

**REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS PLAN FOR
METRO VANCOUVER**
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Approved by the RSCH Constituency Table September 19, 2013

I. Purpose

This document provides terms of reference to develop a new Regional Homelessness Plan for Metro Vancouver. The purpose is to promote stakeholder discussion and support on key aspects of the process to create the plan — purpose, goals, principles, approach, timeline, resources required, and commitments required from stakeholders.

II. Context

The Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH) is responsible for working towards the implementation of the regional homelessness plan in Metro Vancouver and for monitoring and updating the plan as required. The Regional Homelessness Plan is a deliverable under the work program provided by Metro Vancouver to Service Canada under HPS funding. The RSCH is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Regional Homelessness Plan.

The first regional homelessness plan was developed in 2001 and was updated in 2003. The plan, known as *3 Ways to Home*, set out broad policy directions for addressing homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region. It identified gaps in the continuum of housing and services and strategies for action. The plan has served as a template for other sub-regional plans — including efforts by municipalities, neighbourhoods, and private foundations that are committed to a structured approach to addressing homelessness.

The regional landscape of homelessness has changed since 2003. Not only has there been a change in the homeless population, there has also been an increase in governmental involvement in addressing homelessness, and even greater involvement by community agencies, private foundations and the private sector. Knowledge and information about best practices in homelessness has also increased, based on research and experience with new programs and approaches. These shifts, coupled with the ten year time lapse since the last plan revision, necessitate a new plan that will:

- Continue to provide a basis for regional discussions about homelessness and the search for solutions to homelessness;
- Continue to provide a framework for the planning, coordination and development of housing, services and supports for people who are homeless;
- Reflect current research and best practices;
- Reflect the views of all key stakeholders; and
- Increase public support and promote new partnerships to end and prevent homelessness.

The new regional homelessness plan will use the definitions of homelessness contained in Appendix 1. This includes the definition used by the RSCH in the 2003 regional homelessness plan, *3 Ways to Home*, which has been modified slightly over the years to clarify that people who are ‘hidden homeless’ are considered homeless rather than at risk of homelessness. It also includes the definitions of Aboriginal homelessness according to the *2001 Aboriginal Homelessness Study* developed for the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee (AHSC) and included in *3 Ways to Home*.

III. Planning Objectives

The community planning process to create the new Regional Homelessness Plan will have the following objectives:

- Stimulate comprehensive region-wide stakeholder discussion of homelessness and its solutions through constructive engagement processes;
- Increase knowledge and awareness about homelessness issues and solutions;
- Develop regional consensus on:
 - Goals, priorities, strategies, and actions to end and prevent homelessness throughout the region; and
 - A time frame, resources and responsibilities to implement the priorities.

The community planning process will be evaluated to determine if the planning objectives are met.

IV. Planning Framework Principles

The overall goal of the new regional homelessness plan will be to end homelessness in Metro Vancouver.

The following principles will guide the development of the new regional homelessness plan:

- **Community-driven** — Development of the new plan will adopt an inclusive consultation process that welcomes participation from a broad-based citizenry, including public and private sector leaders, non-profit housing and service providers, community groups and persons who have experienced homelessness. This will include working with the AHSC to develop appropriate opportunities for consultation with the Aboriginal community.
- **Data-driven** — Development of the new plan will rely on current data on the homeless population and population at risk of homelessness, on the supply of affordable housing and demand for affordable rental housing, and current reports on best practices and lessons learned in ending homelessness.
- **Alignment with the planning efforts of different levels of government and communities** — Over the years several municipalities and community groups have developed their own plans to address homelessness. These plans will be considered in the development of the new regional plan to ensure optimal impact from the combined efforts of government and communities.
- **Focus on strategies to end and prevent homelessness and promote capacity building**— The new plan will focus on strategies to provide people who are homeless with permanent housing and the services they need and want to remain housed. It will also include effective prevention strategies such as early detection, emergency assistance, affordable housing, adequate income, employment initiatives, mental health and addictions services and other support. In addition, it will include strategies to build capacity to increase effectiveness in ending and preventing homelessness.
- **Fixed timelines for implementation** — The new plan will have fixed timelines for implementation and will be reviewed at least every five years to report on progress made towards its implementation and ensure its continued relevance. It will also

identify measurable outcomes and indicators to determine to what extent the plan is achieving the goal to end homelessness.¹

V. Project Development Process and Approach

The key phases of work and a schedule to develop the new regional homelessness plan are outlined below, with details shown in Appendix 2. The schedule is based on the need to obtain data that will assist in estimating needs and priorities. This includes the 2011 Census data for housing, shelter costs, income, and earnings, which is scheduled for release in September 2013. It will also include data from the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count scheduled for March 2014. Preliminary results of the count are expected by the end of April, and the final report is expected in July 2014.

