



greater victoria  
coalition to end  
homelessness

**hope has found a home**

# Community Plan

Phase 2 Year 2: 2018-19

## OUR VISION:

A Region Without Homelessness

## OUR MISSION:

1. To ensure appropriate solutions are in place to serve those individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in the capital region.
2. To ensure all people facing homelessness in the capital region have access to safe, affordable, appropriate, long-term housing.

## THE COALITION

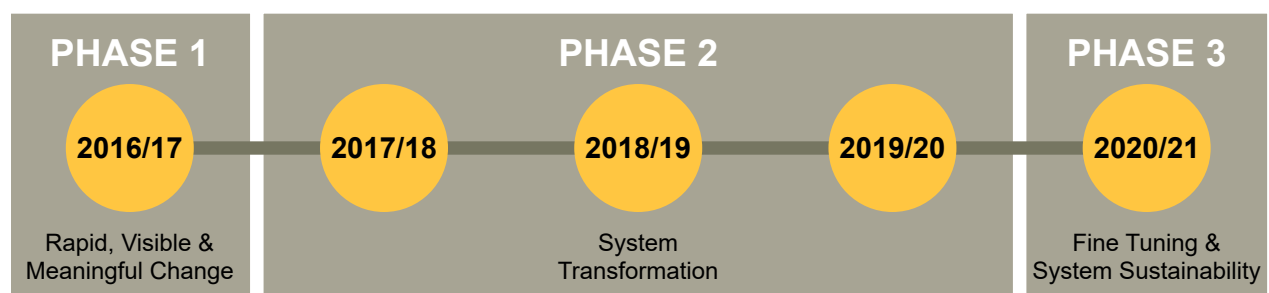
The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (the Coalition) was formed in 2008 with a mission to end homelessness in the capital region. The Coalition consists of local housing, health and social service providers; non-profit organizations; all levels of government; businesses; the faith community; people with a lived experience of homelessness (past or present); and members of the general public. This diverse membership, referred to as Coalition Stakeholders, come together to collectively address the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in the capital region.

The Coalition's activities centre around funding effectiveness, system effectiveness, inclusiveness, evidence-based reporting, and building capacity. As a "backbone" organization, the Coalition facilitates information sharing, relationship building, and strategic planning to ensure the collective efforts of stakeholders are making the greatest possible difference.

## THE PLAN

The Community Plan is a summary of the common vision of "a region without homelessness" and the steps required to achieve this vision. This plan has focused attention over the previous two years and will guide key activities over the next three years as a catalyst for action by stakeholders. It will also direct activities and investments made toward addressing chronic homelessness.

This Community Plan consists of three phases and undergoes an annual review and update collaboratively with stakeholders. The phased approach ensures flexibility and adaptability to maximize investment related to chronic homelessness and provides for effective monitoring and reporting of the long-term stability of individuals housed and supported through initiatives outlined within this community resource.





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	i
• Phase 2 Recommendations	iii
 <b>HOMELESSNESS IN THE CAPITAL REGION</b>	
• Understanding Homelessness	1
• The Spectrum of Housing	2
• Support Services	3
• The Federal, Provincial and Local Context	4
• Principles of Housing First	8
• Levels of Prevention	9
 <b>THE PLAN</b>	
• Establishing the Baseline	11
• A Focus on Chronic Homelessness	11
• Housing Success Schedule	13
• Success at a Glance	15
 <b>EVALUATION AND MONITORING</b>	
• Timeframe and Frequency	17
• Evaluation Criteria	17
 <b>APPENDICES</b>	
• A: Phase 2 Year 1 Results	18
• B: Definitions of Homelessness	20
• C: The 12 Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness	21
• D: Definition of Functional Zero	22
• E: Data Table and Discussion	23





Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many years, conversations about ending homelessness have centred on statistics using sometimes unreliable data, complex definitions that include jargon and calculations few understand, coordinated counting of people who may not want to be counted, and an uphill battle against fatigue within the homelessness serving system, amongst people experiencing homelessness, and in the community at large.

What sometimes gets lost in all the strategy, planning, and reporting - and even in the telling of positive stories of people transitioning out of homelessness - is that homelessness is not an individual issue but a community one. That is why this document is a Community Plan. It is also why the ultimate benefit of the Regional Housing First Strategy begins with the word “Communities.”

## Ultimate Benefit

**Communities throughout the region are safe, healthy, vibrant, welcoming and supporting of people from all walks of life and at all stages in their journey.**

As you read this plan, we invite you to look beyond the numbers and to read between the lines of the definitions to see that under all of this work is a future in which every member of our communities is welcome. That our shared spaces are vibrant with a diversity of people, and that everyone has access to the support they need to enjoy a fulfilling life.

That future is outlined in the Regional Housing First Program timeline, which details how \$90 million dollars of investment from the governments of Canada, British Columbia and the Capital Regional District will be leveraged to create 400 units of housing for people experiencing chronic or at-imminent risk of homelessness alongside more than 1600 units of affordable and market rental housing throughout the region.

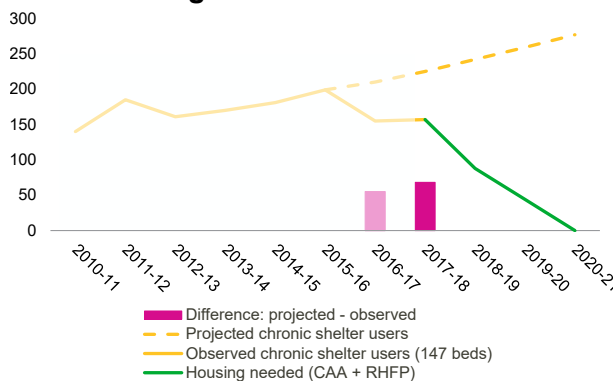
A vibrant, safe future is also evident in the recommendations outlined in this plan. They acknowledge that if we can prevent youth from becoming homeless, we go far in stopping the main driver of adult homelessness.

Finally, that inclusive, healthy vision lives in the recommendation that 33% of housing and support services be directed towards Indigenous individuals. In doing this, we can begin to correct the over-representation of Indigenous Peoples in the homeless population, a continuing consequence of Canada’s colonialist policies.

This year’s plan is built around four goals: a more coordinated system, a more equitable system, a more inclusive system, and a bigger system. Through community collaboration, we can achieve these goals and change daily life across the capital region, for people experiencing homelessness, and for all of us.

**For ten years, the Coalition’s motto has been “hope has found a home.” Now hope also has a plan.**

## Ending Chronic Homelessness







## PHASE 2 YEAR 2: RECOMMENDATIONS

### TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

1. Increase the current goal from “reducing chronic homelessness by 50% by 2028” to “achieve a functional zero of chronic homelessness in Canada by 2028,” with clear and measurable outcomes, milestones and criteria
2. Implement a clear and inclusive national definition of homelessness that ensures women, youth, individuals who identify as LGBTQ2S and Indigenous Peoples are not excluded from services as many of these individuals may experience hidden homelessness and may not access mainstream homelessness services
3. Adopt the Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness
4. Provide funding to Community Advisory Boards (CABs) as backbone organizations responsible for a range of activities related to effective implementation of local homelessness interventions
5. Embed the right to housing across legislation to implement the National Housing Strategy

### TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. Embed a clear vision, goal and target within the BC Homelessness Action Plan of achieving functional zero of chronic homelessness by 2028 with measurable outcomes, milestones and criteria
2. Adopt a “whole of government” approach through which 10 key ministries work collaboratively alongside community to reduce poverty and end homelessness in British Columbia
3. Fund communities, through backbone organizations (in alignment with Reaching Home CABs where they are active), to support the implementation of the BC Homelessness Action Plan with a focus on regional Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) and Homelessness Management Information (HMIS) systems

