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June 28, 2007



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 18, 2007
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Meeting Date: June 28, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of the Housing Centre

SUBJECT: Housing Legacy of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games: Report of the Housing Table for the Inner-City Inclusivity Initiative

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council generally endorse the recommendations set out in the "Report of the Inner-City Inclusive Housing Table" dated March 2007 (Appendix A), subject to the commentary set out in this report;
- B. THAT Council endorse the draft joint VANOC, City, Province and Federal Government response attached as Appendix B;
- C. THAT Council thank the members of the ICI Housing Table for their commitment and contributions, as well as acknowledge and thank BC Housing for facilitating and coordinating the work of the ICI Housing Table;
- D. the Director of the Housing Centre be requested to report back in one year on progress the ICI Partners (the Federal government, the Province of BC, the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games) are making in responding to the recommendations of the Housing Table.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of recommendations A, B, C, and D.

COUNCIL POLICY

The City's social housing priorities are low and modest income families with children; seniors on fixed incomes or in need of support; Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel residents; and the mentally ill, physically disabled, and others at risk of homelessness.

The City's policy is to preserve and replace the SRO stock of low-income housing in the downtown on a unit for unit basis.

The City seeks to maintain the stock of rental housing in the city.

The SRA By-law regulates the rate of change in SRO buildings in the downtown core pending their replacement with social housing.

The Homeless Action Plan identifies three priorities to address homelessness: improved access to income, more supportive housing and expanded mental health and addiction services.

The Downtown Eastside Housing Plan sets out a carefully balanced vision for the future of the community.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the actions recommended in the attached "*Report of the Inner-City Inclusive Housing Table*" (March 2007), attached as Appendix A, as well as a timeline for reporting back on the implementation of the recommended actions. This report recommends that Council generally endorse the Housing Table's recommendations subject to the commentary provided, and endorse the Joint Draft Response attached as Appendix B.

The recommendations of the ICI Housing Table are generally consistent with Council policy and for the most part would implement the City's "Homeless Action Plan" and the "Downtown Eastside Housing Plan." While the Housing Table recognizes that the cumulative magnitude of homelessness presents a major challenge for the Partners, the Housing Table believe that eliminating homelessness should be the legacy of the Games. Timeline and budgetary constraints pose significant challenges to achieving this goal. While some of the recommendations are more complex and will take longer to implement, significant progress has already been made on the implementation of others. The City will continue to work with our ICI Partners to identify opportunities to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts associated with the planning and hosting of the 2010 Games.

BACKGROUND

Council has a number of policies that relate to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (the "Games").

In December 1998, Vancouver and Whistler were selected by the Canadian Olympic Association (now the Canadian Olympic Committee) to represent Canada in the international bidding competition to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games (the "Games").

On March 26, 2002, Council endorsed the City's involvement in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games bid.

Also on March 26, 2002, Council moved that the City of Vancouver urge the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation to work with community members to conduct a complete community impact study with recommendations to minimize the negative effects and to maximize the opportunities of hosting the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games.

In January 2003, Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation submitted their Bid, which sets out the ICI Commitments to the International Olympic Committee.

On July 2, 2003, the International Olympic Committee awarded the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to Vancouver. The Bid Corporation was dissolved and on September 30, 2003, replaced by the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) mandated to support and promote the development of sport in Canada by planning, organizing, financing and staging the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

In September 2003, Council approved *Ensuring Vancouver's Olympic and Paralympic Legacy* which reported on a series of Mayor's forums on legacies coming from the Games.

The Inner-City Inclusive (ICI) Commitment Statement (Appendix C) was part of the bid for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games. It pledges that the Olympic partners (Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver and the 2010 Bid Corporation, later the Vancouver Organizing Committee or "VANOC") will work together to ensure the legacy of the 2010 Winter Games creates direct benefits and minimizes adverse impacts for Vancouver's inner-city communities (Mount Pleasant, Downtown South and Downtown Eastside).

The ICI Commitment Statement includes 37 recommendations across fourteen commitment areas: Accessible Games; Affordable Games Events; Affordable Recreation and Community Sport; Business Development; Civil Liberties and Public Safety; Cultural Activities; Employment and Training; Environment; Financial Guarantees; Health and Social Services; Housing; Input to Decision-Making; Neighbourliness; Transportation.

For the area of housing, an advisory Housing Table was formed in the fall of 2006 to develop goals, action plans, and outcomes for the five housing related commitments:

- Provide an affordable housing legacy and start planning now;
- Protect rental housing stock;
- Provide many alternative forms of temporary accommodation for Games' visitors and workers;
- Ensure people are not made homeless as a result of the Games; and,
- Ensure residents are not involuntarily displaced, evicted or face unreasonable

increases in rent as a result of the Games.

The Housing Table was comprised of a broad membership of organizations including representatives from both the private and non-profit housing sectors. VANOC, Federal, Provincial and Municipal government representatives acted as a resource and provided support to the Table but were not voting members of the Table itself (BC Housing provided facilitation). See Appendix A for the list of table members.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Report

The Housing Table met between October 2006 and February 2007 to develop recommendations to address the five housing related commitments. The resulting report, released March 28, 2007, contains 25 recommendations which are aimed at minimizing adverse impacts and optimizing potential benefits to those that are most vulnerable including the homeless and those that have the fewest housing choices (those with multi-barriers, those with mental health and/or addiction issues, youth, and women in poverty).

The report responds to each of the five housing commitment statements:

Commitments to create direct benefits

- Provide an affordable housing legacy and start planning now (two recommended actions)
- Protect the rental housing stock (eleven recommended actions)
- Provide as many alternative forms of temporary accommodation for Games' visitors and workers as possible (three recommended actions)

Commitments to address potential adverse impacts

- Ensure people are not made homeless as a result of the Games (six recommended actions)
- Ensure residents are not involuntarily displaced, evicted or face unreasonable increases in rent as a result of the Games (three recommended actions)

While the Housing Table was large and diverse in perspectives, there was general agreement on the recommendations and a shared recognition that the legacy of the Games should be to eliminate homelessness. Of the 25 recommendations, 23 were approved on consensus.

Representatives from the private sector did not agree with recommendations #7C (placing a moratorium on the conversion and demolition of SROs) and #25 (changing the Residential Tenancy Act to further protect tenants from rent increases). They felt that supporting these recommendations would result in a disinvestment in rental housing stock and would increase homelessness as a result.

Role of the ICI partners

The ICI partners committed to providing the Table with an initial response to the recommendations within 90 days (end of June). Because many of the recommendations require the cooperation among the ICI partners, a working group was established to review

and develop a response to each of the recommendations as outlined in the draft joint response attached as Appendix B. Following Council deliberation on this report, the draft joint response will be finalized, sent to the ICI Housing Table members and posted on the City's website.

While the ICI partners came to the table with a common purpose, each of the ICI partners plays a distinct role and has a unique responsibility in responding to the recommended actions.

In January 2007, the Province took over administration and ownership of the Federal affordable housing portfolio (excluding federally funded housing co-operatives and aboriginal housing), and the Province now has the primary mandate for funding, developing and administering social and affordable housing. The City provides sites and capital grants for the creation of housing, as well as acts as a regulator (e.g., Zoning and Development By-law, Single Room Accommodation By-law, etc.) and a policy developer (e.g., the Homeless Action Plan). While not involved in the creation of affordable housing, the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) is a signatory to the Inner City Inclusive Commitment Statement,

An overview of each of the recommendations follows. The majority require the ICI partners work together on implementation; however, the City of Vancouver has primary responsibility for four of the actions (#5, #7, #8, and #10). While some of the recommendations can be addressed in the short term, others are complex and broader in scope and will take longer to assess and implement.

PROPOSED RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommendation # 1 - Build Social Housing:

"The Partners to instigate the construction of an average of 800 social housing units (the majority of which are supportive) in each of four years, starting as soon as possible, in Vancouver. This reflects the City's Homelessness Action Plan. The Province to be the lead implementing agency. The specific mix, size, and location of these units are to be determined, but the majority will be targeted for core and deep-core need individuals. As well, a number of units will incorporate universal design and accessibility standard. Units will be managed by not-for-profit housing organizations. Funding to be available to meet operating and support-services costs."

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy (noting the "Homeless Action Plan" recommends that roughly half should be supportive housing units). Since being awarded the Games in 2003, over 1000 additional units of supportive and affordable housing for the homeless have been committed in Vancouver (this does not include the 595 SROs the Province recently purchased - see recommendation 3, but it does include the three Vancouver sites that were announced for the development of new supportive housing). Most of these are funded through the Provincial Homelessness Initiative with the City providing land and/or grants. See Appendix B for an inventory of projects and investment to date.

While we continue to encourage the production of affordable housing with the goal of 800 units per year for the next ten years, Provincial funding constraints make it questionable whether or not this goal can be achieved in the short term. It should be noted that between 2003 (when Vancouver was awarded the Games) and 2006, there has been a net increase of

176 low-income units for singles; in other words, the replacement of low-income singles social housing has kept pace with the loss of units over the same time period. A report on the "2007 Survey of Low-income Housing in the Downtown Core" will be provided to Council in July.

The Province's recent acquisition of 10 buildings in the downtown core (9 SROs and one building with self-contained units), as well as a commitment to develop three City-owned sites for supportive housing is a good first step to help stabilize the SRO stock until new units can be built. The Dobell/Fairbairn "Vancouver Homelessness Funding Model" proposes an extraordinary investment in new supportive housing by bringing more resources and broader perspectives to solving homelessness crisis and developing 1,500 new supportive housing units by 2012. The success of the model is dependent on significant commitments from both the Province (funding) and the Federal government (tax policy changes), and staff will continue working with our partners to ensure as many units as possible are committed to in the next four years.

Recommendation # 2 - Build Social Housing - Olympic Village:

"The Partners to secure funding for an operating subsidy that ensures that more than the current 10% of the 250 affordable housing units should accommodate core and deep core families and singles in the Southeast False Creek Olympic Village, following the Games. The proposed subsidy mix to be 40% deep core, 40% shallow, and 20% low-end-of-market."

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with the direction of Council Policy. The City has committed funding for the construction of 250 non-market units as an affordable housing legacy of the Games (total of \$99 million in dedicated funding, including \$30 million contribution from VANOC). The developer of the Olympic Village has commenced construction of the 250 affordable housing units on behalf of the City. The standard mix in affordable, non-market housing has been 60% core need and 40% market rental. At this point however, the level of affordability that will be achieved is unclear as capital costs have not yet been finalized. Once the capital costs are known, the degree to which additional core need households can be accommodated can be determined and discussion with senior government partners would follow. Staff will report back as required.

Recommendation # 3 - Purchase or Lease Existing Rental Housing:

"The Partners to instigate and fund the acquisition or lease of a minimum of 200 units, for each of four years, through purchase or lease of existing low-income rental housing or the conversion of non-residential premises (these are in addition to the 800 new units proposed in Recommendation #1). Units to be managed by a not-for-profit housing organization(s). Units likely to require renovation. Tenants may need support services."

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with the "Homeless Action Plan" the "Downtown Eastside Housing Plan" and the proposed Dobell/Fairbairn model. Close to 1,000 SRO rooms and rental housing units have been purchased since 2003 (see Appendix B). The purchase of these units will help to stabilize the current stock and protect residents from involuntary displacement. The partners continue to search for appropriate buildings for purchase and if successful, even more units will be protected over the next four years.