Throughout the process of developing the new plan, stakeholders will have numerous opportunities to provide input on a variety of issues, according to a consultation strategy to be developed during Phase 1. The RSCH will establish an Advisory Group to provide advice and recommendations to guide the development of the regional homelessness plan. The RSCH Constituency Table will be responsible for approving the new plan and stakeholders will be asked to endorse it.

It should be noted that sufficient funding and resources are in place to complete Phases 1-3. Resources to complete Phases 4-6 will be explored when the parameters for the next cycle of HPS funding are known.

A. Phase 1 — Planning and Consultation (April 2013 – September 2013)

This phase will involve consulting with RSCH members and constituencies including all levels of government, community funders, organizations that represent the private sector, the AHSC/Aboriginal community, non-profit housing and service providers, and Community Homelessness Tables. The purpose will be to obtain feedback on the draft terms of reference and gather input to develop a consultation strategy that will guide all phases of the plan development process. The deliverables of this phase include terms of reference and a consultation strategy approved by the RSCH.

B. Phase 2 — Background, Needs Assessment and Discussion Papers (July 2013 – October 2013)

This phase involves a review and analysis of relevant background information to provide context for the new plan. It will include identifying successes achieved with the previous plan, identifying current and emerging issues affecting homelessness and the homeless service sector, and reviewing data on the homeless population, hidden homeless, and population at risk of homelessness in Metro Vancouver. Funding provided through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and BC Housing to address homelessness will be reviewed as well as the inventory of facilities and services targeted to the homeless population. Studies on the costs of

¹Examples of outcomes could include reduced number of homeless people identified on the street and in shelters during the homeless count as well as reduced length of shelter stays.

homelessness, and existing plans by local, community and private groups for addressing homelessness, will also be examined as part of this work. Deliverables of this phase will include:

- An inventory of services and facilities for people who are homeless in Metro Vancouver;
- Analysis of changes in the inventory of services and facilities in the region since 2003;
- Projected demand for affordable rental housing; and
- A series of brief discussion papers that provide background information and identify issues and options to be addressed in the new plan (e.g. what does Housing First mean for Metro Vancouver, prevention, strategies for increased capacity building, and issues facing particular target populations).

C. Phase 3 — Priorities and Strategies (September 2013 -March 2014)

This phase will involve engaging with stakeholders identified in the consultation strategy, persons who have experienced homelessness, to initiate discussion on priorities and strategies for the new regional homelessness plan. The deliverables of this phase will include definitions of what we mean by housing first, prevention, and capacity building, a summary of the input received through the consultation process and identification of regional priorities and strategies for the regional homelessness plan.

D. Phase 4 — Draft Plan/Implementation Strategy (April 2014 – September 2014)

In this phase, the RSCH will develop a draft of the new regional homelessness plan. Work will be done to estimate of the number of housing units needed to accommodate the homeless population in Metro Vancouver – using data from the 2014 Homeless Count², shelter data available from BC Housing, and other acceptable sources of data. Work will also be done to estimate the cost of implementing the new plan. A consultation process will be undertaken with stakeholders identified in the consultation strategy, including persons who have experienced homelessness to obtain their feedback on the draft regional homelessness plan. The deliverables will be the draft plan and a summary of input received through the consultation process.

E. Phase 5 — Final Plan (October 2014 – December 2014)

The purpose of this phase is to produce a final regional homelessness plan that considers input received during the consultation processes. It is anticipated that the final plan will reflect not just the feedback of community stakeholders, but will also address implementation issues such as timelines, resources, responsibilities, and a framework for evaluation. The deliverable will be a final plan that is approved by the RSCH.

² This estimate of the number of housing units will be based on annualizing data from the 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count and will be determined in consultation with key partners including BC Housing. The Streethome Foundation used this approach in its 10-Year Community Homelessness Plan to estimate the number of housing units needed for the homeless population in Vancouver.

F. Phase 6 — Community Endorsement (January 2015 – June 2015)

The purpose of this phase is to present the new regional homelessness plan to Metro Vancouver, local governments, and other stakeholders for endorsement. The deliverable will be widespread endorsement from these stakeholders.