### TO THE REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS

1. Engage with community agencies and people with lived experience of homelessness in identifying and developing homelessness, housing and support services
2. Prioritize the development of housing options for individuals experiencing and at-imminent risk of homelessness
3. Reduce the costs of developing and operating non-profit housing by reducing or waiving property taxes and municipal fees
4. Set a minimum number of affordable units to be included in each development, or set equivalent funding contributions to a municipal affordable housing fund

## TO THE COMMUNITY

### **GOAL: A more coordinated system**

1. Build a fully integrated Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) system that
  - a. Prioritizes individuals based on vulnerability to homelessness and best fit for success
  - b. Includes all units of supportive housing, supported housing placements, mental health and substance use clinical outreach teams, other homelessness outreach teams, Regional Housing First Program affordable housing units, and BC Housing's Housing Registry
2. Launch a regional Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) that
  - a. Uses HIFIS 4.0 and is integrated into provincial and national systems
  - b. Includes all units and programs accessed through the CAA system
3. Increase integration between schools, youth serving agencies and traditionally adult serving agencies
  - a. Gain approval of the Upstream Project as a Ministry of Education pilot in School Districts 61, 62, and 63 for youth aged 13-18
  - b. Identify a youth assessment and prioritization tool to assess the vulnerability of youth experiencing homelessness and to connect them to appropriate support services that meet their needs

#### **MEASURES (TARGETS)**

- Developed CAA system
- Developed HMIS
- Quarterly CAA/HMIS reports containing placements, waitlist, stability, and other indicators in line with community input
- Pilot approval of the Upstream Project by local school districts and Raising the Roof
- Recommended youth assessment tool from the Youth Task Force

### **GOAL: A more equitable system**

1. Use the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) throughout the regional system to ensure equitable and effective access to resources while ensuring that
  - a. A minimum of 33% of placements through CAA house individuals who self-identify as Indigenous
2. Focus resources on the prevention of youth (ages 13-24) homelessness
3. Develop a comprehensive regional support services strategy



### ***MEASURES (TARGETS)***

- % of placements through the CAA that house people who identify as Indigenous (33%)
- # of youth ages 19-24 shelter stays are reduced (to 1 stay per year)
- Duration of youth ages 19-24 shelter stays is reduced (by 50%)
- # of youth ages 19-24 accessing shelters is reduced (by 30%)
- Completed regional support services strategy

### **GOAL: A more inclusive system**

1. At least two experiential individuals are engaged at every community-based table related to homelessness

### ***MEASURES (TARGETS)***

- # of experiential individuals engaged at every community-based table related to homelessness (2)

### **GOAL: A bigger system**

1. Approve new units through the Regional Housing First Program, and through BC Housing, CMHC and other available housing investments

### ***MEASURES (TARGETS)***

- # units of housing approved in 2018-19 through the Regional Housing First Program (130)
2. All funding agencies consider the recommendations in this Community Plan when directing funding to housing and support services to end homelessness









# HOMELESSNESS IN THE CAPITAL REGION

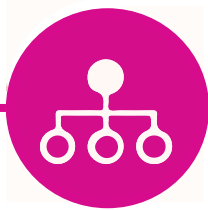
## UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is not just what is visible on the street. It exists when individuals live in abandoned buildings, sleep under bridges, camp in parks, access emergency shelters, or couch surf. The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness speaks to this range through the four kinds of homelessness identified in its definition, including people who are **unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated and insecurely housed**.<sup>1</sup> All of these living situations, from utterly homeless to precariously housed, put people at risk of poor physical, mental and social health.

It is also important to consider the various causes of homelessness, many of which intersect:

### Structural Factors

E.g. Stigma & discrimination, the lingering impacts of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples & increased cost of living without equal increase in income



### Systemic Failures

E.g. Falling between the cracks in our system of care, youth transitioning out of care, discharge from hospitals/correctional facilities without homes



### Personal Circumstances

E.g. Job loss, traumatic events, health problems & family violence or conflict, particularly for women, children, and youth



Without this broad understanding of the types and causes of homelessness, those caught in the system — particularly those with complex and multiple issues such as mental health diagnoses or addictions — can find themselves in a cycle of homeless → housed → struggling to stay housed → and back on the streets.

This Community Plan strives to address the structural and systemic issues involved in homelessness while supporting the Coalition Stakeholders who provide health, social, cultural, spiritual, and other services to those experiencing homelessness. This will ultimately reduce the gaps that perpetuate the experience of homelessness for some individuals.

1. "Canadian Definition of Homelessness," Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, <http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition.pdf>. Accessed July 4, 2017.

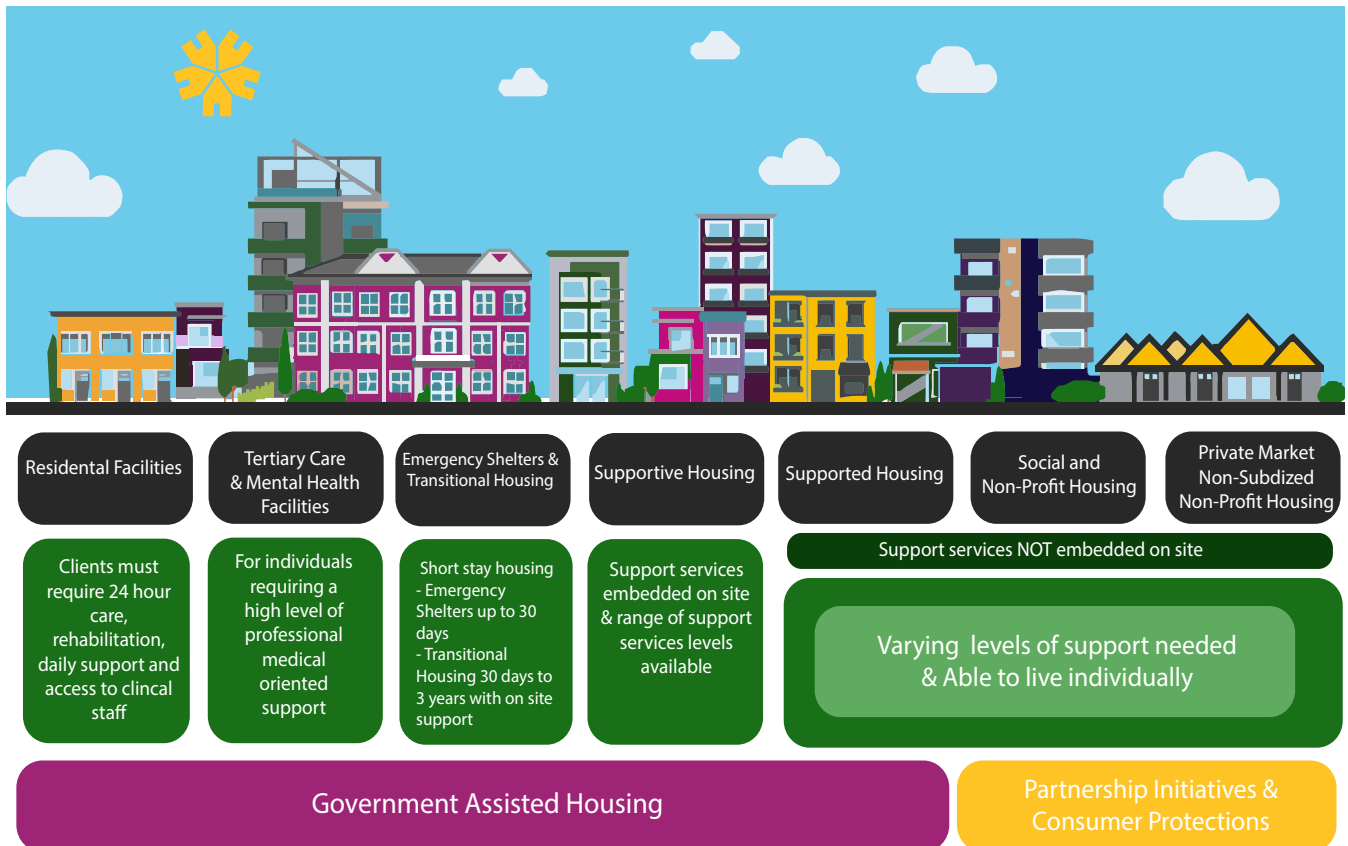
## THE SPECTRUM OF HOUSING

The capital region has a surging real estate market, a persistently low vacancy rate, and wages that have not kept pace with the cost of living. In addition, while the BC Government increased social assistance rates in 2017, this followed a decade of zero growth for those rates.