Recommendation # 4 - Develop Communications Strategy:

"The Partners to retain a consultant who will develop a multi-faceted communications strategy (directed toward landlords, to minimize potential evictions or involuntary displacements). VANOC, the City of Vancouver, and the B.C. Apartment Owners and Managers Association to be the lead agencies. Additionally, the Partners will fund the production and distribution of materials to carry out the specific elements of the strategy."

Response:

The development and implementation of a communications strategy will ensure that landlords and tenants have the appropriate information on Olympic-related housing needs. In particular, the communications strategy will inform and educate landlords that the accommodation needs of visitors are being met through hotels and other forms of accommodation (e.g., bed and breakfasts and VANOC's home stay program) and that evicting tenants for the Games would not be economically advantageous.

All partners will be involved in the development of the strategy and staff will report back to Council on funding that is required to develop and implement the communications strategy. This funding request will be based on a cost shared basis with the other ICI Partners.

Recommendation # 5 - Reexamine SRA Policies:

"The City of Vancouver to review its SRA policies with the aim of achieving a better than one-to-one replacement in all three neighbourhoods, and that replacement housing be provided generally in the same area of the converted or redeveloped housing. Additionally, the City to consider higher demolition/conversion fees per unit through its SRA By-law to cover some of the cost of replacement housing, and to extend the geographic scope of the by-law to cover Mount Pleasant. This measure should be considered alongside incentive measures such as federal tax changes."

Response:

This recommendation consists of four actions. Each action is addressed individually below.

More than One-for-One

The development of the one-for-one policy in the DTES was a result of an intensive community consultation and Council approval process that was part of the "DTES Housing Plan". The DTES Housing Plan sets out a carefully balanced vision which includes one-for-one replacement, more housing for low-income singles outside the DTES and more market housing, as well as encourage the development of non-market housing in other parts of the city. Staff believe that the one-for-one policy continues to be the appropriate objective. Staff will continue to monitor the stock through the biennial "Survey of Low-income Housing in the Downtown Core" and report to Council on the rate of change in the low-income housing stock.

Increase SRA Fee

This policy is consistent with Council policy and on May 1st, Council amended the By-law to increase the fee from \$5,000 to \$15,000. The fee acts as a key mechanism to manage the rate of change. It is important to note that the SRA conversion/demolition fee was not based on the cost to replace SRA but on what disincentives would be required to keep losses at replacement levels. The fee will be reviewed in 2008 to ensure that it is achieving the objective of maintaining the rate of SRA losses to the level of replacement housing.

Extending geographic scope of SRA By-law

In developing the SRA By-law, careful consideration was given to the geographic scope of the By-law. The scope was restricted to the downtown core since the majority of SRA stock is located in this area.

Other policy work is underway to address the loss of rental housing in Mount Pleasant through the Mount Pleasant planning process now underway. On May 24th, 2007, Council adopted a Rate of Change Policy to regulate the rate of change and preserve rental housing in Mount Pleasant, as well as other parts of the city (will apply to the RM, FM and CD-1 districts). Whether or not other options to preserve rental housing are needed in Mount Pleasant will be examined through the Mount Pleasant planning process. The Housing Centre will also be initiating a comprehensive rental study to evaluate the need for rental housing in the city and region, and the appropriate regulatory framework for protecting the stock. The results of that study are to be reported to Council no later than the end of 2009 with an interim report in 2008. Staff will continue to monitor the stock and evaluate the effectiveness of the rate of change policy and will report back as part of the Mount Pleasant planning process.

Incentives such as Federal tax policy changes

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy. Both the Rate of Change Policy and the Dobell/Fairbairn report support federal tax changes in order to encourage private sector investment in the development of rental and affordable housing.

Recommendation # 6 - Encourage Municipal Action:

"The GVRD to encourage and work with member municipalities to implement some form of "no net loss", "replacement housing", or "rate of change" regulations. This is consistent with the GVRD's initiatives to encourage housing diversity and affordability as part of its Livable Region Strategy."

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy. Affordability has long been a problem in the city and has increasingly become a problem in the region. The GVRD's "Discussion Paper on a Regional Affordable Housing Strategy for Greater Vancouver" beings to address the issue by reviewing the supply of and need for affordable housing in the region. At its February 27, 2007 meeting, Council approved the general directions of the GVRD's paper and also forwarded a motion (November 2006) to the GVRD Housing Committee and the GVRD Board to encourage all GVRD municipalities to be involved planning for the creation of affordable housing. As well, the GVRD will be asked to participate in the comprehensive study of rental housing (see recommendation #5)

The Province, which was identified as the lead for this implementation of this recommendation by the Housing Table, will continue to work with the GVRD and municipalities by providing them with resources such as the *Rental Housing Planning Guide*, which outlines and provides examples of conversion and demolition policies. The Province also publishes "The Local Government Guide to Improving Market Housing Affordability" which they offer as another resource available to local governments who are interested in developing policies that support development of affordable and rental housing.

Recommendation # 7 - Initiate Interim Anti-Demolition and Conversion Moratorium; Financial Penalties:

“The City of Vancouver to introduce a package of policies aimed at saving the loss of further SRA buildings pending the initiation of new construction, acquisition, and other measures. These policies would include an immediate one-year suspension, with an annual review, of the acceptance of applications for demolition and conversion of SRA units. (Note: This could be waived where the City/developer agree on a one-for-one replacement.) The City to also apply a financial penalty to SRAs that are closed after a certain date and held empty for more than three months and whose owners have not submitted an application for conversion or demolition. The City would determine the method of assessing this penalty. The time period would be through 2010. Concurrent with these measures, the City to engage the private sector in discussion to develop a mixture of initiatives to protect SRAs and the rental stock.”

Response:

This recommendation consists of four actions. Each action is addressed individually below.

One-year suspension on the acceptance of SRA permits applications

On May 1, Council approved a number of amendments to the SRA By-law including:

- increasing the conditional \$5,000 per room fee, which Council may attach to an SRA conversion or demolition permit, to \$15,000 per room;
- requiring Council to consider the recent history of an SRA hotel when presented with an application to convert or demolish its designated rooms;
- requiring an owner or operator of an SRA building to maintain for each designated room a standardized “room registration form”;
- requiring an owner or operator of an SRA building to identify on the business license specific room numbers of the maximum 10% of SRA units which are available for rent to temporary guests; and
- including provisions that would improve the effectiveness of and promote compliance with the By-law;

Under the SRA By-law, an owner wanting to convert or demolish designated SRA rooms must apply to Council for a conversion or demolition permit. Council can refuse the application, approve it outright, or attach conditions to the approval. These conditions include the owner entering into a Housing Agreement, a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, paying \$15,000 per room (increased from \$5,000) into a reserve fund for the creation of replacement housing, and other conditions as Council deems appropriate. Council considers each application on a case by case basis and in making its decision, must consider the following factors as required by the Vancouver Charter:

- the accommodation that will be available to the tenants affected by the conversion or demolition;
- the supply of low cost accommodation in the Downtown Core;
- the condition of the building; and,
- the need to replace or improve, over time, single room accommodation in the city.

On February 15th, 2007 Council considered a motion to place a moratorium on SRA conversions and demolitions and decided this was not necessary as alternate procedures, as described above, provide similar and adequate protections.

Apply a financial penalty to closed SROs

The City does not have the Charter authority to prevent or penalize owners for leaving their buildings vacant.

On May 1st 2007, Council approved an additional amendment to the By-law to address the closures of SRA buildings outside the SRA By-law, and to ensure the SRA owners and potential purchasers appreciate the importance of keeping the SRA rooms open and operating. When considering a demolition/conversion permit, Council must now also consider the recent history of the hotel taking into account any by-law infractions, including compliance with the Standards of Maintenance, Building, Fire and Health By-laws; the Residential Tenancy Act and other relevant Provincial regulations; whether the building has been operating and occupied; tenant support and relocation plans, etc. Staff will continue to monitor the number of vacant SROs through its biennial "Survey of Low-income Housing in the Downtown Core".

Initiatives to protect SRAs and the rental stock

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy and the City already has a number of initiatives underway to protect SRAs and the rental housing stock including the SRA By-law, the Standards of Maintenance By-law, the one-for-one replacement policy, and the recently approved rate of change policy to regulate the loss of purpose built rental housing.

The City also partners with other levels of government on initiatives to protect SRAs and the rental housing stock. For example, the Vancouver Agreement's SRO Pilot Project provides RRAP funding, tenant support and a rent supplement to assist owners in operating increasingly older buildings that provide accommodation for hard to house tenants. Staff will continue to both explore City-lead initiatives, as well as identify partnership initiatives to protect the SRA and rental housing stock.

Recommendation # 8 - Provide Proactive Enforcement:

"The City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to provide more resources for the consistent and proactive enforcement of existing provisions for inner city neighbourhood SRA units, especially with respect to the City entering and repairing sub-standard premises at the owner's cost."

Response:

As directed by City Council on February 15, staff are searching for a potentially suitable hotel where use of Section 23 of the Standards of Maintenance By-law might be appropriate and will report back to Council on procedures, timeline and budget estimates. As discussed in the report Council considered on February 15, there are limitations to the types of repairs the City can undertake under the Standards of Maintenance By-law.

An inter-governmental working group has also been formed to develop an implementation strategy for the recommendations of the "54 Hotel Analysis Project." Staff will report back on these initiatives once they are fully underway.

Recommendation # 9 - Encourage Municipal Maintenance Bylaws:

"The partners to encourage the GVRD to work with member municipalities to investigate similar provisions to the City of Vancouver regarding standards of maintenance by-law and remedies."

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy. The City, in its recent motion to the GVRD regarding its "Affordable Housing Strategy", encouraged municipalities to adopt measures to upgrade and preserve existing rental housing stock. Rental housing is a key issue for the City of Vancouver and its citizens, half of whom rent, and the City is committed to maintaining its stock of rental housing. The city provides half the region's rental housing, and it is important for the GVRD to support the City's goals of preserving its stock of rental housing and encouraging the development of rental housing throughout the region. To this end, the GVRD's Affordable Housing Strategy proposes the following strategies to protect the rental housing stock:

- application of demolition controls to preserve rental stock;
- standards of maintenance bylaws;
- anti-conversion bylaws related to rental vacancy rates; and,
- replacement policies for loss of rental housing.

The *Community Charter* allows local governments to enact standards of maintenance bylaws to enforce basic levels of maintenance for rental accommodation. According to a survey of local governments in BC (*Planning for Housing 2004*), less than 10% of local governments have a standards of maintenance bylaw for rental housing - 9% of larger communities, 16% of medium communities and 3% of smaller communities." The Province, identified as the lead by the Housing Table for the implementation of this recommendation, will continue to work with municipalities by providing them with resources such as the *Standards of Maintenance Guide and Model Bylaw* to serve as a starting point for local governments to use in drafting a bylaw suited to local conditions.

Recommendation # 10 - Use of Property Tax Incentives:

"City of Vancouver to exempt designated SRAs from property taxes associated with new improvements for up to 10 years where the owner enters into an agreement to rehabilitate vacant or underutilized buildings and maintain rents accessible to low-income renters. The exemption would be transferable to new property owners."

