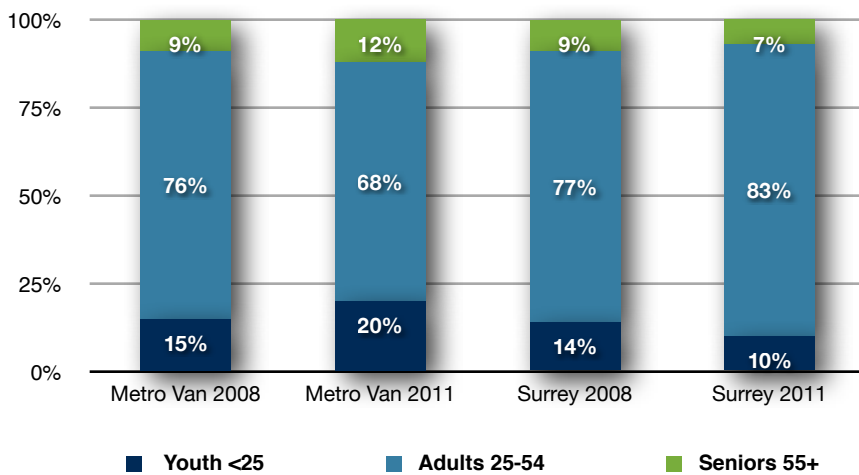
population in the region was split between those who were unsheltered (50%) compared to those staying at shelters (50%).

**Table 7 - Youth Homeless Population in Surrey and Metro Vancouver (2011)**

Unaccompanied Youth	Sheltered	Not sheltered	Total Youth
Surrey	23%	78%	100%
Metro Vancouver	38%	62%	100%

- With a total of 40 individuals counted, unaccompanied youth (under the age of 25) made up 10% of Surrey's homeless population. This amounts to 6% of the region's population of homeless youth. The majority of the youth were not found to be staying in a shelter (78%), as was the case throughout the region where 62% were unsheltered (62%).

**Figure E - Distribution of Homeless Population By Age Groups (2011)**



- In terms of the age distribution, it appears that there was a decline in the share of the homeless population under 25 years in Surrey, although the proportion of homeless youth in the region has increased since 2008. Given the small numbers of homeless youth in Surrey as a whole and the challenges in counting youth who are not staying at shelters, this should not necessarily be seen as an improvement in the situation for youth.
- People who are 55 and older are classified as seniors due to the rapid onset of aging and health consequences of homelessness. Among this group, there was very little change overall across the two counts, with a small proportional increase noted across the region as a whole and a marginal decline seen in Surrey.
- While the majority of the homeless individuals surveyed reported that they were alone (71%), 10% reported that they were with their partner/spouse. Others reported that they had friends, pets or children with them.

## UNDERSTANDING KEY POPULATION GROUPS

The homeless population in Surrey, as is the case in most communities, has a large proportion of single adult men. In Surrey, 63% of the homeless individuals counted, both sheltered and unsheltered, were male and many of the service providers report that the chronic homeless whom they work consists largely of men. Traditional emergency shelters typically focus on the need to accommodate adult men who make up the largest percentage of the client base.

That said, the homeless population in Surrey has also been described by key-informant groups as diverse, including people of all ages, abilities, ethnic backgrounds, and circumstances. Through the interview process, several sub-population groups among the homeless in Surrey were repeatedly identified as having specific characteristics, needs and challenges. Based largely on the key-informant interviews, this section describes these “other” key groups in an attempt to gain a better understanding of their situation and unique set of needs. This information will help to identify if dedicated facilities or services are warranted.

### Women

Based on the recent Count, 37% of the visibly homeless population in Surrey is estimated to be female. However, service providers suggest that women are often under-reported in the homeless counts because many of them do not want anyone to know that they are homeless. Some women fear losing custody of their children if government agencies were to find out they are homeless, and social stigma is another contributing factor. As such, they will resort to alternatives that may or may not be suitable before using emergency shelters. For example, women will often partner with men (sometimes putting themselves or their children in unsafe situations), use an address of a friend, couch surf or find other means to secure shelter to avoid sleeping outside.

Service providers and agencies in Surrey indicate that their female clients are generally in their 30s, but some report seeing more middle-aged female clients, as well as some elderly clients, over the past five years.

Service provider agencies working primarily with women have identified the following particular needs for this group:

- **Second Stage or Transitional Housing** — A lack of second stage or transitional housing for women was identified as a major gap. Many women leaving women's transition homes do not have safe housing to return to; others have never lived on

their own.<sup>3</sup> Service providers find that 30 days (maximum length of stay at women's transition homes) is not enough time for women that have experienced a crisis to stabilize and prepare for independent living. The time restriction prevents women from fully dealing with their immediate personal and health issues and does not allow enough time for them to apply for and start receiving income assistance. For such women, the option to move into second stage housing would extend the time that they are living in a supported environment, enabling them to manage the crisis and gain lifeskills that would help them to achieve independence.

- **Supportive Housing** — Also in short supply is longer term supportive housing which could be another potential stepping stone between temporary or crisis-based shelter and fully independent living. This type of housing would provide some support, administration of medications, communal dinners and other support that helps individuals move towards independent living, while providing some autonomy.
- **Affordable Private Market Rentals** — Ideal housing options for women could include apartments, townhouses, secondary suites that are in safe neighbourhoods located close to local services and transit routes. This type of housing can be hard to find at affordable rental rates. In particular, single women often have a difficult time accessing private market housing because their income is too low. In order to afford market rents, many women seek shared housing or find roommates to move in with them, and occasionally this can lead to exploitive or dangerous situations.
- **Building Trusting Relationships** — Women are also more likely than men to feel isolated and to suffer from anxiety and emotional issues. It is therefore particularly important for them to have positive, trusting relationships, be that with support service staff, friends, family or others. Elderly women especially, often prefer not to live alone, and are said to prefer congregate living models.
- **Larger Units** — Women with children need larger accommodation than is often available in typical non-market housing. In private market rentals, larger units of three bedrooms or more are rarely available or affordable to lower income households.
- **Appropriate Housing for Children** — Women with children are significantly challenged to find housing that is safe, affordable and appropriate for children. Not surprisingly, a two-bedroom unit will be more expensive than a one-bedroom unit of comparable quality in a similar neighbourhood. This is a serious concern for women

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<sup>3</sup> There may be some confusion with the term “transitional housing”. Women's Transition Housing refers to group homes where women who are in crisis or fleeing abusive situations can stay for up to 30 days. They are largely funded by the Provincial program with the same name. They are also often called safe homes. There is a distinction between these types of transition houses and transitional housing for people who were homeless and need shelter for a longer period of time (a few months up to a few years) to help them to transition towards independent living or other permanent housing option. For women, this type of housing is often known as second stage housing.

with children, who risk losing custody of their children if they are not able to meet Ministry standards for housing.<sup>4</sup>

- **Children in Custody** — For those who have lost custody of their children, one of the biggest barriers to their success is their ability to re-connect with their children on a regular basis. To facilitate this, women need access to a flex space or rental unit where they can stay with their children when they visit.
- **Dealing With Addictions** — Women with addictions are reported to suffer from greater physical effects of substance use than men. Drug use, in particular, is reported to lead to cardiovascular issues, heart, lung, liver, joint and other health issues that reduce women's ability to work or live independently.