These compounding factors have created a housing crisis at all but the highest levels of the housing and economic spectrum in the region. The Community Plan addresses this crisis by focusing on those with the most complex barriers to housing while balancing the broad needs of the region.

Effectively addressing homelessness requires a range of approaches that are tailored to individual need and are provided through a range of programs and services. The Spectrum of Housing illustrates a distinct suite of housing and support service models that can all help individuals experiencing homelessness move toward greater housing stability.

It is important to note that these are not steps or stops along a continuum, but rather a spectrum of options available to those in-need as their circumstances dictate. These circumstances can fluctuate as life changes, which is why having a range of approaches that are integrated into one system is an important aspect of successful intervention.





## SUPPORT SERVICES

The provision of housing on its own is not enough to address chronic homelessness. The right type and level of support services to meet individual's needs is critical in ensuring the ongoing housing stability of someone with a repeated or long-term experience of homelessness. Working in conjunction with available housing, any combination of the following could play a role in supporting recovery from homelessness:

### 1. **Peer-Based Social Support Services**

Peer-based support services are a form of social support provided by a person with a lived-experience of homelessness. Peer programming complements existing social support services and clinical supports and works specifically to increase inclusivity, reduce isolation and stigma, and increase housing stability.

### 2. **Social Support Services**

Social support services are typically designed to assist residents with the day to day activities necessary to locate and maintain successful and appropriate housing. These are separate from clinical services and include such activities as helping participants search for and secure housing, building and maintaining relationships with landlords (including mediating during conflict), applying for and managing housing supplements, assisting in setting up apartments, working with clients to develop independent living skills, and providing referral assistance to individuals to help establish the connection between the client and other community-based support services.

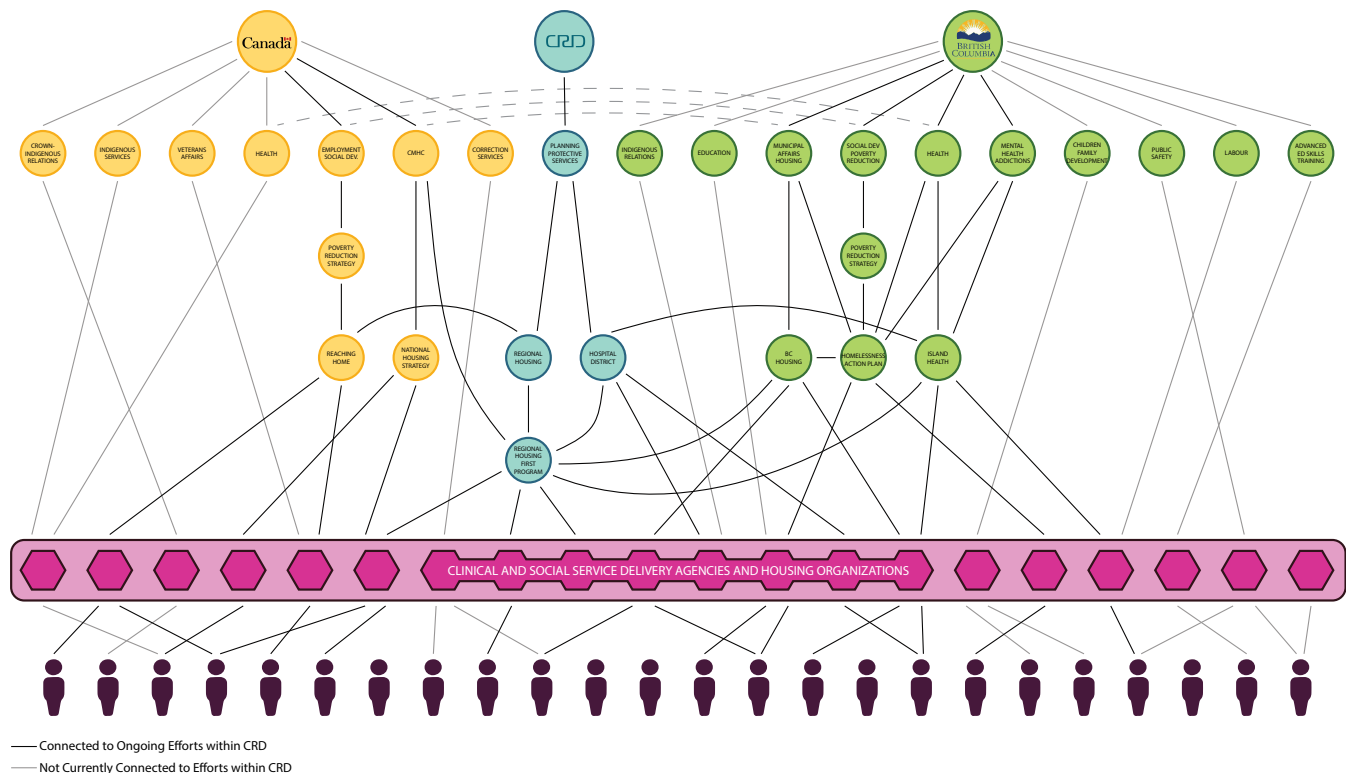
### 3. **Clinical Support Services**

A clinical team typically provides a range of recovery-oriented, client-driven support services. These supports can either be coordinated by a case manager or through a multi-disciplinary team and are designed to specifically address health, mental health, social care or other needs. Activities can include any combination of social support services, as listed above, and clinical services to manage and/or support individuals with mental health concerns.

A key recommendation of this Community Plan is to develop a comprehensive regional support services strategy. This collaborative work is important in determining the level of service that is available in community. It will also help us to estimate the immediate and long-term needs of those experiencing homelessness. Finally, it will identify where additional support service resources may be needed to complement an increased supply of housing for those experiencing homelessness.



# THE FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT



Homelessness is a complex issue with all levels of government supporting individual-level solutions. The conceptual map above illustrates some of the key relationships between federal, provincial and local entities.

The Government of Canada provides national support and resources in three distinct ways: the first is directly to community. The second is through federal transfers and cost-sharing agreements. The third is through direct-to-community programs such as the Reaching Home Program (formerly the Homelessness Partnering Strategy).

The Government of British Columbia plays a considerable role in addressing homelessness. Of the 20 provincial ministries, 10 have important homelessness-related responsibilities. Specifically, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Health, and Mental Health and Addictions are directly connected to efforts to address homelessness in the province through the BC Poverty Reduction Strategy and the forthcoming Homelessness Action Plan (this plan and the Coalition's submission to it will be available on the Coalition's website [victoriahomelessness.ca](http://victoriahomelessness.ca) upon release).

The Planning and Protective Services department within the Capital Regional District is responsible for delivering a range of services, including Regional Housing and the Capital Region Hospital District. These provide important funding and administrative support to the Regional Housing First Program.

The final key component is the many non-profit and community-based organizations that work directly with individuals experiencing homelessness. These organizations provide critical services and programs and work hard to advocate on behalf of those in-need.

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA



The National Housing Strategy, a 10-year, \$40-billion strategy, has been designed as a toolkit. It features complementary initiatives to address challenges across the housing spectrum that will

- build new affordable housing and renew existing affordable housing stock
- provide technical assistance, tools and resources to build capacity in the community housing sector and funds to support local organizations
- support research, capacity-building, excellence and innovation in housing research

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is leading and delivering the National Housing Strategy federal initiatives. In some cases, CMHC will work with other federal departments or agencies to deliver the programs. In other cases, services may be contracted out to third-parties.

