



**City of Campbell River
Homelessness Task Force Report
September 2009**

Homelessness is not only a housing problem, but it is always a housing problem.

- J. David Hulchanski,
- Professor and Director,
Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto

The homeless population of B.C. - are not an alien species. They are our sons and our daughters, our brothers and our sisters. They are us.

- Dr. David Chudnovsky,
Member of the Legislative Assembly,
Vancouver-Kensington, BC

The homeless are our own refugees.

- Oct. 19, 2008 Times Colonist (Victoria) article, by David Mulroney

Action is required – not more surveys.

- Campbell River resident,
May 20, 2009 Public Meeting on Homelessness,
Radiant Life Church, downtown Campbell River

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Background	3
• How was the Task Force formed?	
• What was the Task Force asked to do?	
• Who is on the Task Force?	
• What research has been undertaken by the Campbell River Task Force?	
3. Who are the Homeless?.....	5
• Absolute Homelessness	
• Homelessness due to crisis	
• Risk of Homelessness/Hidden Homelessness	
4. What is being done in other Communities?	6
5. What is being done in Campbell River?	6
6. Public Input.....	13
• What did individuals have to say?	
• What did service providers have to say?	
• What did we learn at the Public Meeting?	
7. What factors contribute to Homelessness?	15
8. What can be done to address Homelessness in Campbell River?	16
A. Coordination of service providers	
B. Role of government agencies	
C. Possible strategies and solutions	
9. Summary of Recommendations	20
10. Conclusion.....	21
Housing Glossary	22
Appendix A: Initiatives from Other Communities	24
Appendix B: Agencies Providing Services in Campbell River.....	27
Appendix C: Homelessness Task Force Survey and Results.....	30
Appendix D: Agency Survey and Results	36
Appendix E: Workshops	40
Appendix F: Shipping container housing	42
Bibliography of Research	46

1. Executive Summary

In February 2009, Campbell River City Council created a task force to examine the issue of homelessness with the aim of providing recommendations to alleviate the problem. The Task Force consisted of eight individuals representing service providers and members of the community.

Terms of Reference were to:

- Determine the extent of homelessness in Campbell River;
- Review the number of agencies and resources in Campbell River that are currently dealing with the homeless, their current roles, and funding sources;
- Identify future partners in dealing with the homeless;
- Examine the current role/contributions of the Federal Government, Provincial Government, VIHA and the City of Campbell River.

The Task Force was asked to make recommendations regarding:

- The coordination of current service providers and other possible partners;
- The role of the Federal government, Provincial Government, VIHA and City of Campbell River;
- Possible strategies and solutions to resolve the issue of homelessness in Campbell River.

The Task Force began this process by defining homelessness. This includes absolute homelessness, homelessness due to crisis and those persons at risk of homelessness or living in a state of 'hidden homelessness.'

Considerable effort was spent reviewing what had been learned and accomplished in Campbell River and other communities to address homelessness. The Task Force obtained input from the public by way of an individual survey, a survey of service providers and a public meeting. What was learned was supported and consistent with many detailed studies undertaken by other communities.

Survey results indicated that the majority of the city's homeless population have been Campbell River residents for more than five years.

Based on statistics provided by the RCMP, service providers and survey results, the Task Force estimates that the number of people who meet the definition of absolute homelessness in Campbell River is approximately 35 to 50. A much larger group (up to an additional 450 people) meet the broader definition of homelessness.

Of the 388 individuals surveyed by the Task Force:

- Equal number of male and female;
- 43% are between the ages of 40 and 54;
- 66% have lived in Campbell River for five years or more;
- 64% struggle to maintain their housing;
- 33% have visited the emergency room in the last 3 months;

Those attending the Public Meeting emphasized the need for:

- Action – “not more surveys;”
- Coordination of effort to ensure effectiveness;
- 24-hour public facilities that include washrooms, drinking water, laundry, showers and telephones;
- More affordable housing.

In Campbell River and other communities, commonly stated factors contributing to homelessness are:

- Poverty;
- Lack of affordable housing;
- Mental illness and/or addictions;
- Lack of intensive support services;
- Discharge into homelessness from psychiatric, correctional, acute care, addiction treatment facilities and aging out of foster care;
- Social safety net, i.e. Income Assistance, Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security do not provide adequate funds for housing and food;
- Difficulty for some to obtain and retain housing due to lack of tenancy skills.

The Task Force recommends that the City of Campbell River:

1. Base all strategies on the guiding principle of “housing first” including the provision of permanent low-barrier, supportive housing with a focus on harm reduction.
2. Establish a Select Committee to address homelessness in Campbell River.
3. Appoint a person to coordinate the function of the committee and to liaise between the various agencies, all levels of government and the City of Campbell River.
4. Work with all levels of government and community partners to secure or develop affordable long-term housing for an additional 50 people who meet the Task Force’s definition of homelessness for each of the next five consecutive years.
5. Work with community partners to enhance day-time services available for people who are homeless to include showers, laundry, lockers, washrooms and telephone access.
6. Continue to provide land for the development of affordable, supportive housing.
7. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to permit secondary suites, rooming houses and other housing options throughout the City.
8. Amend the City’s Official Community Plan to provide incentives such as density bonusing and taxation options to encourage the development of affordable housing.
9. Establish a reserve fund that would be used to support homelessness initiatives.
10. Encourage all levels of government to work together and partner with non-government organizations to be more effective in addressing homelessness.

2. Background

The Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness in Campbell River

Mayor Cornfield, in his inaugural speech stated his intention to create a Task Force to examine the issue of homelessness in Campbell River. In February 2009, Council approved the Homelessness Task Force's terms of reference and appointed members to the Task Force.

What has the Task Force been asked to do?

The purpose of the Homelessness Task Force was to examine the issue of homelessness in Campbell River with the aim of providing recommendations to alleviate the problem. The terms of reference included a request that the task force:

- Determine the extent of homelessness in Campbell River;
- Review the number of agencies and resources that are currently dealing with the homeless, their current roles, and funding sources;
- Identify future partners in dealing with the homeless;
- Examine the current role/contributions of the Federal Government, Provincial Government, VIHA and the City of Campbell River.

In addition, the task force was asked to make recommendations regarding:

- The coordination of current service providers and other possible partners;
- Possible solutions to the issue of homelessness in Campbell River;
- The role of the Federal government, Provincial Government, VIHA and City of Campbell River in assisting in those possible solutions.

Who is on the Task Force?

- Dale Blackburn, Chair;
- Dick Patterson, Vice-Chair;
- Terry Falk, Board Member, Island J.A.D.E. Vancouver Island;
- Leslie MacLennan, Campbell River Mental Health and Addiction Services (VIHA);
- Tara Goodless-Mason, Supervisor, Campbell River and Port Hardy, Ministry of Housing and Social Development;
- Wendy Tyrer, Director, Evergreen House and Lighthouse Centre;
- Pastor Art Van Holst, Radiant Life Community Church;
- Audrey Wilson, Laichwiltach;
- Cpl. Brian Brown, Campbell River RCMP;
- Councillor Claire Moglove, Council Liaison;
- Peter Wipper, Legislative Services Manager, Staff Liaison;
- Dodie Braithwaite, Support Staff;
- Sylvie Januszewski, Support Staff;
- Sandra Deutch, practicum student, North Island College;
- Shelly Pallen, practicum student, North Island College.

What research has been undertaken by the Campbell River Task Force?

The Task Force attempted to learn as much about homelessness as possible so that its report would be thorough, well-researched and relevant to Campbell River. This was accomplished by a variety of methods including:

- The review of reports and initiatives of other communities and agencies regarding:
 - Definition of homelessness;
 - Extent of homelessness;
 - Successes and failures of various initiatives;
 - Recommended solutions for homelessness.
- Presentations from:
 - Ted Brooks, Chair, Comox Valley Commission to End Homelessness;
 - Greg Hill, Executive Director, BC Association for Community Living (Campbell River);
 - John Horn, Social Planner and Co-Chair, City of Nanaimo's group on Homelessness;
 - Richard Miller, Personal Development Planner, The Salvation Army ;
 - Valerie Puetz, Executive Director, North Island Transition Society;
 - Sian Thomson, Executive Director and Stephanie Kihn, Homeless Outreach Worker, Island J.A.D.E. Society (North Island);
 - Diane Welsh, Program Officer, Campbell River Employment and Labour - Market, Ministry of Housing and Social Development.
- An extensive review of what is currently being done in Campbell River.
- A survey of service recipients (Appendix C).
- A survey of service providers (Appendix D).
- A public open house meeting.
- Attendance at various workshops (Appendix E).

