



“The Road Home”

North Shore Homelessness Task Force WORK PLAN 2008-2018

August 2008

Prepared by the Homelessness Task Force Advisory Sub-Committee

**North Shore Homelessness Task Force Members:
Membership**

City of North Vancouver, Community Planning
District of North Vancouver, Social Planning
District of West Vancouver, Social Services
Vancouver Coastal Health, Health Planning/Community Development
Canadian Mental Health Association
North Shore Salvation Army
Lookout Emergency Aid Society
Hollyburn Family Services Society
Harvest Project
North Shore Crisis Services Society
North Shore Women's Centre
Community Housing Action Coalition
North Shore RCMP
Soroptimist International of North & West Vancouver
North Vancouver Recreation Commission
John Braithwaite Community Centre
North Shore Neighbourhood House
Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, Community Development

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“The Road Home” North Shore Homelessness Task Force Work Plan

INTRODUCTION

Mandate:

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force Work Plan will assist the Task Force to fulfill its vision of a North Shore without homelessness.

Homelessness and the risk of becoming homeless continue to be a reality for people on the North Shore (the geographic area encompassed by the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, and the District of West Vancouver). Tackling homelessness is something that can only be done successfully if all sectors of the community are involved – all levels of government, business, non-profit services, and citizens.

The purpose of the North Shore Homelessness Work Plan 2008-2018 is to provide the North Shore Homelessness Task Force with a coordinated, partnership-based approach to addressing the issues related to eliminating and preventing homelessness on the North Shore. It complements the 2003 Regional Homelessness Plan (RHP) of the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and establishes goals for assisting the homeless on the North Shore based on local needs. It also recognizes and builds upon the services and facilities that already exist in the community to help and support those who find themselves without a place to live or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

The work plan serves as a road map, assisting the Task Force in helping people find stable, permanent housing solutions.

Section One: Current Situation

In this action plan, the term ‘homelessness’ is used to include the absolute homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. The absolute homeless refers to people who are living on the street, including back lanes, parks, alcoves, and so on, as well as people who do not have a place of their own and who stay with and move between friends and family “couch surfing”. People at risk of becoming homeless include those living in places that are not safe, secure or affordable and further marginalized people such as those with disabilities who may lose vital services that allow them to maintain their housing and therefore become homeless.

A count of homeless people, coordinated through the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, found that on the North Shore there were 44 people found homeless in 2002 and that by 2005 this had risen to 85 individuals (an increase of 93 per cent). By 2008 the figures of North Shore homeless had risen to 127¹. Of those counted in 2005, 66 reported that their last permanent home was in one of the North Shore municipalities. The preliminary reports for the 2008 Homeless Count indicate that there are 127 homeless persons on the North Shore: 60 living in shelters and 67 living on the streets. These figures were derived during a 24 hour “snap shot” and thought to be an undercount of the actual homeless. Service providers on the North Shore estimate that there are currently 230 persons who are homeless across the three North Shore municipalities².

**GVRD/Metro Vancouver Homeless Count
Number of Homeless Persons Counted on the North Shore
2002, 2005 and 2008**

Year of Homeless Count	Number Counted on the North Shore
2002	44 (24 sheltered/ 20 street)
2005	85 (58 sheltered / 27 street)
2008	127 (60 sheltered / 67 street)
2008 youth only³	37 (youth enumerated through NS schools)

¹ Only preliminary 2008 homeless count statistics were available at the time this work plan was written, therefore no detailed analysis for 2008 is included.

² This figure is based on the anecdotal knowledge of Homeless Outreach Workers on the North Shore

³ A HTF volunteer worked with the North and West Vancouver School District’s to examine the number of youth known to be homeless on count day. A total of 37 youth (up to age 18) were identified by teachers, principals and counsellors but were not included in the overall count.

In addition to the absolute homeless, there are now at least 4,740 renter households on the North Shore who spend 30 per cent or more of their income on shelter costs. This burden poses a threat for becoming homeless and is referred to as a “core need”. Within this group, 2540 households are “In Core Need and Paying at Least Half of their Pre-tax Income on Shelter” (INALH) (2005)⁴. On the North Shore there are 580 people on waitlists for subsidized housing (BC Housing), including 148 seniors and 99 persons with disabilities. Of those, approximately 203 (35 per cent) require one or more additional bedrooms⁵.

Renter Households in Core Need of Affordable Housing and In Core Need and Paying at Least Half of their Pre-tax Income on Shelter (INALH)

Municipality	Number of North Shore Households in Core need	Average rent for 2 BR⁶	Household income req'd for affordability	Median actual income Core need households	Median actual income INALH households
West Vancouver	885 490 INALH	\$1,598.00	\$63,920.00	\$19,125.00	\$18,970.00
District of North Vancouver	1415 675 INALH	\$1,032.00	\$41,280.00	\$22,619.00	\$20,524.00
City of North Vancouver	2640 1165 INALH	\$976.00	\$39,040.00	\$20,093.00	\$15,417.00

The 2005/06 vacancy rates point to a critical shortage of rental units on the North Shore: 0.1percent vacancy in West Vancouver, 0.3 percent vacancy in the District of North Vancouver, and 0.5 percent vacancy in the City of North Vancouver. In each municipality the vacancy rate has fallen since the 2005 Homeless Count.

There are now 2,302 subsidized units on the North Shore, intended for families, seniors, singles and Urban Native households. These include co-ops, facilities operated by non-profit organizations and units directly managed by BC Housing⁷. There is an estimated shortfall of at least 2540 below market housing units.

⁴McClanaghan and Associates. *Greater Vancouver: Affordable Housing Supply Analysis* , March 2006

⁵Statistics from BC housing, August 15, 2007

⁶Canadian Mortgage and Housing Commission 2005-6

⁷3 Ways to Home. GVRD, Nov. 2003, p. 47

Section Two: Work Plan

Introduction:

The goal of the Work Plan is to articulate a comprehensive and collaborative work plan for the North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) that will outline key pieces of work required over the next ten years (reviewed annually). The Work Plan is not meant to be exclusive; should other opportunities arise that are related to the goals of the Task Force, these should also be considered.