### New Supply Programs

#### ***National Housing Co-Investment Fund***

Low-cost loans and capital contributions for building new affordable housing shelters, transitional and supportive housing.

#### ***Affordable Housing Innovation Fund***

Funding for unique ideas and innovative building techniques that revolutionize the affordable housing sector.

#### ***Rental Construction Financing***

Low-cost loans encouraging the construction of sustainable rental apartment projects across Canada.

#### ***Federal Lands Initiative***

Surplus federal lands and buildings used to create affordable, sustainable, accessible and socially inclusive developments.

#### ***Seed Funding***

CMHC provides financial assistance to support activities that will:

- help facilitate the creation of new affordable housing units

- assist existing housing projects to remain viable and affordable

#### ***Investments in Affordable Housing***

Through CMHC, the Government of Canada works with its provincial and territorial partners to provide and improve access to affordable housing.

#### ***Prepayment***

The federal government is providing \$150 million to allow non-profit and co-op housing providers to prepay their mortgages held with CMHC without penalty.

#### ***Regional Housing First Program***

CMHC is a partner, along with BC Housing, the CRD and Island Health in the Regional Housing First Program, a program for non-profit housing societies, the private sector, and other community groups interested in creating new affordable rental housing units in the capital region.

## GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Homes for B.C. is the Government of British Columbia's 30-point plan for a fairer housing market and is designed to both stabilize demand and build the right supply of housing. This plan is supported by the largest investment in housing in the history of the province totalling more than \$6 billion. The plan includes a focus on

- stabilizing the market,
- cracking down on tax fraud and closing loopholes,
- building the homes people need,
- security for renters, and
- supporting partners to build and preserve affordable housing.

BC Housing plays a principle role in supporting the implementation of the Homes for B.C. 30-Point Plan through working in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors, provincial health authorities and ministries, other levels of government and community groups to develop a range of housing options.

### Funding Opportunities for Housing Partners

#### ***Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund***

Facilitates the building and operation of 1,750 units of social housing for Indigenous people in B.C

CLOSES 2PM PST, October 5, 2018

#### ***Building BC: Supportive Housing Fund***

Provides supportive housing for people who are experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of homelessness.

CLOSES 2PM PST, October 30, 2018

#### ***Building BC: Women's Transition Housing Fund***

Provides women and their children who are at risk of violence and/or who have experienced violence with access to safe, secure and confidential services.

CLOSED 2PM PST, July 13, 2018

#### ***Community Partnerships Initiatives***

Provides financing, partnership referrals and advice for non-profits looking to develop affordable rental housing or licensed care facilities.

Ongoing Intake

#### ***Building BC: Community Housing Fund***

Creates new units of social housing for low and moderate income families and seniors in British Columbia.

CLOSED 2PM PST, September 17, 2018

#### ***Regional Housing First Program***

BC Housing is a partner, along with CMHC, the CRD and Island Health, in the Regional Housing First Program, a program for non-profit housing societies, the private sector, and other community groups interested in creating new affordable rental housing units in the capital region.

Fall - 30 August    Winter - 31 January  
Spring - 30 April    Summer - 30 July



# CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT



The Regional Housing Affordability Strategy provides a framework to address housing affordability challenges in the capital region. This document provides an important framework for addressing housing affordability and for supporting a collaborative regional approach for moving toward the creation of a healthy, sustainable housing system - one that supports safe and compete communities and that provides the ability to create a shared regional response to housing affordability and homelessness.

## Regional Housing First Program

The Regional Housing First Program (RHFP) aims to eliminate chronic homelessness in the capital region through mixed-market housing, partnerships and streamlined support services. It will also ease the demand for affordable and market rental housing in the region, and thus work to alleviate episodic homelessness cause by housing unaffordability. The RHFP meets a broad range of housing needs while moving at-risk individuals from streets or shelters into long-term, tenant-based, supported housing to enable recovery and integration into society.

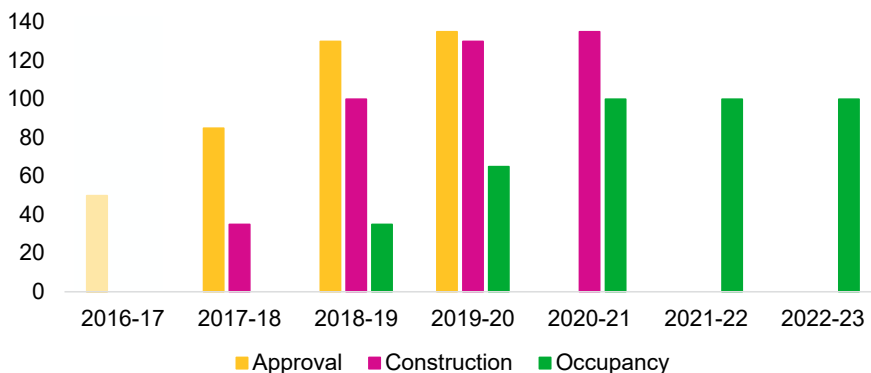
The core of the RHFP is \$90 million dollars invested equally by the governments of Canada, British Columbia and the Capital Regional District. That \$90 million will underwrite the costs of 400 units that will rent at he BC Income Assistance Shelter Maximum rates. Funding partnerships are expected to extend the program to approximately \$400 million, creating a total of more than 2000 new rental housing units in the region.



## Projected Regional Housing First Program Timeline

The timeline for approval, construction, and occupancy of the Regional Housing First Program focuses on the 400 units that are core to ending chronic homelessness in the region.

As these units will be built among the affordable and market rental units to ensure healthy, diverse communities, the overall program timeline correlates to that of the shelter rate units.



## PRINCIPLES OF HOUSING FIRST

The Coalition and its Stakeholders have adopted a “Housing First” philosophy to addressing homelessness, underpinned by complementary prevention strategies. These philosophies and strategies support people who move from homeless to housed retain their housing and help keep people at risk of homelessness from becoming homeless.

According to Stephen Gaetz and Erin Dej, leading Canadian homelessness researchers:

The Housing First model provides housing and supports for people experiencing chronic homelessness with no housing readiness requirements. New research, innovation, and best practices have propelled our thinking to make the goal of ending homelessness realistic; however we are still missing an important piece – preventing homelessness in the first place.

Homelessness prevention refers to policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness. It also means providing those who have been homeless with the necessary resources and supports to stabilize their housing, enhance integration and social inclusion, and ultimately reduce the risk of the recurrence of homelessness.<sup>2</sup>



2. Stephen Gaetz & Erin Dej. (2017). A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. Available at <http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHPreventionFramework.pdf>