Response:

This issue was discussed in a Council report "Downtown Eastside Housing Plan Report Back on SRO Stock (February 15th)". During the recent legislative session, the provincial government approved amendments to the Vancouver Charter that would provide Council the tools to provide general purpose property tax exemptions (School Taxes would continue to apply) for these types of properties for up to ten years (with possibility of renewal). However, there are a number of policy and practical issues to consider before extending an exemption to these properties and a significant process to complete prior to implementing any exemptions. For example, the property taxes on a typical SRO average \$40-\$50 per room, per year, only about half of which is general purposes taxes. It is unclear whether this limited tax relief would be of sufficient benefit to encourage owners to enter into a service contract. As directed by Council (November 2, 2006), staff are also reviewing the City's regulatory powers to create affordability and to look at what other powers the City might seek to create affordability, for example through transfer of density or property tax relief. Staff will be undertaking this review as part of the EcoDensity initiative, as well as the rental housing study to be initiated later in 2007.

Recommendation # 11 - Provide Funds for Education:

“The Partners to secure additional funds to support Vancouver Agreement-initiated programs such as the skill upgrading of SRO hotel owners and managers, and projects with the private sector that result in improvements to low-income rental housing. To enhance the take-up of the skills upgrading program, the City to consider requiring participation in a training program as a condition of obtaining a license to operate an SRO.”

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with the SRO Management Training Program referenced in the “DTES Housing Plan”. An initiative of the Vancouver Agreement, the program was initiated in 2002. First delivered by Vancouver Community College, the program has been revamped to better suit the training required to manage SROs. The current program is funded to December 2007. Funding for the continuation of the program will be sought. Once stable funding has been secured, requiring the training as a condition of a business license for an SRO can be considered.

Recommendation # 12 - Reform Federal Tax System:

“The federal government to implement changes to the tax system, possibly, as part of a broader National Housing Framework. These include:

- *Providing rebates to fully offset landlord GST expenses;*
- *Allowing small rental investors to qualify for the small business deduction;*
- *Restoring the Capital Cost Allowance pooling provisions to encourage capital re-investment in new rental projects; and*
- *Enabling the creation of a labour-sponsored investment fund specifically for affordable housing.”*

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with the recommendations of the “Homeless Action Plan”. As noted previously, the Dobell/Fairbairn “Homeless Funding Model” would provide a mechanism to bring more resources and broader perspectives to solving homelessness crisis. The Federal Government is being asked to make significant changes to their tax regulations and legislation to give priority to charitable donations to supportive housing. Following the May 24th approval of the revised Rate of Change regulations for rental housing, the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, has written to the Federal government requesting the specified tax changes.

Recommendation # 13 - Expand and Change RRAP Program:

“The Federal government to maintain and expand the RRAP program for rooming houses, hotels, and rental apartment units. In particular, CMHC is requested to adjust the program to be more appealing to SRO operators, and to establish maximum rents that are appropriate for Vancouver’s SROs to ensure affordability. The federal government is requested to expand the program to ensure a long-term sustainable response.”

Response:

This policy is consistent with the recommendations of the “DTES Housing Plan”. RRAP is beneficial in that it provides forgivable loans (forgivable under certain conditions) for owners to upgrade their SROs. RRAP funding has been critical to the rehabilitation of a number of SROs (for example, the Washington, the Pennsylvania Hotel and Jackson Avenue Housing Co-

op, as well as privately owned SROs) "The DTES Housing Plan" recommends more money be allocated to RRAP and the program be modified to be more effective. Revisions could include priority for non-profit or local government ownership and management, priority for structural improvements that increase safety and livability, financial contributions by owners, and community input into which buildings receive loan/grants. The "DTES Housing Plan" and the "Homeless Action Plan" also recommend that a condition of RRAP funding should be that renovated units remain affordable to low income tenants (rents at or near shelter allowance rates).

Recommendation # 14 - Establish a Short-Stay Registry:

"The Partners endorse VANOC's establishment of a short-stay registry to match visitors and Vancouver homeowners that are able to provide/rent temporary accommodation."

Response:

The Partners are developing a home-stay strategy. Interested groups will be identified and a lead group will be selected to administer the program. The program is expected to be launched by 2008, allowing local residents to provide temporary accommodation to visitors during the Games.

Recommendation # 15 - Create Short-Stay Youth Facilities:

"The Partners to instigate the creation and operation of up to 300 beds of temporary accommodation for short-stay visitors, primarily teens and young adults in both Whistler and Vancouver. The accommodation will be required before, during, and for a period after the Games. These beds should be located in a number of facilities and will need to be conveniently located and attractive to youth. Youth and adult accommodation must be separate. Partnering with the School Board and the Parks Board to use community centres may be a viable option."

Response:

The Partners will determine the need for additional shelter beds (for youth and others) before, during and after the Games for the general population and youth. Staff will report back on the need for temporary shelters, and how the beds can be accommodated.

Recommendation # 16 - Build Worker Housing:

"The Partners to instigate the construction of 200-250 units of housing by June 2009 which would be leased to Games sponsors that need to accommodate workers before and during the Games, and then converted into social housing following the Games. Consideration for the use of temporary trailers should be given."

Response:

For buildings to be ready before the Games, sites would have to be already acquired and construction would have to be underway by August 2007. Social housing sites such as 1321 Richards Street were considered but using such a site would mean low-income people would be delayed in occupying the building in favour of workers.

Recommendation # 17 - Eliminate Barriers to Access Social Assistance:

"The Province to eliminate barriers for low-income people to access basic income assistance. (Cross-reference: Support accessible training and employment initiatives through the Employment and Training Table.)"

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy. The "Homeless Action Plan." contains a number of recommendations aimed at reducing barriers to income assistance including revising eligibility criteria and the application process to ensure people in need have access to benefits.

The Homeless Outreach Pilot Program (now called the Vancouver Coastal Homelessness Action Plan) has been successful in assisting eligible people to access welfare and housing. The Vancouver Agreement's Employment Strategy (VAES) Case Coordination Service (operated by Building Opportunities for Business) is designed to provide pre and post employment supports to 450 long-term unemployed MEIA clients in the Downtown Eastside over three years. While these programs are essential in ensuring people are able to obtain income, barriers to accessing and maintaining benefits continue to exist for others in need. For example, employment programs such as VAES require participants be on income assistance and is funded only until 2008. In addition, people trying to access benefits face barriers such as the three week wait; the two -year independence test; and other administrative barriers such as the requirement for multiple appointments to get a cheque. It is essential that the Province consider the challenges such barriers pose and consider further initiatives to ensure those in need are able to obtain and remain on income assistance.

Recommendation # 18 - Increase Social Assistance:

"The Province to increase the current basic shelter rate and the basic income assistance by at least 50% and allow earning exemptions to permit people to supplement their income and rebuild their lives. The Province to ensure that future changes are tied to a "cost of living allowance". Consideration may also be given to enabling individuals on income assistance to access provincial housing allowance programs."

Response:

The "Homeless Action Plan" recommends an increase in both the shelter and support component of BC Employment and Income Assistance to reflect cost of living increases since 1991. This would mean the shelter component would be increased to \$430 per month and the support component would be increased to \$245 per month for employable singles.

In the 2007 Budget, the rates for both the shelter and support components of income assistance were raised - \$375 and \$235 respectively. The increase to the shelter component was half what was needed as a minimum and support rates also fell short of the cost of living increase since 1991. And even with the increase, shelter rates are not keeping pace with rising rents. Average monthly rents are approximately double the amount of the shelter component for a single person seeking a bachelor unit. The Province should consider future increases to ensure individuals are able to meet their basic needs for shelter food and basic necessities.

Recommendation # 19 - Increase Funding for Specific Groups:

"In the business case that is developed as part of Action #1 and #2, the lead implementing agency to ensure attention is given to the provision of safe and appropriately designed supportive housing and should include wrap around services for those groups who are most vulnerable and who are multi-barriered. This to include wrap around services. These groups

include youth (13 to 25), women in poverty, the aboriginal population, people who are homeless, or have been evicted, people with mental health challenges, those waiting for treatment, the disabled and those facing other challenges such as medication problems, illegal drugs and participation in the sex trade."

Response:

The "Homeless Action Plan" identifies the need for 3,200 supported and 600 transitional housing units over the next ten years and the "Draft Supportive Housing Strategy" recommends 450 units in 10-15 buildings be built for people with mental health and/or addictions issues that are connected to Vancouver Coastal Health programs.

The Dobell/Fairbairn "Vancouver Homeless Model" reviewed the estimates of the extent of homelessness and at risk populations generated by the City's on-going work with the homeless, the region's 2005 count of the homeless living on the street or in shelters, Vancouver Coastal Health's projections of people with mental illness and addictions, and the work undertaken by the Vancouver Police Department and the City's Licensing and Inspections staff around the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels in the downtown. While the estimates of those in need of supportive housing generated by these various sources vary, they generally agree that there are at least 2,500 people in the city, homeless or living in very poor conditions, who suffer from mental illness and/or addictions and who need supportive housing and support services. As the existing supportive housing is fully occupied, and to account for needs that may emerge over the next decade, Dobell/Fairbairn establish a target of 3,000 new supportive housing units, which is close to the target of 3,200 units of supportive housing over the next decade in the City's Homeless Action Plan.

The provision of a wide range of support services to the groups identified in this recommendation is critical to successfully getting the homeless off the streets and keeping them housed. The Province's recent purchase of 10 SROs is a welcome initial step in providing supportive housing (currently determining the nature of the supports that will be required). Other Provincial initiatives such as the development of housing for Aboriginals who account for a disproportionate number of families and individuals in core need, and the additional funding set out in the 2007 Provincial budget to provide 24/7 staffing in transition houses are positive. The hope is that the new model being proposed will generate renewed commitments from the Federal and Provincial governments to fund the development and operation of supportive housing for those with a mental illness and/or addiction which is key to addressing homelessness in Vancouver.

Recommendation # 20 - Enhance Provincial Portable Rental Assistance Programs:

"The Province to enhance portable rental allowances, including the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program (SAFER), and the Rental Assistance Program. This is not intended to be a replacement or to overshadow the need for the creation of new housing."

Response:

SAFER has been used in Housing Agreements for private sector developments. The income threshold of the Rental Assistance Program for families was raised from \$20,000 to \$28,000 in Budget 2007. Other changes were also made to increase the amount households receive. The average monthly assistance per household has increased from \$185 to \$330. It is important that income thresholds and welfare continue to increase to keep pace with inflation in rents. With vacancy rates close to zero, emphasis needs to be on increasing the supply of market and non-market rental housing.

Recommendation # 21 - Increase Funding for Addiction & Mental Health Services:

"The Partners to secure increased funding over the next four years for increased health professionals, outreach workers, and community-based treatment and recovery services in the inner city. (Cross-reference: ICI-SC commitments related to "Health and Social Services".)"

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy. Both the "Homeless Action Plan" the "Four Pillars Strategy" and the "Draft Supportive Housing Strategy" recommend increased funding for addiction and mental health services. The "Supportive Housing Strategy," approved by Council June 6, 2007 recommends that over the next ten years, 2,200 additional units of supportive housing are built for people with mental illnesses and/or addictions issues already connected to VCH programs but inadequately housed. This includes low barrier housing for people who may not be actively engaged in treatment. The "Homeless Action Plan" calls for an intensive use of mental health services, together with appropriate and affordable housing, to end homelessness. To achieve this end, it recommends the creation of 3,800 units of supportive and transition housing and increasing the capacity to treat at least 700 additional clients using the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model (identified as a best practice by the Ministry of Health).