The initiatives within the Work Plan focus on six primary areas:

1. **Maintaining linkages to related initiatives and work**
2. **Gathering of information and evidence**
3. **Establishing and maintaining a communications strategy**
4. **Advocating for a continuum of housing**
5. **Advocating for a continuum of support services,**
6. **Advocating for adequate income levels and employment training**

Through coordinating the efforts of these six steps, the NSHTF hopes that the Work Plan will result in:

- ✓ **Improved understanding of homelessness and all the associated issues**
- ✓ **Enhanced community capacity around the issues of homelessness**
- ✓ **Better partnerships and alliances through the development of foundation material and information**
- ✓ **Greater ability to seize funding opportunities amongst Task Force partners to address issues related to shelter, affordable housing and support services**

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force will have responsibility for the overall management, implementation, coordination, and monitoring of this Work Plan. This plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

1. Linkages

Maintaining linkages with other organizations and stakeholders is critical in that homelessness is a multi-jurisdictional and multi-modal issue requiring a coordinated response.

The NSHTF will maintain linkages with homelessness-related committees and initiatives underway in other municipalities in Metro Vancouver, provincially and elsewhere. These partners include:

- District of North Vancouver
- District of West Vancouver
- City of North Vancouver
- North Shore Homelessness Protocol Committee
- Community Housing Action Coalition (CHAC), North Shore
- North Shore Youth Safe House Advisory Committee
- North Shore Substance Abuse Working Group
- Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, Metro Vancouver
- North Shore Food Security Action Network
- City of Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy
- City of Vancouver Homelessness Action Plan
- Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy
- Metro Vancouver Regional Homelessness Plan
- Shelter Net B.C. “Working together to provide suitable shelter for all”

This Work Plan recognizes that partnerships currently exist with organizations and agencies in the community. The establishment of new partnerships will be sought within groups and sectors that are supportive of the goals to eliminate homelessness on the North Shore such as:

- Business community
- Faith community
- Youth Service Provider Coalition
- Inter-Agency Network
- North Shore Services to Seniors Coalition
- Philanthropic organizations

2. Gathering Information and Evidence

Gathering information on an ongoing basis is important in order to know the best practices in addressing homelessness and to ensure that any success in decreasing homelessness is recorded, recognized and celebrated. It is also important to record any increases in homelessness in order to share that information with stakeholders to ensure that if possible, extra resources are added.

The Work Plan will require up-to-date information and evidence to be gathered and shared. Actions in this area include:

- a. Relevant information will be gathered on an ad-hoc basis and forwarded to the NSHTF administrative assistant who will develop and maintain an electronic **NSHTF Homelessness Repository**. Information stored will be available to all HTF members.
- b. Participation in the Metro Vancouver **Homeless Count** will also be the responsibility of the NSHTF or a sub group of the NSHTF. This is a count of the number of people who are living without permanent shelter within Metro Vancouver including the North shore. The count is conducted every three years and all participating communities receive a report that documents the figures and trends. The NSHTF will incorporate the 2008 report, expected in October 2008, into the NSHTF Repository.
- c. **Census data** is another source of valuable information for the NSHTF. The Canadian Census is conducted every 5 years, the last one being 2006. Fact sheets on each community are available from Statistics Canada and these will be incorporated into the NSHTF Repository by NSHTF members from the District of North Vancouver.

3. Communications Strategy

A key component of the Work Plan is to ensure good communication amongst members of the NSHTF, as well as the larger community, including people who are homeless.

The following list includes ways in which communication will be maintained (pending funding and staff resources):

- a. **Distribution List** will include NSHTF members and non-members who express an interest in receiving minutes and other key documents.
- b. A page on a **Website** will be created to house the NSHTF minutes, Terms of Reference, Work Plan and any bulletins (host agency/organization for site to be determined). Each agency and municipality will have links to this page on their own websites. It will be the responsibility of the NSHTF to ensure the website information is up to date and will be a standing item at meetings.
- c. A semi-annual **Newsletter** from the NSHTF will be created and disseminated to local Councils, agencies and press. A template will be created by the administrative assistant; NSHTF members will be responsible for submitting content information to the administrative assistant and Chair.
- d. A North Shore **Homelessness Resource Card** will be created and updated as needed. The card will contain important contact information to be distributed to those who are homeless.
- e. **Homelessness Action Week** planning will be the responsibility of the NSHTF or a sub group of the NSHTF. Examples of possible events include a Community Forum, a 'Connect Day', presentations to Municipal Councils and/or a press release or a presentation to a specific group such as the Chamber of Commerce. Details to be determined by the committee annually.

- f. **Press releases** related to homelessness (at the discretion of the current Chair in consultation with the members).
- g. **Advocacy letters** on behalf of the NSHTF (at the discretion of the current Chair in consultation with the members).
- h. **Endorsement of reports** by NSHTF.
- i. **Progress reports** on the achievement of the plan will be completed on an annual basis and posted on the NSHTF Action Plan webpage.

4. Advocacy for a Continuum of Housing

The NSHTF must focus on work that include activities that advocate for and support the inclusion of accessible and affordable housing across the continuum including emergency shelters, transition houses, short and long term supportive housing and affordable housing. Without housing, homelessness will never end. The following are some of the initial thoughts put forth by the NSHTF on how to address the needs associated with the continuum of housing.

- a. Supporting a central **“housing board”** for landlords and prospective tenants to advertise. The ‘housing board’ will include a link to The Housing Registry which has a list of affordable housing options through BC Housing, Non-Profits and Housing Co-ops, and how to apply to each.
- b. Work for an **increase in rental stock**, particularly below market (subsidized) rental stock, across the North Shore.

