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To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**

Date: 12/17/2021 4:40:00 PM

Subject: Updated Memo on Homelessness in 2021 and Plans for 2022

Attachments: image002.png

[ACCS - GM - Memo \(Council\) - Updated Memo on Homelessness in 2021 and Plans for 2022 \(2021-12-16\).pdf](#)

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**Dear Mayor and Council,**

On November 29, 2021, General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services provide a memo entitled **Update on Homelessness in 2021 and Plans for 2022**. Please find attached an update to that memo that provides additional information on spaces created since the 2020 Homelessness Point-in-Time count.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Sandra and she will ensure questions are answered in the weekly Q&As.

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwx̱w̱u817 \_wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.



## MEMORANDUM

December 16, 2021

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Celine Mauboules, Managing Director of Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing Programs, ACCS

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Clarifications to Memo Update on Homelessness in Vancouver: 2021 Alternative Data Analysis and Plans for 2022 within the Context of the Ongoing COVID Pandemic

RTS #: N/A

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### PURPOSE

This memo provides clarifications to the November 29, 2021 memo to Mayor and Council on efforts to assess the current state of homelessness in Vancouver and plans for understanding the state of homelessness in 2022, by providing additional information regarding housing and shelter brought online from March to December 2020 and thus provides an updated count of all of the spaces created since the March 2020 Point in Time Homelessness Count.

### BACKGROUND

#### Context of Homelessness

Homelessness in Vancouver is a humanitarian crisis that reflects a trend seen across the region, province, country, and continent. Poverty and a lack of affordable housing for those living on low incomes are two of the most significant contributors to homelessness.

Traumatic personal events and serious health issues also contribute to homelessness, particularly when they intersect with individual poverty and a lack of supports. The persistence of deep poverty, without sufficient relief through government assistance, has meant some people remain homeless for years.

The stark overrepresentation of Indigenous people who experience homelessness in Vancouver and across the country highlights the impacts of colonialism and intergenerational trauma experienced by many Indigenous peoples. Homelessness is made worse in Vancouver by rising rents and low vacancy rates. Stigma and discrimination directed towards people who are experiencing homelessness, such as assumptions that the poverty keeping people from securing a home is their own fault, compound the challenge of addressing the issue through systemic efforts.

Homelessness is a city-wide challenge that requires a city-wide response. The City's Housing Vancouver strategy and community plans call for housing affordability and accessibility for all people in all communities. The City of Vancouver is working with its partners to take collective action to address the critical needs of people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver.

### Impact of COVID-19 on people experiencing homelessness

With the dual public health emergencies of the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID) and the opioid overdose crisis, people experiencing homelessness are at greater risk of serious health issues and even death. At the onset of COVID, there were a number of restrictions put in place that disproportionately impacted service provision to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. While some of these restrictions have been lifted, the associated impacts on individuals and communities is still being felt. These include:

- No guest/ limited guest policies in SROs and Supportive Housing Buildings  
At the onset of COVID, almost all SROs and supportive housing buildings implemented “no guest/limited guest” policies restricting guests from accessing these sites who may have benefited from having a place to sleep overnight. “Limited guest” policies meant that those who were considered ‘permanent guests’ in their role as caregivers or key support for the resident were permitted in the building, but others were not which potentially increased the likelihood of those individuals facing unsheltered homelessness if no other indoor spaces were available. Changing public health guidelines has meant that some buildings have now relaxed their no guest restrictions while others have continued to implement strict no policies in their buildings guest.
- Reduction in Access to Public Space  
In an effort to reduce the transmission of COVID, many public spaces (community centres, public libraries, drop-in programs, etc.) that provided warmth, services and supports to individuals during the day either temporarily closed or significantly limited their occupancy and usage at the onset of the pandemic. A significant number of public spaces, including City operated community centres and libraries, are now open and are able to provide respite space for individuals. However, some places still have limited hours, capacity or services available, meaning that overall access to public space is reduced compared to pre-COVID levels.

- Reduction in Shelter Capacity Levels  
At the onset of COVID, public health mandated physical distancing requirements in shelters which resulted in an overall reduction in shelter capacity. More recently, operators at some shelter have been able to slowly increase their capacity while still meeting distancing requirements by repurposing space and layouts. While the City, in partnership with senior levels of government, opened additional shelter spaces, demand for these spaces continues to be high.
- Challenges for Homelessness Outreach Teams and Meal Service Providers  
While the City's Homelessness Services Outreach office has remained open during the pandemic, many other outreach offices and drop-ins, as well as meal service providers initially closed or changed their operation models to comply with public health requirements. While many organization did their best to pivot the delivery of services (e.g., take out only, meal delivery service to SROs), these changes resulted in increased difficulty in accessing food for individuals in need. Many, though not all, programs have now been able to return to pre-COVID service levels.