Recommendation # 22 - Improve Local Planning & Service Delivery:

"The Province to encourage municipalities in Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health, to investigate ways, in collaboration with community-based groups and service providers, to improve the local planning and delivery of services to residents with mental health or addiction-related needs. To be effective these services need to be integrated with the new housing that is constructed. (Cross-reference: ICI-SC commitments related to "Health and Social Services".)"

Response:

This recommendation is consistent with Council policy. The "Homeless Action Plan" recommends the Province work with other partners to ensure the provision of a full range of services to help prevent homelessness, in particular for the mentally ill and those experiencing addiction issues. The "Homeless Action Plan" identifies the provision of outreach services such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model as the immediate priority.

The City is also a member of the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness which developed and oversees the implementation of the Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver "Three Ways to Home" to reflect the three components of a comprehensive solution to homelessness: affordable housing, support services, and adequate income. Finally, following Council approval of the Supportive Housing Strategy on June 6, 2007, the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, will also send the Supportive Housing Strategy to the GVRD, its member municipalities, and the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness urging, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Valley Health Authorities, development of a regional supportive housing strategy and encouraging GVRD municipalities to develop local supportive housing strategies.

Recommendation # 23 - Increase Services for Tenants and Landlords:

“The Partners to secure funding for a permanent and full service office of the Residential Tenancy Branch in Vancouver, ensuring there are adequate staff levels to ensure reasonable wait times (in person and on the phone), and to cover emergency situations outside normal working hours. This office should include provision for a full range of services. Additionally, a Court Services representative should be assigned to this office to provide advice and assistance in the enforcement of RTB dispute resolution judgments.”

Response:

On June 3, 2003, Council approved urging the Provincial government to provide adequate access to the Residential Tenancy Office for Vancouver tenants by either re-opening the office in Vancouver, or extending the hours of the Burnaby office to accommodate people who work during the day.

It is expected that the Province will consider options to improve services for tenants in Vancouver's inner-city such as providing services through a community centre or established non-profit housing provider.

Recommendation # 24 - Increase Advising Assistance for Tenants:

“The Province to fund community advocates in community agencies to advise tenants on their rights, assist in preparing documents and, where necessary, appear with tenants at RTB dispute resolution hearings.”

Response:

On June 24, 2003 Council approved urging the Provincial government to consider providing additional resources to organizations that assist tenants in resolving disputes and accessing the arbitration process. And as directed by Council (February 15th, 2007) discussions have commenced with the Province to secure matching funds of \$35,000 that will provide a grant for tenant support services. This would fund a pilot contract (\$70,000 total) for tenant support for a period of one year with possible extensions through 2010.

Recommendation # 25 - Change the Residential Tenancy Act:

“The Province to consider amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA). The intent is to ensure that health and safety of existing residents, particularly residents of SRAs, is protected and that these residents are not faced with unreasonable rent increases or displacement. The recommended action should be combined with incentives such as changes to the federal tax system. The private sector is not in agreement with the following three recommended changes to the Residential Tenancy Act:

- *To ensure that a landlord finds replacement housing or provides compensation for tenants who are evicted for renovations that relate to tenant safety;*
- *To provide tenants for a right of first refusal following renovations at a rent not to exceed that allowed under the Act (recognizing this essentially as a continual tenancy); and*
- *To ensure, for SROs, that rental rates are tied to the unit, rather than tenant occupancy.”*

Response:

These regulations are in place in other provinces such as Ontario and Quebec. More information on the impact these types of regulations are having is needed to better understand the implications they would have in BC. The Province should further investigate

these measures to determine the validity in having such regulations in place directly before and during the Games if not permanently.

Next Steps

As shown in the responses above, the majority of recommendations are consistent with Council policy. Considerable progress has been made on some of the recommendations (for example, about 1,000 SRO rooms and other rental units have been purchased) though much more will need to be done to eliminate homelessness which the Housing Table believes should be the legacy of the Games. Staff will continue working with our ICI partners, and in particular, BC Housing, to work towards achieving the recommended actions where appropriate. Staff will report back in one year, or as required, to update Council on progress being made.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this point. Staff will report back on any funding required to carry out the recommended actions (e.g., recommendation #4 and funding required for a communications strategy).

CONCLUSION

Homelessness and housing for multi-barriered individuals continues to be a serious social issue in Vancouver that must be dealt with regardless of whether or not we will be hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Staff will continue to work with our ICI Partners to identify opportunities to achieve the Housing Table recommendations. The majority of recommendations put forward by the ICI Housing Table are consistent with City policy and if implemented in a significant way - in particular the supply oriented recommendations - would significantly reduce the number of people that are experiencing homeless or are at risk of homelessness. As a result, this report recommends that Council generally endorse the Housing Table's recommendations subject to the commentary provided in this report and endorse the joint VANOC, City, Province and Federal government response attached as Appendix B.

* * * * *

REPORT OF
THE INNER-CITY INCLUSIVE HOUSING TABLE

FINAL

MARCH 2007

FOREWORD

The Housing Table is made up of a number of organizations and agencies. Their common purpose is to develop goals, action plans, and outcomes that will create lasting housing benefits associated with the 2010 Games, in the pursuit of the overarching goal of eradicating homelessness.

This report has been written with the assistance of CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

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Report of the Inner-City Inclusive Housing Table

Table of Contents

SUMMARY

MAIN REPORT

The Context	1
The Reasoning	2
COMMITMENT STATEMENT: PROVIDE AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING LEGACY	3
<i>Recommended Action #1 Build Social Housing.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Recommended Action #2 Build Social Housing – Olympic Village.....</i>	<i>4</i>
COMMITMENT STATEMENT: PROTECT RENTAL HOUSING	4
<u>Acquisition Measures</u> to Protect Rental Housing.....	5
<i>Recommended Action #3 Purchase or Lease Existing Rental Housing.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<u>Communications Measures</u> to Protect Rental Housing	5
<i>Recommended Action #4 Develop and Implement Communications Strategy.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<u>Regulatory Measures</u> to Protect Rental Housing	6
<i>Recommended Action #5 Re-examine SRA Policies</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Recommended Action #6 Encourage Municipal Action</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Recommended Action #7 Introduce Interim Anti-Demolition/Conversion Measures and Penalties for Vacant Buildings</i>	<i>7</i>
<u>Enforcement Measures</u> to Protect Rental Housing	7
<i>Recommended Action #8 Provide Proactive Enforcement</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Recommended Action #9 Encourage Municipal Maintenance By-Laws.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<u>Incentive Measures</u> to Protect Rental Housing.....	9
<i>Recommended Action #10 Use Property Tax Incentives.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Recommended Action #11 Provide Funds for Education</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Recommended Action #12 Reform Federal Tax System</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Recommended Action #13 Expand and Change RRAP.....</i>	<i>10</i>
COMMITMENT STATEMENT: PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	10
<i>Recommended Action #14 Establish a Short-stay Registry</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Recommended Action #15 Create Short-stay Youth Facilities</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Recommended Action #16 Build Worker Housing</i>	<i>11</i>
COMMITMENT STATEMENT: ENSURE HOMELESSNESS DOES NOT INCREASE AS A RESULT OF THE WINTER GAMES.....	12
<i>Recommended Action #17 Eliminate Barriers to Access Income assistance.....</i>	<i>13</i>

Recommended Action #18 Increase Income assistance 13
Recommended Action #19 Increase Funding for Specific Groups 13
Recommended Action #20 Enhance Provincial Portable Rental Assistance Programs 13
Recommended Action #21 Increase Funding for Addiction and Mental Health Services 14
Recommended Action #22 Improve Local Planning and Delivery of Services 14

**COMMITMENT STATEMENT: ENSURE RESIDENTS ARE NOT INVOLUNTARILY DISPLACED,
 EVICTED OR SUBJECT TO UNREASONABLE RENT INCREASES AS A RESULT OF THE GAMES... 14**

Recommended Action #23 Increase Services for Tenants and Landlords 15
Recommended Action #24 Increase Advising Assistance for Tenants 15
Recommended Action #25 Change the Residential Tenancy Act 15

Appendix A List of References and Excerpts from Research Studies
Appendix B Summary of Recommended Actions
Appendix C Glossary of Terms

Summary

Report of the Inner-City Inclusive Housing Table

In a recent survey of 600 Vancouver residents, 25% identified homelessness as Vancouver's top priority over the next two years, and 17% identified affordable housing. When asked, "Which is the most important lasting impact of 2010", the highest response (32%) was "Help solve the homelessness problem".

This survey's findings are a convincing confirmation of Vancouverites' awareness and concern about homelessness. When the world arrives on our doorstep less than three years from now, what will they see? A city that has a striking street homeless problem or one that is making steady, visible progress towards eradicating homelessness? There is still time to act. To prepare for the influx of workers. To prevent evictions. To improve conditions. To build a legacy.

The Housing Table met from October 2006 to February 2007, reviewing the impacts experienced at previous hallmark events, grappling with complex issues of housing and services, and anticipating how the pre-Games period will affect the housing market. Our focus has been on housing for those people who are most vulnerable and multi-barriered, and always have the least choice in the housing market. These include youth between 13 and 25, women in poverty, people with mental health challenges, the disabled, people waiting for treatment, and Aboriginal people. Many face other challenges with medications, illegal drugs, and the sex trade. In light of what we continue to learn about the rapid changes being experienced in the Downtown Eastside, Mount Pleasant and Downtown South, there is an urgent need for three levels of government to take action.

Although the Table was large in size and diverse in perspectives¹, there was a remarkable degree of agreement on most on most of the recommended actions and a shared recognition that the legacy of the Games should be the elimination of homelessness. The accompanying report presents 25 recommended actions, organized in clusters, each relating to one of the five housing commitment statements made by the Games' four Partners in 2002.

Commitments to create direct benefits:

- Provide an affordable housing legacy and start planning now.
Two recommended actions.
- Protect rental housing stock.
Eleven recommended actions.
- Provide many alternative forms of temporary accommodation for Games' visitors and workers.
Three recommended actions.

¹ It should be noted that while a diverse group of 25 organizations participated on the Housing Table, some provincial and federal ministries that may be affected by these recommendations were not represented at the Housing Table.

Commitments to address potential adverse impacts:

- Ensure people are not made homeless as a result of the Games.
Six recommended actions.
- Ensure residents are not involuntarily displaced, evicted or face unreasonable increases in rent as a result of the Games.
Three recommended actions.

The members of the Housing Table believe that it is imperative that those actions that are supply-oriented must be initiated immediately in order to ensure funding is allocated at the earliest possible opportunity. The construction of affordable housing is the most potent way of impacting homelessness, and in considering the magnitude of needed housing the Table has drawn on the research work and targets within the *City of Vancouver's Homelessness Action Plan*. In summary, in terms of new supply, the Table recommends the following:

- Construction of an average of 800 social housing units (the majority of which are supportive) for each of the four years, starting as soon as possible. (Recommended Action #1)
- Securing additional operating subsidies to house low-income households in the Southeast False Creek Olympic Village following the Games. The proposed subsidy mix to be 40% deep core, 40% shallow, and 20% low-end-of-market. (Recommended Action #2)
- Acquisition or lease a minimum of 200 units, for each of four years, of existing low-income rental housing or the conversion of non-residential premises. (Recommended Action #3)
- Construct 200-250 units of housing by June 2009 to be leased to Games sponsors that need to accommodate workers before and during the Games, with subsequent conversion into social housing. (Recommended Action #16)

The Housing Table recognizes that the cumulative magnitude of homelessness presents a significant challenge for the Partners. But, unless this issue is tackled quickly through a focused program as set out in the report, the problem will become larger, more visible, and increasingly difficult to solve. The national media, and to some extent, the international media already know of the social and homelessness issues that prevail in Vancouver's inner city. When Vancouver welcomes the Games in 2010, what will the world's media see?

