

Tackling Homelessness in Nanaimo: Current Snapshot & How Do We Move Forward?

Presented to: Nanaimo City Council
February 11, 2019



United Way
Central and Northern
Vancouver Island

Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition



Snapshot of Nanaimo's homeless:

Homeless People

- 335 Counted (minimum) Spring 2018
- 174 Counted (minimum) Winter 2016

Age - 2018

- 55% are age 25-44
- 22% are age 45-54

Local residents - 2018

- Over 80% of participants had *not* moved to Nanaimo in the last year.
- Most have lived here for 5-40 years. (30% spent entire life here)

Gender - 2018

- 70% Men, 30% Women (approx.)
- Women are likely underrepresented

First Nations - 2018

- Nearly 1/3 of participants identified as First Nations/Indigenous

Homelessness – a continuing crisis

- ▶ Tent City and how solutions rolled out highlight that structure of planning and helping homeless and wider community need more resources & co-ordinated leadership.
- ▶ Nanaimo's homeless population has more than doubled since 2016.
 - Time spent being homeless is increasing
 - The homeless are local people

Quote shared with Council
June 11th presentation:
“Put bluntly, Nanaimo faces pressures that threaten the integrity and sustainability of the current service system if not addressed.”

Chronic Homelessness – 2016 vs. 2018

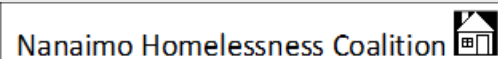
- ▶ 2016 – 60% were homeless for 6+ months (chronically homeless).
- ▶ 2018 – **72%** were chronically homeless of which 53% were homeless for 12+ months.
- ▶ The length of time spent homeless is increasing; it is continuous (not episodic).

Why the Crisis?

- ▶ Lack of Affordable Housing:
 - Housing prices increased 14% (2015-2016)
 - Vacancy rates dropped from 2% to 1.5% (2014-2016)
 - Growing disparity between average income vs. housing market
- ▶ Addiction and Mental Health:
 - Sharp increase in acuity of drug use and mental health
- ▶ Becomes a barrier to housing; landlords overlook people
- ▶ Gaps in Service:
 - Resources are highly limited
 - Support systems are overwhelmed
 - Sector capacity/coordination faces challenges

What Can We Build On?

- ▶ Previous Councils worked with service providers/other funders to create a plan, secure funding, and implement solutions
- ▶ 2006-2008 plans developed (2007 New Hope Centre opened)
- ▶ 2008 - MOU with BC Housing for housing projects
- ▶ Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding secured
- ▶ Island Health implemented various strategies and teams
- ▶ Many of our most chronic homeless housed as result of past plans
- ▶ Homeless Coalition created & meets monthly
- ▶ Feds renew HPS funding (now called Reaching Home) 2019-2029
- ▶ Committed, caring, hardworking service providers on the ground!!!



The Action Plan

- ▶ Work in conjunction with the City of Nanaimo's Affordable Housing Strategy
- ▶ Increase affordable/supportive housing options
- ▶ Acquire resources and address gaps in services
- ▶ Create a coordinated access system/continuum of services
- ▶ Communicate effectively to educate public/support strategy roll out

Strategies in Action Plan

- ▶ Strategy 1: Increase shelter beds, outreach, and intervention
- ▶ Strategy 2: Create a day space/Drop in facility
- ▶ Strategy 3: Remap and broaden social networks
 - Ensure people are connected to networks outside of the social services sector
- ▶ Strategy 4: Increase rent supplements and develop affordable housing
- ▶ Strategy 5: Add # of dry housing units, increase scattered site housing

Strategies in Action Plan

- ▶ Strategy 6: Support personal and program transitions
 - Rapid re-housing, housing loss prevention
- ▶ Strategy 7: Manage increasing acuity of addictions and mental health
- ▶ Strategy 8: Increase Coalition's capacity
 - Educate/communicate to public - drive plan implementation
- ▶ Strategy 9: Integrate Indigenous lens in services
- ▶ Strategy 10: Prevention through agency coordination