## Youth

From 2008 to 2011, the number and proportion of homeless youth counted in Surrey declined. This is inconsistent, however, with the observations from service providers and local agencies, who reported an increase in the number of youth accessing resources and support services in Surrey. Many organizations in Surrey reported a growing percentage of homeless youth among their clients over the past five years. In addition, they are seeing more Aboriginal and immigrant youth. Similar to women, youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness, often “fly under the radar,” couch surfing or shuttling back and forth between family members. This makes it difficult for service providers to identify and provide services to vulnerable youth. Highlights of specific issues and needs include:

- **Transitioning Out of Foster Care** — Service providers suggest that youth who are about to transition out of foster care (a group which includes a high percentage of Aboriginal youth) are at a high risk of homelessness when they turn 19 and are no longer supported by the foster care system. Having been dependent on system supports in the past, many youth in this situation face a range of housing barriers and often end up in transient or unstable housing situations.
- **Lack of Basic Life Skills**— Homeless youth, or those at-risk of homelessness, often lack the life skills to successfully access and maintain housing and employment on their own and need services and staff that can assist them to gain stability and independence. They are often unaware of the resources that are available to them and may not have the information or skills to access resources on their own. Areas of support that are needed include lifeskills training and “how-to” information related to budgeting, learning how to be a tenant, grocery shopping, cooking, housekeeping and others. Another area is assistance with “navigating the system”, particularly income support and other government programs.

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<sup>4</sup> The recently completed project, YWCA Alder Gardens, has 28 units of long-term housing for single moms and their children and an additional 8 second-stage units for women who are staying at safe houses or otherwise in crisis. The housing project includes 2, 3 and 4-bedroom units. The society reports considerable interest in the larger 3 and 4-bedroom units.

- **Youth-Specific Services & Staff Training** — Most emergency services, shelters and drop-in facilities, are available for adults over 19 years with few options available to meet the needs of homeless youth. This further limits the access to support services and resources to under-age youth. In addition, there is a perceived lack of trained staff able to provide services to youth within adult-serving agencies. Having youth-friendly drop-in and emergency services would provide a place where staff can connect and build trust with at-risk young people.
- **Staffing & Funding Resources** — Staffing and funding shortages also affect the operating hours of youth services and the extent of lifeskills programming or referrals, goal planning, and other services. An emerging issue for service providers is the need to respond to the needs of youth with mental illness and disabilities. It was reported that some facilities are not equipped, in terms of their physical layout or staff training, to provide adequate services to these individuals.
- **Appropriate Housing** — On the whole, service providers stress the need for a range of housing and services that is dedicated to youth. This could include supported transitional housing and appropriate/affordable independent housing options, but that appropriate housing needs to be in areas where young women and men will feel safe, i.e. areas that are not commonly associated with drug dealing or violence. Youth, typically, need shared accommodation in order to afford market rental housing, although finding suitable roommates can be challenging.
- **Housing Conditions** — It is reported that housing that is comfortable and well-finished is more likely to be well maintained than housing that is in poor condition. Similarly, if young people feel “at home”, they are more likely to take care of their unit. As such, assistance with household goods such as furniture, personal supplies and home goods (pots/pans, plates, bedding etc.) was also suggested as a way to help young people to feel at home and maintain their housing.

## Aboriginal People

Approximately one quarter of the homeless population in Surrey is Aboriginal, which amounts to 15% of the region’s entire Aboriginal homeless population. This represents a disproportionate share of the homeless population that is Aboriginal, as only 2% of the total population in Surrey is Aboriginal. Aboriginal homeless people have a unique set of needs and circumstances that differentiate them from the rest of the homeless and at-risk population. For Aboriginal youth and adults, a set of specific needs were reported by key-informants:

- **Complex Housing Barriers** — Aboriginal households are reported to face complex housing barriers that make it more challenging for them to maintain traditional market housing (e.g. independent apartment or suite). This is due in part to family and cultural expectations that can lead to conflicts with landlords or neighbours. For example, extended family and friends may move in without prior consent,

resulting in crowded living conditions. Aboriginal people who were formerly homeless are also reported to face challenges maintaining housing due to their lack of experience with landlord-tenant relationships and tenancy obligations and also due to cultural differences and common practice of living communally. Shared housing models or communal living arrangements — single detached homes, townhouse and apartment complexes where families and friends could live close together — were suggested.

- **Aboriginal Youth** — Aboriginal youth were identified as a specific sub group with distinct needs. In Surrey, many of the Aboriginal youth who are homeless or at-risk have been “in the system” (i.e. foster care) for most of their lives. Many Aboriginal children that have been removed from their families at a young age and placed in foster care are found to be particularly vulnerable to homelessness. Such children and youth are reported to become “service resistant” over the years, avoiding public or non-profit services. This often means that they have less contact with individuals at either government agencies or community service providers who can connect them to key services or provide them with assistance before they slip into a situation of homelessness.
- **Lack of Resources** — One of the key challenges facing the Aboriginal homeless population and the service providers working with them is the lack of resources, including staff, funding and available beds or housing units. The Fraser Region has only one Aboriginal outreach worker that is based in Surrey but responds to requests for housing and outreach assistance from Aboriginal individuals from throughout the Fraser Region. The outreach worker typically does not have the resources to adequately respond.
- **Culturally-Appropriate Services** — Aboriginal people are reported to respond more effectively to services that are offered in a culturally-appropriate setting. Emergency shelter and support services that can be tailored to Aboriginal people are needed and this may include having a core cultural component and related programs. Services which acknowledge and address historic and generational issues were noted to be of particular value, for example, the Residential School Syndrome affects the 50+ age group but its negative effects can have an impact on several generations.

## The Situational Homeless

Another population group was identified by several interviewees as a growing segment of the homeless or at-risk population — the “situational homeless” or working poor. The characteristics and associated needs of these groups may overlap with the rest of the homeless or at-risk population, but there are unique factors that are worth noting as part of this review.