Main Report

Report of the Inner-City Inclusive Housing Table

In 2002, the four Partners to the Inner-City Inclusive Commitment Statement (ICI) pledged to work together to ensure that the legacy of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (“the Games”) created direct benefits and managed potential adverse impacts for Vancouver’s Mount Pleasant, Downtown South and Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods. In terms of housing, this pledge was conveyed as a series of commitments.

Commitments to create direct benefits

- Provide an affordable housing legacy and start planning now.
- Protect rental housing stock.
- Provide many alternative forms of temporary accommodation for Games’ visitors and workers.

Commitments to address potential adverse impacts

- Ensure people are not made homeless as a result of the Games.
- Ensure residents are not involuntarily displaced, evicted or face unreasonable increases in rent as a result of the Games.

Following the award of the Games, each of the Partners identified an agency that would be accountable for the implementation of the commitments. One of these agencies – the Vancouver Agreement Housing Task Team – took the lead in identifying participants and facilitating the work of a “Housing Table”, an advisory group to the Inner- City Inclusive Steering Committee (ICI-SC). The Housing Table is made up of participants whose common purpose is *to develop goals, action plans, and outcomes* that will be carried out by the Partners to the Commitment Statement. The Table is also responsible for identifying measures to monitor the progress of implementation, and report to the broader public.

The Context

Compared to previous host cities, the impact of the Games on the residential rental market in the Vancouver is likely to be more significant in light of its exceptionally low vacancy rate. According to CMHC’s most recent rental market report², the 2006 vacancy rate in fell to 0.7% in metro Vancouver and to a negligible 0.3% in the city of Vancouver. Despite a strong home ownership market, the vacancy rate has remained below the 15-year average of 1.5% in the past three years. A healthy vacancy rate is considered to be 3%.

A number of studies have exhaustively researched and described the problems associated with Greater Vancouver’s housing market, particularly in relation to low- and moderate-income households. Two studies, in particular, have focused on the potential impact of the 2010 Games related to housing³. Also, there is a growing body of research about the impact of hallmark events,

² CMHC. Rental Market Report, British Columbia Highlights. 2006.

³ Ference Weicker and Company in conjunction with the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation. Community Assessment of 2010 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Games on Vancouver’s Inner-City Neighbourhoods.

such as the Olympics, Expos and the World Cup published in academic and trade publications. These sources are increasingly available via the Internet. Rather than repeat the findings of local and international studies, this report uses them as the primary point of departure in developing specific goals and actions⁴ related to the work of the Housing Table. Appendix A includes a list of references, as well as quotes from studies, that have helped to inform the recommended actions of this report.

It is also noted that a recent survey⁵ of 600 Vancouver residents, 25% identified Homelessness as Vancouver's top priority over the next two years, and 17% identified affordable housing. When asked "Which is the most important lasting impact of 2010", the highest response was "Help solve the homelessness problem" – 32% of respondents.

The Reasoning

The Housing Table presents 25 recommended actions for consideration by the four Partners – Canada, British Columbia, City of Vancouver, and VANOC. Although the Housing Table was large (25 members from an almost equal number of organizations), there was a remarkable degree of agreement on most of the recommended actions. There was a shared recognition that the legacy of the Games should be the eradication of homelessness. While this is unlikely to be completely achieved, the world will visit Vancouver in 2010, and the failure to seriously impact homelessness will be evident for the world to see.

The Table trusts that the recommended actions in this report will be given immediate review and consideration by the ICI-SC. The ICI Housing Table Members acknowledge that any public funding, whether pre-existing program funding or new funding, to implement the ICI Commitments is outside the scope of the funding for planning and hosting of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games committed by the Government of Canada or the Province of British Columbia. Any implementation of the ICI Commitments which requires public funding will therefore be subject to normal development of business case and demonstration of relationship to strategic government priorities.

The Table wishes to highlight three key considerations that emerged during its deliberations.

1. Although Vancouver's inner city is the focus of many of the recommended actions, the inner city relates to, and is impacted by, the regional housing market, and the processes that are playing out in other sub-markets and across municipal boundaries. Many factors know no municipal boundaries – the lack of affordable housing and in some cases emergency housing, exceptionally tight rental vacancy rates, rising land prices, poor housing standards, continued in-migration, and the legacy of deinstitutionalization. The Table recognizes this broader context and puts forward a number of recommended actions pertinent to GRVD's constituent municipalities.

February 2003. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation with consultants Urban Futures and CitySpaces Consulting. [The Impact of the 2010 Olympics on the Vancouver and Sea-to-Sky Housing Markets](#). November 2006.

⁴ In relation to action plans put forward that require public funding, it is understood that these are subject to the development of a business case, and their relationship to strategic government priorities.

⁵ Random telephone survey of more than 600 adult Vancouver residents conducted by Justason Market Intelligence. November 2006.

2. A number of the Table's recommended actions are dependent upon the federal and B.C. governments taking decisions that would impact the country or the province. While these recommended actions may seem beyond the scope of the Table, the reality is that their implementation would greatly improve the circumstances of inner city residents. Examples are measures to encourage the construction of private rental housing through reforms to the federal tax system and increases to income assistance.
3. The construction of new affordable and supportive housing – the first recommended action – assumes the involvement of all three levels of government, plus the health authority, in order to ensure the cost-effective creation of new housing, and a sustainable approach to residents' ongoing support needs. A number of activities are already underway:
 - The provincial government's current commitments to housing are part of a comprehensive housing strategy, "Housing Matters BC";
 - The City continues to purchase land to develop non-market housing; and
 - The federal government recently committed capital funding for the homeless as part of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy. (Note: The federal government is encouraged to create a long-term sustainable approach to homelessness and housing by expanding this initiative beyond its 2008/09 commitment as part of a broader National Housing Strategy.)

Commitment Statement: Provide an Affordable Housing Legacy

Homelessness is arguably the single most urgent housing issue in the city of Vancouver, and especially prevalent in the three inner city neighbourhoods (Mount Pleasant, Downtown Eastside, and Downtown South) that are identified in the ICI Commitment Statement. The majority of the Housing Table believes that if hosting the Games is to provide a significant, enduring, and visible legacy, it should be to eliminate homelessness. The construction of affordable housing is the most potent way of impacting homelessness and in considering the magnitude of needed housing, the Table has drawn on the research work and targets within the City of Vancouver's Homelessness Action Plan.

The legacy should be to build supportive housing that is accessible to people who are absolutely homeless – on the street, in shelters, sofa-surfing – and people who are at risk of becoming homeless. It will need to be distributed throughout the City and within mixed income buildings and communities to facilitate integration. This housing should incorporate universal design principles and a specific proportion of housing accessible for disabled individuals. The construction of this housing should also be structured to provide opportunities for employment and skills development for inner city residents to meet other commitments by the Partners.

The Housing Table recognizes that the cumulative magnitude of homelessness is a major challenge to respond to for the Partners. However, in the absence of a serious program, the consequence will be a large and highly visible problem that will be showcased to the world in 2010. This will be a sharp contrast to the commitments given by the Partners in the Inner-City Inclusive Commitment Statement.

***Recommended Action #1
Build Social Housing***

The Partners to instigate the construction of an average of 800 social housing units (the majority of which are supportive) in each of four years, starting as soon as possible, in Vancouver. This reflects the City's Homelessness Action Plan⁶. The Province to be the lead implementing agency. The specific mix, size, and location of these units are to be determined, but the majority will be targeted for core and deep-core need individuals. As well, a number of units will incorporate universal design and accessibility standards. Units will be managed by not-for-profit housing organizations. Funding to be available to meet operating and support-services costs.

Measurement: Number of social housing units constructed annually and cumulatively.

During the Games, Southeast False Creek will be temporarily transformed into the *Vancouver Olympic Village*, accommodating approximately 2,800 athletes and officials. The Olympic Village is the first phase of a new mixed-use community and will contribute about 1,100 residential units – 250 units to become non-market housing. VANOC will outfit and operate the Olympic Village starting November 2009, and will return the Olympic Village to the City of Vancouver in April 2010. Recommendation #2 is aimed at ensuring that the investment in the Olympic Village will benefit low and moderate income households and contribute to the elimination of homelessness. Beyond the Village, in and around South East False Creek, new supportive housing should also be facilitated.

***Recommended Action #2
Build Social Housing – Olympic Village***

The Partners to secure funding for an operating subsidy that ensures that more than the current 10% of the 250 affordable housing units should accommodate core and deep core families and singles in the Southeast False Creek Olympic Village, following the Games. The proposed subsidy mix to be 40% deep core, 40% shallow, and 20% low-end-of-market.

Measurement: Number of households in core need and deep core need that are housed in the South East False Creek Olympic Village.

**Commitment Statement:
Protect Rental Housing**

The goal of recommended actions 3 to 13 is to prevent the net loss of privately-owned, Single Room Occupancy hotels (SROs) and self-contained rental housing for people with very-low incomes ("core need"). People living in these dwellings are vulnerable to becoming homeless if any of this rental stock is converted to other uses, closed and left vacant, or demolished.

⁶ The City of Vancouver's Homeless Action Plan (2005) calls for the production of at least 8,000 more subsidized units over 10 years (social housing plus private sector apartments where renters receive a subsidy). Of these, there is an estimated need for 3,200 supportive housing units and 600 transitional units in order to end homelessness. The Pivot Legal Society report, Cracks in the Foundation (2006) calls for the City to pursue the goal of 800 new social housing units per year.

The recommended actions are presented as a means *to stabilize the current situation* and protect residents from involuntary displacement in the 36 months leading to the Games. They are intended to be interim solutions until new units can be created. They are in addition to the creation of new housing units. The recommended actions are *not* meant to be an endorsement of sub-standard housing conditions often found in existing SRO hotels. The ultimate goal must be to replace this sub-standard housing with affordable self-contained housing, and, where needed, adequate support services.

Acquisition Measures to Protect Rental Housing

There is inherent instability in expecting that the private sector will continue to operate low-income housing in a rapidly changing real estate market. A preferred approach is for government, or a not-for-profit agency, to purchase and renovate rental housing. The City has purchased several SROs, such as the Granville Residence, the Stanley New-Fountain, and the Gresham. The Province has also purchased the Sunrise and Washington hotels. The continued purchase and renovation of SROs will provide long-term security of tenure for low-income individuals.

Other options for consideration are for governments to lease rental housing, or enter into service contracts with SRO operators for a period of time, with the aim of stabilizing and improving housing conditions for existing tenants until appropriate permanent housing can be built. Where leases are established, first right of refusal to purchase could also be sought by the City as part of these arrangements. Private sector representatives at the Housing Table believe that other innovative options could be possible and that the sector would be interested in considering more lease and purchase of service initiatives as part of rezoning negotiations and increases in density.

