

ATTACHMENT B

POSITION STATEMENT - CITY'S ROLE IN RESPONDING TO HOMELESSNESS

The City of Nanaimo believes that our community can be one where everyone is home and belongs. The municipality can play an integral role in advancing solutions to complex social challenges, including homelessness.

Currently, the City's role in responding to homelessness falls broadly within six categories:

Working to advocate for, support and contribute to the development of more affordable and supportive housing in our community. The City recognizes that very few individuals transitioning directly out of homelessness will be able to both afford and succeed in market rental housing. The City works in partnership with BC Housing and the development community to facilitate and contribute to the costs of building sufficient affordable and supportive housing units to meet the needs of our community. Though not required to, the City regularly contributes land for projects and makes annual financial contributions to the Housing Legacy Reserve fund, which in turn subsidizes the cost of building affordable and supportive units. The City also works with BC Housing, Island Health and neighbourhood associations to ensure once operational, the building is successful in supporting the well-being of the residents and the surrounding area.

Finding and resourcing creative solutions in response to community needs and concerns. Though housing is not primarily within municipal jurisdiction, the City is often the first level of government people turn to when they have a concern about homelessness. The City is committed to listening to these concerns and either connecting with other agencies that have the resources to address the issue, or finding creative means of meeting these needs by leveraging municipal resources in partnership with other agencies.

Providing dedicated staff resources to support the work of ending homelessness. For over 20 years, the City has employed social planning staff to work on social issues, including homelessness. Three years ago the City doubled this commitment by adding a second Social Planner position, in recognition of the significant growth of the social challenges in our community. This staffing function is a critical support to leadership as they work on solutions to homelessness.

Facilitator and convener in the housing and community supports ecosystem. The City is well positioned to be the convener of agencies and organizations devoted to preventing and ending homelessness. In this role, the City directly participates in problem solving and acts as a clearing house for research and funding opportunities. In this capacity, the City will support and participate in the development of evidence-led solutions to improve Nanaimo for diverse stakeholder groups.

Enhancing communication and engagement in social issues. The City will work with diverse stakeholders to support housing solutions, including facilitation of positive dialogue on homelessness. The City will work with partners to profile solutions and progress as well as emerging trends relating to social challenges to enhance a coordinated response.

Advocacy to higher levels of government. The City will communicate Nanaimo's needs and advocate for appropriate resources to higher levels of government at the annual Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and Union of British Columbia Municipalities conventions, as well as through regular email, phone and in-person meetings. Advocacy messaging will be clear, consistent, and data-driven.

The City is currently engaged in a collaborative process with community and government partners to determine priorities in addressing homelessness in Nanaimo, identify evidence-based solutions and define clear accountabilities for implementation. This process will further refine the City's role and those of other levels of government, the private sector, and community groups.