In addition to these recommendations, the NSHTF is also closely following recommendations that were submitted by the Housing Sub Committee of VCH’s Mental Health and Addiction Operational Review. The recommendations represent an array of activities meant to address the needs associated with the development of a comprehensive mental health & addictions housing continuum for the North Shore.

- a. Designate a **Housing Lead at VCH** that will focus on working with non-profit, the private and public sector to advocate for and help to create affordable housing on the North Shore.
- b. Form a task group to focus on the **housing needs of older adults**.
- c. Invest in providing **enhanced support to landlords** to support clients in existing housing.
- d. Develop an **informational management system** that allows for greater capacity to gather and capture information related to the needs found along the housing continuum which will assist stakeholders in identifying needs and gaps etc.

5. Advocacy for a Continuum of Support Services⁸

A continuum of support services are required in order to address issues related to homelessness on the North Shore. Support services related to mental health, addictions, health services, employment, and food security, among others, are all required. These services are needed to prevent homelessness and to assist those who have become homeless. The following list provides more detail on what types

⁸ A list of definitions and current services in the ‘Continuum of Support Services Section’ are located in Appendix 2.

of services the Task Force feels are necessary and needed in order to address the continuum of support service needs across the North Shore.

Mental Health

There is a need for a **continuum of mental health services** from bio-psycho-social rehabilitation to relapse prevention and intervention to support for the chronically ill.

Addictions

There is a need for a **continuum of addiction services** from harm reduction to abstinence, from detoxification to residential treatment and long term follow-up. Connections with the Substance Abuse Working Group is integral in this component of the work plan as this committee has a work plan and 'four pillar' strategy that mirrors the needs identified above.

Health Services

There is a **need for primary and multi-disciplinary health care services at locations where those who are homeless tend to congregate**. Outreach health services are needed immediately and likely ongoing, with the potential long term need for strategically located **Community Health Centres (CHC)** that offer comprehensive and interdisciplinary primary health care services including "house calls" – on the street and elsewhere. The outreach and CHC services should encompass the following:

- a. Low threshold (easily accessible) services that are flexible, inclusive and located close to where services are needed (i.e. drop-in, no medical card needed, accessible location and hours).
- b. Multiple disciplines that can assist persons to manage social issues in tandem with health concerns (e.g. nursing, social work, addiction counselling, mental health support and occupational therapy).
- c. Comprehensive outreach services to include: wound care, foot care, medication management, information and referral.
- d. Coordinated discharge planning/continuum of care from ER and hospital to community/shelter, from shelter to transition or permanent housing and long term follow-up.
- e. Accessible/not-for-profit dental services with a dentist and hygienists.

Integrated Case Management.

In order to ensure that the hardest to house clients are helped, an **integrated case management model** for homeless representing members from Vancouver Coastal Health, the Ministry of Income and Employment Assistance, the Shelters and other practitioners will be explored for both youth and adult clients.

Food Security⁹

Food is a more flexible component of a household budget compared to housing costs therefore the quality and/or quantity of food eaten suffers when housing is unaffordable. The following are key areas of need in this category:

- a. Advocate for community organizations to **address food insecurity through resources and collaboration**. Work to improve emergency food services such as meal programs and food banks.
- b. Build community food security through capacity building initiatives such as **community gardens, community cooking programs, and food recovery and distribution**. Advocate for organizations and governments to implement policies and best practices that increase the access, availability and affordability of healthy foods (especially locally grown food). Advocate for collaboration in equipping kitchen facilities and making facilities available.

Other

In addition to the needs in the continuum of support services identified above, there are other needs that do not necessarily fit into the identified categories. These include **access to showers, laundry and washrooms facilities as well as access to lockers, computers and telephone services for the homeless**.

In addition to these recommendations, the NSHTF is also closely following recommendations that were submitted by the Addictions Sub Committee of VCH's Mental Health and Addiction Operational Review. The recommendations represent an array of activities meant to address the mental health and addictions housing continuum across the North Shore.

- a. **Integrate Stepping Stones and West Coast Alternatives Society** services to enhance services to those with addictions and work toward reducing the overall costs as a result of the integration
- b. Continue to support the '**Addictions Service Network**' to identify gaps in addiction services on the North Shore
- c. Raise the necessary funds required to **purchase and operate a support recovery house** for the North Shore

6. Advocacy for Adequate Income and Employment Training Programs:

The NSHTF will focus on activities that work towards establishing better income levels for persons who are employed as well as for those that are unemployed or underemployed. Proposed activities include:

- a. **Advocate for the provincial government to increase levels of income assistance by 10 percent a year until the cost of living levels established by SPARC BC are reached**. This in turn will ensure that the benefits received by a citizen will reflect the actual minimum cost of living in BC, adjusted annually for inflation.

⁹ Food security is a "Model Core Program for Public Health" and a required function of Health Authorities. VCH is coordinating this on the North Shore via the North Shore Food Action Network.

- b. Advocate for the elimination of the mandatory current three-week waiting period for Income Assistance.**
- c. **Restoration of the earnings exemption** for persons receiving temporary welfare benefits in order to facilitate connections to paid work.
- d. **Increased child care subsidy rates** to cover actual costs of childcare provided by professionally trained staff.
- e. Enhanced medical benefits to be extended to all Income Assistance recipients to **ensure that they can access dental and optical care.**

There is also a need to look more closely at the possibility of an expansion of employment training programs for people who are unemployed and homeless. Helping marginalized people learn employment skills is critical to preventing the cycle of poverty and homelessness from continuing. Proposed activities that the NSHTF may consider include:

- a. Explore improved connections with existing employment training programs and investigate ways in which programs targeted at the chronically unemployed homeless can be developed in partnership with shelter staff and homeless outreach workers etc.