- **Low Wage Job Earners** — People working minimum-wage jobs are reported to be the most at-risk of homelessness. It has been reported that more and more people who have full or part time employment are unable to make ends meet and need to access basic services. For example, the food bank and other service providers have reported that young families and new immigrants are using their services over extended periods and not merely in emergency situations. Temporary assistance in the form of food banks, meal programs, rent supplements or other prevention activities may help such low-income households and those in tenuous housing situations from losing their homes.
- **The Formerly Homeless** — The formerly homeless are particularly vulnerable to a return to homelessness. Those who are employed in low-wage or part time jobs or those capable of living independently through the rent supplement program are at risk of homelessness if work is scarce or the rent supplement is removed. Others do not initially have the lifeskills to maintain their housing independently. Outreach workers provide the type of assistance that is needed to help such individuals to maintain their housing: ongoing contact and follow-up support; client-centred services; and access to basic services such as meals or household goods. Outreach workers are burdened, however, by a growing client base and are unable to support all their clients equally or when needed.
- **Lower Income Seniors** — Elderly individuals or couples have been repeatedly identified as being at-risk of homelessness. Lower income seniors are reported to be accessing community services, food banks, transition houses and other resources. Many are having difficulties managing their rents on limited incomes. With increasing physical health needs, this group is considered to be particularly vulnerable. Some of the elderly homeless, those in the 50+ age group, are noted to be dealing with issues related to drug addiction or prostitution. For them, in addition to the challenges related to being homeless, they are often dealing with a mix of physical health issues that are further exacerbated by their homelessness, substance use and/or sex work.
- **The Seasonal Homeless** — There is another group that is known to be seasonally homeless. During the summer months, some individuals living in trailer parks face homelessness, as they cannot afford to rent the mobile homes or pad rental fees at summer prices. For them, they may spend the summers camping in tents or in their vehicles/trailers if they own them.



# REPORTED CHALLENGES

## A Shortage of Housing and Shelter Options

Service providers and stakeholders have reported a shortage of housing and shelter options in Surrey that are adequate and appropriate to meet the needs of the city's homeless population. This includes emergency shelter, temporary housing, supportive housing and affordable and appropriate market housing. Essentially, housing options across the entire housing continuum were identified, with sub-sets to meet the specific needs of women, youth and Aboriginal people.

The following section highlights some of the housing and shelter-related gaps and other considerations identified through the consultation with service providers, organizations and agencies working with the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness:

### Emergency Shelters and Drop-In Centres

Surrey shelters have high turn-away rates in winter, which is an indication that the existing supply of beds and available housing is not meeting the demands of the homeless population. The demand for shelter beds dedicated for women, Aboriginal individuals and youth was noted to be particularly high as well as they do not typically access traditional adult shelters. Temporary or emergency accommodation that is suitable for families was also noted to be in need; the one Surrey-based shelter that can accommodate women with children reported turning away over 200 families a year.

In terms of suitability, many of the current drop-in and shelter facilities in Surrey are functioning out of buildings that were not designed for the purpose of providing emergency services. There are many lessons learnt from other jurisdictions regarding building design and other features for shelters that enable shelters to better integrate into the neighbourhoods and adequately respond to the needs of users. For example, providing space for users to store their belongings such as bikes and shopping carts is a feature that could determine whether a homeless individual will choose to access the shelter or not. Similarly, few facilities have interior courtyards or covered spaces away from the public street where users can smoke or “hang out”.<sup>5</sup> This often results in friction with local businesses and other neighbours as groups of people congregate outside the facility.

In terms of location, shelters should ideally be located close to transit, close to a town centre or accessible to medical facilities, food shopping, government offices and other services. The suitability of different locations depends largely on the target population

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<sup>5</sup> This type of space also minimizes the risk of homeless individuals who are congregating on the street from being preyed upon by drug dealers and other unscrupulous individuals.

anticipated to use the facility. However, finding neighbourhoods that are welcoming of new emergency services is often a challenge.

### **Transitional or Second Stage Housing**

Another housing form that was noted to be in short supply is housing that can help individuals to transition from the street or emergency shelter into the next stage of housing (ie. supportive housing, independent living or some other form of accommodation). For many individuals, transitional housing was reported to be a key step towards future independence and housing success. This type of temporary housing provides an opportunity for tenants to learn or re-learn basic lifeskills that can help them to maintain their housing. It also enables tenants to obtain a rental reference that is needed when seeking long-term housing through the private market.

Second stage housing is particularly important for women who are leaving transition homes (safe houses for women fleeing abuse), but continue to be dealing with situations of crisis and trauma. It is also a housing form that is valuable for youth who have stayed at safe houses, but are unable to live on their own. This housing form can be costly to operate as it requires ongoing staff support. While smaller buildings with self contained units may be well-suited to this type of housing, it can be difficult to get municipal approval for the use; it may also be costly to operate due to the need for regular staffing to provide ongoing tenant support.

### **Supportive Housing**

Surrey has a very limited stock of supportive housing, that is, housing with integrated support services. While the level of support service and the method of delivery can vary depending on the population that is housed, the link between housing and supports was emphasized in the consultation as a vital piece of the housing continuum and one that was in short supply in the city.

### **Low-Barrier Housing**

Service providers noted the difficulties in finding housing that is suitable for their clients facing multiple barriers to housing and reported the need for a broader range of housing options. Most commonly, individuals with a mental illness, drug and alcohol addictions or those with a criminal record or history of criminal activity were noted to face the greatest difficulties. For these individuals, finding housing that will accommodate their background or behaviours can be challenging as there are very few low-barrier housing options in Surrey.

Sex trade workers is one particular group that would benefit from a safe, yet low- barrier housing option where they can access support services and other resources in a secure environment.

## Private Market Rentals and Supports

It was acknowledged that the private rental market is an invaluable source of supply for people who are able to live independently, including people with low-incomes, people with disabilities, families and people transitioning out of homelessness (potentially with roommates). This may include apartments, townhouses and single-detached dwellings. However, these units are often inaccessible to those who are homeless or at-risk of homeless because of a number of reasons. For example, the rents are not affordable, the individuals do not present well to landlords when they apply for units, or they do not have the lifeskills or experience in managing their tenancy after they rent a place.

Outreach workers rely heavily on private market rentals as homes for their homeless clients. They attribute their success in housing people in privately-owned apartments or secondary suites to good relationships with landlords, crisis intervention when difficult situations arise, and regular and ongoing support to the tenants. Other key factors in the success of these housing arrangements include the availability of rent supplements to assist with housing costs and finding good room-mates. As outreach workers continue to increase their client base, however, it is becoming more difficult to provide the type of regular follow up and support that is needed to help clients to maintain their housing.

