



DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
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12.

COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	June 22, 2022
From:	Arleta Beckett, Community Services & Community Development Manager
Subject:	North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy Update
File:	2620-01

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report dated June 22, 2022 titled North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy Update be received for information.

1.0 Purpose

This report provides an update on the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy for the North Shore including a summary of the engagement activities and an overview of the key themes that emerged from community consultations.

A final report to Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) is mandatory to fulfill the requirements of the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program (UBCM Program).

2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

Addressing Homelessness in Metro Vancouver (2017) uses a conceptual framework to develop recommendations and strategies to prevent region-wide homelessness, to serve people who are homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness. In 2019, the Province of British Columbia introduced *TogetherBC*, its first poverty reduction strategy which aims to make life more affordable for people struggling to get by through reducing costs and increasing incomes.

Strategies in the *Blueprint for Social Responsibility and Change (2017)* help support the District of West Vancouver (District) to anticipate and meet community needs as demographic changes occur. These strategies include participation in regional and tri-municipal planning tables and joint funding initiatives to share knowledge and implement sustainable strategies for addressing priority issues.

3.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan

Council Strategic Plan

The District Council's Strategic Goal 1.0 supports housing by setting objectives to fulfill the goal to significantly expand the diversity and supply of housing including housing that is more affordable.

Official Community Plan

The District's Official Community Plan (OCP) recognizes community health and social sustainability as critical tenets of the overall social fabric of a community. Housing is central to social and community health. The OCP provides Council with a range of policies to provide greater housing options including the creation of new market and non-market rental, seniors, and supportive housing.

4.0 Financial Implications

The development of the North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy and Assessment is funded by a \$75,000 grant from the UBCM Program Stream 1. The District's contribution to the development of a North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy is in-kind staff resources. There are no financial implications from this report which updates Council about the engagement results of Stream 1 of the UBCM Program.

5.0 Background

5.1 Previous Decisions

West Vancouver Housing Needs Report

The District's *Housing Needs Report* received by Council on January 25, 2021, focuses on current and projected needs in West Vancouver and meeting the need for market and non-market rental housing; seniors housing; special needs and/or accessibility designed housing; and more diverse and affordable ownership options. The report identifies priority need for supportive and affordable seniors housing and anticipates that future special needs units will grow in demand. It also identifies that in 2016, 14.4% of households were in core-housing needs (30.7% of renter households and 8.9% of owner households). Among the renter households, 19.3% were found to be in extreme core housing need, spending more than 50% of their income on shelter. The report highlights the divide between incomes and housing costs which is evident in the number of households in core and extreme core housing need and the lack of housing diversity that impacts options available to various demographics.

UBCM Poverty Reduction Strategy: Stream 1 – Action

Council, at its February 22, 2021 regular meeting, passed resolutions to direct staff to work with the City of North Vancouver (CNV) and District of North Vancouver (DNV) and submit a joint regional grant application for the North Shore under Stream 1 of the UBCM Program and have the District act as the primary applicant for the North Shore application.

UBCM Poverty Reduction Strategy: Stream 2 – Action

Council, at its February 14, 2022 regular meeting, passed resolutions to direct staff to work with the CNV and DNV and submit a joint regional grant application for the North Shore under Stream 2 of the UBCM

Program and have the District act as the primary applicant for the North Shore application. Results on this application are expected by July 31, 2022.

5.2 History

Federal Poverty Reduction Strategy

In August 2018, the Government of Canada released *Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy* which targeted a 20% reduction in poverty by 2020 and a 50% reduction in poverty by 2030, relative to 2015 levels. The strategy brings together investments that the Government of Canada has already made in the social and economic well-being of Canadians.

Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy

In March 2019, BC released their poverty reduction strategy, *TogetherBC*. Mandated through the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, the strategy set targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in BC by at least 25% and the child poverty rate by at least 50% by 2024.

TogetherBC is based on four principles: affordability, opportunity, reconciliation, and social inclusion. These principles guide the priority action areas that form the core of the strategy.

