



April 22, 2020

Jake Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer  
City of Nanaimo  
455 Wallace Street  
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J6

Re: Co-creation of community solutions

Dear Mr. Rudolph,

The Crisis of COVID-19 has only high-lighted the terrible and increasing challenges for those in our community who struggle with mental health, addictions, extreme poverty and homelessness. The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition understands that the solutions to these struggles need to be community-based with strong support from the City and with funding support from the Provincial and Federal levels.

With this in mind, The Nanaimo Homeless Coalition is encouraging further primary stakeholder collaboration regarding both immediate crisis response needs and long term community strategies for our marginalized and homeless populations.

**We encourage the City of Nanaimo, via the Health and Housing Task Force, to take the lead on communicating to the Province, an actionable short term crisis strategy that reflects the essential needs of our community.**

Plan frameworks have been developed on the local level using the extensive knowledge of the local service providers. With the buy-in of a range of stakeholders, we can ensure our decisions have an active and lasting impact on balancing the needs of our vulnerable population and the public at large. Inclusive, collaborative plan development increases the operational viability of the response and allows us to mitigate the risks associated with the proposed solutions.

**The City of Nanaimo, via the Health and Housing Task Force, must prioritize the development of a pro-active long term strategy that reflects the housing, social support and poverty needs of our community.**

We are all aware that Nanaimo has experienced significant challenges regarding individuals who are experiencing homelessness. The level of need is high, and it outstrips the available services currently offered by our community alone. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, we anticipate that the housing, social support and financial needs of our community could increase

exponentially in the months and years to come. We must have the framework of a long term community plan and funding ask prepared for both the Federal and Provincial Governments in anticipation of increased funding for both affordable housing options and support for our vulnerable populations today.

We believe that, at a minimum, representation from the City of Nanaimo, Nanaimo Homeless Coalition, Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, BC Housing and Island Health should partner in the co-development of focused solutions that considers the needs of our whole community. A working group comprised of these stakeholders could more nimbly create options for the Task Force to discuss and endorse for the City to action and implement.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Borrows, (Major)  
Co-Chair Nanaimo Homeless Coalition  
The Salvation Army Nanaimo Ministries

Jason Harrison  
Co-Chair Nanaimo Homeless Coalition  
Executive Director, CMHA Mid-Island