## Housing Conditions

A consistent thread in the conversations with key-informants was the **quality of the rental housing** that is available to low-income households. Several agencies reported that some of their clients have stayed in housing that is of substandard quality and they identified concerns around health and safety, pests and poor management. Such conditions were reported to be found in all forms of housing including market and non-market housing; single detached homes, apartments or basement suites; and units managed by private owners or by established management companies. As in many Metro Vancouver communities, bed bugs were also found to be an ongoing concern.

A related issue is the status or condition of **unregulated “recovery houses”** in Surrey. It is estimated that there are over 1,000 people housed in such recovery houses in Surrey, potentially in precarious living situations. A large number of such recovery houses are operating in Surrey without provincial or civic regulation and no protection for residents under the Residential Tenancy Act. Issues including sub-standard living conditions, overcrowding, unfair evictions and over-charging were reported. This situation is said to put tenants and users at risk with possible negative impacts for those who are attempting to access recovery services.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A committee comprising the City of Surrey and other provincial and regional agencies has been meeting on a regular basis to consider the city's unlicensed recovery houses and identify solutions. This process is currently under way and a number of measures are being implemented to respond to the situation. For this reason, solutions related to recovery homes in Surrey will not be directly addressed as part of the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless.

**Secondary suites** and rooming houses have been identified as an important housing option, but it was noted that some clients have been housed in suites/houses with low quality conditions and even unsafe standards.<sup>7</sup> Those tenants that are concerned about finding alternative housing at equally low rents do not complain to landlords or the city about these conditions. The more vulnerable tenants are the ones that are often most affected.

## **A Lack of Client-Centred Support Services**

The general perception by interviewees was that Surrey lacks sufficient support services to adequately address the needs of the local homeless population. Many felt that the chronically homeless population would be in need of the greatest range and intensity of support services, but that in all cases, the supports should be tailored to meet the needs of the individual, reaching out to clients and meeting them “where they are at” and “on their own terms.” This client-centred approach to support service delivery is becoming broadly recognized as one of the more effective methods for working with at-risk individuals.

Specific service-related gaps that were identified include health-related services; linkages to housing and supports for those who are leaving institutions; meal programs; and financial services.

## **Health, Mental Health & Addictions Services**

A shortage of health drop-in services was reported. This includes clinical and dental services that are non-discriminatory to individuals who may or may not have proper identification and those with other barriers to access.

Several agencies described a gap related to addictions-related services such as detox treatment and withdrawal management for both adults and youth. It is often difficult to place clients into detox or licensed recovery programs when it is most in need or a client is ready.<sup>8</sup> Capacity issues and long wait periods were reported, as well as intake restrictions that prevent certain clients from receiving timely access.

A lack of mental health services and training for front line staff who are working with individuals with mental health issues was noted as a critical shortfall across many services and facilities.

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<sup>7</sup> Secondary suites refer to self-contained units in single detached homes, often located in the basement or ground floor of a house. The zoning bylaw was recently amended to allow one secondary suite in every single detached house. Registered suites must abide by the current Building Code, which may deter some of the older illegal suites from becoming registered. Rooming houses are typically single detached houses where individual rooms are rented out to different tenants who share the kitchen and bathroom(s).

<sup>8</sup> Quibble Creek, which opened in 2012, includes substance use, assessment and clinical health services; 15 short-term recovery beds; and 52 transition housing units.

## **Discharge Services**

Older or chronically ill homeless individuals often end up “bed-blocking” in health care institutions because they have nowhere to go when released and may not have a suitable care environment for recovery. Resources are needed to help people find transitional housing where they can receive care services or other support and more adequately recover. Similarly, assistance with finding suitable long-term housing is needed for individuals who are leaving treatment programs or other health facilities.

There is also a need to help offenders connect with services and housing before they are released. An example is a pilot project between the Elizabeth Fry Society and BC Housing to help chronic offenders who are homeless get connected to services and housing as/before they leave the system. Elizabeth Fry is working with women and Keys Housing and Health Solutions (formerly South Fraser Community Services) is working with men who are leaving the corrections system, and both agencies have reported positive outcomes in their project's preliminary stages. This is the first time that this type of in-reach work has been funded by BC Housing.

## **Meal Programs**

Access to regular, nutritious meals is increasingly attributed to individuals' success in maintaining their housing. While there are some options for meals and food in Surrey, there are often limitations for certain clients. For example, food bank users are required to have proof of a Surrey address in order to receive food boxes. There are free meals served at the Front Room drop-in centre, but families or young adults are less likely to visit this centre because of its location and neighbourhood reputation. It is also less likely for supportive housing buildings to integrate a meal program as part of the package of supports that is provided to tenants. Having a broader range of food programs for those who are homeless or those living in supported housing is a key service that should more frequently be included in the toolkit of solutions.

## **Financial Assistance & Other Prevention Services**

In some cases, an individual may need financial support to prevent homelessness but the current procedure to obtain Employment Insurance or Income Assistance can take too long. The delay between an individual realizing they need income assistance, submitting the appropriate forms, waiting to receive confirmation and getting the first cheque, is often protracted and may lead to homelessness if they are in a tenuous housing situation and in need of financial assistance.

Improved coordination between outreach workers and the responsible ministry (Ministry of Social Development) was identified as a potential area of intervention that could prevent homelessness. Rent supplements are another prevention tool that service providers can utilize. This has been identified as an invaluable resource that should be maintained in the future. Expansion of this resource or added flexibility in how this type

of financial assistance would further enable outreach workers or service providers to assist tenants in achieving their housing goals.

Similarly, having access to rent banks can prevent crisis and possible homelessness. A pilot rent bank project operated by Sources Community Resources Society provides access to emergency loans to households throughout Surrey, while offering tools to help households to better manage their limited financial resources. Efforts to publicize the availability of such programs to low-income households are needed, along with an evaluation of their effectiveness as this can provide a rationale for their continued funding and expansion. Rent banks in other jurisdictions rely on ongoing funding from senior levels of government.

## Challenges Facing New Projects

Some social service organizations reported challenges when developing new housing projects or expanding social services.

- It is often difficult for organizations to identify locations in Surrey that are appropriate for their clients and where they are not likely to face strong opposition from the local neighbourhood. Access to transit and close proximity to services are key considerations for those with limited incomes and the safety of a neighbourhood is another factor, especially when housing women and youth.
- Selected non-profit organizations cited difficulties obtaining approval to build new projects or to renovate or convert existing single detached houses for special needs housing initiatives. In one case, a group of neighbourhood residents organized a campaign against a proposal for a purpose-built housing project to be operated by an experienced service provider. In such situations, it would be helpful to have clear direction and support from staff and Council to aid groups in their plans and prospects to facilitate the development of new projects in suitable locations.
- Another factor influencing the ability of organizations to provide new housing or service facilities is the price of land. Areas where real estate prices were historically lower, such as Whalley, are finding that leasing rates are increasing and there is increasing pressure for services to relocate out of these areas.
- In terms of possible acquisitions, it has been noted that there are very few smaller size apartment buildings, hotels, or other commercial buildings in Surrey that might be suitable for conversion to supportive or lower income housing. In an environment of limited funding, converting existing buildings is often seen to be a useful alternative — as it requires a smaller capital investment, re-purposes some of the older stock of buildings and the renovation work can be completed in a much shorter time frame than new builds. This is not the case in Surrey.