The target number identified in recommended action #3 is consistent with the number of units lost recently due to conversion, renovation, or closure.

Recommended Action #3 Purchase or Lease Existing Rental Housing

The Partners to instigate and fund the acquisition or lease of a minimum of 200 units, for each of four years, through purchase or lease of existing low-income rental housing or the conversion of non-residential premises (these are in addition to the 800 new units proposed in Recommendation #1) The Province to be the lead implementing agency. Units to be managed by a not-for-profit housing organization(s). Units likely to require renovation. Tenants may need support services.

Measurement: Number of non-market housing units acquired or leased annually and cumulatively.

Communications Measures to Protect Rental Housing

In comparison with some mega-events, the Games are of short duration and most visitors pre-arrange their accommodation. The conditions are wholly different than they were during Expo 86 and there appears to be no benefit in speculatively keeping units vacant leading up to the Games. This message needs to be conveyed to landlords through a communications initiative in order to minimize potential evictions or involuntary displacements. The target audiences would include owners of SRAs, secondary suites, and strata rental units. The BC Apartment Owners and Managers Association currently provides education programs for its members. However, the Table also

believes that a more elaborate communications strategy should be considered in order to alert potential visitors or workers to the challenges of finding accommodation in the City, unless it has been pre-arranged.

***Recommended Action #4
Develop and Implement Communications Strategy***

The Partners to retain a consultant who will develop a multi-faceted communications strategy. VANOC, the City of Vancouver, and the B.C. Apartment Owners and Managers Association to be the lead agencies. Additionally, the Partners will fund the production and distribution of materials to carry out the specific elements of the strategy.

Measurement: To be determined through the communications strategy.

Regulatory Measures to Protect Rental Housing

The City already has a number of regulatory measures in place to regulate demolitions and limit conversions of rental properties, and a program to assist tenants displaced by redevelopment. The Single Room Accommodation By-law manages the rate of change of low-income housing in Vancouver's downtown core, including SRO hotels, rooming houses and non-market projects with rooms less than 320 square feet. At the time of enactment, approximately 200 properties were identified. Affected owners must get a permit to demolish or convert SRA designated rooms and may be charged a fee of \$5,000 per room. The City is currently considering changes to the SRA By-law, including increased fees for demolition or conversion. In the Downtown South and the Downtown Eastside, the City's policy is to ensure one-to-one replacement of SRO units through redevelopment.

While Vancouver's core has the largest number and concentration of SRA rooms, other Greater Vancouver municipalities have these and other forms of low-cost rental housing that are vulnerable to redevelopment, including residual detached houses in industrial areas, and mobile home parks. When these are redeveloped, they often have a bounce effect on demand for low-cost housing in the City of Vancouver.

***Recommended Action #5
Re-examine SRA Policies***

The City of Vancouver to review its SRA policies with the aim of achieving a better than one-to-one replacement in all three neighbourhoods, and that replacement housing be provided generally in the same area of the converted or redeveloped housing. Additionally, the City to consider higher demolition/conversion fees per unit through its SRA By-law to cover some of the cost of replacement housing, and to extend the geographic scope of the by-law to cover Mount Pleasant. This measure should be considered alongside incentive measures such as federal tax changes.

Measurement: Changes to SRA policies, including demolition fees and geographic scope.

***Recommended Action #6
Encourage Municipal Action***

The GVRD to encourage and work with member municipalities to implement some form of "no net loss", "replacement housing", or "rate of change" regulations. The Province, GVRD, and possibly UBCM to be the lead implementing agencies.

This is consistent with the GVRD's initiatives to encourage housing diversity and affordability as part of its Livable Region Strategy.

Measurement: Council-adopted municipal policies and bylaws.

The next recommended action deals with the topic of *applications for demolition or conversion* that would result in the loss of affordable rental housing. The Table members who have community experience working with residents in the three inner city neighbourhoods believe that, in the light of current development pressures, the associated low vacancy rate, and potential pressure on rental stock by Games, a limited-term suspension of demolitions and conversions may be justified to preserve the stock. Similarly, a time-limited financial penalty could also be justified for owners who simply close their SRAs rather than make application for conversion or demolition. This interim period will allow the Partners (or their agents) the opportunity to focus on securing additional low-income supportive housing as recommended in Actions #1 and #2.

Representatives of the private sector do not agree with using interim demolition and conversion measures, nor financial penalties for vacant buildings; however, the BC Apartment Owners and Managers Association are supportive of #7C. They believe these to be punitive and counter-productive. A preference by this sector is to develop a toolbox of initiatives through engagement of their sector as Partners, as noted below.

Recommended Action #7

Introduce Interim Anti-Demolition/Conversion Measures and Penalties for Vacant Buildings

- A. The City of Vancouver to introduce a package of policies aimed at saving the loss of further SRA buildings pending the initiation of new construction, acquisition, and other measures. These policies would include an immediate one-year suspension, with an annual review, of the acceptance of applications for demolition and conversion of SRA units. (Note: This could be waived where the City/developer agree on a one-for-one replacement.)
- B. The City to also apply a financial penalty to SRAs that are closed after a certain date and held empty for more than three months and whose owners have not submitted an application for conversion or demolition. The City would determine the method of assessing this penalty. The time period would be through 2010.
- C. Concurrent with these measures, the City to engage the private sector in discussion to develop a mixture of initiatives to protect SRAs and the rental stock.

Measurement: Council-adopted suspension of new applications for demolition and conversion. Council-adopted penalties for empty residential buildings. City and private sector cooperation. Number of units removed from the market or closed.

Enforcement Measures to Protect Rental Housing

The *Vancouver Charter* makes specific provision for establishing standards of maintenance for all dwellings, for requiring the owners to conform to these standards, and, for allowing the City to

enter and repair dwellings to conform to standards at the cost of the owner. The purpose of the Standards of Maintenance by-law is to maintain basic standards of livability in residential premises. The *Charter* also provides for demolition or removal where a building is considered to be a fire hazard, structurally unsafe or a menace to health⁷. The City has implemented these provisions through several by-laws – Standards of Maintenance, Building By-law, Fire By-law, and Health By-law. Administrative and potential legal costs are high and the enforcement of these by-laws has been an ongoing challenge. There is a concern that some landlords deliberately neglect their buildings and, thus facilitate the approval of a demolition application. A greater level of enforcement and prosecution is warranted under these circumstances, especially with respect to the City entering and repairing sub-standard premises at the owner's cost.

There are sub-standard conditions in some low-income rental buildings and there are practices that clearly violate existing City standards – bedbugs, for example, are a very serious issue. Consideration should be given to funding an area-wide bedbug eradication program and building on a recent pilot initiative, as well as amending provincial legislation to allow for preventative treatment.

In the remaining months leading up to the Games, a great deal could be gained through extra funding to ramp up the enforcement program, although the goal in doing this should be to improve conditions while keeping buildings open. One way to accomplish this may be through the Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NISTs) that collaborate across City departmental and agency boundaries to help solve problems that require an integrated approach.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of the housing market across municipal boundaries, beyond the City of Vancouver, there is a need for other municipalities in the GVRD to develop standards of maintenance bylaws. It is understood that the province has prepared a model by law that could be utilized by municipalities.

***Recommended Action #8
Provide Proactive Enforcement***

The City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to provide more resources for the consistent and proactive enforcement of existing provisions for inner city neighbourhood SRA units, especially with respect to the City entering and repairing sub-standard premises at the owner's cost.

Measurement: Number of bylaw infractions. Number of units repaired.

***Recommended Action #9
Encourage Municipal Maintenance By-Laws***

The partners to encourage the GVRD to work with member municipalities to investigate similar provisions to the City of Vancouver regarding standards of maintenance by-law and remedies.

Measurement: Council-adopted "standards of maintenance" policies and bylaws.

⁷ With respect to other municipalities, the *Local Government Act* does not contain these specific provisions but the *Community Charter* does provide increased latitude for municipalities to enact similar provisions.

Incentive Measures to Protect Rental Housing

All levels of government have the ability to use incentive measures through their respective taxation powers to encourage the production and protection of rental housing. The Housing Table has given consideration to these incentives.

Generally, municipal governments are cautious about the use of tax incentives, but the City of Vancouver could introduce these incentives to encourage the protection and production of rental housing. It is recognized that there will be reluctance by the City to see this kind of initiative on a large scale because of the implications for tax revenue and other taxpayers. Therefore, its introduction would need to be strategic and aimed at SRAs. The *Vancouver Charter* provides for latitude in establishing business and property taxes. The City has used this provision to provide a tax exemption for heritage buildings as an incentive. Some jurisdictions, such as Seattle, have used their taxing authority to forgive or reduce property taxes on rental properties where the owner has entered into a binding agreement for rehabilitation of vacant buildings, or buildings in need of repair. There are other incentives that will help protect the rental housing stock, some of which are currently being piloted by the City. One in particular is the Silver-Avalon Hotel, which is a partnership between a private landlord, a non-profit organization (Lookout), and the Vancouver Agreement. Consideration could be given by the City to exempting SRAs from property taxes under certain conditions. This may need further Vancouver Charter amendments that the Province would need to grant expeditiously.

There has been a widely-supported call for the Federal Government to reform the tax system to encourage the private sector to build more rental housing. It is understood that this is currently being worked on by the federal and provincial governments, along with private sector involvement. The federal government also continues to fund the RRAP program with an extension for a further two years.

More private rental housing is already urgently needed in Vancouver. One of the anticipated impacts of the Games is that there will be more demand for rental housing, creating further pressure on an already tight rental market.

Recommended Action #10 Use Property Tax Incentives

City of Vancouver to exempt designated SRAs from property taxes associated with new improvements for up to 10 years where the owner enters into an agreement to rehabilitate vacant or underutilized buildings and maintain rents accessible to low-income renters. The exemption would be transferable to new property owners.

Measurement: Number of properties receiving a tax exemption.

Recommended Action #11 Provide Funds for Education

The Partners to secure additional funds to support Vancouver Agreement-initiated programs such as the skill upgrading of SRO hotel owners and managers, and projects with the private sector that result in improvements to low-income rental housing. To enhance the take-up of the skills upgrading program, the City to consider requiring participation in a training program as a condition of

obtaining a license to operate an SRO. The City to be the lead implementing agency.

Measurement: Uptake of training programs

***Recommended Action #12
Reform Federal Tax System***

The federal government to implement changes to the tax system, possibly, as part of a broader National Housing Framework. These include:

- Providing rebates to fully offset landlord GST expenses;
- Allowing small rental investors to qualify for the small business deduction;
- Restoring the Capital Cost Allowance pooling provisions to encourage capital re-investment in new rental projects; and
- Enabling the creation of a labour-sponsored investment fund specifically for affordable housing.

Measurement: Federal government legislative and regulatory changes.

***Recommended Action #13
Expand and Change RRAP***

The Federal government to maintain and expand the RRAP program for rooming houses, hotels, and rental apartment units. In particular, CMHC is requested to adjust the program to be more appealing to SRO operators, and to establish maximum rents that are appropriate for Vancouver's SROs to ensure affordability. The federal government is requested to expand the program to ensure a long-term sustainable response. CMHC to be the lead implementing agency.

Measurement: Annual number of units and value of renovations through RRAP.