TogetherBC identifies six priority action areas and includes policy initiatives and investments designed to break the cycle of poverty. The six priority action areas are:

- making housing more affordable
- supporting families, children, and youth
- expanding access to education and training
- providing more opportunities, more jobs
- improving affordability
- investing in social inclusion

North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative

In the summer of 2020, the three North Shore municipal Councils each passed a Notice of Motion directing staff to create a cross-jurisdictional Steering Committee and Working Group to develop actions that are focused on clear, comprehensive, and coordinated strategies to prevent homelessness, to serve the people who are currently homeless, and to create pathways out of homelessness.

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI) Steering Committee was comprised of elected and appointed government officials from the District, CNV, DNV, Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of Parliament, and Board Chairs from BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). The NSHAI Working Group was comprised of staff from the five North Shore

jurisdictions. Through this time, the NSHAI Steering Committee focused on understanding community needs; supported the creation of an inventory of all the work related to homelessness within the five North Shore jurisdictions; created priority actions that focus on opportunities to achieve better data and understanding of community needs; reviewed and considered multiple models and examples of housing and supports; and supported commitments to better communication for staff, the public, and advocacy efforts.

While the NSHAI Steering Committee has concluded, the NSHAI Working Group will continue to pursue better communication and collaboration amongst all jurisdictions through updating the North Shore Homelessness Response Protocols, a document for staff that outlines available tools and responses to issues, challenges, and situations to better support people experiencing homelessness in public spaces.

North Shore Homelessness Task Force

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (NSHTF) was formed in 1998 in response to reports of people living on the street. The NSHTF utilizes a partnership-based approach to address the issues related to eliminating and preventing homelessness on the North Shore. Through the Parks, Culture & Community Services and the Planning & Development Services Divisions, the District, along with CNV, DNV, and VCH provide leadership and support to the NSHTF Coordinator and to the NSHTF membership.

In 2021, the NSHTF developed a new 10-year Community Action Strategy (2022-2032) and a Situation Analysis Report. The strategy was informed by research; local service providers; and members of the community including residents who are currently street-entrenched, accessing shelters, in precarious housing, or at risk of being homeless.

6.0 Analysis

6.1 Discussion

The North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy is being developed by results from six different engagement methods and working sessions with the North Shore Poverty Reduction Task Force (Project Task Force).

A Project Task Force made up of staff from the three North Shore municipalities, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation was created to provide leadership and support to the consultants and community.

Data was gathered through several means, including sensitive listening interviews, service provider administered questionnaires, focus groups, key informant interviews, virtual workshops, Project Task Force meetings, and steering committee meetings. A total of 205 people were part of the engagement process. **Appendix A** contains a list of organizations and District service areas that participated in these engagement activities.

The information gathered in Phase One (information mapping and research) and Phase Two (community engagement) of the project are being used in Phase Three to prepare a draft strategy. Phases Three and Four involve preparing a North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy, a summary video, and will conclude with public communications materials, outreach, an implementation plan, and monitoring framework. This work will conclude in September 2022. The final North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy and implementation plan will come forward to Council in winter 2023.

Engagement

To connect with as many residents as possible with lived or living experiences of poverty, six different community engagement methods were offered within a three-month period. In total, 205 people participated in the following forms of engagement:

- Sensitive listening interviews (51)
- Virtual workshops with stakeholders (2)
- Virtual workshop with the public (1)
- Focus groups (6)
- Questionnaires administered directly to clients by organizations (5)
- Key informant interviews (4)

Many topics were discussed and four key themes emerged as the foundation of the North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Key Themes

1. Work Together

Working together involves continuous collaboration to create an equitable and inclusive North Shore; increase participation in community activities; educate and generate awareness about poverty; and work with other levels of government to address issues related to education, health care, non-market housing, and income and disability assistance.

2. Enhance Navigation Services

The North Shore has a strong social services sector and there is a desire to support the positive collaborative culture. Enhancing navigation services will help where needs are currently surpassing the available resources and capacity. This will create greater awareness of existing programs and support services and allow providers to scale-up their assistance to meet this need. There may be an opportunity to explore a centralized approach for some service provision at a later time.

3. Address the Cost of Living

Low-income households feel the intensity of the rising costs of housing, childcare, food, technology, basic goods, and gas. Discrimination further exacerbates this situation by putting up barriers for individuals with low income to access housing and stable employment. Ways in which the District can assist with addressing the impacts of the rising cost of living are supporting not-for-profit organizations that provide assistance to individuals with low income; looking for opportunities to provide a variety of subsidized housing options; providing Community Grants to organizations that support those impacted by poverty; and ensuring the community is aware of and can access the Recreation Financial Assistance Program.