3. Who are the Homeless?

There are many definitions of homelessness which have been developed by various other communities and studies. The Task Force reviewed a wide range of definitions. For the purpose of this Task Force report, homelessness is defined as follows:

Absolute Homelessness

Individuals and families who are living in:

- Public spaces without legal claim (e.g. living in the bush, on the streets, in abandoned buildings, in tents);
- A temporary or emergency shelter;
- A public facility or service (e.g. hospital, care facility, rehabilitation or treatment centre, correctional facility) and cannot return to a stable residence; or

Individuals and families who are:

- Financially, sexually, physically or emotionally exploited to maintain their shelter. (difficult to identify- drug houses, prostitution.)

Homelessness due to crisis

Individuals and families who are:

- Homeless because their previous residence became uninhabitable due to a human caused or natural disaster (e.g. fire, earthquake).

Risk of Homelessness/Hidden Homelessness

Individuals and families who are living in:

- Temporary accommodation where they do not have control over the length and conditions of tenure (e.g. staying in a guest room, name not on lease, couch surfing, two or more individuals who are double bunking in a single room because appropriate housing is not available);
- Time-limited housing designed to help them transition from being homeless to living in a permanent form of housing, e.g. transitional housing or second-stage housing; or
- Accommodation where tenancy will be terminated within three months (e.g. given notice by landlord for a variety of reasons which may include tenant behaviour).

4. What is being done in other Communities?

The Task Force reviewed a variety of studies conducted by other communities including Victoria, Calgary, Portland, Oregon, Comox Valley and Nanaimo. Summaries of the various studies are attached as Appendix A.

In addition, the Task Force invited the Chairs from the Nanaimo and the Comox Valley Homelessness Commissions, to provide a summary of what their communities are doing. From the review of the various studies, it became apparent to the Task Force that there are many recurring themes and recommendations to address homelessness. The most notable are:

- A housing first strategy;
- Housing must be affordable, low-barrier and supportive;
- The need to coordinate community groups and agencies.

5. What is being done in Campbell River?

There are a vast number of organizations in Campbell River who are providing services for those who are homeless. For some agencies this is their primary activity, for others this is a component of a broader mandate. A comprehensive list of these agencies and their contact information is attached as Appendix B.

Some of the agencies which provide services and programs for people who are homeless include:

AIDS Vancouver Island

- Established in 2004;
- Provide services to those who are infected by HIV/AIDS and/or Hepatitis and provide Harm Reduction to any person who is at risk;
- Positive wellness drop-in lounge safe non threatening environment for registered clients with snacks, personal hygiene supplies, free clothing, message centre and access to 2 nurses;
- Provides counseling and educational services specifically regarding infectious diseases;
- Harm reduction needle exchange for IV users Monday-Friday. Education and strategies regarding the prevention of sexual transmitted diseases;
- Outreach once or twice a month as time permits go out on the streets to offer harm; reduction supplies, meet on-on-one with people in the sex industry and listen to stories of street vengeance, updates and concerns;
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender social/support group facilitated weekly by counselor.

Ann Elmore Transition House

- Active in our community since 1985;
- Non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide service to women and children who are dealing with issues of abuse and violence;
- Employs 14 people;
- Two supportive recovery beds (maximum 28 days);
- Operates an 18 bed women's transition house which also provides programs to teach their residents skills needed to acquire permanent housing;

- Memorandum of Understanding with BC Housing for 30 transitional units for women to be located on property provided by the City of Campbell River;
- Most of the funding is through Ministry of Housing and Social Development; additional funds come through gaming, donations, VIHA and BC Housing.

Campbell River and District Association for Community Living

- Active in our community since 1961;
- Non-profit organization whose purpose is to advocate for services and/or provide services for people with special needs, and their families;
- Employs over 150 people who provide physical therapy and speech-language therapy in the Early Intervention Programs, supervise adult day programs services to teach life skills, work skills and self-advocacy skills, provide supported living environments, vocation settings and staffed residential settings;
- Assists clients who are at risk of homelessness with the development of life skills such as banking and food preparation;
- Provides various kinds of housing including 5 group homes with 4 residents each and a 54-unit Assisted Living housing facility;
- Currently developing an additional 14 units to the 4 existing units on Nikola Road on property it owns;
- City will provide exemption from property taxes as long as services are provided for people who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness;
- Financial support provided by the Ministry of Human Resources, Ministry for Children and Family Development, Community Living British Columbia, VIHA, BC Housing Commission, local businesses and service organizations, as well as fundraising efforts by the Association.

Campbell River Social Planning Committee

- Comprised of volunteer members representing various service providers who support the importance of social planning for our community;
- Active since May 2003;
- Partnering with the City to apply for funding to hire a social planning coordinator who would assist in the development of a social plan for the City.

Food Bank

- Registered non-profit society established in 1985;
- 25 volunteers with 1 full-time equivalent employee;
- Total registration is 680; this is a combination of families and individuals;
- Provides a monthly hamper to all registrants as well as soup and bread rations on Mondays and Fridays;
- Served 2,648 people in May 2009, a 45% increase from the same period last year;
- Funding from the BC Gaming Commission/Chances and donations (in kind and monetary) from local residents and businesses.

Island J.A.D.E. Society (North Island)

Island JADE (Justice, Advocacy, Dignity, Empowerment) Society provides free legal information, support, and referral in all areas of law and representation in administrative law processes. Its purpose is to assist people in crisis and improve the quality of life for those living in poverty.

- In operation since 1991;
- Provides poverty relief and alternative supports including legal advocacy to low income and disadvantaged people and those in crisis;
- 1,500 clients served in 2008 by 4 full-time staff;
- Funding provided through BC Law Foundation, BC Gaming, BC Housing with donations from individual citizens, youth groups, local businesses and unions;
- Donations from local businesses including tents, sleeping bags, flashlights, pillows, tarps, water containers, first aid supplies, personal hygiene items and other miscellaneous items.

Homeless Outreach Program

- One outreach worker employed for approximately one year;
- 169 homeless people entered into database;
- Housing obtained for 77 families and individuals;
- Funding provided for this program by BC Housing.

John Howard Society

- Over 20 years experience working on the North Island;
- Promote safe and healthy communities by providing appropriate programs of rehabilitation, education, prevention, and healing for those who need an opportunity to achieve, maintain or regain a balance within their communities;
- Clients are primarily youth including young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Began a “Youth Housing project” (Barnett House) in February 2008 with the purchase of a “six-plex” apartment. This facility is now fully occupied and provides supportive transitional housing for youth ages 16-19;
- Works collaboratively with all levels of government, the school district, community agencies, various businesses, service clubs and other groups that may be involved with youth. Also, receives funding from most of the above as well as the Real Estate Foundation of BC.

Laichwiltach Family Life Society

- Began in Campbell River on Sept. 1, 1992 and is located at 441 4 Ave.;
- Provides support to aboriginal people including referrals to other agencies in the community (Food Bank, soup kitchens and The Salvation Army, etc.);
- Provides coffee and snacks Monday to Friday;
- Provide bread etc. on Tues., Thurs. & Fri. for public to take (donated by Thrifty foods);
- Clothing on shelf available to public;
- John Howard Society provides staff person once a week (Tuesdays) to youth who come to LFLS who are on the street;
- Funding provided both provincially and federally.

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

- Administers income assistance benefits on behalf of the Province;
- Homeless Outreach worker helps connect homeless people with income assistance services. (Our Homeless Outreach Worker is no longer coming to town, but the community organizations that he liaises with can refer homeless applicants to him and he does their intakes remotely.);
- Attempt to provide same-day service to address individuals' and or families' immediate needs (including homelessness) when identified;
- Funding provided by Province of British Columbia.

Employment Assistance Services

Consists of four programs that may assist homeless people including:

- Skills Development - funding support for skills training to individuals who identify a lack of marketable skills as an employment barrier;
- Targeted Wage Subsidies - assisting unemployed individuals to obtain on-the-job work experience;
- Self Employment - providing financial assistance and entrepreneurial counseling;
- Job Creation Partnership - providing funding to existing organizations to assist with projects.

North Gate Foursquare Church

- Monthly Free Store providing clothing and food;
- In operation for one year serving approximately 30 people per month;
- Funding provided by private donations.

North Island Supportive Recovery Society "Second Chance"

- The North Island Supportive Recovery Society has operated Second Chance since 1990;
- 4 crisis stabilization beds and 6 supportive recovery beds for men 19 years of age and older;
- Provides services to about 200 men each year, almost all of whom are homeless or have unstable, unsafe or inadequate housing;
- Provides in-house and outreach services to support clients in their recovery;
- Funding sources include the Vancouver Island Health Authority, the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, Bingo and Direct Access Gaming Funds, Strathcona Regional District and the United Way.

Radiant Life Community Church

- Operating in downtown Campbell River for over three years;
- Hosts the United Church's Saturday Soup Kitchen;
- Sunday and Holiday Soup Kitchen serving between 75-115 meals each week, (numbers increasing over the last six months);
- Serves breakfast Monday to Friday;
- Community Christmas Dinner with The Salvation Army and Save-On Foods;
- Distributes food, clothing, personal care items, tents and tarps, sleeping bags and bedding, shoes, boots, coats, gloves, hats, and hot packs;

- Addiction counseling and referral services;
- Funding provided through private donations.