**Commitment Statement:
Provide Alternative Forms of Temporary Accommodation**

A lesson learned from hallmark events similar to the Games is that very few out-of-region visitors/spectators arrive without previously arranging accommodation. The majority have purchased tickets for specific events and have made sure they have a place to stay, whether with family, friends or in a hotel/motel. Experience also indicates that local homeowners are willing to rent rooms, or provide bed and breakfast, for short-term stays. Also, VANOC is establishing a registry for homeowners who are willing to provide short-stay accommodation. The exceptions to this pattern are teens and young adults who surge into a venue before and during the Games. Many of these visitors do not have pre-organized accommodation but need an affordable place to stay or they will be adding to the demand for emergency shelter. Temporary accommodation during the Games is a priority for VANOC and \$500,000 has been set aside for this purpose.

There are a number of initiatives that can be taken to provide alternative and temporary forms of accommodation.

***Recommended Action #14
Establish a Short-stay Registry***

The Partners endorse VANOC's establishment of a short-stay registry to match visitors and Vancouver homeowners that are able to provide/rent temporary accommodation.

Measurement: Establishment of Registry. Monthly update on number of registrants, starting February 2009.

***Recommended Action #15
Create Short-stay Youth Facilities***

The Partners to instigate the creation and operation of up to 300 beds of temporary accommodation for short-stay visitors, primarily teens and young adults in both Whistler and Vancouver. The accommodation will be required before, during, and for a period after the Games. These beds should be located in a number of facilities and will need to be conveniently located and attractive to youth. Youth and adult accommodation must be separate. Partnering with the School Board and the Parks Board to use community centres may be a viable option.

Measurement: Number of beds of temporary accommodation created for youth. Monthly update on number of beds and bed occupancies, starting December 2009.

There is a commitment on the part of VANOC to ensure worker accommodation for IOC, sponsors, and venue workers before and during the Games and agreements are being signed with hotels in this regard. However, in relation to *worker accommodation*, the research indicates that people gravitate to cities that host the Games. Some workers find employment and are accommodated by their employers, for example, in hotel/motel rooms or furnished suites in condominiums. Others are responsible for their own housing. Both groups of workers have the potential to displace local residents and this is of concern to the Housing Table.

***Recommended Action #16
Build Worker Housing***

The Partners to instigate the construction of 200-250 units of housing by June 2009 which would be leased to Games sponsors that need to accommodate workers before and during the Games, and then converted into social housing following the Games. The Province to be the lead implementing agency. Consideration for the use of temporary trailers should be given.

Measurement: Construction of units and arrangements with sponsors to lease this housing for workers.

Commitment Statement: Ensure homelessness does not increase as a result of the Winter Games

The implementation of Actions #1 and #2 will produce a significant increase in the supply of housing for the homeless and homeless at risk and greatly impact homelessness in Vancouver. However, a concern remains by the Housing Table that the arrivals of short stay workers and visitors to the Games, who lack income for conventional hotel accommodation, or who are unable or unprepared to find other lodging, will compete for low cost accommodation in the inner city and displace low-income households. There are specific vulnerable and multi-barriered groups in the inner city who are least likely to be able to cope when faced with the prospect of homelessness – youth between 13 and 25, women in poverty, people with mental health challenges, the disabled, people waiting for treatment, and Aboriginal people. Many face other challenges with medications, illegal drugs, and sex trade. Some people have gravitated to the inner city from other parts of the Lower Mainland low cost housing or support services are inadequate or insufficient.

In addition to increasing housing supply, measures are also needed to address income and support services. Most organizations concur that the single biggest factor in homelessness in Vancouver is that housing is unaffordable for income assistance recipients. This is explicitly cited in the City of Vancouver's Homelessness Action Plan. The shelter component of income assistance rates has fallen far below the cost of safe and decent accommodation. Most individuals are using their support allowance (\$185) to add to their shelter allowance (\$325). The average rent is \$701 for a purpose-built bachelor apartment and \$816 for a one-bedroom in Vancouver's metro area. Support allowances are insufficient for an individual in Vancouver to purchase sufficient nutritious, healthy food, as well as basic personal necessities.

Direct experience by several members of the Housing Table indicates that too many people also face unnecessary barriers in accessing basic income assistance. This increases their wait time and forces people into living on the street, in shelters or making other temporary arrangements. Notable among these barriers are: a three-week wait, an online orientation, the 2-year independence rule, employment plans, and the requirement for more than one appointment to complete an application. As more people gravitate to Vancouver to find Games-associated work, some of these people will also be seeking basic income assistance. This will put further strain on the system.

The recommended actions directed toward this commitment are focused on increasing income and providing support services. Unless these two matters are addressed, even with the construction of recommended units, there is a risk that homelessness will be exacerbated by the Games.

***Recommended Action #17
Eliminate Barriers to Access Income assistance***

The Province to eliminate barriers for low-income people to access basic income assistance. (Cross-reference: Support accessible training and employment initiatives through the Employment and Training Table.)

Measurement: Reduction in time between initial application and receipt of basic income assistance and elimination of the barriers identified in the preamble to this recommended action; number of people gaining access.

***Recommended Action #18
Increase Income assistance***

The Province to increase the current basic shelter rate and the basic income assistance by at least 50% and allow earning exemptions to permit people to supplement their income and rebuild their lives. The Province to ensure that future changes are tied to a "cost of living allowance". Consideration may also be given to enabling individuals on income assistance to access provincial housing allowance programs.

Measurement: Change in the current basic shelter rate and living allowance relative the cost of the average rental rates in the City of Vancouver.

***Recommended Action #19
Increase Funding for Specific Groups***

In the business case that is developed as part of Action #1 and #2, the lead implementing agency to ensure attention is given to the provision of safe and appropriately designed supportive housing and should include wrap around services for those groups who are most vulnerable and who are multi-barriered. This to include wrap around services. These groups include youth (13 to 25), women in poverty, the aboriginal population, people, who are homeless, or have been evicted, people with mental health challenges, those waiting for treatment, the disabled and those facing other challenges such as medication problems, illegal drugs and participation in the sex trade.

Measurement: Number of housing units acquired annually and cumulatively for the above groups.

***Recommended Action #20
Enhance Provincial Portable Rental Assistance Programs***

The Province to enhance portable rental allowances, including the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program (SAFER), and the Rental Assistance Program. This is not intended to be a replacement or to overshadow the need for the creation of new housing.

Measurement: Number of new households assisted.

***Recommended Action #21
Increase Funding for Addiction and Mental Health Services***

The Partners to secure increased funding over the next four years for increased health professionals, outreach workers, and community-based treatment and recovery services in the inner city. (Cross-reference: ICI-SC commitments related to “Health and Social Services”.)

Measurement: Number of new outreach workers and health professionals funded.

***Recommended Action #22
Improve Local Planning and Delivery of Services***

The Province to encourage municipalities in Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health, to investigate ways, in collaboration with community-based groups and service providers, to improve the *local* planning and delivery of services to residents with mental health or addiction-related needs. To be effective these services need to be integrated with the new housing that is constructed. (Cross-reference: ICI-SC commitments related to “Health and Social Services”.)

Measurement: Number of supportive units that have the appropriate and adequate services required to support residents.

Commitment Statement:

Ensure residents are not involuntarily displaced, evicted or subject to unreasonable rent increases as a result of the Games

Issues of displacement, eviction and unreasonable rent increases are the challenges most commonly faced by low-income residents on fixed incomes who live in rental housing. As more workers come to the City there will be additional demand for rental housing, making low-income residents even more vulnerable to displacement. Research from other hallmark events suggests that workers arrive up to three years before the staging of the event. Those who are employed before arriving in Vancouver are more likely to have pre-arranged accommodation than those that arrive without a job. It is this latter group that is likely to have the most impact on the rental housing market, particularly in lower-cost areas of Downtown.

There are also barriers that make it difficult for tenants to learn about their rights. Some of these barriers are a result of language and literacy challenges, others are systemic – multi-hour wait times, few locations for filing applications, complex forms and lack of enforcement of dispute resolution orders (the latter being part of the court system). Most recently, members of the Housing Table advised that evictions for renovations have become a concern, obliging tenants to move because of minimal renovations and be replaced by tenants paying much higher rents. It was also noted that, because most apartment buildings were constructed before 1970, many now require major renovations and upgrades that, of necessity, lead to tenants being displaced and increased rents.

There was a shared agreement by members of the Housing Table that tenants in the inner city need easier access to the Residential Tenancy Branch office (which is in Burnaby) and that landlords too, experience problems with wait times. Of particular concern is addressing the unique needs of SRA owners and the special circumstances of SRA tenants at a location in the Downtown Eastside.

Provincial representatives noted that this would lead to increased staffing costs to the RTB and that outreach services are already available for the inner city neighbourhoods.

There was also shared concern by Housing Table members regarding the need to safeguard against unreasonable rent increases in a tight rental market as the Games approach. Those Table members who work with tenants saw the need to protect tenants through amendments to the *Residential Tenancy Act*. The proponents of the amendments believe that these are similar to measures in place in Quebec and Ontario. However, the Table was divided on the mechanisms that could be used to respond to these issues, with the private sector preferring the Table's other recommended actions relating to supply methods and incentives. (*Note: The developers, builders, and apartment owners do not support recommended action #25.*)

***Recommended Action #23
Increase Services for Tenants and Landlords***

The Partners to secure funding for a permanent and full service office of the Residential Tenancy Branch in Vancouver, ensuring there are adequate staff levels to ensure reasonable wait times (in person and on the phone), and to cover emergency situations outside normal working hours. This office should include provision for a full range of services. Additionally, a Court Services representative should be assigned to this office to provide advice and assistance in the enforcement of RTB dispute resolution judgements.

Measurement: Opening an appropriately-staffed office of the Residential Tenancy Branch in Vancouver.

***Recommended Action #24
Increase Advising Assistance for Tenants***

The Province to fund community advocates in community agencies to advise tenants on their rights, assist in preparing documents and, where necessary, appear with tenants at RTB dispute resolution hearings.

Measurement: Number of community advocates funded.

***Recommended Action #25
Change the Residential Tenancy Act***

The Province to consider amendments to the *Residential Tenancy Act* (RTA). The intent is to ensure that health and safety of existing residents, particularly residents of SRAs, is protected and that these residents are not faced with unreasonable rent increases or displacement. The recommended action should be combined with incentives such as changes to the federal tax system. The private sector is not in agreement with the following three recommended changes to the *Residential Tenancy Act*:

- To ensure that a landlord finds replacement housing or provides compensation for tenants who are evicted for renovations that relate to tenant safety;
- To provide tenants for a right of first refusal following renovations at a rent not to exceed that allowed under the Act (recognizing this essentially as a continual tenancy); and

- To ensure, for SROs, that rental rates are tied to the unit, rather than tenant occupancy.

Measurement: Provincial amendments to the legislation and regulations of the Residential Tenancy Act.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF REFERENCES AND EXCERPTS FROM RESEARCH REPORTS

List of Related Materials

- Carbonell, Jordi. 2005. *The Olympic Village, ten years on: Barcelona: the legacy of the Games 1992-2002* [online article]. Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis Olímpicas UAB.
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- Pivot Legal Society. *Cracks in the Foundation: Solving the Housing Crisis in Canada's Poorest Neighbourhood*. 2006.
- Urban Futures and CitySpaces Consulting for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *The Impact of the 2010 Olympics on the Vancouver and Sea-to-Sky Housing Markets*. November 2006.
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Excerpts from Research Reports

Ference Weicker and Company in conjunction with the Vancouver 2010 Bid Corporation. *Community Assessment of 2010 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Games on Vancouver's Inner-City Neighbourhoods*. February 2003.

