



NEWS RELEASE

NORTH SHORE MOVES FORWARD WITH COORDINATED APPROACH TO ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER, BC – JULY 28, 2022... Governments across the North Shore are partnering up to provide a coordinated approach to homelessness.

With the recent completion of the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI) report, the five North Shore governments – the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) – will begin to work closely together on priority actions intended to prevent homelessness, better serve those experiencing homelessness, and create pathways out of homelessness.

The endorsement of the NSHAI report by each North Shore jurisdiction reflects their commitment to increasing coordination and jointly pursuing initiatives and policies, as well as working with other levels of government on funding and capital investments to address this critical issue.

Priority actions include advocating for and focusing efforts on delivering:

- A single point of entry - enabling a centralized, coordinated way for individuals to access services and information;
- Housing First - a federally-endorsed model that promotes moving people rapidly into stable housing, where services and supports can be provided; and
- More emergency shelter, transition and supportive recovery housing, and permanent affordable and/or supportive housing.

Staff from the five jurisdictions will continue to work collaboratively to bring forward actions, initiatives, policies and projects to their elected officials for consideration, including:

- Improving communications and collaboration between each other and partners;
- New policies and protocols to improve on-the-ground communications, equity, and consistency in municipal and First Nations response; and,
- Data collection and sharing to understand current and future needs and support public awareness and dialogue.

Background

The NSHAI was launched in 2020 to address the rising numbers of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness on the North Shore— a concerning situation further exacerbated by the pandemic.

The resulting report was based on 18 months of research, discussion and planning by a cross-jurisdictional steering committee made up of elected officials and delegates from each North

Shore jurisdiction as well as Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, and local elected officials at the provincial and federal level.

The project served as a forum to bring together the various jurisdictions and partners with an interest in and responsibility for addressing homelessness. It has resulted in a shared understanding of the issues and policy and housing needs, the creation of a vision and principles to guide the work, and an inventory of all related work on the North Shore to enable greater collaboration.

The work dovetails with other existing regional North Shore initiatives that support equity deserving populations, including a regional poverty-reduction strategy and enhanced services for people experiencing homelessness, funded through provincial grants.

For more information or to read the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative report, visit cnv.org/NSHAI.

QUOTES

Mayor Linda Buchanan, City of North Vancouver

“Access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing is a fundamental human right we all share. But too many people are not having this right met. The pandemic lifted the veil on gaps in services and housing options that people in our community need. That’s why we came together to pursue solutions. We are moving forward and ensuring that no one is left behind. As a nurse, I look forward to exploring the possibility of a single point of entry service model.”

Mayor Mike Little, District of North Vancouver

“As a member of the task force steering committee, I was pleased to work together to find approaches to prevent homelessness on the North Shore, and to help those who are experiencing homelessness. While there are no quick answers, I am confident this task force made progress in identifying ways we can move forward. A significant gap remains in how we help those living in non-traditional housing such as RVs and caravans and, while not the focus of this task force, that needs to be considered. This is a complex situation that requires continued partnership efforts by all parties.”

Mayor Mary-Ann Booth, District of West Vancouver

“West Vancouver is not immune to homelessness, and we are seeing increasing numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness – both visible and hidden. And while homelessness is, in theory, the province’s responsibility to address, it is at the community level that we need to collaborate with our partners and drive the change that is needed. That is why West Vancouver is working with our North Shore partners on the Housing Needs Report, the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI). We have a spectrum of needs, from emergency shelter, transition and recovery housing to permanent affordable and supportive housing. In West Vancouver, we have made significant progress: the 298 rental apartments, including 11 below-market supportive units, at the Gateway Residences are almost finished, and we have just recently approved 167 below-market rental units at 2195 Gordon Avenue. In all areas, I will continue to collaborate on and advocate for solutions that prioritize dignity and ensure that services and facilities are inviting, inclusive and culturally safe.”

Sxwixwtn, Spokesperson and General Councillor, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) Nation

“Homelessness is a growing issue on the North Shore and some residents are struggling to maintain or find housing due to rising rents. This report outlines concrete actions that local municipalities and First Nations can take together to make housing more stable, accessible and affordable for vulnerable residents.”

Chief Jen Thomas, səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation

“Housing and homelessness continues to be an issue for Indigenous people, and we continue to see that here on the North Shore. These issues were amplified during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tsleil-Waututh is pleased to come together with the Squamish Nation and other North Shore municipalities to support people experiencing homelessness in our communities. This work is a step in the right direction and we are looking forward to continuing the good work.”

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