Section Three: Conclusion

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force **10 year Work Plan's** primary purpose is to help guide the work of the Task Force to address the issues and root causes of homelessness and to provide direction on what role the Task Force can take in working toward ending homelessness on the North Shore. The six primary areas that the Task Force is focusing on in the Work Plan are as follows:

1. Maintaining linkages to related initiatives and work
2. Gathering of information and evidence
3. Establishing and maintaining a communications strategy
4. Advocating for a continuum of housing
5. Advocating for a continuum of support services,
6. Advocating for adequate income levels and employment training

These six work areas are the primary focus of activity for the Task Force and have been approved by the committee as activities which will make a significant difference in addressing the root causes of homeless and assisting with interventions that help people become housed and stabilized. The North Shore Homeless Task Force will focus on these work areas in their planning over the next 10 years and will review and evaluate the effectiveness of the work plan annually.



Appendix One:

North Shore Homelessness Task Force Terms of Reference

Introduction

These revised Terms of Reference (TOR) were adopted by the North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) at its September 20, 2007, meeting.

Definition of Homelessness

The term 'homelessness' is used to include the absolute homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless, as defined in the City of Vancouver's June 2005 Homeless Action Plan. The absolute homeless are people living on the street, in back lanes, parks, alcoves, and so on; and people who do not have a place of their own who stay with and move between friends and family. People at risk of becoming homeless include those living in places which are not safe, secure or affordable; and people such as those with disabilities who lose services that allow them to maintain their housing.

Formation, Commitment, Vision, Goal

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force was formed in 1998 to address homelessness and issues related to homelessness on the North Shore, and it continues to be committed to doing so. Its vision is a North Shore without homelessness. Its goal is to eliminate and prevent homelessness on the North Shore (the geographic area encompassed by the City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, and the District of West Vancouver).

Rationale for the Task Force

Homelessness continues to be a reality on the North Shore and a pressing issue that requires ongoing action. The NSHTF was formed to provide coordinated, collaborative leadership and action on this issue, and it is important and appropriate that one North Shore-wide entity continue to provide this collaborative leadership and coordinated action in relation to homelessness. Since homelessness is a systemic issue, the NSHTF will continue to exist as long as it is considered necessary.

The NSHTF's Approach to Homelessness

The NSHTF has adopted a two-pronged approach to homelessness on the North Shore:

1. Address the root causes of homelessness
2. Establish and maintain a continuum of housing and support services for the homeless

Functions & Purposes

The NSHTF has the following functions and purposes:

1. To serve as the one North Shore wide entity whose focus is homelessness on the North Shore
2. To provide collaborative leadership in relationship to homelessness and to advocate and lobby for the homeless on the North Shore
3. To pool the resources, expertise, and knowledge of all those who wish to play a role in addressing homelessness on the North Shore
4. To develop, adopt, implement, monitor, maintain, and promote a long term North Shore Homelessness Work Plan
5. To identify and prioritize program and service gaps for the homeless people on the North Shore and coordinate, support, and advocate for actions to fill these gaps
6. To develop and maintain networking and a communication system among members of the Task Force and others to take advantage, in a timely manner, of funding, policy, and other opportunities that arise that can assist the homeless on the North Shore, and to collectively address cuts to or deterioration of existing programs and services for the homeless people on the North Shore
7. To collect, house, generate, share, and disseminate information and statistics on homelessness on the North Shore
8. To educate and engage the public, politicians, all levels of government, and the North Shore community in general on all aspects of and issues related to homelessness on the North Shore
9. To work in collaboration with other homelessness initiatives in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere, and liaise with other related initiatives, that have an impact on homelessness on the North Shore
10. To seek endorsement of and administrative and operating resources and funding from its members, private and public institutions, levels of government, and other appropriate sources on the North Shore and elsewhere

Scope and Limitations

The NSHTF has the following scope and limitations:

1. The NSHTF will support but not provide programs and services to the homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless on the North Shore
2. The NSHTF will support but not involve itself in the day-to-day operations of services and programs provided to the homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless or the assessment of those programs and services
3. The NSHTF will support but not organize activities or events to raise funds for the provision of programs and services for homeless people
4. The NSHTF may hire consultants and other temporary assistance to carry out its functions as it sees fit

Structure and Operation of the NSHTF:

The North Shore Homelessness Work Plan

- The NSHTF will develop, adopt and seek the appropriate endorsement of a 10 Year North Shore Homelessness Work Plan to provide all interested parties with a coordinated and focused approach to addressing homelessness across the North Shore
- The NSHTF is responsible for promoting, monitoring, providing regular progress reports on, and updating the plan on a regular basis

NSHTF Annual Work Plan

- The NSHTF will develop an annual work plan to focus and guide its work each year, based on the 10 Year North Shore Homelessness Work Plan
- The annual work plan will set out its goals and objectives for the year, the activities it will undertake to achieve them, who will be responsible for achieving them within what time frame, and what resources will be required

NSHTF Annual Operating & Funding Plan

- The NSHTF may develop an annual operating and funding plan for each year, based on the NSHTF Annual Work Plan. Depends on funding availability
- The annual operating and funding plan may set out how the Task Force intends to organize its operations in the coming year, the funding and other resources it requires to function and achieve its annual work plan, and the sources of these funds and other resources

NSHTF Terms of Reference

- The NSHTF will maintain an up-to-date Terms of Reference to guide its structure and operations
- The Terms of Reference will set out the vision, goal, rationale, approach, functions and purposes, and limitations of the Task Force, and how it is structured and operates