The Salvation Army

- Began in Campbell River in 1991 with a soup kitchen at the corner of St. Ann's & Alder street;
- Employs approximately 66 staff and operates a variety of ministries including:

Evergreen Apartments

- 6-plex;
- 3 to 6 month program;
- 2nd stage housing for men and women in recovery.

Evergreen Shelter

- Operates 4 crisis stabilization beds for women;
- 22 bed shelter (20 men, 2 women), which provides meals as well as personal hygiene supplies, showers and some clothing;
- 30 day maximum stay;
- Open and staffed 24 hours a day/7 days a week;
- Laundry facilities (if residing in house);
- Funded by BC Housing and VIHA.

Extreme Weather Program

- Lighthouse Centre from November until March;
- 9 p.m. – 7 a.m., 2 staff on duty throughout those hours;
- Sleeping accommodations for 12;
- 30 adults and 2 youth accommodated in 2008;
- Light dinner, showers and warm clothing;
- Laundry for Extreme Weather clients (staff operated);
- Funded by BC Housing.

Lighthouse Centre:

- Emergency Assistance;
- Soup Kitchen week days 11:30-1:30pm (averages 100 people per day);
- Medical Room, drug and alcohol counseling and treatment referral services (attended by Crisis Nurses, Public Health Nurses);
- Partners with Narcotics Anonymous and Campbell River Sexual Exploitation Team;
- Operates James Club (Christian 12 step program);
- Clinical Counseling available in November 2009;
- Showers, computer skills and winter coat program;
- Funded by Christmas Kettles and private donations.

Oceancrest Church:

- Family Services including food, emergency assistance by appointment and vouchers for furniture and clothing from The Salvation Army Thrift Store;
- Drug and alcohol support and counseling services;
- Marriage counseling;
- Youth group discussion nights, with topics which include homelessness and addiction.

Sandwich Van

- In operation since January 2008;
- Sandwiches, coffee, dessert and fruit served from a mobile van 6:45-8:00pm weekdays;
- Served approximately 1260 females and 3699 males and numerous youth. Toques, gloves, sleeping bags, and tents were given to those in need.

United Church

- Weekly Saturday Soup Kitchen at Radiant Life Church;
- Serve between 75-100 meals each week;
- Saturday lunch served in various downtown locations for the past eight years;
- Funding provided by private donations.

VIHA/Campbell River Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS)

VIHA/Campbell River Mental Health and Addiction Services provide a wide range of voluntary, non-crisis services to adults with mental illness and/or addiction issues. The following represent those services which may benefit people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness:

- Residential Programs for eligible clients of Mental Health and Addition Services include, Family Care Homes, rent subsidies, a six-unit subsidized apartment program, and contracted crisis stabilization beds (contracts are with The Salvation Army and North Island Supportive Recovery Society);
- Adult Community Support Services Team provides outreach case management for adults with serious, persistent mental illness, working closely with family physicians. Services include individual and group counseling, psychiatric assessment, access to housing and rehabilitation programs, connection with/advocacy for community resources, and education for clients and families;
- Addiction Services Team provides individual and group counseling for adults with addiction issues;
- Rehabilitation Program provides occupational therapy, supported independent living services and vocational support services;
- Office hours are 8:30 – 4:30 Monday to Friday. An After Hours Response worker is available into the evening hours on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturdays;
- Other contracted services include the Campbell River Beacon Club for people living with mental illness, a family education program, a public education program (puppet program) and a peer support program.

VIHA/ Crisis Services:

- Crisis nurse available 7 days a week 9:30 am to 9:30 pm at Campbell River Hospital Emergency Department;
- Services provided include crisis intervention, crisis stabilization, medical and social detox, referrals and support to community crisis stabilization beds (for both men and women).

Vancouver Island North Women's Resource Society (Women's Centre)

- Operating as a non-profit, registered charity in Campbell River since 1983;
- 400-420 drop-in visits each month;
- Part-time professional staff and more than 25 regular volunteers;
- Active on community committees focusing on domestic violence and sexual exploitation;
- Serve a population of women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Funding from BC Gaming/Chances Campbell River as well as various donations from the community and grants.

Antipoverty Program

- Distributes free clothing, personal care, hygiene supplies, infant formula and diaper vouchers;
- Fundraise and distribute school supplies to 200 – 250 families annually;
- Use of this program has increased more than 150 per cent in the past 3 years, with a subsequent short-fall in funding;
- Funding by community donations and BC Gaming grant.

Drop-in Centre

- For women and their children Monday to Thursday from 10-3;
- Support and crisis counseling from professional staff and trained volunteers;
- Information and referral to community resources;
- Computer and internet access;
- Free workshops and groups focusing on women's wellness.

Senior Peer Counseling Program

- Provides emotional support to men and women aged 55+;
- Since March 2008, provided weekly support to more than 30 seniors.

Volunteer Income Tax Program

- Operates January until August;
- Assistance with income tax for persons on low income (men and women);
- Completed 170 returns in 2009.

Vineyard Christian Fellowship Church

- Provides hot dinners to over 100 people three times per year;
- In operation for 6 years;
- Funding provided by private donations.

6. Public Input

In an effort to learn more about homelessness in Campbell River, the Task Force conducted an individual survey, a survey of service providers and held a public meeting.

What did individuals have to say?

The Task Force conducted a survey in May 2009 by interviewing 388 individuals at various agencies in Campbell River including: Radiant Life Church, the Food Bank and the Lighthouse Centre.

The survey attempted to quantify the number of homeless people in Campbell River, identify factors leading to their homelessness and obtain suggestions of possible solutions. The survey/interview questionnaire and a summary of the responses are attached as Appendix C.

Notable results include:

- 37 (10%) identified themselves as absolute homeless;
- 39 (10%) identified themselves as hidden homeless;
- 249 (64%) struggled to maintain their housing;
- 66% have been residents of Campbell River for 5 years or more;
- 12% have been residents of Campbell River for 2 years or less;
- 2.5% have been residents of Campbell River for less than 3 months;
- 43% were between the ages of 40 and 54;
- Equal number of male and female respondents;
- 26% were single;
- 33% had visited the emergency room in the last 3 months.

What did service providers have to say?

The Task Force conducted an on-line survey of service providers. Thirty-two agencies responded. These agencies provide services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on a regular basis. The on-line survey and a summary of responses are attached as Appendix D.

Results of this survey indicate:

- The number of individuals and families struggling with housing issues is increasing;
- Two respondents said their agencies saw 500 or more people who met the definition of “risk of homelessness/hidden homeless” last year;
- Funding to provide services is inadequate;
- There is a lack of safe affordable housing;
- Many of these agencies are actively looking at ways to address homelessness;
- There is interest in participating in a community coalition to address homelessness and to coordinate community efforts and resources.

What did we learn at the Public Meeting?

The Task Force hosted a Public Meeting on May 19, 2009 at the Radiant Life Church in downtown Campbell River. Approximately 75 people attended the meeting including representatives from service agencies, community members and many individuals who have experienced homelessness. The public meeting provided an opportunity to hear ideas regarding the causes of homelessness and possible solutions. Many were eager to express their views. These include:

- A desire for immediate action. “Action is required – not more surveys”;
- Coordination of efforts is imperative in order to be effective;
- 24-hour public facilities including washrooms, drinking water, laundry, showers and telephones;
- A need for more affordable housing;
- A need for low-barrier housing;
- Increased financial support for people on social assistance, as they cannot afford both housing and food;
- Access to more complete health care including dental care, so as to reduce barriers to employment;
- The need for education in tenancy skills.

7. What factors contribute to Homelessness?

After reviewing the profile of homelessness in Campbell River and other communities, the Task Force was able to identify the following contributing factors:

- Poverty;
- Lack of affordable housing;
- Mental illness and/or addictions;
- Lack of intensive support services;
- Discharge into homelessness from psychiatric, correctional, acute care, addiction treatment facilities and aging out of foster care;
- Social safety net (Income Assistance, Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security) does not provide adequate funds for housing and food;
- Lack of adequate tenancy skills;
- Lack of employment opportunities;
- Challenging and difficult requirements in applying for social benefits;
- Reluctance of some landlords to rent to a variety of people (youth, people on income assistance, First Nations, immigrants, single mothers, physically disabled, etc);
- Discrimination related to homelessness;
- Eviction history;
- Criminal history;
- Family breakdown;
- Domestic violence.

8. What can be done to address Homelessness in Campbell River?

The Task Force observed through the public meeting, surveys, speakers, agency reports and ongoing conversations that there are many agencies working in our community in different ways to support people who are homeless. It also became clear that there is a willingness and interest on the part of the many Government and Non-Government Organizations to work together to reduce homelessness. It was noted that an essential element in strategies developed by other communities was improved coordination of all the groups and agencies which provide services to the homeless.