## LEVELS OF PREVENTION<sup>3</sup>

### Primary

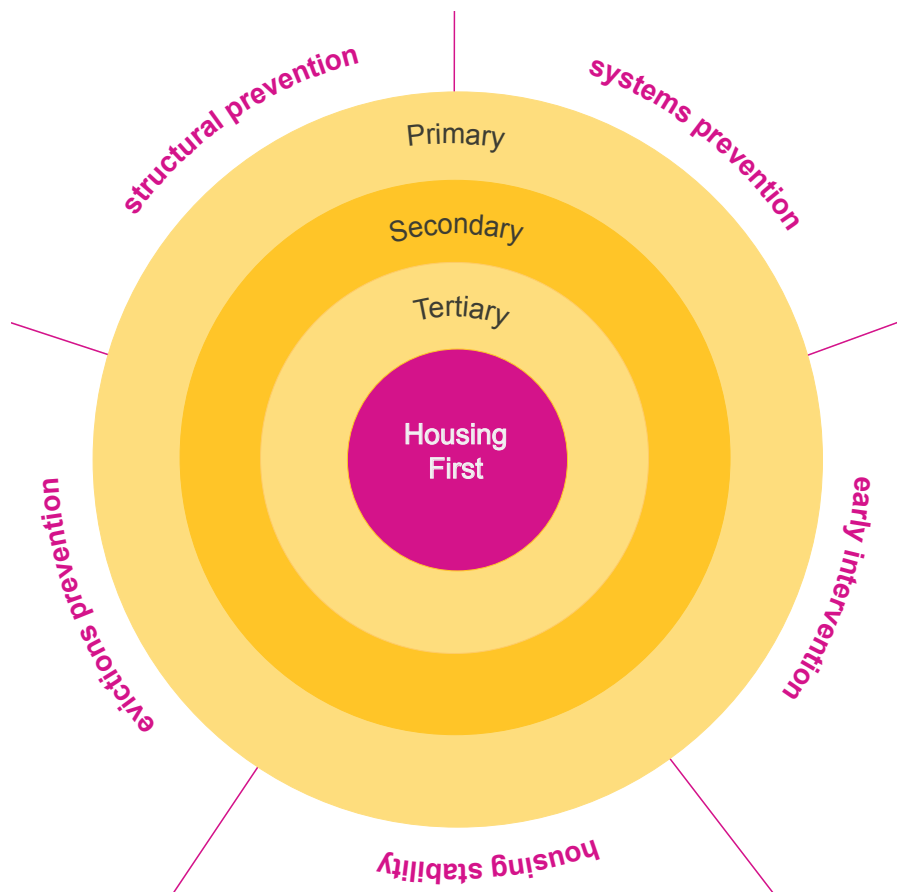
Initiatives that apply to everyone to reduce the risk of homelessness and build protective factors within the population at large.

### Secondary

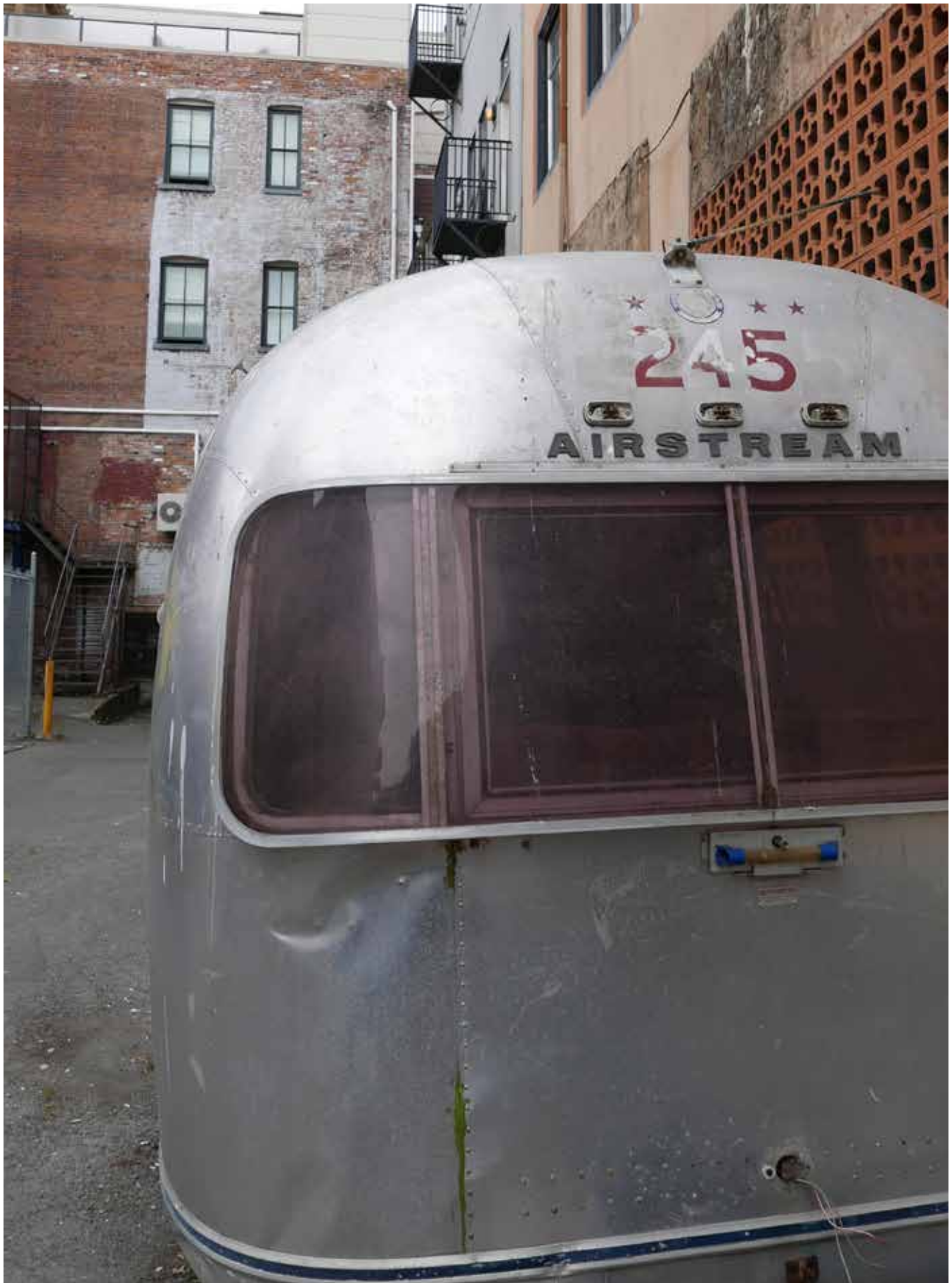
Strategies aimed at those at-imminent risk of homelessness or who have recently become homeless, with the intention of avoiding or moving out of homelessness quickly.

### Tertiary

Initiatives that support individuals and families who have experienced homelessness to ensure that it doesn't happen again. Housing First is a type of tertiary prevention focused on chronically homeless individuals.



3. Stephen Gaetz & Erin DeJ. (2017). A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. Available at <http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHPPreventionFramework.pdf>





# THE PLAN

## ESTABLISHING THE BASELINE

An important aspect of measuring success at the regional level is establishing the baseline, as the Coalition did between 2010 and 2016 using emergency shelter data.<sup>4</sup> In 2015-16, the observed number of individuals accessing emergency shelter was 1,675, with an average annual growth rate over the six year period of 2.4%. Based on this data, the total number of unique shelter users is expected to increase to 1,885 by the year 2020-21.

Since this annual Community Plan began in 2016, the total number of observed shelter users has been below the number of projected shelter users. This is the first time since observations began in 2010 that the numbers of shelters users has dropped two years in a row.

Observed and Projected Total Shelter Use



## A FOCUS ON CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

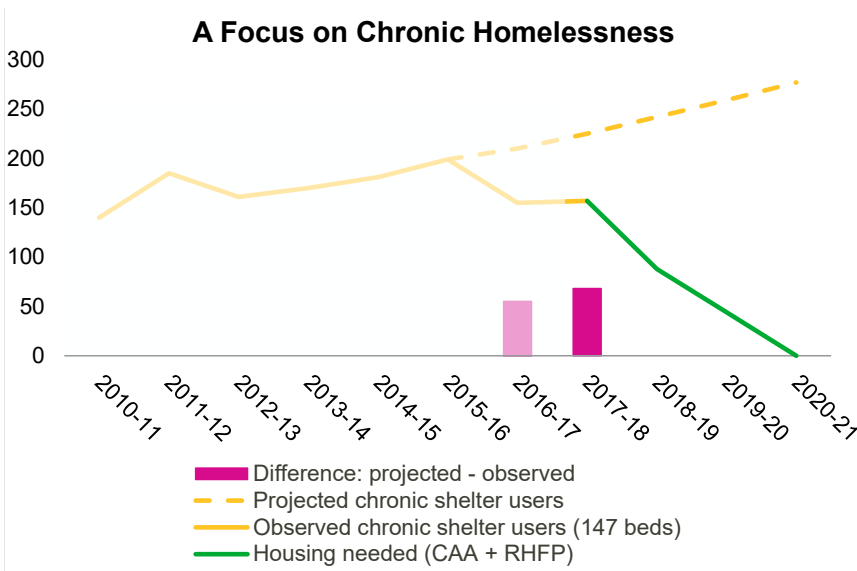
For the second year in a row in 2017-18, both the number of observed total shelter users and the number of observed shelter users experiencing chronic homelessness was below the projected number. The difference between projected and observed chronic shelter users was 55 individuals in 2016-17, and grew to 68 individuals in 2017-2018.