Membership

- Membership in the NSHTF is voluntary and open to any individual, private organization, not-for-profit organization, or public agency or institution who supports the North Shore Homelessness Action Plan, and is committed to working collaboratively and actively to address the issue of homelessness on the North Shore
- By definition a task force is action oriented and it is expected that all NSHTF members will play an active role in ensuring the task force is able to accomplish its goals and achieve the results it is aiming for on behalf of the homeless on the North Shore and the North Shore community in general
- Those wishing to become a member of or withdraw their membership in the Task Force may do so by contacting the NSHTF Chair
- Organizations, agencies, and institutions who wish to become and maintain membership in the Task Force may appoint a representative to attend task

force meetings and one or more representatives to participate on one or more working groups

Meetings of the Task Force

- The Task Force meets as a group on the North Shore for a morning on the third Thursday of January, April, July, and October, and decides to meet as a group in addition to these set meeting dates as appropriate
- The general purpose and agendas of the Task Force meetings is to determine the status of homelessness on the North Shore, the North Shore Homelessness Work Plan, the Task Force's current year's Annual Work Plan, and the Task Force's current year's Annual Operating & Funding Plan, to have the working groups provide a status report on their activities, and make any adjustments and revisions as necessary to these items and the structure and operations of the Task Force
- The additional focus of the October meeting is to adopt the Task Force's coming year's Annual Work Plan, the Task Force's coming year's Annual Operating & Funding Plan, and to make any adjustments to its Terms of Reference for the coming year

Working Groups

- The majority of the work of the Task Force is carried out by working groups
- In general, the working groups will be established at the meetings of the Task Force
- There may be times when working groups are formed to address immediate issues in a timely manner between meetings of the Task Force
- The working groups will meet and interact as they see fit to accomplish their goals and complete their assigned tasks
- The working groups will provide a written status report on their progress in MS Word as an e-mail attachment to the Task Force Chair 14 calendar days prior to each Task Force meeting

Chair of the Task Force

- The overall coordination of the Task Force and the setting of the agenda, organizing, chairing of Task Force meetings, and ensuring that Task Force meeting minutes are taken and distributed to Task Force members will be responsibility of the Chair of the Task Force
- The Chair of the Task Force will also be the designated spokesperson for the Task Force
- The Chair of the Task Force has the ability to delegate some of their responsibilities to other Task Force members from time to time as they see fit

Administrative Support for the Task Force

- Administrative support for the Task Force will be determined annually
- The purpose of the administrative support is to assist the Task Force Chair in their duties

APPENDIX TWO: DEFINITIONS

Overview of Definitions

Adequate Income:

Income sufficient to cover cost of food, clothing, household supplies, personal care, transportation, shelter, and child care expenses.

Affordable Housing:

- Housing which costs no more than 30 percent of a households' pre-tax income, provided that it is appropriate, in good repair, and has secure tenancy.¹⁰
- Families spending more than 30 percent and/or living in housing that fails to meet these criteria are said to be in **core housing need**.
- Families spending more than 50 percent of their pre-tax income on shelter are called **INALH** (In Core Need and Paying at Least Half of their Income on Housing) and are at risk of homelessness.

Appropriate Housing:

Includes the following:

The housing should be in good repair with no health hazards and there should be sufficient bedrooms so that:

- there shall be no more than 2 or less than 1 person per bedroom
- Spouses and couples share a bedroom
- Parents do not share a bedroom with children
- Dependents aged 18 or more do not share a bedroom
- Dependents aged 5 or more of opposite sex do not share a bedroom

Continuum of Support Services:

A continuum of support services is defined as an interconnected system of services that provides people with the support that meets their immediate and personal needs over time. As identified above, there is a close relationship between many support services and different types of housing provided under the continuum of housing.

Emergency Shelter Services:

Emergency shelters, safe houses, and transition houses are defined as housing of last resort for those who have no other options¹¹. These facilities provide temporary housing and the maximum length of stay at one of these facilities is usually 30 days

¹⁰This technical definition applies, for our purposes, to renters in the lower half of the Lower Mainland income spectrum. High income renters/owners can spend a larger percentage of their income on housing while still able to afford necessities, and even have disposable income. If their financial situation deteriorates, they still have an asset they can sell.

¹¹ City of Vancouver June 2005 Homeless Action Plan

and are provided free of charge. The expectation is that those who make use of one of these facilities will eventually move along to another suitable form of housing.

Includes the following:

- Women's Emergency Shelters: Typically, a short term program (30 days) that provides shelter, personal necessities and support to women and women with children who are homeless. Women who access Emergency Shelters may be escaping abuse, living on the street, or coming from a mixed-gender homeless shelter.
- Homeless Shelters: Homeless shelters are temporary residences for homeless people. Usually located in urban neighborhoods, they are typically open to anyone, without regard to the reason for need. Some shelters limit their clientele by gender or age. There are daytime-only homeless shelters that provide a place to stay for people who cannot stay inside at their night-time sleeping shelter during the day.
- Youth Safe Houses: Emergency shelter for young people ages 14-18 with 24/7 services available with the goal of either reuniting the youth with family or finding alternate safe and appropriate living space in the community.

Eviction Prevention Services:

Services and resources extended to tenants in the event of eviction, when eviction threatens, or for other eviction-related issues. Provides information to tenants and agencies about their rights and responsibilities.

Family Counselling and Support Services:

Services which:

- help families stay together peacefully (requiring only one domicile)
- help people manage on their income, avoiding eviction
- help with substance abuse problems of family members

Food Security:

The long-term goal of community food security is to create a supportive environment where people can easily make healthy food choices. Community food security exists when people are able to access affordable, nutritious food through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy food choices and community self-reliance. (Hamm and Bellows, 2003). Food security includes being able to make a living by growing and producing food in ways that protect and support both the land, sea and the food producers. It ensures that there will be healthy food for our children's children.

Health Services:

The NSHTF recognizes housing and homelessness are determinants of health, as are education, employment, income, adequate nutrition, social supports, social networks and access to health care services. The 2005 GVRD homeless count revealed that 75 per cent of those counted reported having one or more health condition. Those who were street homeless were more likely to report more than one

health concern. The incidence of reported health conditions in 2005 shows an increase when compared to the 2002 homeless count, especially in the area of addictions.