A. Coordination of Service Providers

The City of Campbell River needs to serve a leadership role in the **creation of a select committee***, which would draw on the community's resources and provide an opportunity to speak with a unified voice when supporting housing initiatives and all other endeavours to address homelessness. This committee would serve to coordinate the efforts of the various community groups who are currently providing services for homeless people or may do so in the future. The committee would work towards ensuring that services are not duplicated and that gaps in services are addressed. The committee would also promote the coordination of support services, so that people can easily navigate the complex system of services that currently exist.

The committee would:

- a) Be inclusive and representative;
- b) **Include a member appointed by the City** (volunteer, City staff representative or contract position) to provide coordination and liaison between the committee, the various agencies, senior levels of government and the City of Campbell River;
- c) Include representation from all levels of government, including BC Housing and the Vancouver Island Health Authority;
- d) Include input from people who have experienced homelessness;
- e) Implement strategies to deal with homelessness focusing on 'Housing First' strategy;
- f) Set defined timeframes for all recommended courses of action;
- g) Obtain access to web-based data collection technology to be used for identification of client needs, the services available and their utilization. The committee would also use web-based technology for the evaluation of the effectiveness and accountability of the various strategies along with the use of human resources and funding;
- h) Promote and support the provision of multi discipline outreach services;
- i) Development community education programs regarding homelessness;
- j) Provide an annual review of homelessness initiatives, to be published on the City of Campbell River's website.

* Section 142 of the Community Charter states: *A council may establish and appoint a select committee to consider or inquire into any matter and to report its findings and opinion to the council. At least one member of a select committee must be a council member.*

B. Role of Government Agencies

The City of Campbell River needs to encourage all levels of Government including Federal, Provincial, Regional and First Nations to work together and partner with each other and Non-Government Organizations to more effectively address homelessness issues by:

1. Lobbying the **Federal Government** (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Service Canada, Corrections Canada, Canada Health Act) to:
 - a) Re-establish the National Strategy for Housing;
 - b) Increase the support and housing capacity for people being discharged from federal institutions;
 - c) Implement The Mental Health Commission of Canada's homelessness initiatives;
 - d) Provide funding to alleviate homelessness for aboriginal people.

2. Lobbying the **Provincial Government** (Ministry of Housing and Social Development - BC Housing, Income Assistance, Housing Matters; Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Solicitor General, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance) to:
 - a) Secure or develop affordable long-term housing for an additional 50 people who meet the Task Force's definition of homelessness for each of the next five consecutive years;
 - b) Direct the current allocation of Property Purchase Transfer Tax into a community reserve fund;
 - c) Increase the support and housing capacity for people being discharged from correctional and psychiatric facilities;
 - d) Enhance the rental assistance program including funding levels, eligibility criteria, public awareness and timely approval process. (BC Housing);
 - e) Continue support for housing projects presently underway (i.e. Habitat for Humanity, Campbell River Assoc for Community Living and North Island Transition Society);
 - f) Provide equitable funding in rural/remote communities such as Campbell River in concert with larger urban communities;
 - g) Provide urgently needed secondary housing for recovering addicts that is safe and requires accountability on behalf of the occupants;
 - h) Increase financial support to people receiving income assistance (Ministry of Housing & Social Development).

3. Encouraging the **Vancouver Island Health Authority** (VIHA) to:
 - a) Work in partnership with BC Housing and other stakeholders such as the City and non-profit societies to provide a range of housing resources. This includes supported housing, residential (staffed) housing and emergency housing;
 - b) Ensure that plans for the new Campbell River hospital and the proposed mental health and addiction beds provide housing and supports with assertive community treatment services for those who will be discharged back into the community;
 - c) Ensure that plans for our new Campbell River hospital provide for a sobering and assessment centre and medical detox centre;
 - d) Establish an assertive community treatment (ACT) team (VIHA "reducing homelessness," January 2008 and BC's Mental Health Reform Best Practices for Assertive Community Treatment) to work with people most at risk of homelessness;
 - e) Ensure necessary health and dental services are accessible and available to all in our community, including those who are homeless.

C. Possible Strategies and Solutions

“The only *real* solution to homelessness is homes.”

- Affordable Housing Calgary, Feb. 2, 2007

The Task Force studied information from a variety of sources and communities and it became apparent that the City of **Campbell River needs to support a ‘Housing First’ model**. Housing First refers to the principle that the first priority must be to provide homes regardless of an individual’s problems or behaviour. It has been shown that once housed there is an improvement in a person’s circumstances regardless of their initial problems.

Research clearly indicates that the most effective forms of housing for the homeless include the following best practice elements:

- a) Low-barrier criteria – The available housing may have minimal, defined expectations as to abstaining from using drugs and alcohol; however, abstinence is not an absolute requirement to qualify for housing;
- b) Safety – The housing must offer security, promote good health and focus on proven harm reduction behaviors;
- c) Supportive services – These are best provided by a community based multi-disciplinary team which is directed to facilitate a wide range of assistance including:
 - Interpersonal and life skill development;
 - Substance abuse services;
 - Counselling and therapy for mental illness;
 - Tenancy skills;
 - Vocational support.
- d) Client centred – Housing and support services based upon specific resident needs are necessary for those with mental illness or substance abuse. Single-room occupancy with independence and individual participation in decision making should be goals.

The Task Force established that on any given day there are approximately 50 people who are considered absolutely homeless in Campbell River. This estimate likely represents only 10% of those who meet our broader definition of homelessness which includes those people at risk of homelessness and hidden homelessness. These numbers are based on two surveys, a public meeting and information provided by service providers.

Providing housing for these homeless people is the essential foundation for a successful response to homelessness in this community. Several agencies are currently assisting homeless people in Campbell River to obtain housing. Despite these efforts there is insufficient affordable housing to meet the need for the present and the future. Consequently, the Task Force recommends that **additional affordable long-term housing be secured or developed for 50 people who meet the Task Force’s definition of homelessness for each of the next five consecutive years.**

To accomplish this, the City of Campbell River needs to:

1. Address the needs of homeless people by:
 - a) **Working with community partners to enhance day-time services available for people who are homeless to include showers, laundry, lockers, washrooms and telephone access;**
 - b) **Amending the zoning bylaw to encourage the development of secondary suites and rooming houses;**
 - c) **Providing incentives for the development of affordable housing** such as: density bonusing; cash incentives for secondary suites (Victoria); taxation options;
 - d) **Making land available** for affordable, supportive, low-barrier housing;
 - e) Lobbying the Provincial Government to enable the development of alternate forms of low-cost housing e.g. housing created from shipping containers.
2. Reach out to the community and develop strong partnerships by:
 - a) Taking a proactive approach, in offering land through a Request for Proposal process, to develop affordable housing options for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
 - b) Public education campaign and community relationship building;
 - c) Continued support for current projects (North Island Transition Society and Association for Community Living);
 - d) Support programs which focus on landlord engagement (market housing) which promote crime free multi-unit housing;
 - e) Promoting the development of tenancy skills training programs.
3. **Establish a reserve fund** that would be used to support homelessness initiatives. Examples for use of this fund are off-setting developer incentives; tenancy training programs and establishing a day-time center.

Sources of revenue could include:

- a) Donations from the public;
- b) Casino gaming revenue;
- c) Percentage of revenue from licensing of secondary suites or rooming houses, building permits, and housing developments.

9. Summary of Recommendations

The following recommendations represent a summary of “What can be done to address homelessness in Campbell River?” as described in Section 8.

The Homelessness Task Force recommends that Council:

- 1. Adopt “Housing First,” as the guiding principle in all matters relating to homelessness.*
- 2. Establish, by year-end 2009, a Select Committee to address homelessness in Campbell River.*
- 3. Appoint a person to coordinate the function of the committee and to liaise between the various agencies, all levels of government and the City of Campbell River by year-end 2009.*
- 4. Work with all levels of government and community partners to secure or develop affordable long-term housing for an additional 50 people who meet the Task Force’s definition of homelessness for each of the next five consecutive years.*
- 5. Work with community partners to enhance day-time services available for people who are homeless to include showers, laundry, lockers, washrooms and telephone access by Spring 2010.*
- 6. Continue to provide land for the development of affordable, supportive housing.*
- 7. Amend the Zoning Bylaw by the end of 2010 to permit secondary suites, rooming houses and other housing options throughout the City.*
- 8. Amend the City’s Official Community Plan to provide incentives such as density bonusing and taxation options to encourage the development of affordable housing.*
- 9. Establish a reserve fund that would be used to support homelessness initiatives such as providing cash incentives for creation of secondary suites by year-end 2010.*
- 10. Endorse recommendations to alleviate homelessness as outlined in Section 8.B.(1) (2) (3) to be submitted as resolutions to the 2010 annual general meeting of the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities and the Union of B.C. Municipalities.*

10. Conclusion

This Task Force report is about men, women and children in our community who are without safe and secure housing. Many live with mental illness, addictions and/or complex personal circumstances. All struggle with poverty. Homeless people are members of our community. They may be our neighbours or our family members.