Over the same 2010-2016 time frame, the population of individuals accessing emergency shelter services who meet the definition of experiencing chronic homelessness grew by 7.1%. This comparatively rapid rate of growth results in a projected total number of 277 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness by 2020-21. It is critical to note that this expected population growth does not factor in potential changes in funding or other external variables.

The Priority One Task Force in 2016 identified a cohort of 74 individuals, many of whom had been banned from shelters and/or housing. This cohort is being identified as a separate population because the region lacks a coordinated data system that would identify if individuals are being counted both in the Priority 1 cohort and in the shelter data. These individuals were identified as having a much higher than typical level of interaction with health and corrections resources and were showing little improvement in condition.

4. Please see Appendix E for data table and discussion.

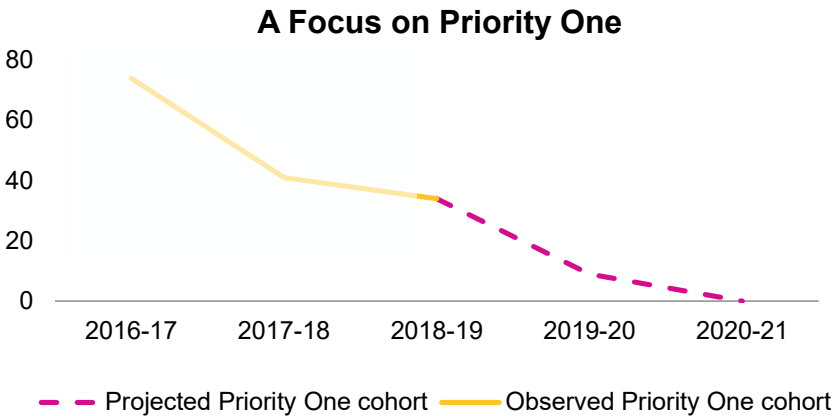
In both this Community Plan and in the 5-year Regional Housing First Program, the population of people experiencing chronic homelessness who require housing and support services totals 347 (277 shelter users experiencing chronic homelessness + 70 members in the Priority 1 cohort). This is the baseline against which we now measure success.



### The Priority One Cohort

The Priority One cohort began with 74 identified individuals in 2016-17. Sadly four members of the original cohort passed away in the first year, and another two cohort members died in 2017-18. Reporting in 2017-18 showed 41 Priority One individuals awaiting housing, and that number has been reduced to 34 in 2018-19. This figure is expected to continue to decrease over the next number of reporting cycles as these individuals are supported in achieving increased housing stability.

Of the 20 Priority One group members who self-identified as Indigenous 15 were stably housed as of March 31, 2018 through a culturally-focused partnership between the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, Cool Aid, and Island Health. Another 19 cohort members have been housed through Island Health managed or partner supportive housing for a total of 34 members housed. Of the surviving 68 individuals in the original cohort, 34 members remain to be housed.





## HOUSING SUCCESS SCHEDULE

This Community Plan sets out specific goals for the housing success of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. It considers factors such as the time needed to identify and implement system improvements, and the time between receiving approval for a new building and when people can move in.

While the Regional Housing First Program will require a proportion of newly built housing, some housing for people experiencing chronic homelessness may be achieved through alternative unit procurement methods - for example, through the purchase of almost completed or completed units. Other units may be identified through more efficient use of existing supported and supportive housing in the region. Through new buildings, acquiring move-in ready units, and system improvements, chronic homelessness can be ended in the region by 2021.

### Chronic Homelessness

Units will become available to people experiencing chronic homelessness in two primary ways:

- Prioritization in existing supportive housing stock, and
- New units funded through the Regional Housing First Program or other initiatives as they are announced.

#### ***1. Existing Supportive Housing***

The redesign of the regional Centralized Access to Supported Housing (CASH), now called Coordinated Access and Assessment, along with the increase of homelessness outreach services and teams is increasing the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who are being housed within the existing system.

With a turn over rate of approximately 18% annually, the current supported and supportive housing system in the region can accommodate between 110 and 180 people each year.

#### ***2. New-Build Supported Housing – Regional Housing First Program***

New unit approvals within the Regional Housing First Program will prioritize the supported housing required for those experiencing chronic homelessness, including the Priority One cohort. Due to variances in building times, municipal approval systems, and service design, it can take between 24 and 36 months from when new units are approved to when they are fully occupied.

This Community Plan calls for the Regional Housing First Program to focus on the procurement (purchase or new-build) of units that would be integrated into mixed-income rental buildings at rates in keeping with the Government of BC's Shelter Maximum portion of Social Assistance. This would signal a regional shift toward additional supported housing options to better complement the existing supportive housing stock already in use. Units available specifically to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and to individuals transitioning out of supportive housing should not exceed 20% of the total number of units within a given building. This will help ensure an economy of scale for service delivery, support the economic feasibility of the development, and create diverse populations within buildings.

This Plan calls for a total of 200 supported housing units to be developed through the Regional Housing First Program that are for individuals experiencing street or sheltered homelessness.

### ***3. New-Build Affordable Housing – Regional Housing First Program***

According to anecdotal reports, approximately 20% of residents of supportive housing would choose independent affordable housing if it were available. The very low shelter rates covered by social assistance mean that few rental units are accessible to these individuals. The gap between income and housing costs is a significant factor across the housing and health/social support system, and blocks supportive housing units to those who need and would choose them. The Regional Housing First Program will facilitate positive flow through the housing spectrum by creating affordable units for those residents who choose independent living, opening supportive housing for people who require the supports.

The shelter-rate affordable units in the Regional Housing First Program are intended for individuals on social assistance wishing to exit existing supportive housing. This would open up approximately 200 units of purpose-built supportive housing units already in the community and would greatly enhance the effectiveness of existing investment. More importantly, this would ensure units are available to individuals experiencing chronic street or sheltered homelessness with integrated choice-based support services.





This Plan calls for a total of 200 units of new-build affordable housing to be procured through the Regional Housing First Program to support positive transitions for individuals from existing supportive housing. These units are to be specifically for individuals currently in supportive housing and wishing to move into more independent housing, with or without support services.

### Unit Requirements 2018-19

This Community Plan identifies that for this region to address chronic homelessness, in 2018-19 the community must come together to

- House 11 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in existing supportive housing through enhanced system coordination, service integration and client prioritization;
- Move 35 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness into completed Regional Housing First Program units;
- Work collaboratively to support 25 individuals from the Priority One Cohort achieve housing stability; and,
- Approve 130 units of new housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness through the Regional Housing First Program (this is a combined total of supported and affordable units).

Following the shelter success schedule as outlined in this Community Plan, the Coalition and its stakeholders can meet the needs of the Priority 1 cohort by 2019 and those of the population of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness by 2021.