Health status can also be correlated with an individual's history of homelessness. Although those who are chronically homeless make-up approximately ten percent of the homeless population, they account for a disproportionately larger demand for shelter beds and health care services in comparison to those who are homeless for a transient period of a few weeks or months. The latter group of homeless tends to be relatively healthy, whereas those who are chronically homeless have a high incidence of severe mental illness, substance abuse, and medical conditions.

Health conditions related to homelessness:

Patterns of illness differentiate between homeless men, women, youth, seniors, new immigrants and mothers with children. That being said, there are known health conditions and concerns that are common among those who experience homelessness:

- Men, women and youth who are homeless are all at risk for injury and trauma, especially physical and sexual assault.
- Early mortality
- Sleep deprivation and exhaustion
- Mental illness, substance abuse
- Infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections.
- Chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, chronic pulmonary disease (COPD), seizures and musculoskeletal disorders are often poorly managed or go undiagnosed altogether among the homeless.
- Foot problems including frostbite, infections and severe blisters are common.
- Skin problems, such as sunburn, scabies, head lice, body lice and bed bugs.
- A lack of dental care is prevalent among the homeless, as are nutritional deficiencies.
- Homeless women with children are at particular risk for malnutrition as they may forego food in order to feed their children.
- Women who are homeless often have limited means to access birth control methods and subsequently little control over the timing and circumstances surrounding conception.

Independent Affordable Housing:

Independent affordable housing refers to permanent housing that is affordable to households with low and modest incomes, and who can live independently in the community with little or no support services¹².

¹² City of Vancouver June 2005 Homeless Action Plan

Life Skills Related to Employment & Income:

Continuum of services to assist people with:

- writing resumes
- completing job applications
- employment planning
- conducting job searches
- job interview skills
- job training
- budgeting

Mental Health, Addiction and Abuse Prevention Services:

Mental health services: Services that support a state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life.

Addiction services: Services that address a compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance (as heroin, nicotine, or alcohol) characterized by tolerance and by well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal.

Adult Abuse and Neglect Prevention Services: Adults who are abused, neglected and self-neglected and are unable to seek support and assistance on their own due to:

- Restraint
- Physical or mental limitation or illness
- Disease
- Injury
- Other conditions that affect their ability to make decisions about the abuse and neglect.

Outreach Services: Community based services that attempt to reach those who cannot or do not access supports and services elsewhere. Outreach interventions are typically focused on maintaining personal safety and wellbeing by ensuring basic needs are met as well as mental and physical health. Outreach services can reach people in their homes, on the street, or in strategic locations where those in need tend to congregate.

Rental Assistance Programs:

Subsidies that enable households to obtain or remain in appropriate dwelling units despite rents that exceed what is defined as affordable.

Supportive Housing:

Supportive housing is affordable housing that is linked to support services that will assist individuals to thrive in the community. The support may be temporary or ongoing and could include the development of life skills, training and support with housekeeping, meal preparation, banking support, budget management, and access to medical care, medication management counseling, referrals, crisis response and

intervention. Some support services are provided on-site, while other services may be available at other locations within the community. Supportive housing may be located in purpose-built dedicated buildings or in scattered site apartments.

Transitional Housing:

Transitional housing is affordable housing where people can remain for a limited period of time (for example, 30 days to 2-3 years). The expectation is that residents will move to permanent housing once their living situation is stabilized. Support services are generally provided to help people develop skills and acquire the resources needed to achieve independence.

APPENDIX THREE: STATISTICS

Summary Statistics for the North Shore (2007)

North Shore Shelter:

The shelter, as it known to most, has several components to it that include the North Shore Adult Shelter, the Cold Wet Weather Shelter, an Extreme Wet Weather Response Shelter and the Transitional Housing Unit. The North Shore Adult shelter is a minimal barrier shelter that can house 25 male or female adults. It is a goal orientated program where clients supported by qualified caring staff set achievable targets to improve their lives by choosing healthier lifestyles, improving life skills and securing appropriate and affordable housing. The Cold Wet Weather Shelter is a 20 bed unit that is open from Oct 15th to March 31st (approx) and provides shelter during the extreme cold weather period.

In 2005 the shelter provided 12,499 bed nights at an occupancy rate of over 98 percent, serving 1,183 individuals. The number of people turned away in 2005 was 856 (mostly due to the shelter being full)

Residents of the Shelter reported the following reasons for being homeless:

- Mental Illness: 32%
- Addiction: 23%
- Dual diagnosis (mental health and addiction):10%
- Poverty/ lack of housing: 28%

North Shore Youth Safe House:

Closed in 2006, but reopened in December of 2007, the Safe House caters to youth aged 13 to 18 who are homeless. The Youth Safe House accepts referrals from other jurisdictions as well as from the North Shore. During the time the Safe House was open previously (2001 to 2006) the average age of youth admitted was 17 and the average length of stay was about 7 days. The Safe House received a total of 2854 calls and of those, 1041 were admitted. Of that total number, 554 calls were from North Shore youth in crisis however only 272 showed for a stay. An additional 120 North Shore youth were turned away during the operation of the safe house. Reasons for referral included substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence or family breakdown.

More recent statistical information will be made available now that the Safe House is open again. Since the Safe house reopened in December 2007, there have been 32 youth who have stayed, with 16 years being the average age and the 3.5 days being the length of stay.