The outcomes of restrictions like those listed above had and in some cases continue to have significant impacts for the people who are in need of shelter and services. Each of these situations compounds the impacts of precarious housing or lack of housing and creates further risk for people in already precarious situations. These factors will have impacted the number of people who need(ed) to find shelter in other places – either overnight or during the day – out on sidewalks and in parks.

Over the course of the pandemic, the demand for services, housing, and shelter have continued to grow and residents, businesses, and non-profit service providers in communities across the city are expressing concern about increased unsheltered homelessness and associated impacts, including increased garbage, feces, and needles, as well as concern for people struggling with mental health and substance use issues. While many restrictions related to COVID have either been lifted or lowered, all levels of government, private and non-profit housing and service providers must continue working together address the unmet need of people living in poverty and disproportionately impacted by COVID.

In October 2020 recognizing the impacts of COVID on homelessness, staff provided a very conservative estimate of an additional 100 people made homeless and without shelter directly due to COVID impacts.

### The Point in Time (PiT) Homeless Count

While recognized as undercounts, PiT counts are a widely accepted and used methodology to provide information about the number and profile of people experiencing homelessness. The City conducted its first Point in Time homeless count as part of the triennial Metro count in 2005 and since 2010 has conducted an annual count, coordinating with partners for the triennial Metro counts.

### *2020 PiT Count Overview*

On March 3 and 4, 2020, the City of Vancouver participated in the Metro Vancouver Homeless Count. The count was carried out prior to the Province and the City declaring a State of Emergency and, as a result, planning for the count – including volunteer recruitment

and training – and deployment of volunteers for data collection was not impacted by COVID restrictions.

The 2020 Count found 2,095 residents experiencing homelessness (compared to 2,223 in 2019): 547 people were living unsheltered on the street and 1,548 people were staying in sheltered locations, including emergency shelters, detox centres, transition houses, and hospitals, with no fixed address (NFA). The results of the Homeless Count were presented to Council on October 7, 2020 as part of the Homelessness and Supportive Housing Strategy.

### *2021 PiT Cancellation Due to COVID Pandemic*

On February 8th, 2021, staff provided a memo to council reporting that the 2021 Homeless Count would not be conducted due to COVID restrictions. While no Count was conducted in 2021, staff collected alternative sources of data to attempt to understand the state of homelessness in Vancouver.

## **DISCUSSION**

As noted above, staff explored other ways to understand the current state of homelessness in 2021 given the cancelation of the 2021 PiT count due to the ongoing COVID pandemic.

### Trends to Date

As staff looked to alternate data points, it is important to note that – while conducting a PiT counts remains a key tool in tracking homelessness trends – demographic indicators of individuals experiencing homelessness have also remained fairly consistent year over year since 2017:

- There has been an average 2-5% change in the total number of people experiencing homelessness enumerated since the last regional Count (2017-2020).
- Indigenous individuals continue to be disproportionately represented in the homeless count (39% average 2017-2020).
- Since 2017, men have represented on average 75% of individuals surveyed (76% in 2020). It is important to note, however, that women and gender diverse people are more likely to experience hidden homelessness.<sup>1</sup>
- There has been a slight rise in the number of survey respondents who are fifty-five years or older from 21% in 2017 to 23% in 2020.
- Individuals experiencing homelessness continue to face increasing health challenges, especially related to addictions (60% in 2020) and mental health issues (45% in 2020).

This general trend data provides a basis from which to review alternate data sources for 2021.

### Changes in Shelter and Supportive Housing Capacity since 2020 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count

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<sup>1</sup> Previous Homeless Count reports and community agencies have stated that women tend to be part of the hidden homeless population, often staying with families and friends or in unsafe situations rather than stay on the streets or access services for those experiencing homelessness. As such, they are very likely to be undercounted using a Point-in-Time count methodology.

A key consideration to understanding the state of homelessness is the implementation of new shelter and housing since the last PiT count. As seen below, the City of Vancouver in collaboration with our partners have opened a number of additional shelters and supportive housing units.