## Crime and Legal Issues

Consultation with the RCMP as well as the local business community identified the Whalley area as one of the key areas affected by crime and illegal activity. Service providers and the RCMP recognize that Whalley and Newton are service hubs that need to continue to provide basic services to the population in need and acknowledge that “relocating” these services would not necessarily resolve the issues around crime. However, the concentration of services in certain areas has resulted in people congregating in the streets, parks and vacant lots and can be attributed to these areas becoming a draw for drug dealers and other predators.

Some of the top homelessness issues that the local RCMP detachment is dealing with include littering, loitering, use of doorways for sleeping, shoplifting, aggressive panhandling, public disturbance, trespassing and metal theft. Police report that the main issues they deal with when people are housed tend to be domestic disturbance and drug-related incidents. Police and the business community identified a need for the City of Surrey to give greater attention to abandoned buildings, both commercial and residential, which can become magnets for crime, squatters, fires and theft. Empty, overgrown lots also need to be monitored to limit squatting, littering and other public safety issues.

The RCMP attempts to prevent arrests of homeless individuals by establishing dialogue with local service providers and developing relationships with the homeless. However, if a homeless person is arrested, it is often difficult to release them on bail because they do not have a credit card, a lease or a job. This results in extended detention periods for the homeless, particularly women.

## OPPORTUNITIES & SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

While many gaps and deficiencies were identified in the key-informant research, many ideas and suggestions were also generated. The following section presents some of the recommendations that came forward from this consultation.

### Recommendations for the City of Surrey

Service provider organizations that have attempted to provide new housing projects, expand services or introduce change into established neighbourhoods have reportedly encountered barriers related to City bylaws or policy. The following suggestions are aimed at overcoming some of these barriers:

- Through this Master Plan, identify the City's housing priorities and provide **strategic direction and vision** for how to achieve or implement the City's objectives. To be effective, this Plan needs to be supported by staff and Council.

- Continue to develop **planning objectives and policies** that facilitate the inclusion of a mix of housing and services in all neighbourhoods. Dovetail such policies with regulatory mechanisms and staff support to assist organizations working towards providing a range of housing and service options to be able to successfully integrate into existing communities.
- Support the creation of **affordable secondary suites** and enforce health and safety standards in a way that protects the rights of tenants, while minimizing the loss of affordable units and tenant displacement.
- Continue to identify solutions and to develop a comprehensive strategy for **regulation of recovery houses** and advocacy for a provincial funding program.
- Consider the **implications of displacement** during redevelopments or conversions of buildings.
- Continue to develop relationships and clear lines of **communication** between bylaw officers, the RCMP, service providers and outreach workers to address issues with the homeless population, such as through Surrey's Hard Target Committee meetings.
- Continue to **support local groups** and participate in local committees and taskforces.
- Consider methods to **educate and build awareness** among the general public about homelessness and how it affects our communities. This type of communication can identify ways that the public can be compassionate and how to support long term solutions.

## Housing-Specific Recommendations

While there are many gaps and challenges related to housing in Surrey, there are also approaches and models that have been working well. Groups working with at-risk youth, women and Aboriginals shared examples of housing that works for their clients, and strategies that could be used more broadly:

- While Provincial funding priorities are focused on housing as opposed to shelter beds, there continues to be a strong need for **appropriate shelter resources** and related services to help provide a gateway to longer term housing options for the homeless. A number of key features of shelter locations were identified as ones that would help individuals stabilize and connect with services. This includes private rooms, storage space, and flex rooms for couples or transgendered individuals. In addition, it is useful to have flexible meeting spaces that allow organizations to set up on-site clinical, dental, counselling or other health-related services. In particular, Keys Housing and Health Solutions' Gateway Shelter needs to be relocated to a more appropriate facility that better meets the needs of the user population.



- The **expansion of existing facilities** was also suggested as a strategic and efficient way to bridge the housing gap. For example, expanding existing shelters to add medium-term transitional housing units is one way to create medium term stable housing with supports for individuals who are interested in moving on to the next stage of housing. The exact balance between housing and shelter beds needs to be carefully considered to ensure that all users benefit from being in a stable and appropriate environment.
- Similarly, providing service providers (outside the shelter system) with more **resources** to connect with the homeless and offer links to housing and services is an efficient way to enhance the gateway function of local agencies. Such groups can then target the sub-populations (women, youth, Aboriginal, elderly and families) who are not well-served by Surrey's traditional emergency shelters.
- **New build supportive housing** is an important component in the housing continuum and one that was noted to be a high priority for Surrey. The recently completed units in Surrey's Timbergrove development were cited as a good example of a new-build development.<sup>9</sup> This 52-unit apartment building of supported, long-term housing is operated by Coast Mental Health. The building provides affordable units with 24-hour support staff on a referral basis, plus on-site Fraser Health services.
- Supportive housing, however, does not need to be only located in purpose-built complexes, but can be located in **alternative housing forms**. One group noted that single dwellings and duplexes that can be renovated into multiple self-contained units have worked well for them as a housing form in other communities. This type of housing gives organizations a place to manage a small number of individuals needing similar types and levels of support (mental health, physical disabilities, youth, women, etc.) within a neighbourhood setting. The City's policies and regulations would need to be revised to allow this form in residential neighbourhoods and City Council support would need to be granted.
- All forms of **housing for youth** is currently lacking. Expanding the options currently available for youth with a mix of housing forms that includes emergency shelters and housing that is linked to support services was identified as a high priority. The location of youth housing was cited as a critical consideration with a preference to safe residential neighbourhoods and areas that are close to transit and services. Good examples of working models for youth included Bolivar Heights, a co-ed house for youth in Surrey, and Broadway House in Vancouver, which has housing units above a ground-level resource centre. Both initiatives are run by the Pacific Community Resources Society.

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<sup>9</sup> Timber Grove is a new development that uses existing modular housing that was used to accommodate athletes during the 2010 Winter Olympics. The modules were adapted and stacked to form a 3-storey apartment building.

## Recommendations for Support Services

“Housing is not enough,” as one interviewee stated. To become part of the solution to homelessness, housing units often need to be linked to support services, well-trained staff and good programs.