Sage House:

Sage House, run by the North Shore Crisis Services Society, is a transition house for women and children who are victims of any of the various forms of abuse and can no longer stay in their homes because of safety issues. Women may reside at SAGE for up to 30 days, longer if necessary. The program is staffed 24/7 and staff provide crisis intervention, advocacy, support and referrals. The following represent the statistics for the period April 1, 2006 - March 31, 2007:

- Crisis Calls: 1014
- Number of women resided in house: 139
- Number of children resided in house with their mother's: 90
- Average length of stay : 21 days
- Number of women turned away: 412

Reasons for turning away:

- Insufficient or no space: 111
- Special Needs which were unable to support: not stabilized and no mental health support, active substance abuse, health issues: 117
- Accommodation needed only: 88
- Inappropriate (usually have been in before and have serious communal living issues, or unable to follow house rules such as abide by curfew, no smoking, no men dropping off at the house): 103
- No shows/changed their mind: 70

Hope's Place:

A transitional housing program that provides accommodation in two fully furnished two bedroom suites. Each suite can accommodate up to 4 family members. Referrals are accepted from Sage House and other Lower Mainland transition houses although preference is given to North Shore residents.

Harvest Project:

Harvest Project is a registered charity on the North Shore that provides food, clothing and client care services to individuals and families at risk of homelessness. They currently list over 500 active clients (not including family members) facing serious life challenges and transition. While providing them with food and clothing during this period, the clear focus is to work with them to set goals, direct them to the appropriate support services or agencies and assist them in the process of rebuilding their lives. Harvest Project provides a hand up.

In 2007, Harvest Project received over 4,300 client visits for services equating to over 2,400 client care appointment hours, \$38,000 worth of job ready clothing and \$491,000 worth of food.

Salvation Army:

The Salvation Army provides comfort and assistance to persons in need (including those who are homeless), have an addiction, have a mental or physical disability, or have inadequate income. Their Homeless Outreach Program which is funded by the City of North Vancouver initiates first contact, and ascertains people's needs in order to connect them with available resources.

The Salvation Army works with over 100 people a month, a mix of old and new clients. Of those assisted, 75 percent of the clients have addictions, 50 percent are homeless, and 90 percent of the homeless also have an addiction.

APPENDIX FOUR: INVENTORY

Inventory of Existing Services for the North Shore

Emergency Shelter Services & Drop In Centres

- North Shore Youth Safe House
- North Shore Shelter (Lookout)
- Sage House
- Harvest Project

Supportive & Transitional Housing Services:

- North Shore Youth Transition Beds
- Hopes Place
- North Shore Housing Centre

Homelessness Prevention Outreach Initiatives:

Currently there are three primary outreach services available to homeless individuals on the North Shore:

- Lookout Emergency Aid Society's Homeless Outreach Worker
 - The Homeless Outreach Worker funded by the provincial government at the Lookout Emergency Shelter works with clients who reside in the shelter and require external interventions and works with individuals not accessing the shelter.
 - The position is 1.4 FTEs
 - The position is available for members of the public and by-laws/Parks/RCMP to access for assistance but it is the agency and the provincial funders that determine the priorities.
- Canadian Mental Health Association: North and West Vancouver Branch Income Outreach Program
 - The Income Outreach Worker funded by the provincial government with Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) aims to assist homeless people who are not on Income Assistance to apply for welfare and find accommodation.
 - The Income Outreach Worker can fast-track those in need to the Ministry for Employment and Income Assistance, even if the person does not have identification and the other requirements.
- Salvation Army Homeless Outreach Prevention Program
 - The function of Salvation Army's Homeless Outreach Program, funded by the City of North Vancouver, is to reach out to

homeless individuals not in the shelter and facilitate a transition into more appropriate housing, with a strong emphasis on rehabilitation programs.

Formal Mental Health Services provided by VCH:

Assessment and Treatment Services (VCH) - An interdisciplinary team providing professional mental health treatment services to individuals 19 years of age and older with psychiatric and psychosocial problems. Treatment services include group and individual therapy, as well as psychopharmacology when indicated.

Community Psychiatric Services (VCH) - CPS provides specialized service for individuals 19 years of age and older who are developing or have a serious persistent mental illness, such as schizophrenia and affective psychosis. The team provides assertive community outreach, community residential program, family management, psycho-social rehab and community living support workers.

Older Adult Mental Health - Provides specialized outreach assessment and treatment of seniors ages 70 and over with complex age-related mental health problems that would benefit from an interdisciplinary team approach. These problems include dementia, severe and persistent mental illness with complicating age-related decline, depression and anxiety and delusional disorders. Offers support and psycho-educational services to families and caregivers, and education and training to health care providers.

Abuse and Neglect Program - This Program receives reports, provides consultation and coordinates responses to adults who are abused, neglected and self-neglected and are unable to seek support and assistance on their own due to restraint, physical or mental limitation or illness, disease, injury or other conditions that affect their ability to make decisions about the abuse and neglect.

Stepping Stones Addiction Day Program – Provides an 8-week outpatient treatment program for adults with addiction issues.

Adult Central Triage - Centralized screening and triage service for all requests made by General Practitioner/Care Providers for Community Mental Health Services for their patients.

Bridge Program - Located at LGH, this Program provides short-term crisis intervention and/or “bridging” of patients who are awaiting entry to a program of a longer duration.

Acute Services (provided by VCH):

Inpatient Unit (A2) Lions Gate Hospital - Provides assessment and treatment to individuals with an acute or severe psychiatric illness.

Transition Unit - the Transition Program provides an environment and resources that assist patients to continue working towards their overall goal of reaching an optimal level of functioning in the community.

Magnolia House - A short-term crisis intervention, community based facility, of the Acute Psychiatric Services. The mandate is to provide rapid, urgent, voluntary, short stay, residential placement and treatment for individuals with psychiatric diagnoses, and in crises. Provide a safe, supportive environment where clients will have the opportunity to discuss their current needs and problems, as well as respite from environmental stressors.

Psychiatric Emergency Program – Provides access to prompt psychiatric nursing assessments through the Emergency Department at LGH

Community Psychiatric Services – outreach worker (?FTE), attends the North Shore Shelter once per week to assess, refer, assist to apply for PWD, review medications

Youth Outreach Addiction Worker at Youth Safe House, one time per week, assists in streamlining referrals to addiction services for the youth in the house.