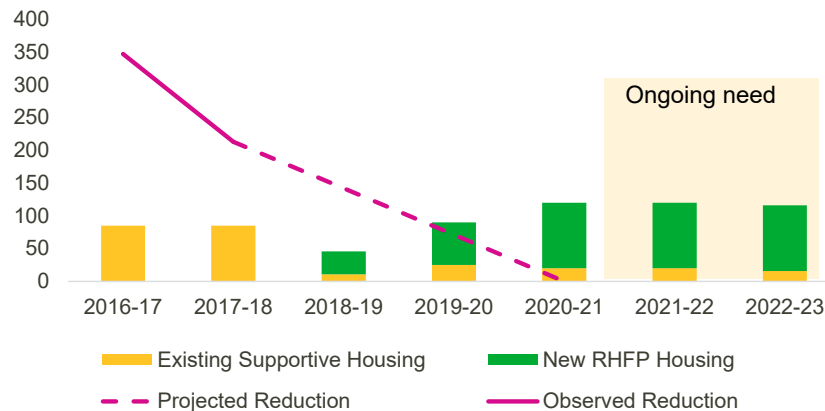
### SUCCESS AT A GLANCE

While providing housing of choice for the projected 347 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in the region by 2021, the plan will also provide additional housing units to account for system needs and population changes, and to allow positive flow and reduce episodic homelessness.

Even after functional zero (see Appendix D) is reached, it is anticipated that between 13% and 18.5% of individuals residing in supportive housing will require re-housing annually.

Planning that accounts for this ongoing need also offers client choice in housing type and location, and will prevent people from experiencing chronic homelessness by allowing rapid re-housing.

### Achieving Functional Zero for Chronic Homelessness







# EVALUATION & MONITORING

Evaluation and monitoring is critical to ensuring the health, social support and housing system is improving to better support individuals experiencing homelessness. Effective evaluation and monitoring identifies gaps in both housing and health/social support services and guides action and investment in the community.

Evaluation and monitoring assesses both program impact and system effectiveness in the health, social support and housing system. Methods will include both quantifiable results and qualitative impacts.

## Timeframe and Frequency

Evaluation will take place continuously and be summarized quarterly in advance of the Coalition's annual community planning.

## Evaluation Criteria

The Coalition's Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group, with input from people with lived experience of homelessness, will use the following framework, supplemented by priority measures identified by the community.

## Draft Monitoring Framework

### SYSTEM

- # of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness
- # of supportive units in system
- # of supported units in system
- Turnover and vacancy rates and reasons for turnover

### ACCESS

#### To Housing

- Average wait time to access resource through CAA
- Average unit turnover time
- Demographic identifiers
- Source of application

#### To CAA

- Demographic identifiers
- Source of application
- Average wait time before CAA process completed, including response back to applicant

### PREVENTION

- % of individuals leaving correctional institutions with housing and support plans
- % of individuals leaving health facilities with housing and support plans
- % of tenants rehoused with appropriate supports within 30 days of receiving a notice to vacate

### STABILITY

- Average number of moves per year and % of positive moves
- % of clients who move from transitional to long-term housing
- % of clients who remain housed after 6 months
- % of clients who remain housed after 12 months
- % of clients who remain housed after 18 months



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: PHASE 2, YEAR 1 RESULTS

The recommendations for Phase 2, Year 1 of the Community Plan focus on the particular needs of three key population segments: the Priority 1 Cohort, Indigenous Peoples, and youth.

### SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the existing Coordinated Access and Assessment System be enhanced to support better matching of housing options and support services for individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness across the housing, health and social support system in the capital region.

**UPDATE: The Coordinated Access and Assessment System continues to be developed, under the leadership of BC Housing and Island Health. Initial roll-out will include all units and services currently covered by the Coordinated Access to Supported Housing system, with discussions ongoing about incorporating Regional Housing First Program units as they are occupied.**

2. That a region-wide Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) for the housing, health and social support system using HIFIS 4.0 be implemented in the capital region.

**UPDATE: BC Housing has implemented use of HIFIS 4.0 for reporting with all Emergency Shelter Program, Homelessness Prevention Program, and Homelessness Outreach Program partners. Discussions about a regional application of HIFIS 4.0 that includes additional aspects of the homelessness serving system are ongoing.**

3. That the housing, health and social support system in the capital region begin annual reporting on the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who self-identify as Indigenous and who are housed and accessing health and/or social support services as needed by March 31, 2018. This is to be done through the Coordinated Assessment and Access System once implemented.

The community objectives for Indigenous individuals previously experiencing chronic homelessness and accessing housing, health and/or social support services are as follows and will be revisited annually:

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
23	21	21	21	86

**UPDATE: Through the Priority 1 program, the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness reports having housed 15 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who self-identify as Indigenous as of March 31, 2018. Additional efforts are needed and are included as recommendations in Phase 2, Year 2.**

4. That a pilot initiative for early identification and assessment of at-risk youth be implemented in the capital region.

**UPDATE: The Youth Task Force and the Youth Projects Coordinator continue to develop a regional capacity map for youth services in anticipation of seeking school district approval for an in-school pilot initiative in 2019.**



5. That the community collectively work to identify priorities and work to implement recommendations from the Regional Housing First Strategy. This includes
  - a. Those activities specific to the recommendations from the Priority One Task Force that are focussed on better housing and support options for those individuals with additional or other needs; and,

**UPDATE: Both the System Improvement and the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Groups have met to develop a coordinated approach to supporting individuals with significant support needs in order to remain housed; housing stability and eviction-prevention best practices continue to be developed through community input.**

- b. A residence-based managed alcohol program to better support housing stability and program participation of Indigenous Peoples experiencing chronic homelessness.

**UPDATE: No reported development at the time of printing.**

## **CAPITAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That a minimum of 86 units specifically for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and/or individuals wishing to exit existing supportive housing are identified for funding through the Regional Housing First Program in response to the fall 2017 Expression of Interest.

These units will

- have rent levels set at the Provincial Shelter Limit,
- be accessed through the Coordinated Access and Assessment System, and
- support the positive movement of individuals from existing supportive housing into more independent affordable rental housing.

**UPDATE: 85 units of new housing have been approved through the Regional Housing First Program.**

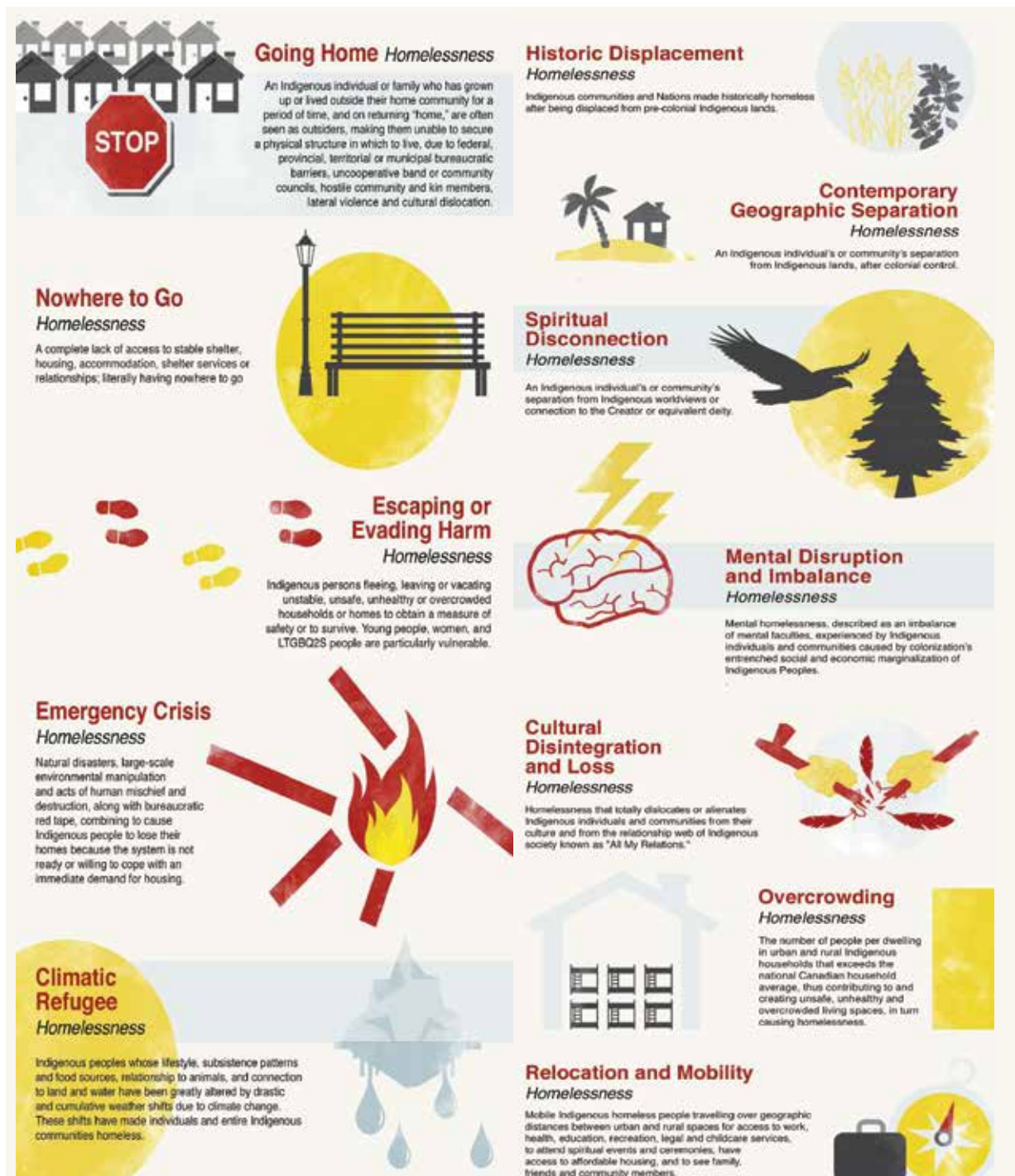
2. That the Coalition work with stakeholders to identify partnerships and/or potential project proponents for capital initiatives specific to the following three priority populations:
  - Youth Transitional Housing including those for unstably connected youth and chronically disconnected youth.
  - Indigenous housing along with appropriate, culturally-based support services.
  - Priority One individuals not experiencing increased housing retention within the existing housing, health and social support landscape.