- While the outreach workers in Surrey have been praised for their success at reaching out to the homeless and helping them to get connected to housing and services, there are few workers relative to the overall size of the community. **More outreach workers** are needed in certain geographic areas that are less well served, but also to address the needs of specific groups such as youth, women and seniors.
- Outreach workers currently have two primary functions — one is to engage with homeless individuals and assist them to connect with housing and support services; the second is to provide **ongoing follow up and support** to the recently-housed individuals to help them to maintain their housing. For outreach workers to adequately provide such follow-up services, especially in the Surrey context, where their client base continues to grow over time, it will be useful to consider additional staffing or a division of roles to ensure their success in the future.
- **Rent supplement programs** are extremely important in getting people housed, and helping people maintain housing. The continuation of this important tool was cited as a critical funding resource that outreach teams heavily rely on. These flexible funds are often used to top up rents so that individuals can afford to live in market rental units.
- There was an emphasis on increasing the amount of **services and programs dedicated to youth**. Many agencies cannot offer services to individuals under the age of 19 and it was felt that there was a dearth of resources and services available specifically for the youth homeless population. Similarly, outreach workers are not mandated to work with youth under 19 years. It was suggested that a similar program could be developed for youth to assist them to access clean, safe housing.
- At the existing shelters and drop-in facilities, there is a continued need for **on-site services** to be provided through permanent staffing or in-reach services from partner organizations. In this way, the services are provided to users in a welcoming, non-intimidating environment. This might include medical services, income assistance, food services and educational or employment-related programs. An example of this includes the Surrey North Community Health Centre, a free medical clinic, needle exchange and dental clinic for disadvantaged individuals who may or may not have identification which is often a barrier to health care access for homeless individuals.
- Surrey is in a good position to explore and increase **opportunities for partnership** between service providers, faith based groups, and government agencies (e.g.

health authorities). There is a very active homelessness taskforce; regular meetings between outreach workers and front line service staff; as well as the local Homeless Intervention Project that brings together government agencies in an attempt to streamline and integrate programs and services. Future partnerships could include the co-location of services such as housing, social enterprise, medical clinics and food services.

- There is potential for local groups and agencies to **collaborate and establish prevention programs** for the working poor and households at-risk of homelessness. There are many agencies providing selected services to these populations, but it would be advantageous for key agencies to work together to identify the right mix of supports and work collaboratively towards finding solutions. Lifeskills education, outreach and rent banks are examples of initiatives that should be funded and expanded where possible.
- Many outreach programs and service providers work with landlords in the private market to establish good relationships and help to resolve potential conflicts between landlords and tenants. Much of this relationship building is done independently by the outreach workers. **Resource material** could be developed to communicate consistent information to potential and existing landlords. To help strengthen ties between private landlords, tenants and service providers, a mentoring program was also suggested to help people learn skills to be good landlords or good tenants.
- Drop-in centres provide valuable gateway services that include meals, laundry, showers, parenting support, high school equivalency courses and lifeskills training. Women's groups advised that a drop-in centre should remain open on a 24-hour basis in order to be accessible to more vulnerable women. South Surrey has a women's centre, but it is only open during office hours and generally serves higher functioning women. As such, the expansion of **drop-in services** with extended hours is a noted recommendation. Drop-in centres, where possible, should also expand their services to provide volunteer opportunities or other activities during the daytime to assist people to address their personal goals and to find opportunities for productive activity.
- Another important consideration is the development of **discharge programs** that help individuals who are leaving institutions (treatment programs, hospitals, or corrections facilities) to access housing and services. This type of prevention service has been funded by BC Housing through a pilot program in Surrey. The Integrated Offender Management project connects individuals identified to be at risk of becoming homeless. There is potential to adapt and expand this service, not only within the corrections system, but also to other types of institutions such as hospitals and treatment centres.

- **Crisis lines and hotlines** have been a successful method of providing support services. Having the crisis lines provided in the Punjabi language was recommended as one way to reach the local South Asian community. This is primarily helpful for women facing violence or other abusive situations, but would be potentially useful for seniors, people with mobility limitations and others who are not comfortable visiting service providers in person. Similarly, it was suggested that agencies can further promote the use of BC 211, an information line that provides information and referrals to community, government and social services.
- The RCMP suggested the need to establish **community courts** for petty crimes and bylaw infractions as it is not in the public interest to prosecute small crimes. The intention of this model is to address root causes of crime (i.e. agree to get treatment for addictions rather than go to jail) and break the cycle of homelessness. Community Courts have become a mechanism that helps people to get into rehabilitation programs or to connect them formally with relevant services.

## Partnerships with Businesses & Development Community

Many positive examples of partnerships with the private sector and between service providers and agencies were shared. Opportunities for increased cooperation, sharing resources and building on past successes were also discussed.

- Efforts can be made to involve the business sector with mentoring, employment, volunteer opportunities and other assistance. The Cloverdale BIA has spearheaded many positive initiatives and is actively involved with many groups serving the homeless. It would be useful to document their example and share this information with other business communities throughout the city.
- There are emerging opportunities to engage a range of businesses in Surrey, particularly, with the recent interest and involvement of the Surrey Board of Trade (SBoT). SBoT prepared a policy position in 2011 that outlines how local businesses can get involved in a collective response to address homelessness. The SBoT also operates the LinkLine, a phone line that businesses can phone to report seeing a homeless person at their location. Outreach workers are then dispatched to the location to remedy the situation for the business, but also to coordinate access to services to the homeless individual(s).
- There is an opportunity to provide information to the development community and the not-for-profit sector about successful partnerships from other jurisdictions. Currently, there are few private developers building affordable or non-market housing. Some may be interested in opportunities to provide affordable/social housing, but they are limited by available funding and a lack of knowledge or experience in delivering such projects.

## TOP PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

Largely based on the key-informant interviews from within Surrey, this Situation Report has highlighted a range of housing and services that are of particular demand in the community. Based on this background research, along with the research on good practices and document and data review, seven priority areas have emerged. These priorities provide initial direction and focus for the City of Surrey, BC Housing, other government agencies, local service providers and the private sector to consider. They will provide some direction to the consultants in the development of the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless.