Homelessness, lack of affordable housing, and poverty are inexorably linked. This report provides statistics and profiles leading to strategies and proposals with the goal to eliminate homelessness in Campbell River, rather than to merely manage it. The people of Campbell River are creative, energetic and consistently exhibit a long-term commitment of giving to others. These qualities will be the foundation of our success. There are many individuals and agencies currently addressing this need and there is much more to be done.

The cost of inaction for this problem is high. The homeless individual struggles everyday to meet basic needs. Society, by default, is burdened with providing additional healthcare, criminal justice and social services. These costs are estimated to be one-third more for those who are homeless, but are dramatically reduced in those communities which adopt the 'Housing First' approach.

We live in one of the richest countries in the world. There is no reason why all people who seek safe and affordable housing should not be able to obtain it. We have the resources to do it and the moral obligation to make it happen.

Housing Glossary:

Abstinence-Based or Dry Housing: Housing where tenants are not allowed to drink alcohol or use other drugs while in *tenancy*. Tenants are expected to be "clean" before moving in and actively working on their recovery while living there. Tenants may be discharged from the program if they refuse treatment or relapse.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT): Is a service-delivery model for providing comprehensive community-based treatment to persons with severe and persistent mental illness and now is the accepted strategy for providing services to homeless persons including those with substance abuse.

Damp Housing: Housing where tenants do not need to be "clean" when entering the program, but are expected to be actively working on recovery from substance use problems.

Dedicated Site: Housing units that are placed in a common building, where all the tenants are part of the program.

Emergency: Short-term shelter for people in crisis. Some emergency shelters also provide meals and support services to the people who stay there.

Group Home: A home that is shared by a number of tenants who are generally expected to participate in shared living arrangements and activities. There is usually 24-hour support staff on site.

Hardest to House: Refers to people with more complex needs and multiple challenges when it comes to housing, such as mental illness(es), addiction(s), other conditions or disabilities, justice-system histories, etc.

Harm Reduction: Harm reduction is a pragmatic response that focuses on keeping people safe and minimizing death, disease and injury associated with higher risk behaviour, while recognizing that the behaviour may continue despite the risks. At the conceptual level, harm reduction maintains a value neutral and humanistic view of drug use and the drug user. It focuses on the harms from drug use rather than on the use itself. It does not insist on or object to abstinence and acknowledges the active role of the drug user in harm reduction programs.

Low Barrier Housing: Housing where a minimum number of expectations are placed on people who wish to live there. The aim is to have as few barriers as possible to allow more people access to services. In housing this often means that tenants are not expected to abstain from using alcohol or other drugs, or from carrying on with street activities while living on-site, so long as they do not engage in these activities in common areas of the house and are respectful of other tenants and staff. Low-barrier facilities follow a harm reduction philosophy.

Non-Profit or Community Housing: Housing that is run by a community organization.

Permanent: Long-term housing with no maximum length of stay.

Private Market: Traditional rental housing that is run by private landlords rather than a housing program.

Public Housing: Housing that is owned by the government.

Scattered Site: Housing units are spread out in apartments in various locations around the city rather than all in one common building. These apartments may be either market or social housing.

Second Stage Housing: Housing that is supported, time-limited and affordable. People may come to second stage housing from a transition house, shelter or a supportive recovery house.

Single Room Occupancy (SRO): Small, one-room apartments that are rented on a monthly or weekly basis. Tenants share common bathrooms and sometimes also share kitchen facilities.

Social Housing: Housing provided by the government (public housing) or a community organization (non-profit housing).

Subsidized: Housing that receives funding from the government or a community organization. Tenants who live in subsidized housing pay rent that is less than market value.

Supported: Affordable housing where the tenants have access to support services in addition to housing. These services vary and can include:

- Life skills training: income management, job training, medication management;
- Medical care;
- Social activities;
- Problem substance use rehabilitation programs;
- Case management.

Transitional: Time-limited, affordable, supported or independent housing. Tenants can usually remain in transitional housing for up to 2 or 3 years.

Wet Housing: Housing where tenants are not expected to abstain from using alcohol and other drugs and where entering rehabilitation program is not a requirement. Tenants have access to recovery services and get to decide if and when they use these services. Wet housing programs follow a harm reduction philosophy.

Appendix A: Initiatives From Other Communities

Calgary

www.endinghomelessness.ca

- Housing first strategy with 10-year action plan including promoting secondary suites, specialized and single-room occupancy housing, utilization of existing surplus school sites and City-owned lands.
- The cost of not dealing with homelessness is substantial. In the province of Alberta it is estimated that the cost of inaction would be \$6.65 billion over 10 year period. The strategy is to spend \$3.3 billion over the same period for construction and supports to address homelessness.

Comox Valley Commission

www.rdcs.bc.ca/notices.asp?id=3108

- One of the challenges the Comox Valley Commission has had is the number of local governments represented in the Valley - Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland and the Regional District. The City of Courtenay has not been forthcoming with land or any other assistance for the homeless. The Commission has been operating through the Regional District as the City of Courtenay only represents a small portion of the total number of homeless;
- All the Agencies & local government need to be involved in the process. There needs to be 'buy-in' from everyone involved;
- The Comox Valley Commission to End Homelessness has been an advocate for 'zero discharge' which means that people being discharged from correction services or detox centres have to have housing and not be discharged to the street. They provide temporary housing which could be a hotel room;
- 'Dawn to Dawn' is up and running. They rent apartments and then sublet the rooms in the apartments, acting as intermediaries between the tenants and the landlords- to ensure longer term housing for the tenants. Dawn to Dawn also has an outreach van staffed by volunteer nurses and physicians who provide assistance to the homeless. Dawn to Dawn fund raises to help financially support the program.

City of Nanaimo

www.nanaimomen.com/pdf/Library/Nanaimo_Homelessness_Plan_2003.pdf

City Social Planner John Horn co-chairs the Nanaimo Working Group on Homelessness, Working group has been in existence for 9 years and has been successful in securing senior government funding.

- Housing First model;
- Harm reduction model;
- Street outreach needed;
- Homeless counts vs surveys (note that a homeless count is not a survey);
- Goal to have five year-ten year time frame for planning;
- Mobilize community/community acceptance;
- Ongoing communication and consultation;
- Accountability;
- Range of housing-disbursement/range of housing (low barrier);
- Support services.

Portland

www.portlandonline.com/bhcd/index.cfm?c=38062

- Housing first strategy and creation of web-based database to examine more accurate numbers of homeless persons, the frequency of homelessness and the depth and breadth of homelessness, and to help plan more effectively to serve greater numbers of homeless people;
- Move people into housing first;
- Stop discharging people into homelessness;
- Improve outreach to homeless people;
- Emphasize permanent solutions;
- Increase supply of permanent supportive housing;
- Creative innovative new partnerships to end homelessness;
- Make the rent assistance system more effective;
- Increase economic opportunity for homeless people;
- Implement new data collection technology throughout the homeless system.

Victoria

www.victoria.ca/cityhall/tskfrc_brcycl.shtml

Key Findings

- Over 200 organizations engaged and 20 funding agencies spending \$76 million annually, plus \$62 million on other services – policing, jails, acute care hospital services, emergency room visits, emergency shelters, clean-up;
- 1500 absolute homeless with 45% substance abuse, 30% mental illness, 30% co-occurring.

Evidence Based Practices

- Low barrier housing with supportive care – these must be connected;
- Outreach Community teams are needed immediately to assist the homeless in navigating the complex fragmented web of services;
- Functional integration within, and between, agencies needs to occur at the policy, funding, governance and service delivery levels;
- Studies (in U.S.A) show that 75% of people remain in the community where they become homeless.

Proposed Actions

- “Housing first” – supported housing for homeless must be made available regardless of behaviors and individual problems. Experience shows ‘improvement’ regardless of dysfunctional behaviors;
- Assertive Community Teams – trained proactive outreach teams including partnership among police, VIHA, Housing and Social Development;
- Strategies aimed at public awareness to address discrimination and stigma of homelessness;
- The City needs to identify and provide land for supportive housing. This should also include fast track development planning and approval processes;

- Develop and initiate a shared information system to include data on client needs, service access and provision. This would also allow evaluation as to the effectiveness of strategies, including human resources and funding.

Implemented all 7 policies recommended by “Best Practices by SmartGrowth B.C.” which include:

- Density Bonus;
- Inclusionary Zoning;
- Rent Restrictions;
- Resale Price Restrictions;
- Housing Fund;
- Demolition Policy;
- Secondary Suite Policy.