VI. Project Management

Many groups and individuals will be involved in the development of the new regional homelessness plan. The following sets out roles and responsibilities of the key partners. An organizational chart is provided in Appendix 3.

1. The Homelessness Secretariat – The Homelessness Secretariat will support the RSCH in Phases 1-3. Pending confirmation of funding resources, the Secretariat will support the RSCH to complete the plan. The Secretariat may secure external funding to support completion of the plan. Oversight will be provided by the Metro Vancouver Director of Housing. The Manager of the Homelessness Secretariat will be the Project Team Manager, with responsibility for ensuring the project is carried out as planned. They will be supported by other staff who will be responsible for executing various project tasks and producing expected deliverables on schedule. In this role, the Secretariat will also provide administrative support to the project and will coordinate all aspects of the development of the new plan. The Secretariat may secure additional resources from external consultants and other Metro Vancouver staff as needed.
2. The RSCH — The new plan is the RSCH's plan. Decision-making authority will be exercised by the RSCH Constituency Table. The Constituency Table will be supported by an Advisory Group of volunteer RSCH members who will provide advice and recommendations to guide the development of the plan. The Advisory Group will review project deliverables, provide recommendations to the RSCH Constituency Table, help resolve issues and policy decisions to achieve consensus on policy decisions, priorities and strategies, and provide general direction and guidance to the project. It is expected that some Advisory Group members may be able to provide resources, assist in securing funding, act as liaisons to groups and agencies, and fill other roles as defined by the project.
3. Stakeholders — This includes all groups, individuals, or organizations that will be affected by, or can affect the outcomes of the project. This includes all levels of government, non-profit housing and service providers, the AHSC/Aboriginal community, community groups, foundations, and persons who have experienced homelessness. These groups will be invited to participate in the development of the new plan in various ways — through consultation meetings, surveys and other processes.

VII. Budget Requirements

The development of the new plan will be funded with resources from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy program and the community. It is estimated that the total project cost will be \$125,000. A preliminary project budget is shown in Appendix 4.

Appendix 1 - Definitions of Homelessness used by the RSCH and AHSC

(1) RSCH Definition and Categories of Homelessness

The RSCH approach for defining and addressing homelessness includes two categories: people who are homeless and people at risk of homelessness. These are described below.

Homeless

The RSCH considers people to be homeless if they do not have a place of their own where they could expect to stay for more than 30 days and if they do not pay rent. This includes people in the categories below. In order to report on the number of people in these categories, the RSCH conducts a homeless count every 3 years.

Unsheltered homeless. People living 'outside', including in alleys, doorways, parkades, parks and vehicles. This category also includes people who are couch surfing and accessing homeless services on the day of the count.

Sheltered homeless. People staying in emergency shelters for the homeless, transition houses for women fleeing abuse, and safe houses for youth. This category also includes people with no fixed address who are in health, correction and recovery facilities on the night of the count.

Hidden homeless. People staying temporarily with another household who do not have a regular address of their own where they have security of tenure. They cannot stay with the household as long as they need, in order to establish a residence of their own).³

At Risk of Homelessness

The RSCH considers people to be at risk of homelessness if they are living in spaces or situations that do not meet basic health and safety standards, do not provide security of tenure or personal safety, and are not affordable. To estimate the number of people at risk of homelessness in Metro Vancouver, the RSCH uses Census data to include households in core need and spending at least 50% of their income on housing.

³ A 2009 pilot study in Metro Vancouver estimated that more than 9,000 persons were hidden homeless at the time of the survey, and about 23,500 persons were hidden homeless in the previous year. (Margaret Eberle et al. 2009. *Results of the pilot study to estimate the size of the hidden homeless population in Metro Vancouver*).

(2) AHSC Definition and Categories of Homelessness

Aboriginal person: a person who identifies themselves as a North American Indian, Métis or Inuit.

Characteristics of an Urban Aboriginal Homeless Person (meets any of the criteria listed below):

- Those who have no security of tenure beyond a 30-day period
- Those who suffer from family violence or family breakdown and who have no security of tenure
- Those who 'couch surf' (frequently stay at the homes of friends or family for no more than a few days) for a period of more than thirty days with no security of tenure
- Those who are frequently living on the street
- Those who are living in inadequate, substandard and unsafe accommodations that do not meet the minimal housing standards established by the United Nations or other local government agency such as the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Those who rely on emergency shelters as primary residences
- Anyone released from a mental health facility or prison with no security of tenure
- Those who are prevented from leaving a mental health facility or prison because of lack of security of tenure (including those women and men who are unable to have children returned to them by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) for want of decent affordable housing)
- Those who flee their home as a result of sexual abuse (regardless of age) and who have no security of tenure
- Those who alternate between sheltered and unsheltered (whether those shelters are hospitals, hostels, single room occupancy hotels or otherwise)
- Those who suffer from discrimination and cannot hold security of tenure for any reasonable period of time as a result of such discrimination