### ***March 2020 through March 2021: 490 spaces created***

As a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Oppenheimer Park encampment, BC Housing, the City of Vancouver and partners worked together to provide temporary sheltering options for people living in the Park. As part of this response, BC Housing both leased and purchased a number of hotel sites.

- In April 2020, BC Housing leased four hotels to provide space where people experiencing homelessness were able to access shelter with a private room and bathroom during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two of these hotels, as seen below, were subsequently purchased by BC Housing in March 2021 and converted to supportive housing.

*Table 1: BC Housing leased hotels, April 2020.*

Date	Site	Address	Operator	# of Units	Status
April 2020	HI Central	1114 Burnaby Street	Atira	68	Shelter
April 2020	HI Downtown	1025 Granville Street	Community Builders Group	74	Shelter <sup>2</sup>
April 2020	Holiday Inn	1110 Howe Street	Lu'ma Native Housing Society	100	Shelter
April 2020	The Lark	103 E. Hastings Street	PHS	33	Shelter <sup>3</sup>
<b>Total:</b>				<b>275</b>	

- In June 2020, BC Housing purchased three properties (1906 Haro Street, 1176 Granville Street, and 928 Main Street) to provide additional supportive housing units. The Buchan Hotel (1906 Haro Street) will provide housing with supports specifically for women in need.

*Table 2: BC Housing leases/purchases*

Date	Site	Address	Owned by	# of Units	Status
June 2020	Buchan Hotel <sup>4</sup>	1906 Haro Street	BC Housing	63	Operating <sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> BC Housing purchased 1025 Granville Street in March 2021, and is now operating the building as supportive housing (please see Table 3).

<sup>3</sup> BC Housing purchased 103 E. Hastings Street in March 2020, and is now operating the building as supportive housing (please see Table 3).

<sup>4</sup> BC Housing leased 1906 Haro Street in May 2020, but subsequently purchased the building in June 2020.

<sup>5</sup> As of December 2021, the Buchan Hotel is under renovations.

June 2020	Howard Johnson (Luugat) <sup>6</sup>	1176 Granville Street	BC Housing	110	Operating
June 2020	The American	928 Main Street	BC Housing	42	Operating
<b>Total:</b>				<b>215</b>	

### ***March 2021 through December 2021: 630 spaces***

Staff did conduct a shelter count using the PiT Count methodology in March 2021, since this count a number of shelter and supportive housing units have opened or had a change of use. This includes the following which are included in the summary Table 3 below:

- In March 2021, BC Housing purchased two hotels that they previously leased in response to COVID-19. The two hotels provide 107 units of supportive housing. The space created by these purchases is counted above.
- In March and April 2021, BC Housing purchased four properties (403 E Hastings Street, 435 West Pender Street, 956 Main Street and 956 Main Street) to provide additional supportive housing units. When fully occupied the four sites will provide 279 units of supportive housing.
- In February and April 2021, with acquisition funding from the federal RHI program through CMHC and operational funding commitments from BC Housing, the City purchased two hotels: 2075 Kingsway (formally The Days Inn) and 205 Kingsway (formally the Best Western Hotel). Once fully operational, these two sites provide 133 additional units of supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, connecting them to services and programs to support their well-being.
- In September 2021, the City, in partnership with BC Housing, opened Álewem, a 98 unit Temporary Modular Housing (TMH) at 1580 and 1582 Vernon Drive. The building is operated by Community Builders Group and provides 24/7 support services to tenants.

*Table 3: New Supportive Housing in 2021*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Owned by</b>	<b># of Units</b>	<b>Status</b>
Feb 2021	The Days Inn	2075 Kingsway	COV	65	Under renovation
March 2021	Cow aa	435 West Pender Street	BC Housing	80	Operational
April 2021	The Patricia Hotel	403 E Hastings	BC Housing	145	Operational
April 2021	956 Main Street	956 Main Street	BC Housing	22	Operational
April 2021	1012 Main Street	1012 Main Street	BC Housing	32	Operational

<sup>6</sup> BC Housing leased 1176 Granville Street in May 2020, but subsequently purchased the building in June 2020.