Appendix B: Agencies Providing Services in Campbell River

AIDS Vancouver Island
1371c Cedar Street, Campbell River, B.C. V9W 2W6
(250) 830-0787, www.avi.org

Ann Elmore Transition House
P.O. Box 548, Campbell River, B.C. V9W 5C1
(250) 286-3666

Campbell River and Area Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association,
#202, 437 10th Ave., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 4E4
(250) 830-0171, www.crmisa.ca

Campbell River & District Association for Community Living
1153 Greenwood St., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 3C5
(250) 286-0391, www.cradacl.bc.ca

Campbell River FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) Community Action Network
1153 Greenwood St., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 3C5
(250) 286-0391, www.cradacl.bcca/programs.html

Campbell River Food Bank Society
1671 Petersen Road, Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 286-3226

GT Hiring Solutions (2005) Inc.
303, 909 Island Hwy, Campbell River, B.C., V9W 2C2
(250) 286-4231, www.gthiringsolutions.ca

Homalco Indian Band,
1218 Bute Cres., Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 923-4979

Housing Matters BC
www.housingmattersbc.ca/strategy1.html

Island J.A.D.E. Society (North Island)
#206, 1040 Shoppers Row, Campbell River, B.C., V9W 2C6
(250) 830-1171

John Howard Society
#201, 140A 10th Ave., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 4E3
(250) 286-0611, www.jhsni.bc.ca

Kwakiutl District Council Health (KDC Health)
1400A Drake Road, Campbell River, B.C., V9W 7K6
(250) 286-9766

Laichwiltach Family Life Society
441 – 4th Ave., Campbell River, B.C. V9W 3W7
(250) 286-3430

Legal Aid
101 – 500 S. Dogwood St., Campbell River, B.C. V9W 6R4
(250) 287-9521, www.legalaid.bc.ca/legal_aid/legalAidOffices.asp

M'akola Leasehold Housing Society
47A – 300 Robron Road, Campbell River, B.C., V9W 5P2
(250) 923-4145, www.makola.bc.ca

Mental Health Commission of Canada
Suite 800, 10301 Southport Lane S.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2W 1S7
www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

Methadone Clinic (Columbia Coast Medical Clinic)
15 Beech St., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 5G4
(250) 287-4822

Ministry of Children and Family Development - Child and Youth Mental Health
215, 1180 Ironwood St., Campbell River, B.C.,
(250) 830-6500

Ministry of Children and Family Development – Infant and Child Services
929 Ironwood St., Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 286-7542

Ministry of Children and Family Development – Youth Services
215, 1180 Ironwood St., Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 830-6500.

Ministry of Housing and Social Development
833A 14th Ave., Campbell River, B.C.,
1-866-866-0800, www.gov.bc.ca/hsd

Northgate Foursquare Church
403 5th Ave., Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 287-8133

North Island Alcohol/Drug Information and Education Society (NADIS)
910 Island Highway, Campbell River, B.C.,
(250) 287-4771

North Island Employment (NIEFS)
870C 13th Ave., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 4H2
(250) 286-3441, www.niefs.net.

North Island Supportive Recovery Society “Second Chance”
647 Birch Street, Campbell River, B.C.,
(250) 287-4273, www.nisrs.com

Opportunities Career Services Society
#101, 300 St. Ann's Road, Campbell River, B.C. V9W 4C6
(250) 286-3436, www.ocssoc.ca

Public Health Nursing, Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) North
200, 1100 Island Highway, Campbell River, B.C.,
(250) 850-2110

Radiant Life Community Church
1251 Cypress St., Campbell River, B.C.,
(250) 830-0190

Robron Centre
740 Robron Road, Campbell River, B.C., V9W 6J7
(250) 923-4918

The Salvation Army
www.salvationarmy.ca

- Emergency Shelter
690 Evergreen Road, Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 287-3791
- Lighthouse Centre
1381 Cedar St., Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 287-4360
- Oceancrest Community Church
291 McLean St., Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 287-3720

United Church of Canada
415 Pinecrest Road, Campbell River, B.C.,
(250) 286-0431

Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), Mental Health and Addiction Services,
#207 – 1040 Shoppers Row., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 2C6
(250) 850-5800, www.viha.ca/mhas

Vancouver Island North Women's Resource Society (Women's Centre)
1265A Ironwood St., Campbell River, B.C., V9W 5T4
(250) 287-3044, www.vinwrs.ca

Vineyard Christian Fellowship Church
2215 Campbell River Road, Campbell River, B.C.
(250) 286-3372

Appendix C: Homelessness Task Force Survey and Results

The following Homelessness Task Force survey was distributed to the following agencies in May 2009:

- Ann Elmore Transition House
- Crisis Nurse
- Campbell River Foodbank Society
- IHA Aboriginal Liaison
- Island J.A.D.E. Society (North Island)
- Laichwiltach Family Life Society
- Legal Aid
- North Island Supportive Recovery Society “Second Chance”
- Radiant Life Community Church
- The Salvation Army Lighthouse
- The Salvation Army Sandwich Van
- The Salvation Army Evergreen House
- Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)
- Vancouver Island North Women’s Resource Society (Women’s Centre)



Campbell River Homelessness Task Force Survey May 2009

The City of Campbell River appointed a task force to look at homelessness in our community and provide a report and recommendations to Council. In order to make useful recommendations we want to know how many people do not have housing and how many people have housing that is not adequate.

Your input is a valuable and essential part of this initiative. Thank you!

This is a confidential survey so please do not sign it. There will be no personal identifying data in the survey summary. You will be given a card with contact information in case you would like to talk with someone from the task force or would like a copy of the survey summary when it is complete.

1. Have you completed this survey before?
 - Yes (If yes, please do not complete another survey)
 - No

2. What is your age? _____ years

3. What gender do you put down when filling out forms?
- Male
 - Female
 - Other
4. Do you identify yourself as Aboriginal, First Nations or Metis?
- Yes
 - No
5. Do you live alone?
- Yes
 - No
6. If no, who is with you?
- Partner or Spouse
 - Child or children
 - Pet
 - Prefer not to say
7. What is your major source of income?
- Income Assistance / Welfare
(maximum \$610/month for single person = \$235+ up to \$375 shelter allowance)
 - Persons With Disability Benefits (PWD)
(maximum \$ 906.42/month for single person = \$606.42 + up to \$300 additional shelter allowance)
 - Persons With Persistent Multiple Barriers Benefits (PPMB)
(maximum \$657.92 /month for single person = \$282.92 + up to \$375 shelter allowance)
 - Canada Pension Plan
 - Old Age Security (OAS)
 - Part Time Employment
 - Full Time Employment
 - Employment Insurance
 - Collecting recyclables (bottles etc)
 - Other: _____
 - No Income
 - Prefer not to say

8. Do you have any of the following health difficulties?

(please check all that apply)

- Medical concerns
- Physical disability
- Mental health issues
- Addiction issues
- Other health problems
- Prefer not to say

9. What community services have you used in the past month?

- Food Bank
- Shelter
- Transition house
- Community meals (Lighthouse soup kitchen, sandwich van etc)
- Island JADE Society
- Church based programs
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

10. In the past 3 months have you used the Hospital Emergency Room?

- Yes
- No

11. How long have you lived in the Campbell River Area?

12. Do you live in your own home (rented or owned)?

- Yes
- No

13. If you answered yes to question 12, is your home safe and stable and are you able to afford it?

- Yes
- No

14. If you answered no to question 12, where did you stay last night?

- Someone else's place
- Vehicle
- Salvation Army Shelter
- Transition House
- Recovery House
- Outside
- Other: _____
- Prefer not to say

15. If you answered no to question 12, how long have you been without your own home?

16. Do you struggle to maintain housing?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what are the problems?

17. What do you see as solutions to alleviate homelessness that Campbell River could work toward as a community?

Comment:

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.

Campbell River May 2009 Homelessness Task Force Survey

RESULTS

Question 2: What is your age?

Under 19	7	50-54	50
19-24	47	55-59	20
25-29	37	60-64	13
30-34	31	65-69	7
35-39	33	70-74	3
40-44	59	Unknown	13
45-49	58		

Question 3: What gender do you put down when filling out forms?

Male	190
Female	194
Other	1
Unknown	3

Question 4: Do you identify yourself as Aboriginal, First Nations or Metis?

Yes 154 (40%)

Question 5/6: Do you live alone? If no, who is with you?

Alone	101
With pet	14
With child	73
With spouse	62
child & spouse	55
Other	37
Didn't say	48

Question 7: What is your major source of income?

Income Assistance/Subsidized income assistance	62%
Not on Income Assistance or Didn't Say	38%

Question 8: Do you have any of the following health difficulties?
(please check all that apply)

Of the 388 persons surveyed, only 230 responded to this question. Of the 230 who responded, they may have responded to more than one health condition.