Characteristics of an Urban Aboriginal Person At-Risk of Being Homeless (meets any of the criteria listed below):

- Those who pay more than 25% of their income for accommodations (United Native Nations, 2001)
- Those who suffer from acute life crisis such as: family violence, divorce, eviction, release from institutions
- Those who are at-risk of losing their accommodations as a result of lack of income, overcrowding, redevelopment, or unemployment
- Those whose income is below the Low Income Cut-Off established by the Government of Canada
- Those whose education level would place them in social distress or poverty below the Low Income Cut-Off
- Those who suffer from substance abuse, mental illness, or structural or personal barriers that may lead to homelessness
- Those who are denied an opportunity to acquire social housing to meet their socio-economic needs

- Those who are hard to house for whatever reason
- Those whose income requires them to use food banks to supplement their income for prolonged periods of time
- Those who are entrenched in the sex trade on the streets
- Those who, because of systemic barriers, are unable to acquire accommodation of any kind

(Pranteau, 2001)

For Discussion Only

Appendix 2- Project Workplan, Deliverables and Schedule

Task	Resources	Deliverables	Schedule	
Phase 1 – Planning and Consultation			April 2013– September 2013	
1. Prepare Terms of Reference, including a workplan, defined roles and responsibilities and a budget and obtain feedback from RSCH stakeholders	Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of Reference and a consultation strategy approved by the RSCH Sufficient resources for the project 		
2. Raise funds to meet budget needs				
3. Prepare a consultation strategy				
Phase 2 – Background, Needs Assessment, and Discussion Papers			July 2013 – October 2013	
4. Review and report on regional data re general population, population at risk of homelessness, and housing supply including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total population in Metro Vancouver Rental housing supply Average monthly rent Households in Core need – numbers/profile (BCNPHA data) INALH (Core Need and 50% of income to housing) – numbers/profile Projected demand for affordable rental housing 	Metro – Regional Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports on the data, literature and documents reviewed (items 4 – 9) Inventory of services and facilities for people who are homeless in Metro Vancouver Analysis of changes in the inventory since 2003 Series of discussion papers for the new plan 		
5. Review and report on regional data re homeless population, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hidden Homeless – estimate Previous homeless count data (2014 data to be added when available) Special populations: Youth (e.g. transitioning out of foster care in Metro; Aboriginal; Women; Families; Seniors etc. 				Secretariat
6. Report on HPS funding allocations and BC Housing expenditures to address homelessness according to: priorities; sub-regions; and target populations				
7. Review reports on the costs of homelessness				
8. Review reports on successful approaches, projects and lessons learned since 2003, e.g. Housing First, Outreach, At Home/Chez Soi project, and business partnerships				
9. Review relevant documents including the Metro Vancouver Affordable Housing Strategy, local community homelessness plans, and 10-year plans to end homelessness				
10. Update inventory of services and facilities serving homeless people in the region				Consultant
11. Analysis of changes in the inventory of services and facilities since 2003 (Appendix)				Secretariat