Homeless Coalition Members

- AIDS Vancouver Island
- BC Housing
- City of Nanaimo
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo
- Haven Society
- Island Crisis Care Society
- Island Health
- Men's Resource Centre
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Nanaimo Region John Howard Society
- Nanaimo Women's Resource Centre
- Nanaimo Youth Services Association
- Pacifica Housing
- Nanaimo RCMP
- Service Canada
- Salvation Army
- Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre
- United Way CNVI
- Vancouver Island Mental Health Society
- Widsten Property Management
- 7-10 Breakfast Club
- Citizens at-large

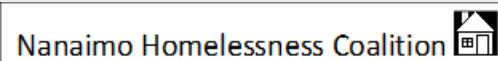


What the Coalition Is and Isn't

- ▶ Not a legal entity
- ▶ Has no budget or staff
- ▶ Members bring resources to Coalition agenda/activities
- ▶ Conduct research - PIT Counts, research coordinated access system
- ▶ Formal place to approve federal investments (United Way supports this function)
- ▶ Develops strategy/plans to address homelessness
- ▶ Public education - all candidates meetings, speaking to media, etc
- ▶ Service Providers/Funders share intel to inform individual agency agendas

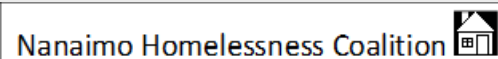
United Way plays two roles on the Coalition

- ▶ Role #1 - Community Entity (CE) for Federal funds invested in Nanaimo
- ▶ Role #2 - Inspires donors, invests UW grants to help vulnerable



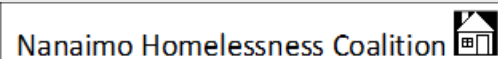
United Way as Community Entity (CE) managing HPS - now called Reaching Home

- ▶ CE for last 9 years in Nanaimo
- ▶ \$900,000 a year for 2019-2024
- ▶ Reaching Home goals:
 - create a coordinated access system/cut homelessness in half
- ▶ Support the Coalition to:
 - set community plan for Federal \$
 - choose where to invest
 - monitor results
- ▶ Connect monthly with 10 CEs in province to share strategy



United Way as a Funder Inspires Donors & Invests in Community

- ▶ Raises \$ from local donors
- ▶ Invests in 47 programs in Central Island. Helped 23,000 people last year
- ▶ Many UW funded programs lift up the most vulnerable
- ▶ Public education about needs/reminder of human side of homelessness -speak to 1000s in the workplace/media
- ▶ Fund bc211 text, phone, web chat info referral service - top issues affordability of housing/mental health
- ▶ Understand regional issues - started & provides leadership on four Homeless Coalitions on Island
- ▶ Draw on 90 plus United Ways across the country for best practices



City's Role on Coalition To Date

- ▶ City staff person has co-chaired Coalition
- ▶ Participated in creating Action Plan that Council adopted fall 2018
- ▶ Sits on the Allocation Committee to recommend HPS investments
- ▶ Identifies opportunities for the City to invest in to support the broader efforts identified by the Coalition - rent supplements, etc.

Coalition Ready to Evolve

- ▶ On-going crisis requires more effective structure
- ▶ Allocation Committee - Island Health, City, United Way, BC Housing, Ministry of Social Development now meet every other week
- ▶ This group could become a Steering Group of the Coalition with terms of reference and driving the implementation of the Action Plan
- ▶ City staff, United Way and key service providers working on communication strategy
- ▶ Look to move Coalition as a whole to meet quarterly to keep everyone informed but have smaller, more effective group that drives Plan

What is Missing?

- ▶ Coalition created Action Plan but isn't resourced to drive it forward
- ▶ Main funders/players need to move from adopting plan to strategy/action
- ▶ City needs to clarify its role as a key driver of implementing the Action Plan

City Role – What Works in Other Communities/Worked in 2008 in Nanaimo

- ▶ Political Leadership – Mayor and/or council members drive implementation of Action Plan along with Island Health, BC Housing, CE and other key funders
- ▶ Senior City staff/resources dedicated to Action Plan

Questions?

