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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

Date: 11/30/2018 2:01:13 PM

Subject: CoV submission to BC Poverty Reduction Strategy

Attachments: CoV Provincial Handout - Poverty Reduction-Sept 2017.PDF

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Greetings Mayor and Council:

Attached is the City's brief to the Province for their Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Please note staff are drafting a memo to update Council on the work-to-date on our Poverty Reduction Plan, including the results of our Vancouver consultations on this matter.

Please follow-up with Sandra if you have questions.

Best

Sadhu

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## Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity for All

### BACKGROUND

We all pay a high price for poverty. Poverty holds people back from contributing their talents, and creates divisions in communities between those who have access to opportunities and those who don't. Poverty results in higher costs to health and justice systems, and lowers economic growth.

British Columbia is the only Canadian province without a poverty reduction strategy. It has the second highest poverty rate in the country, created by increased costs of living, poor quality job creation, and inadequate income supports.

Vancouver's situation is particularly acute. Vancouver's poverty rate, homeless population, and proportion of residents in low-quality, service-level-paying jobs is higher than in most similarly sized cities in Canada and the Metro Vancouver region. The negative health, social and economic effects on Aboriginal communities are disproportionate and acknowledged as part of our City of Reconciliation and Truth and Reconciliation efforts.

There is an urgent need for action. The new BC government is committed to a province-wide poverty-reduction strategy with legislated targets and timelines. In 2014, Vancouver adopted its Healthy City Strategy, a comprehensive "social determinants of health" approach to social development and equity "for all" that includes creating a poverty reduction plan in 2017-2018. However, significant investments and coordinated action from senior governments are required to meet the needs of lower-income residents and achieve a vision of shared prosperity for all.

### RECENT ACTION

The City has recently:

- Become Canada's largest Living Wage Employer.
- Adopted a Community Economic Development Strategy that includes low-barrier employment hubs, social procurement and social purpose real estate initiatives, and other innovations.
- Launched a new Housing Vancouver Strategy which sets interim 10-year housing targets of 72,000 homes, of which 12,000 will be new social/supportive housing



and 14,500 will be market/below-market rental homes, delivered through Community Plans and the Cambie Corridor Phase III planning program.

- Supported parents to re-enter the workforce by piloting no-cost childcare spaces for low-income families and created over 800 new childcare spaces since 2015, totalling \$70 million in investments to date.
- Entered into a memorandum of understanding with United Way to encourage more social-purpose business in Metro Vancouver.
- Submitted a response to the Federal government's consultation on a national poverty reduction strategy (The submission to the Federal government Employment and Social Development Canada is available in full at [vancouver.ca/files/cov/prosperity-for-all-through-a-healthy-communities-approach.pdf](http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/prosperity-for-all-through-a-healthy-communities-approach.pdf)).
- Began updating our social procurement and Community Benefits Agreement policy framework to explore ways of increasing employment opportunities for marginalized people.



## PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Vancouver invites the Province to work with us as we develop Vancouver's poverty reduction plan. The plan can help inform the Provincial government's efforts, and contribute towards a five-year, intergovernmental/community poverty reduction agreement to implement actions and track results and progress in Vancouver. Such an agreement would include the following actions aligned with the Healthy City Strategy goals:

- Increase income assistance rates to \$1,500/month (including the shelter component of \$600/month) indexed to inflation, increased disability rates and earnings exemptions.
- Implement the 28 recommendations of the 2009 ombudsperson report, Last Resort: Improving Fairness and Accountability in British Columbia's Income Assistance Program.
- Raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour.
- Implement guaranteed basic income pilots.
- Invest in affordable and accessible public transit.
- Expressly confirm the City's authority to require Community Benefits Agreements on major infrastructure projects, increasing quality job opportunities for people with barriers to employment.
- Recommit to pre-employment training and funding-supported employment programs.
- Coordinate with Federal and Municipal governments to create social procurement policy and opportunities for low-barrier and local employment.
- Engage the private sector to foster inclusive hiring practices.
- Connect the work of the Provincial Shared Prosperity Committee to poverty reduction.

In addition to these actions, the City has identified a series of specific needs and opportunities in relation to housing, homelessness and affordable childcare. Direct and meaningful action to address those challenges is also critical to mitigate the effects of poverty.