This report identified the following housing impacts:

The experience of other Games indicates that the 2010 Winter Games would add to the supply of affordable housing and is unlikely to induce landlords to convert inner-city housing units (particularly SROs) to tourism lodging because the primary demand is for higher-end, furnished units.

- The Downtown Eastside is home to 6,427 single room occupancy (SRO) units. Given the preference for higher-end furnished units, the supply of accommodation and the short duration of the Winter Games, the financial incentive for landlords to convert inner-city housing units (particularly SROs) to tourism units is likely to be very weak. To be sure that a unit is available, a landlord would need to hold the unit vacant for a month or more prior to the Games and it would likely sit vacant for a month or more immediately following the Games when the demand for housing tends to be low.

Increased demand for housing from people hired to work in the months prior to the Winter Games could have a more significant impact on inner-city housing than would demand from spectators attending the Winter Games.

- The prospect of employment can draw many people to the host city and province or state. Benefiting from the slowing of the broader economy and the completion of Olympics-related construction projects, vacancy rates actually increased during the time leading up to the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Games. However, depending upon the number of workers drawn to Vancouver, the timing, and the average length of stay, the impact on housing in Vancouver could be much more significant given that the city normally has extremely low vacancy rates (currently less than 1%).

There tends to be an increase in the number of homeless people during Olympic Games.

- The Games attract people who are hoping to find employment once they arrive in the city or who are expecting to stay with friends and relatives. When their plans do not develop as anticipated, these people may find that they are unable or unwilling to pay for commercial accommodation and may look to local shelters for temporary housing support.

The past Games have experienced varying levels of evictions, depending in part on market conditions as well as legal or regulatory protections.

- Concerns about housing in the inner-city neighbourhoods are very high, in part, because

of the extent to which Expo 86 resulted in the displacement of low-income individuals in Vancouver. Various sources have estimated that between 500 and 1,000 lodging house residents were evicted or displaced as a result of Expo 86. It is important to recognize that Expo 86 was a six-month event rather than a 17 day event. However, it is also important to recognize that the Winter Games can act as catalyst to help revitalize both the Downtown Eastside (DTES) and other parts of the provincial economy. A revitalized economy could contribute to increased land prices which, in turn, could lead to evictions, both in the SROs and purpose built rental housing stock, due to conversions or upgrades to higher return land uses.

Urban Futures and CitySpaces Consulting for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *The Impact of the 2010 Olympics on the Vancouver and Sea-to-Sky Housing Markets*. November 2006.

This report identifies the impact of the Games primarily on the private housing market, and includes a comprehensive literature review that examines topics including displacement and gentrification. Some highlights from the report are:

- The employment consequences of the Games would be an additional 92,000 jobs in the Southwest Metropolitan region by 2031; that is 74 per cent more jobs than in 2001 and 4.6 per cent more than there would be under the “no Games” scenario. This increase in the demand for workers would augment migration to the region; meeting this demand would result in a 2031 labour force of 2.18 million people in the Southwest Metropolitan region, 4.5 per cent more than under the “no Games” scenario.
- Accommodating the projected additional population will determine the impact of the Games on the region’s housing markets. It is estimated that the number of households in the Southwest Metropolitan region in 2031 will be 4.0 per cent larger, with a total occupied stock of 1.58 million units in 2031, versus 1.52 million under the “no Games” scenario.
- The impact of the Games on housing starts would be to increase the number of average annual starts by 9.3 per cent over the “no Games” scenario. The Games will also lead to differences in occupancy demand by tenure, turnover in the rental and ownership markets, prices, listings, rents and vacancy. By 2031, the “Games” scenario will result in:
 - Demand for 3.9 per cent more ground-oriented owner-occupied units and 3.6 per cent more demand for owner-occupied apartments;
 - Demand for 4.2 per cent more rental ground-oriented units and 3.9 per cent more rental apartments; and
 - Rental vacancy rates being 0.25 percentage points lower.

Appendix B
Summary of Recommended Actions

Commitment	#	Recommended Action	Secure Funding	Lead Agency	Monitor Progress	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Provide an Affordable Housing Legacy	1	Build Social Housing	Partners	Province	Number of social housing units constructed annually & cumulatively		3200	→		
	2	Build Social Housing — Olympic Village	Partners	Province	Number of households in core need and deep core need that are housed following Games					250
Protect Rental Housing	3	Purchase or Lease Existing Rental Housing	Partners	Province	Number of non-market housing units acquired annually & cumulatively	800	→			
	4	Develop Communications Strategy	Partners		To be determined through the communications strategy					
	5	Reexamine SRA Policies		City	Changes to SRA policies, including demolition fees and geographic scope.					
	6	Encourage Municipal Action		Province, GVRD & UBCM	Council-adopted municipal policies and bylaws					
	7	Initiate Interim Anti-Demolition and Conversion Measure; Financial Penalties		City	Suspensions and penalties					
	8	Provide Proactive Enforcement		City	Number of bylaw infractions. Number of units repaired					
	9	Encourage Municipal Maintenance Bylaws	Province	Province	Council-adopted "standards of maintenance" policies and bylaws					
	10	Use Property Tax Incentives		City	Number of properties receiving a tax exemption					
	11	Provide Funds for Education	Partners		To be determined					
	12	Reform Federal Tax System	Canada	Canada	Federal legislative and regulatory changes.					
	13	Expand and Change RRAP program	Canada	CMHC	Annual # of units and value of renovations					

Appendix B
Summary of Recommended Actions

Commitment	#	Recommended Action	Secure Funding	Lead Agency	Monitor Progress	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Provide Alternative Forms of Temporary Accommodation	14	Establish a Short-stay Registry		VANOC	Monthly report on # of registrants					
	15	Create Short-stay Youth Facilities	Partners	Province	Number of beds; monthly report					
	16	Build Worker Housing	Partners	Province	Construction of units and arrangements with sponsors to lease this housing for workers		250			
Ensure homelessness does not increase	17	Eliminate Barriers to Access Social Assistance	Province	Province	Reduction in time between initial application and receipt of basic social assistance; eliminate barriers					
	18	Increase Social Assistance	Province	Province	Change in shelter rate and living allowance relative to average rental rates					
	19	Increase Funding for Specific Groups	Partners	Province	Number of housing units acquired annually and cumulatively for youth, women and Aboriginal people					
	20	Enhance provincial portable rental assistance programs		Province	Number of new households assisted					
	21	Increase Funding for Addiction and Mental Health Services	Partners	Province	Number of new outreach workers and health professionals funded					
	22	Improve Local Planning and Service Delivery		Province	Number of supportive units that have appropriate, adequate services					
Ensure residents are not involuntarily displaced, evicted or subject to unreasonable rent increases	23	Increase Services for Tenants and Landlords	Partners	Province	Open office of Residential Tenancy Branch					
	24	Increase Advising Assistance for Tenants	Province	Province	Number of community advocates funded					
	25	Change the Residential Tenancy Act	Province	Province	Amendments to legislation & regulations					

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

There are a number of terms used in this report.

Housing Terminology

Affordable housing

Affordable housing is a catch-all phrase for housing that is accessible to households with low or moderate incomes. It may be rented or owned. If rented, the landlord may be a market or non-market landlord. (Note: The definition of affordable housing varies greatly and may be more specifically defined through government programs or by local governments.

Social housing

Social housing is a form of housing tenure where there is an ongoing subsidy provided by government to make units affordable to low-income households. It may be directly managed by a government authority, leased/ owned by a non-profit housing society. In June 2006, Canada and BC entered into a social housing agreement whereby the Province assumed administration for over 50,000 social housing units that were formerly federally administered.

Supportive housing

Supportive housing provides opportunities for individuals to stabilize their personal situation and re-establish connections with the community. The housing is linked to support services that are voluntary and flexible to meet residents' needs and preferences. The level of support may vary, and some support services are provided through on-site staff, while in other instances staff support may be delivered on an outreach basis. In Vancouver, supportive housing may be located in social housing buildings where all the units are supported (dedicated), or social housing buildings where some of the units are supported (mixed) or in scattered market apartments with rent supplements.

Non-market housing

This housing is a form of housing tenure in which the property is owned by an entity which aims to provide housing at a price that does not include a profit. Non-market housing includes social housing, co-operative housing, and forms of housing that do not require ongoing government subsidies, such as student housing.

In Vancouver, non-market housing is for those who cannot afford to pay market rents or who have needs that are not being met by the market. It is designed for independent living and is owned by government or a non-profit/co-op society. The rents are controlled by government through an operating agreement, housing agreement, or land lease, and are therefore not determined by the market.

Single room accommodation (SRA)

In Vancouver, Single Room Accommodation includes those rooms designated under the Single Room Accommodation By-law and includes Single Room Occupancy hotels (SROs), rooming houses, and non-market housing units 320 square feet or smaller.

Single room occupancy (SRO)

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels are buildings containing small, single rooms (usually 100 sf) with tenants usually sharing bathroom facilities and, occasionally, cooking facilities. SROs began to appear in Vancouver in the late 19th century, in response to a large transient workforce that came in and out of the city on a seasonal basis, and in association with the Port of Vancouver. Today,

these SRO units represent the most basic shelter provided by the market for low-income individuals. The tenants are covered by the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

Core Housing Need

A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three standards).

- Adequate dwellings are those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.
- Affordable dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income.
- Suitable dwellings have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

Income Program

The BC Employment and Assistance Program is an income- and asset-tested program that assists people temporarily while they find work, and assists those who are unable to fully participate in the workforce. The accompanying table shows the rates that are in effect. There are two components of income assistance – support rate and shelter maximum.

Number of Persons in Household	SUPPORT ALLOWANCE				SHELTER ALLOWANCE
	Employable singles, couples, and two-parent families where all adults under 65 years.	Employable one-parent families where the parent is under 65.	Singles, couples, and two-parent families where all adults meet the Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) criteria and all are under 65.	Singles, couples, and two-parent families where one adult is 65 years or older.	
1	\$185.00	\$325.58	\$282.92	\$531.42	\$325.00
2	\$307.22	\$325.58	\$452.06	\$700.56	\$520.00
3	\$401.06	\$325.58	\$452.06	\$700.56	\$555.00
4 +	\$401.06	\$325.58	\$452.06	\$700.56	\$590.00

Source: BC Ministry of Employment and Income website. Rates effective January 1, 2005. Does not reflect changes related to shelter allowances that were announced in the 2007 provincial budget.

Housing Programs

The *Rental Residential Rehabilitation Program* (Rental RRAP) offers financial assistance to landlords of affordable housing to pay for mandatory repairs to self-contained units occupied by low-income tenants. Mandatory repairs are those required to bring properties up to minimum levels of health and safety.

The *Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters* (SAFER) program helps make rents affordable for BC seniors with low to moderate incomes. SAFER provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for eligible BC residents who are age 60 or over and who pay rent for their homes.

The BC *Rental Assistance Program* provides direct cash assistance to eligible low-income, working families with children under the age of 19 and a household income less than \$20,000 per year. Eligible families have lived in British Columbia for 12 months.