Medical concerns	71 (31%)
Physical disability	102 (44%)
Mental health issues	70 (30%)
Addiction issues	90 (39%)
Other health problems	62 (27%)

*Please note that the results of this question may have been higher if all had responded.

Question 10: In the past 3 months have you used the Hospital Emergency Room?

Yes	127 (33%)
No	257 (66%)
Other	4 (1%)

Question 11: How long have you lived in the Campbell River Area?

Under 2 years	47
2 years +	50
5 years +	51
10 years +	78
20 years +	129
Didn't respond	36

Question 16: Do you struggle to maintain housing?

Yes	64%
No	36%

Based on the answers and anecdotal comments received from questions 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, the Task Force was able to determine the following

- 37 (10%) identified themselves as **absolute homeless**.
- 39 (10%) identified themselves as **hidden homeless**.

Appendix D: Agency Survey and Results

Homelessness - Agency Survey

Exit this survey

1. Default Section

***1. Name of agency/organization**

***2. Name and position of person completing survey**

3. Does your agency/organization receive funding specifically to provide services around homelessness?

yes

no

have applied for but not yet received funding

4. What population does your agency/organization serve?

gender(s)

age range

other

5. Please provide details of programs your agency/organization provides specifically to address homelessness issues.

6. How many people seen by your agency/organization in the past year would meet the Task Force's definition of homelessness? (see email for definition)

We would appreciate as much detail as you are able to provide.

7. What are some of the housing concerns or issues people have shared with you?

8. Please tell us about any changes your agency/organization has noticed around homelessness. (ie Have you seen an increase/decrease in the number of people

who are homeless?)

9. What do you see as solutions to alleviate homelessness that Campbell River could work toward as a community? What recommendations would you like to see going forward to City Council?

10. Additional Comments?

Done

Survey Powered by:
SurveyMonkey.com
"Surveys Made Simple."

Agency Survey Results

The following information provides a summary of responses from the online Homelessness Survey distributed to the following Campbell River Social Service Agencies/Organizations in May 2009:

- Ministry of Children and Family Development (9 responses);
 - North Island Alcohol & Drug Information & Education Society;
 - Opportunities Career Services (2 responses);
 - Campbell River Women's Centre (Vancouver Island North Women's Resource Society);
 - Campbell River and NI Transition Society;
 - Campbell River Family Services;
 - Crisis nurses;
 - Second Chance Recovery House;
 - Laichwiltach Family Life Society;
 - Radiant Life Community Church;
 - Campbell River Head Injury Support Society;
 - Salvation Army Evergreen House Shelter;
 - Campbell River Mental Health and Addiction Services (adults);
 - Island JADE Society;
 - Campbell River Beacon Clubhouse;
 - GT Hiring Solutions (2005) Inc.;
 - Ministry of Housing & Social Development;
 - John Howard Society of North Island;
 - Campbell River Multicultural and Immigrant Services Association;
 - NADIS – North Island Alcohol & Drug Information & Education society;
 - Forest Circle Child Care;
 - Vancouver Island Health Authority;
 - Dr. M. J. Clelland, (methadone clinic);
 - Cape Mudge Band;
 - Sunrise Resources for Early Childhood Development.
- 34 responses received;
 - 12 of the respondents said their agency/organization serves over 200 people each month;
 - 26 respondents said their agency/organization serves all genders;
 - 4 respondents said their agency/organization received funding specifically to provide services around homelessness;
 - Those receiving funding specific to homelessness indicated the major source of funding is private donations, followed by BC Housing, other provincial funding, foundations, federal funding and municipal funding;

- Services around homelessness provided by the agencies surveyed include a wide range of activities such as: providing social assistance shelter benefits, providing people with a list of apartments to phone and access to a phone, working directly with people to help them find housing, advocating with landlords, liaison between landlords and tenants, providing housing subsidy, providing emergency shelter, providing food and personal care items, referral to other agencies;
- Most of the agencies/organizations who responded to the survey indicated they saw some people who met the taskforce's definition of "absolute homelessness" over the past year. One agency estimated they saw 100 people and two agencies estimated they saw 125 people who met the definition for absolute homelessness;
- Some agencies saw a large number of people (individuals and families) who were homeless due to crisis last year. One agency reported they saw 150 people who met the definition of homelessness due to crisis;
- Twenty-seven respondents said their agencies/organizations worked with people who met the definition for "risk of homelessness/hidden homelessness" last year. One respondent said their agency saw 500 people who met the definition. Another respondent said their agency saw more than 500 people who met the definition;
- A significant increase in the number of people (of all ages) who are homeless was noted;
- Respondents described a number of solutions that Campbell River could work toward as a community. Safe affordable housing was a strong theme;
- 69.6% of respondents said they (or another representative from their agency/organization) would be interested in participating in a community coalition to address homelessness.

What did the Homelessness Task Force learn from this survey?

There are an increasing number of individuals and families struggling with housing issues in our community. People who work in social service agencies/organizations in Campbell River see people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness regularly. Some agencies provide services and support to people who are homeless every day. Specific funding to provide services around homelessness is limited and there is a lack of safe affordable housing available. On the positive side, many of the agencies/organizations surveyed are actively looking at ways to help address homelessness issues. There is interest in participating in a community coalition to address homelessness and the potential for coordinating community efforts and resources.

Appendix E: Workshops

Ann Elmore's Legacy: Preparing for Social Change / May 20th 2009

- On May 20th 2009, the committee hosted a community workshop with the assistance of the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) to obtain broader input from agencies, groups and individuals to progress towards developing an achievable, effective social plan for Campbell River that has a clear relationship to the "Official Community Plan";
- Outcomes from the workshop include identified priorities under 7 social development areas, one of which is "housing, shelter and homelessness".

Frontline on the Fringe '09 - Housing the Homeless/June 11, 2009

This information workshop was arranged by the Comox Valley Ad Hoc Emergency Resources Organization (AHERO) Event Committee for anyone who works or volunteers with individuals suffering from homelessness or those who are in the process of re-entering mainstream society.

Media presentations of homelessness in Vancouver, housing panel speakers from Comox Valley and Victoria, as well as the local client panel reiterated the following themes:

- A need for decent, low cost housing in areas spread through out the community;
- Challenges homeless individuals often face: addictions, substance abuse, mental health issues, disability, lack of education, no income, involvement with the criminal justice system, lack of life skills, lack of support, and history of childhood neglect and/or abuse;
- Separation from family and mainstream society as well as a lack of life skills frequently occurs;
- Not all homeless individuals are from broken/abusive homes, not all are addicts or have mental illnesses;
- The homeless population is diverse and individuals have different needs;
- Some individuals may not have the capabilities to re-enter mainstream society and their needs still must be considered. Some individuals have never been a part of mainstream society;
- Some individuals do not want to live in areas where drugs and alcohol use occurs, other individuals may require low barrier housing which permits the use of drugs and/or alcohol on the premises;
- Many homeless individuals are ignored in society. These are the most vulnerable of people;
- Fear, shame and pride are reasons some individuals may not access services. It was suggested workers need to show compassion and kindness towards homeless individuals; see the human inside;
- The most important thing is a connection with others. To be there to support changes, to let others know that they can do it and they are worth it;
- The most important things all people need are a sense of belonging, to love and be loved, and the opportunity to contribute.

They also shared about common barriers which included:

- Lack of food/nutritional food;
- Difficulty accessing services;
- Poor health, addictions, mental illness;
- Lack of family physician;
- lack of life skills;
- Lack of references & credit checks;
- Subsidies are complicated;
- Stigma;
- Lack of income/inadequate income.

UVIC-Community Housing and Homelessness Research and Strategy Workshop: March 25th 2009

- Dr. David Hulchanski (Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto) talked about the (relatively short) history of homelessness in Canada. Also talked about Canada having the knowledge and resources to make homelessness disappear through broad based research and multi-sector policy solutions on three causes of homelessness: inadequate housing, inadequate income and inadequate support services;
- UVic Office of Community Based Research is moving to create housing and homelessness strategies;
- Possibility for community/university partnerships and venues for information/resource sharing;
- Websites: www.hulchanski.ca; www.homelesshub.ca; www.NeighbourhoodChange.ca; www.gtuo.ca; www.tnrn.ca

Skaeve Huse



Skaeve Huse is actually an expression from Denmark which means something like special houses for special people. As in every city, Amsterdam has to deal with people who can not rent a 'normal' house in a 'normal' neighborhood, either because they lack the means to pay rent in time or they cause trouble with their different views of life. For these people, in most cases with a psychiatric history, Denmark started project to house them outside the city borders where they could do no harm but could be housed properly. In Holland this initiative was adopted and the project you see below is located in the harbor area in Amsterdam as an experiment for 6 houses which turned out to be a successful approach. More of these projects are expected in Holland.