**UPDATE: The Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness has awarded a 21 unit modular housing contract to provide supported housing for Indigenous women and children escaping violence. Youth providers are participating in the Youth Task Force to identify the type and amount of housing needed by youth experiencing homelessness in the region.**

# APPENDIX B: INDIGENOUS DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

## The 12 Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness

As articulated by Indigenous People across Canada



Thistle, J. (2017.) Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada. Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.

## APPENDIX C: KEY DEFINITIONS

### Indigenous Homelessness in Canada

Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous world views. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

It is important to note that the disproportionate number of Indigenous Peoples accessing shelter services or experiencing chronic homelessness is not the result of individual or personal failings. Conversations with people experiencing homelessness who self-identify as Indigenous reveals that some are now experiencing second and third generations of homelessness. These experiences are the result of centuries of colonization and racism that continue to socially exclude generations of Indigenous Peoples and communities.

### Homelessness

#### ***Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless***

Living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;

#### ***Emergency Sheltered***

Staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence;

#### ***Provisionally Accommodated***

Those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure,

#### ***At Risk of Homelessness,***

People who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/ or housing situation is precarious

### Chronic Homelessness

Individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance use challenges), who are currently homeless and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year (i.e. have spent more than 180 cumulative nights in a shelter or place not fit for human habitation); **and/or,**

Individuals, often with disabling conditions (e.g. chronic physical or mental illness, substance use challenges), who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year.

## APPENDIX D: FUNCTIONAL ZERO

“Functional Zero” is achieved when the number of people entering homelessness each month is not greater than the number of units of housing available each month. Functional zero, as opposed to “ending homelessness” recognizes that while life circumstances may change and individuals may enter homelessness, their experience of homelessness will be both brief and unrepeated.

### What is Functional Zero?

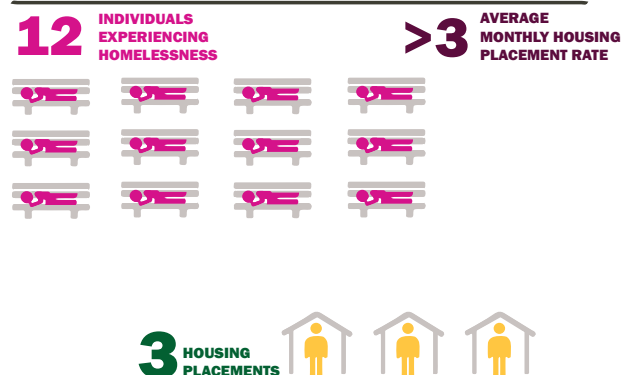
#### JUNE



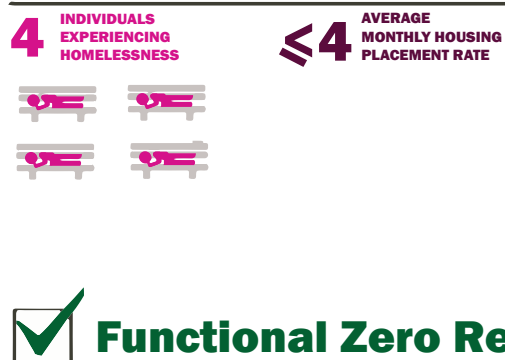
#### JULY



#### AUGUST



#### SEPTEMBER





## APPENDIX E: DATA TABLE AND DISCUSSION

The Coalition is grateful for the partnership of Victoria Cool Aid Society and their long relationship of both sharing and helping to interpret shelter data. In the ten years that the Coalition has worked to end homelessness in the region, the data from Cool Aid's shelters has come to represent a smaller part of the homelessness story with additional shelters and diversion services. In 2017-18, additional shelter beds funded by BC Housing moved the proportion offered by Cool Aid from 100% (147 of 147 beds) to 75% (147 of 197 beds). Shelter bed usage data from Cool Aid shows 1.07 users experiencing chronic homelessness per bed. This usage data has been applied to the remaining 50 beds in the system, to extrapolate a possible range between 157 and 213 shelter users experiencing chronic homelessness in the 197 bed system. The upper limit of this range has been used to determine the necessary annual reductions in the success schedule.

The Coalition anticipates that this will be the last year in which we rely solely on Cool Aid's shelter data for reporting purposes. When a robust, reliable, and comprehensive regional data system, be that the Coordinated Access and Assessment system or the Homelessness Management Information System, comes online, the Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group will ensure that the data used going forward correlates to the historic data so that measurement of the community's progress is conclusive.

Shelter user data is available annually at the end of the fiscal year (March 31), whereas Priority One cohort data can be captured at any time. For that reason, Priority One data is a fiscal year ahead of the shelter data, and calculations of housing need are calculated accordingly.

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Projected shelter users						1671	1715	1756	1798	1841	1885		
Observed shelter users	1463	1520	1560	1705	1536	1671	1622	1598					
Projected chronic shelter users						199	210	225	242	259	277		
Observed chronic shelter users (147 beds)	140	185	161	170	181	199	155	157					
Estimated population total (197 beds)								213					
Difference: projected - observed							55	68					
Housing needed (CAA + RHFP)								157	88	44	0		
Projected Priority One cohort									34	9	0		
Observed Priority One cohort							74	41	34				
Projected Reduction								213	142	71	0		
Observed Reduction							347	213					
Existing Supportive Housing							85	85	11	25	20	20	16
New RHFP Housing									35	65	100	100	100
<b>RHFP Housing Timeline</b>													
Approval							50	85	130	135			
Construction								35	100	130	135		
Occupancy									35	65	100	100	100



The following funders help support the Regional Housing First Program:



Making a difference...together



Photographs throughout this document were taken by Coalition staff members Dana Begg, Clare Pugh and Jennipher Shihundu.



greater victoria  
coalition to end  
homelessness

---

**hope has found a home**

1125 Pembroke Street  
Victoria, BC V8T 1J3

[victoriahomelessness.ca](http://victoriahomelessness.ca)