1. **A suitable replacement shelter in Whalley** — one that is designed to perform the gateway role of an emergency shelter, including longer term stays with 24-hour access and links to support services; and one that is designed and managed to be well-integrated within the neighbourhood. It is suggested that this shelter should be combined with transitional housing units as well as key health care and other basic services that enhance the shelter's gateway function.
2. **Expansion of drop-in and shelter services provided by local service providers** — to meet the needs of target groups that have unique needs and are currently underserved by local emergency services. This includes at-risk women, particularly sex trade workers, youth, Aboriginal people and the situational homeless or working poor.
3. **Transitional and supportive housing in a mix of forms** — This can include new build housing (where funding permits), but also acquisitions of existing buildings (where available), and acquisitions and conversions of larger houses into self-contained units for key groups (e.g. at-risk women, youth, individuals leaving institutions, and others with higher support service or care needs).
4. **Expansion of outreach and housing follow-up services** — Providing continual contact and support to individuals living in private market rentals is a key service that helps to prevent homelessness or minimize the cycle of homelessness from re-occurring. Providing support services to at-risk individuals in scattered private units can take a variety of forms, from clinical-based mobile teams to outreach support to meal delivery programs. Partnerships between government agencies (particularly through the Homeless Intervention Project) will be needed to facilitate and expand this type of client-centred mobile support.
5. **Review and update of municipal bylaws and regulations** — To support special needs and supportive housing projects, which may include conversions of houses/buildings and to further protect existing tenants from low or substandard housing conditions.
6. **Establish ongoing liaison groups with business community** — At a city-wide and neighbourhood level, such groups should be established to create a positive

environment between service providers, businesses and residents where all groups work together to maintain good relations and identify solutions to neighbourhood issues. Joint liaison groups will also establish a venue for communication about possible partnership initiatives.

7. **Work with BC Housing, Fraser Health Authority and other agencies to introduce/improve key services** — Focus on support services and initiatives that are of particular demand, including programs that assist individuals discharged from institutions; provide nutritious meals and food lifeskills; streamline financial assistance; offer health, mental health and addictions services; and offer training for front line service provider staff.

These priority areas will be reviewed and considered in context as part of the development of the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless. Key considerations will include the availability of funds, ease of implementation and timing.

## **APPENDICES**

**A - Sources & Contacts**

**B - Relevant BC Housing Programs**

**C - City of Surrey Official Community Plan: Draft Policies on  
Affordable Housing**

**D - Inventory of Transition & Supportive Housing**

## A - Sources & Contacts

### List of Documents

- BC Housing. November 2007. Emergency Shelter Program: Program Framework Fact Sheet. <http://www.bchousing.org/Partners/Operating/ESP>
- BC Housing. March 2008. Emergency Shelter Program: Program Framework. <http://www.bchousing.org/Partners/Operating/ESP>
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- Greater Vancouver Steering Committee on Homelessness. March 2010. Homelessness in Metro Vancouver: A Comparative Community Profile.
- Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. May 20, 2011. Metro Vancouver Homeless Count 2011. Preliminary Report.
- Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness. February 28, 2012. One Step Forward: Results of the 2011 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count.
- Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC). March 2006. Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents.
- Surrey Homelessness & Housing Society. 2010. Everyone has a home: Annual Report.

### Key Contacts & Agencies

Agency or Group	Key Contact(s)
Atira Women's Resource Society	Janice Abbott Maddy Carlington Shawna Baylis
Coast Mental Health	Darrell Burnham
Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association	Elizabeth Model Bonnie Burnside
Elizabeth Fry Society	Shawn Bayes Bonnie Moriarty
Fraser Health Authority	Susan McKela David Poulette
Fraserside Community Services Society	Jill Bloom



Agency or Group	Key Contact(s)
Metro Vancouver Homelessness Unit	Kingsley Okyere Diana Hurford
Ministry of Social Development, Fraser Region	Patricia Boyle Morten Bisgaard
Nightshift Ministry	MaryAnn Connor
Options Community Services Society	Darrell Ferner Peter Fedos
Peninsula Homelessness Unit Taskforce	Peter Greenwell
Pacific Community Resources Society - Surrey Youth Resource Centres	Michelle Shaw
Phoenix Society	Michael Wilson
South Fraser Community Services Society	Shayne Williams Megan Baillie
Surrey Development Corporation	Jim Cox
Surrey Food Bank	Marilyn Hermman
Surrey Homelessness & Housing Taskforce	Alice Sundberg
Surrey Urban Mission	Jonquil Hallgate

## B - Relevant BC Housing Programs

### Emergency Shelter Program

In 2007, BC Housing introduced a new program framework for the Emergency Shelter Program, which was developed to better integrate the Program along the housing continuum, enabling homeless individuals to more easily move from shelters to permanent housing. The new program framework requires emergency shelters to provide 24/7, year-round service so that shelter clients can be connected with support services and housing in addition to overnight accommodation, meals and showers. The framework is guided by a set of key principles:

- Core services are to be accessible and client-focussed. All homeless persons age 19 and over have the right to access shelter services regardless of ethno-cultural background, religious beliefs, physical disability, mental health status, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation.
- Operations will be transparent and accountable. Shelter providers will maintain reliable and consistent records, fulfill reporting obligations and develop meaningful policies and procedures.
- A welcoming, safe and secure environment will be provided. The health and safety of residents, volunteers and staff is of the highest importance.
- Shelter providers will work in a collaborative and innovative sector environment. Shelter providers will work in partnership with the local community and local service agencies as well as their clients or former clients to ensure that the shelter and its support services are responsive to the community needs.

As its primary function, an emergency shelter provides temporary accommodation and essential services to respond to the immediate needs of people who require shelter, food, access to hygienic facilities, and security. While shelters provide a short-term response, they are an essential part of the continuum of housing, and importantly, serve as a “gateway” to stable housing and support services.

BC Housing has “operating agreements” in place with more than 60 shelter providers in communities of all sizes throughout BC. Once these agreements are in place, BC Housing provides most, if not all, of the funding for the shelter’s operation. In addition to the shelter agreement, shelter providers are required to enter into a “Support Services Agreement” with BC Housing. Funding for these support services varies depending on local needs.

As part of entering into these agreements, shelter providers are required to set up an outcome monitoring process to track progress and ensure that the shelter is meeting the program’s objectives. Providers are also required to submit annual reports and financial information.

## **Extreme Weather Response**

The Extreme Weather Response Program is funded and monitored by BC Housing. BC Housing does not deliver this service directly. Instead, it contracts with existing service providers — community organizations, faith-based groups, and existing 24/7 shelters. The program enables communities to temporarily increase their shelter capacity during extreme weather conditions between November 1st and March 31st. Unlike emergency shelters that provide a 24 hour, year-round service, the Extreme Weather Response Program provides only temporary sleeping spaces for those whose health and safety is at risk sleeping outside in extreme conditions.

## **Women’s Transition Housing & Supports**

The Transition Housing program includes short-term accommodation for women (with or without children) who are at risk of violence. These safe places or shelters have 24/7 staffing and provide emotional support, crisis intervention as well as other assistance to women, e.g. accessing housing, financial, medical and legal assistance. These facilities are similar to emergency shelters in that they provide temporary accommodation that seeks to provide basic shelter services and create a safe environment from which users can potentially stabilize and receive access to gateway services.