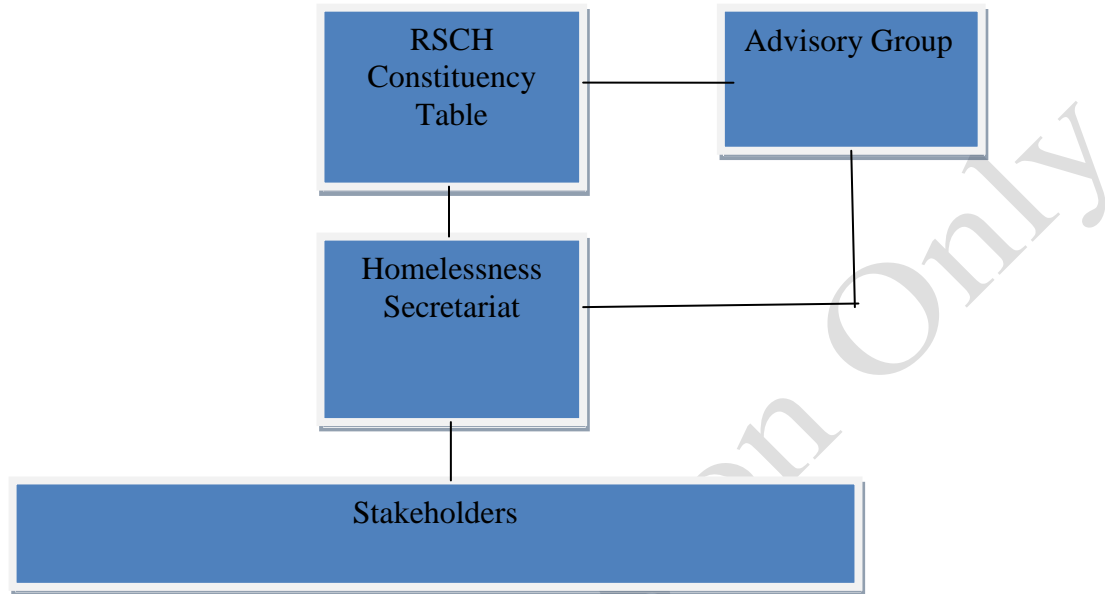
12. Identify gap in housing units for people who are homeless: 2014 annualized count compared to number of units under development. Analysis by target groups (Youth, Adults, and Families, Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal)	Secretariat or Consultant		
13. Prepare discussion papers e.g. Housing First, capacity building, and prevention.	Secretariat		
Phase 3 – Priorities and Strategies			September 2013 - March 2014
14. Engage with interested stakeholders throughout Metro Vancouver to initiate discuss on the new homelessness plan. Objectives will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain consensus on major gaps and top priorities in Metro Identify regional strategies and actions to prevent and end homelessness 	Consultant and Secretariat	Summary of input received through the consultation process. Report to Service Canada re use of funds.	
15. Engage with persons who have experienced homelessness to provide input into the new plan	Consultant		
Phase 4 – Draft Plan/Implementation Strategy			April 2014 – September 2014
16. Estimate the number of housing units needed to accommodate people who are homeless in Metro Vancouver – based on data from the 2014 Homeless Count		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap analysis - housing for people who are homeless in Metro Vancouver 	
17. Prepare a Draft Plan to be circulated to stakeholders	Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Regional Homelessness Plan 	
18. Engage with interested stakeholders throughout Metro Vancouver to review the draft plan and obtain feedback	Secretariat and Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of input received through the consultation process 	
19. Engage with persons who have experienced homelessness to review the draft plan and obtain final feedback	Consultant		
20. Estimate cost to implement the new plan	Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate of cost to implement the new plan 	
Phase 5 – Final Plan			
21. Prepare a final plan that considers input received during the consultations. The plan will include a section on timelines, resources and responsibilities required to implement the plan, as well as an evaluation framework to assist in reporting on progress made towards implementing the plan and ending homelessness	Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final plan approved by the RSCH 	October 2014 – December 2014
Phase 6 – Plan Endorsement			January 2015 –

22. Distribute and present the plan to Metro Vancouver, local governments, and the broader community to secure endorsement	Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan is presented to Metro Vancouver, local governments and other stakeholders throughout the region for endorsement	June 2015
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For Discussion Only

Appendix 3 – Project Roles and Responsibilities

The following organizational chart illustrates the project management structure for developing the new plan.



1. The Homelessness Secretariat is responsible for developing the new plan on behalf of the RSCH. Oversight will be provided by the Metro Vancouver Director of Housing. The Manager of the Homelessness Secretariat will be the Project Team Manager, with responsibility for ensuring the team executes the projects as planned.
2. The RSCH Constituency Table is responsible for approving the new plan. An Advisory Group will guide the detailed project planning and development process.
3. Stakeholders include all groups, individuals, or organizations that will be affected by, or can affect the outcomes of the project, including all levels of government, non-profit housing and service providers, the Aboriginal Homelessness Steering Committee/Aboriginal community, community groups, foundations, and persons who have experienced homelessness.

Appendix 4 – Preliminary Project Budget

Regional Homelessness Plan - Budget			
Revenue		Expenses	
Homelessness Partnering Strategy	\$90,000	Consultants (inventory, consultations, and financial analysis to estimate the cost to implement the plan)	\$75,000
Other (confirmed)	\$20,000	Meeting expenses	\$30,000
Other (TBD)	\$15,000	Data runs	No charge
Total	\$125,000	Printing	\$10,000
		Contingency	\$10,000
		Total	\$125,000

For Discuss