Community Services (provided by local non-profits):

BC Schizophrenia Society - The Centre provides personal support and information on major mental illnesses - schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety disorders and eating disorders. They also provide a wide range of programs, plus education and information for schools and the general public.

Canadian Mental Health Association - CMHA takes a holistic perspective to providing programs and services and endeavors to place the person participating in services at the centre of all that they do. As guiding principles, they believe that all people are entitled to regular work, safe and affordable housing, education and a reasonable income.

West Coast Alternatives - Provides addiction counseling to adults and families, including the Kids FIRST (Families in Recovery Staying Together) program. Offers workshops to help parents to address potential drug-related problems affecting their children.

Other Detox and rehabilitation services:

- Avalon Women's Centre
- So-Sah-Latch Health and Family Centre
- Stepping Stones Addiction Day Program
- Self-help groups operating on the North Shore

Current Health Services:

- VCH Home Health (nurse, PT, OT) and Home Support. Includes case management and assessment for assisted living and residential care, for those who meet the criteria.
- Centre for Disease Control (CDC) Nurse
- Hepatitis/Liver Program at Lions Gate Hospital
- TB Testing
- Flu shots/clinics – outreach at shelter and food bank
- Youth Clinics
- Mobile Mammogram Clinic at North Shore Neighbourhood House
- Stroke Recovery Group – North Shore Neighbourhood House
- Outreach Nurse at North Shore Food Bank once per week
- Community Nurse Practitioner
- Outreach Foot Clinic (quarterly)

Employment, Income & Life Skills:

Employment:

- CMHA North & West Vancouver Branch - ACHIEVE Planning and Employment Service assists and supports adults with disabilities to access the labour market in a volunteer, part-time or full-time capacity
- Harvest Project - Assists job seekers with resume creation and phone/fax/photocopying services.
- IAM Cares Society - Provides case management services designed to assist persons with a disability to prepare for, obtain and keep employment or to become self employed
- One-stop Career Shop – Drop-in resource centre for male and female jobseekers aged 15-30.

Income:

Other than paid employment, income sources for those who are eligible are typically from Government (Federal or Provincial) or private pensions.

- Canada Pension Plan (CPP) disability or retirement pension.
- Old Age Security for seniors
- Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors
- Provincial:
 - Income Assistance “welfare”, including disability benefits, through the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance.
 - Employment Insurance
- Other:
 - Long Term Disability (LTD) income through employer private extended benefits plans.
 - Private/Municipal Pension Plan
 - Workers Compensation pension, short and long terms, for persons who have been injured at work.

Life Skills:

- Moving Forward - A Community Assistance Program for women who face multiple barriers and challenges to achieving self-reliance and employment. The program offers individual counseling, coaching, support, life planning and referrals to community resources.
- Harvest Project - Offers regular workshops in a variety of essential skills including budgeting, interview skills, stress management, and cooking on a budget.

Housing Information Services:

- Harvest Project - Provides clients with information on other community resources, such as affordable housing, detoxification centres & recovery programs. Hosts a housing board with information provided by the Canadian Mental Health Association
- Community Housing Action Committee (CHAC) – Goal is to help develop a complete community on the North Shore by addressing the lack of affordable and appropriate housing.
- Seniors One-Stop Information – The service provides telephone and in-person information to seniors on accessing community resources including housing.
- BC Housing – develops, manages and administers a wide range of subsidized housing options www.bchousing.org

Food Security:

- The North Shore outlet of the Greater Vancouver Food Bank operates Wednesdays from 11:00 – 1:00 at the North Shore Neighbourhood House
- Food is also distributed by the Harvest Project, the North Shore Shelter and Salvation Army in various ways.

Employment Assistance:

- One Stop Career Shop is the first stop for 15-30 year an assessment centre for 15-30 year olds.
- Training Innovations is a “triage service” that refers to Job Search supports, Multicultural Society's employment program, upgrading programs, etc.
- Compass is a Federal program that serves job ready people and offers a full time four week long program.
- Salvation Army trains kitchen workers through its Eat Good Do Good Cuisine program.
- North Shore Women's Centre will help with resumes, job search and have computers available to use on-site.

Agencies serving First Nations people:

- Eslha7an Employment and Training Centre provides general academic upgrading, youth-targeted services and literacy-building skills
- Stitsma Employment Centre: helps its clients with job searches, job training, job-related transportation and funding

- Tsleil Waututh Nation children of Takay-Wolf Clan – for people needing Income Assistance.

Eviction Prevention Services:

- TRAC – Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre, based in Vancouver, provides information online and through its hotline.
- Residential Tenancy Office –offers dispute resolution and arbitration services.
- North Shore Community Services Legal Advocacy program provides information, assistance, and advocacy and a dispute resolution process, including issues related to eviction and the need for shelter.
- CLAS offer assistance for judicial review in BC Supreme Court

Rental Assistance Programs:

- Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters [SAFER]¹³ is a provincial government rental subsidy for eligible seniors.
- Rental Assistance Program [RAP] is a provincial subsidy intended for families with at least one child and an income under \$28,000, with total assets no higher than \$10,000.

Family Counselling and Support Services:

Family Counselling

- Elizabeth Fry Society – North Shore Office
- Esemkwu Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Centre Squamish Nation
- Family Services
- Hollyburn Family Services
- Living Systems Counselling Services
- North Shore Integrated Family Program
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation Children of Takaya-Wolf Clan

Money Management, Training and Advice:

- The North Shore Women's Centre occasionally sponsors financial management workshops for women.
- Credit Counselling Society (New Westminster)
- Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia.

¹³<http://www.bchousing.org/programs/SAFER>

“The Road Home”

A special thanks to all members of the North Shore Homelessness Task Force for their contributions to this work plan, working together to end homelessness