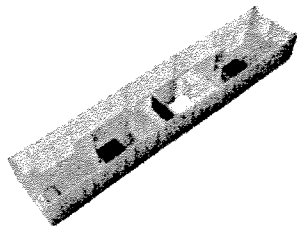
Low Cost Housing Solutions

Tempohousing has 7 base models, shown below. What they have in common is:

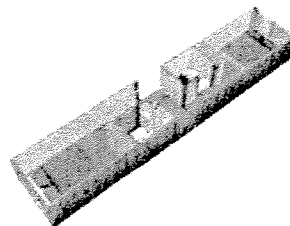
- The ducts and pipes for ventilation, sewage, water and heating (cooling) and the wiring for power and data all come together in a central service shaft in the middle of the unit, next to the bathroom
- Overall internal insulation (heat / cold, noise, fire resistance)
- Large windows for sufficient daylight (and view)
- Heavy steel construction for high stacking
- A single unit (2,4 m wide) or a combination of 2 units (4,8 m wide)
- CSC plated, meaning they are accepted as standard freight on a container vessel world wide.

If you choose for a Tempohousing product , what you get is an ISO universal system of 8 ft (2,4 m.) wide units that have - because of these sizes - always a second life if you wish: you can reuse or resell them to other countries in the world. Reselling won't be a concern: the need for housing is a worldwide problem that is not solved in the near future. But this great advantage also means a basis of 8 ft wide unit: they do not get wider. Standard 8 ft wide (2,4 m.) and 40 ft long (12 m.) sizes are our business. Of course you can combine 2 of them (maybe 3) and then you have a nice area of 60 square meters or 640 square feet. For large projects, we can also use 12 ft (3,6 m.) units but they cost a lot more and are difficult to transport. A brochure with all these models is available.

Bachelor

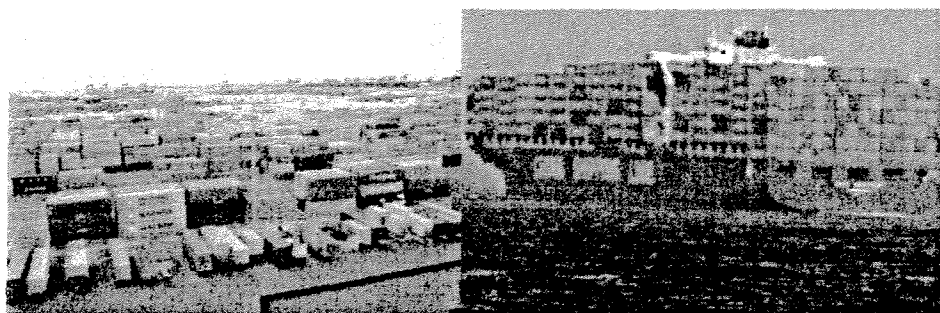


Starter



Like it or not - Shipping Container Homes are coming to a lot near you!

Any drive along the coast of America will reveal that in port cities and areas around inland freight transit terminals, there are literally hundreds of thousands of empty containers are piling up. The stacks start to resemble alien landscapes, with the ISBU's often piled several containers high, to loom over the landscape like forgotten Sci-Fi movie sets. In most of these repositories, there are commercial and residential neighborhoods living in the shadows these monsters cast, where the sun sometimes sets an hour earlier than in all the adjacent surrounding areas.

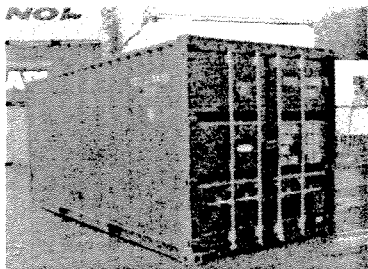


Along every rail line you can see them riding along, usually stacked two high on flatbed railroad cars, in caravans stretching for miles, or hauled along on flat-bed trailers behind tractors on our interstate highways. We see them so frequently that they've become a popular icon for stock film footage on the news channels, and their images are used for everything including illustrating every story about port security ever broadcast.

If you've been following along, you already know that ISBUs are manufactured of heavy-gauge Corten steel and are water-proof, fire resistant, impervious to bugs and built to hold cargo securely on the pitching deck of a ship. They're designed to be rugged, resilient, durable, and impervious to most damage.

So, it isn't hard to imagine that one day, while stuck at a railroad crossing, an architect staring at an impressive column of containers rolling by, suddenly saw the light-bulb flash on.

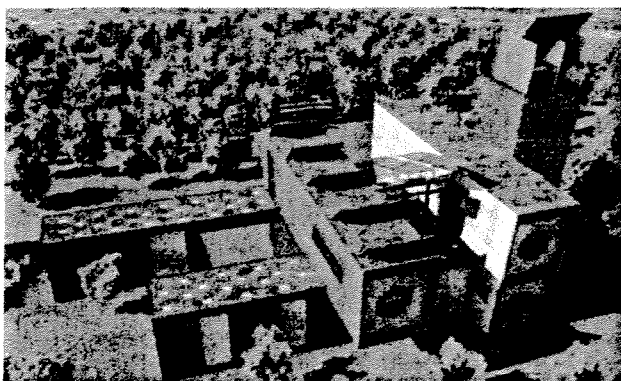
CONTAINER LOW COST HOUSING



One container can form the basis for a low cost home (albeit compact) or perhaps emergency temporary housing following an earthquake or hurricane. And several containers can be combined as building blocks to create larger and more permanent structures. For example, five 40 foot units placed side by side with the side walls of the inner containers removed provides an open space 40' x 40' - 1,600 sq. ft of living area. And remember that containers are manufactured to be stacked as many as nine high without compromising their structural integrity so adding a second or third story isn't a problem.

The possibilities are endless. Because they are just boxes, they lend themselves to many different possibilities; college dorms, artist loft space, shopping areas, Community Centers, jails, industrial parks, and more housing configurations than you could shake a welding rod at! You can line ISBU's up, add on decks, cantilever them, add canopies, and achieve a finished design that can resemble anything you want; be it modern, traditional, or whimsical.

And, as much as we like to take credit for everything including sliced bread and spaghetti, Container housing is not an American innovation. Containers have been used in Europe, New Zealand, and many third-world countries for years. There are actually real places where people are far ahead of us in the number of completed projects and in innovative technology.



Bibliography of Research

- Affordable Housing Calgary, *Fast Facts #05 – Innovative Approaches to Ending Homelessness*, February 2, 2007;
- Affordable Housing Resources in Campbell River, March 2009;
- Auditor General of British Columbia, *2008/2009 Report 16: Homelessness: Clear Focus Needed*, March 2009;
- British Columbia Medical Association, *Stepping Forward: Improving Addiction Care in British Columbia, B.C; A Policy Paper by B.C.'s Physicians*, March 2009;
- Campbell River Women's Centre (CRWC), *Street Survival Guide*, Fall 2008;
- Chudnovsky, David. *Finding Out Way Home: A Report on the Homelessness Crisis in British Columbia*, 2008;
- Citizens Commission on Homelessness, *Home Again: A 10- year plan to end homelessness in Portland and Multnomah County*, December 2004;
- City of Campbell River, *The City of Campbell River Crime Reduction Strategy: Improving the Quality of Life for the Citizens of Campbell River, A Problem Solving Approach*, [ND];
- City Spaces - City of Nanaimo, *Nanaimo's Response to Homelessness Action Plan*, July 2008;
- Comox Valley Homelessness Task Force, *Homelessness Community Profile – Comox Valley 2008*, April 2008;
- Gansner, Myra A., *Community Health Assessment*. March 27, 2009;
- Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, *Report on Housing and Supports to March 31, 2009*;
- Mayor's Task Force on Breaking the Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness, *Report of the Gap Analysis Team*, Oct.19, 2007;
- National Alliance to End Homelessness, *A Plan Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in 10 Years*, 2000;
- Nanaimo's Working Group on Homelessness, *Reducing Homelessness - A Community Plan for Nanaimo, BC.*, October 2003;
- Opportunities Career Services Society, *Freebies and Cheapies in Campbell River*, (ND);
- Smart Growth BC, *Review of Best Practices in Affordable Housing*, [ND];
- Tubbs, Rebecca, *Continuing and Shifting Patterns in Nanaimo's Homeless Population: Based on the September 2008 Homeless Count*, September 18, 2008;
- Vancouver Island Community Research Alliance (VICRA), *Addressing Critical Issues of the well-being of the people of Vancouver Island through Community-Campus Research Partnerships*, 2008;
- Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), *Community Health Atlas 2000-2004 Alcohol Related Deaths*, March 20, 2009;
- Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), *Community Health Atlas 2000-2004 Drug Induced Deaths*, March 20, 2009;
- Vancouver Island Health Authority's (VIHA) Campbell River Mental Health and Addictions Services (CRMHAS) *Reducing Homelessness: Proposals for Housing and Support Services in Campbell River*, January 2008.