4. Take Action on Reconciliation

Indigenous peoples disproportionately feel the impacts of poverty because of systemic racism, discrimination, and historic and ongoing trauma. Relationship and trust building will be included within these strategies as reconciliation involves both Indigenous and settler communities. Two ways in which the District can support the Poverty Reduction Strategy are furthering Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action; and ensuring strategies are Indigenous-centred as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people experience poverty differently.

Next Steps

Several working sessions with the Project Task Force to draft the strategies are scheduled through June through August. Staff from the five jurisdictions will work together to plan for actions that address the four key themes of the North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy.

6.2 Sustainability

The \$75,000 grant from UBCM Program covers the project costs concluding with the engagement strategy. The District's contribution to the development of a North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy is in-kind staff resources.

6.3 Public Engagement and Outreach

A summary video of the North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy's engagement and key themes will help inform partners and highlight participation opportunities for the next step which is to create actions to reduce and eliminate poverty on the North Shore.

In total, the Project Task Force engaged with 205 people through six different modes: sensitive listening interviews, virtual workshops with stakeholders, a virtual workshop with members of the public, focus groups, a client survey done by not-for-profit organizations, and key informant interviews. **Appendix A** provides a summary of engagement.

6.4 Other Communication, Consultation, and Research

Additional communication, consultation, and research will be sourced as needed. A final report with results of the engagement strategy will be submitted to UBCM by September 30, 2022.

7.0 Options

7.1 Recommended Option

THAT the report dated June 22, 2022 titled North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy Update be received for information.

7.2 Considered Options

Council may request further information or provide further direction.

8.0 Conclusion

The North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy is one of several municipal and regional plans that help to address inequities in the community. The District of West Vancouver's participation in the development of actions for the North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy will further strengthen relationships with local jurisdictions and support assisting vulnerable citizens.

Author:



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Concurrence:



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Appendix A: North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy – Engagement Participation At-A-Glance

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North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy - Engagement Participation At-A-Glance

Participant	Sensitive Listening Interviews	Service Provider Administered Questionnaire	Focus Groups	Key Informant Interviews	Virtual Workshops	Task Force	Steering Committee
City of North Vancouver - Planning						X	X
District of North Vancouver – Community Planning					X	X	X
District of West Vancouver – Seniors' Activity Centre						X	
District of West Vancouver – Access Services	X				X	X	
District of West Vancouver – Community Services					X	X	X
District of West Vancouver – Youth Hub			X				
District of West Vancouver – Youth Outreach						X	
Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)	X					X	X
saɬilwataʔ (Tseil-Waututh Nation)	X				X	X	X
Avalon Women's Centre		X			X		
Canadian Mental Health Association North and West Vancouver				X			
Community Living BC					X		
Family Services of the North Shore		X					
Harvest Project					X		
Hollyburn Community Services Society						X	
Impact North Shore		X				X	
Lookout Housing and Health Society	X				X	X	
North Shore Alliance Church					X		
North Shore Community Resources					X		
North Shore Crisis Services Society	X					X	
North Shore Disability Resource Centre				X			
North Shore Homelessness Task Force					X	X	
North Shore Neighbourhood House						X	
North Shore Restorative Justice Society					X		
North Shore Table Matters					X		
North Shore Women's Centre	X		X				
North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce						X	

North Shore Poverty Reduction Strategy - Engagement Participation At-A-Glance

Participant	Sensitive Listening Interviews	Service Provider Administered Questionnaire	Focus Groups	Key Informant Interviews	Virtual Workshops	Task Force	Steering Committee
North Vancouver City Library	X					X	
North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission					X		
North Vancouver Schools		X				X	
Parkgate Community Services Society					X		
Quest Food Exchange				X			
RCMP				X			
Silver Harbour Centre	X					X	
Spectrum Mothers Support Society			X				
Vancouver Coastal Health						X	
West Vancouver Child and Family Hub			X				
West Vancouver Memorial Library					X		
West Vancouver Police						X	
West Vancouver Schools						X	
West Vancouver United Church					X		