## **Supportive Housing**

BC Housing also offers long-term low barrier supportive housing for the homeless or at-risk of homelessness who require support services to achieve successful tenancies and need safe, affordable housing. Some of these units are directly managed by BC Housing, although the majority are operated by non-profit housing agencies.

## C - City of Surrey Official Community Plan: Draft Policies on Affordable Housing

The Official Community Plan is being updated with final adoption anticipated in the fall of 2013. Section F3 outlines the City of Surrey's policies on affordable housing (June 2013 draft).

### OBJECTIVE F3 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Strive to provide appropriate and affordable housing for everyone.

Adequate, affordable and appropriate housing is fundamental to building strong, healthy communities, allowing people to live with honor and dignity regardless of income level or abilities. A complete community enhances livability in neighbourhoods by providing a variety of housing choices in terms of cost and type.

Appropriate housing meets the diverse needs of households in terms of size, location and design. Affordable housing is generally considered to be housing (either for rent or for ownership) which meets the needs of individuals or families in the low-to-moderate income range and which costs less than 30% of gross household income. The affordable housing spectrum includes non-market, supportive housing as well as affordable market housing provided by the private sector. The City has a role to play in ensuring an adequate supply of housing to meet demographic needs, working in partnership with the development and home-building industry, senior levels of government and community-based housing societies.

In order to meet Objective F3, the City will:

#### F3 POLICIES | GENERAL

F3.1 Maintain and regularly update an Affordable Housing Action Plan to guide City policy and actions supporting the provision of affordable housing.

F3.2 Work with government agencies, community groups and private developers to accommodate a full range of affordable and accessible housing that meets the needs of Surrey's diverse population.

F3.3 Support affordable housing projects that:

- strengthen and enhance the well-being of the community
- address the need for clean, safe, suitable and affordable housing
- demonstrate partnerships with other service providers and businesses.

F3.4 Affordable housing projects should generally be located:

- on transit routes
- in close proximity to schools
- in close proximity to shopping and medical services
- where support service, such as counseling and training, are accessible to residents
- where there is no overconcentration in one area.

F3.5 Actively advocate to senior levels of government for housing services to address homelessness, including homeless outreach, addictions and mental health services, food services, employment services and rent supplements.

F3.6 Coordinate with BC Housing and Provincial and Federal agencies to establish a full range of non-market housing to meet the current and future needs of residents.

F3.7 Support the development and on-going operation of a range of non-market housing, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, low-income housing and co-op housing.

F3.8 Support non-market housing for the diversity of low-income households, including: mental health and addictions, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, women, low-income singles and families with children, Aboriginals and refugees.

F3.9 Support the development of non-market housing through actions such as expediting applications, decreasing parking requirements, waiving development fees or charges, contributing land, etc.

F3.10 Continue to support the Surrey and Homelessness Society and Fund.

F3.11 Continue to support community and/or regionally-focused forums for addressing housing and homelessness issues in Surrey.

F3.12 Ensure an adequate supply of rental housing units in all areas of the city.

F3.13 Restrict the demolition or strata conversion of existing rental units unless city-wide vacancy rates are higher than 4%.

F3.14 Encourage and support the development of new purpose-built rental apartments through such actions as expedited development applications and reduced parking requirements, where appropriate.

F3.15 Advocate to senior governments for policy and taxation changes that will encourage the construction of purpose-built rental apartments.

F3.16 Coordinate and partner with landlords and Provincial agencies to ensure that adequate and appropriate rental housing is available throughout the city. Ensure adequate standards of building maintenance and management are followed.

F3.17 Recognize secondary suites and coach houses as a significant stock of rental housing. Encourage homeowners to legalize their existing suites to sensitively integrate into neighbourhoods.

F3.18 Encourage innovative zoning, design and development solutions for affordable housing units, particularly for infill development, that is sensitive to neighbourhood context.

F3.19 Where a density bonus is granted in exchange for community benefits or amenities, the first priority community benefit shall be to provide affordable housing (or cash-in-lieu), in conjunction with the market housing residential units.

F3.20 Where redevelopment of a Manufactured Home park is proposed, ensure that adequate consultation and compensation for relocated residents is implemented as part of the development application.

F3.21 Encourage the development of accessible and adaptable units using the BC Building Code Adaptable Housing Standard for all new apartment housing, to allow for "Aging in Place" and to create greater housing options for persons with disabilities.

F3.22 Promote affordable family housing in City Centre, Town Centres and other locations accessible to frequent transit service by encouraging a mix of unit types include two-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments in new developments.

## D - Inventory of Transition & Supportive Housing

The following table provides an inventory of the transitional and supportive housing beds and units available in Surrey at the time of publication of this report.

Transition & Supportive Housing	# Beds / Units				
	Youth	Women	Men	Unspecified	Total
<b>ADDICTIONS HOUSING*</b>					
Phoenix Centre			64		64
Quibble Creek			15	52	67
Path to Freedom Treatment Centre			10		10
Ellendale (Elizabeth Fry)		10			10
Freedom House			24		24
Luke 15			24		24
Vision Quest 1,2,3			30		30
A Better Place				20	20
Realistic Success Recovery			10		10
Options Community Services Society			10		10
Launching Pad			20		20
It's Up To You			24		24
Keys Housing and Health Solutions				12	12
Step by Step		7	40		47
Cwenengitel			6		6
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>378</b>
<b>POST-CORRECTIONS</b>					
Phoenix Centre			20		20
Cwenengitel			6		6
John Howard Society			17		17
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>HOMELESS/AT-RISK</b>					
Hyland House - Transitional Units (Options)				20	20
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>

Transition & Supportive Housing	# Beds / Units				
	Youth	Women	Men	Unspecified	Total
<b>WOMEN'S SECOND STAGE</b>					
Arbour House (YWCA)		8			8
Koomseh (Atira)		11			11
Promise & Grace Houses (Servants Anon.)		20			20
Harmony House (PICS)		8			8
Maxxine Wright (Atira)		36			36
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>YOUTH</b>					
Bolivar House (PCRS)	4				4
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOTAL TRANSITION/SECOND STAGE</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>528</b>
<b>SUPPORTIVE HOUSING</b>					
Timber Grove (Coast Mental Health)				52	52
Peterson Place (FraserSide)**				39	39
Len Shepherd (Fraser Health)				25	25
Alder Gardens (YWCA)		28			28
Bolivar Court (FraserSide)				19	19
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>TOTAL TRANSITION &amp; SUPPORTIVE</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>691</b>







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