April 2021	The Best Western	205 Kingsway	COV	68	Operational
Sept 2021	Alewem (TMH)	1580/1582 Vernon Drive	COV	98	Operational
<b>Total:</b>				<b>510</b>	<b>445 operational</b>

Further, additional emergency shelter spaces were opened in this same timeframe:

- Over the spring and summer of 2021, the City, in partnership with BC Housing, opened two new temporary year round shelters that provide 120 additional shelter spaces: The Osborn, managed by PHS Community Services Society (PHS), and Klahowya Tillicum Lalum, managed by Lu'ma Native Housing Society. The latter site was also enabled by funding from the federal Reaching Home program. Together, these sites provide 120 shelter spaces for individuals experiencing homelessness. Both shelters are in operation 24 hours a day, and have shelter pods, which provides guests with more privacy, and meet COVID-19 guidelines for distancing. These spaces are in addition to year round – both permanent and temporary – beds available (currently 1,350+ bed) and 230 additional COVID response shelter spaces.

*Table 4: New Emergency Shelters*

Date	Site	Address	Owned by	# of Spaces	Status
Summer 2021	The Osborn	27 West Hastings Street	Private Owner	60	Operational
Summer 2021	Klahowya Tillicum Lalum	875 Terminal Avenue	COV	60	Operational
<b>Total:</b>				<b>120</b>	

In total, an additional 1,120 spaces (combination of housing units and shelter beds/pods) have been brought online since the last full PiT count in March 2020. This is an impressive number of activations in a relatively short amount of time and the funding support and partnership of the Province through BC Housing and funding support from the federal government were both critical to these implementations. One would reasonably expect this to have decreased the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Vancouver.

Staff will also compile an inventory of the number of supportive housing and other shelter rate units that have been delivered in partnership with senior governments over a longer period of time in the early new year.

#### Alternative Approaches to Understanding Homelessness during COVID-19 (2021)

Staff reviewed a number of service data sources – outlined below – to determine if these sources could either individually or in aggregate provide some understanding of the state of homelessness in Vancouver in the absence of a PiT count. For more information on these sources, please see Appendix A.

- Shelter Occupancy**  
 Using the PiT count methodology, a shelter count took place on March 16, 2021, during which 1,483 individuals were accessing shelter spaces. These spaces included year round shelters, transition houses, safe houses, EWR, detox centres, as well as COVID response shelters.<sup>7</sup>
- City of Vancouver's Homeless Outreach Team Data**  
 In Q1s from 2018 and 2020, the outreach team served an average of 2,761 clients. During Q1 of 2021, the Outreach Team served 3,474 unique clients, which represents a 26% increase compared to the previous 3 year Q1 average.
- Community Based Data**  
 Staff conducted a survey with outreach providers and the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) also conducted a survey. The survey data highlight the ongoing need for supports, especially for specific demographics of individuals. For further analysis see Appendix A.
- 311 Homeless Related Cases**  
 While there was an initial increase in 311 cases related to homelessness at the onset of the pandemic, volume levels have leveled off, with only a slight increase compared to pre-COVID. However an increase in calls does not directly correlate to an increase in homelessness.
- No Fixed Address (NFA) Income Assistance Data**  
 Staff met with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) to explore the potential use of NFA data to understand unsheltered homelessness. It was determined that NFA data is not always an indicator of homelessness and would not correlate to homeless counts as NFA as a status is used for other purposes beyond homelessness.

Table 5 below provides a summary of the various data sources and general trend (for a more detailed overview, please see Appendix A).

*Table 5: Alternative data source findings summary*

Data Source	Findings	Trend
<b>2020 Homeless Count</b>	In 2020, 2,095 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in Vancouver.	Largely unchanged since 2017
<b>Shelter Count</b>	1,483 individuals in 2021, compared to 1,548 in 2020	Downward

<sup>7</sup> During the shelter count there were five sites that were not taking new intakes due to present COVID outbreaks. There were 18 sites that were either at or over capacity.

Data Source	Findings	Trend
<b>Homeless Outreach Metrics</b>	During Q1 of 2021, the Homelessness Services Outreach Team served 3,474 unique clients, which represents a 26% increase compared to the previous 3 year average.  People access the services of the Outreach Team for more than just finding housing including, but not limited to replacing ID, access income assistance, tenancy issues, etc.	Upward
<b>311 Homeless Related Cases</b>	During the first six months of COVID there was a large increase in 311 inputs related to homelessness. The initial spike in volume decreased to slightly above pre-COVID-19 levels.	Upward
<b>Community Data</b>	Outreach provider survey and DEWC survey data highlight ongoing need for supports, especially for specific demographics of individuals.	N/A

While these alternative data sources help to provide context and some insight into the current state of homelessness in Vancouver, they unfortunately do not provide a reliable proxy to the PiT count number. Further, comparisons within each data source to previous years is difficult because it is unclear if the changes are due to the actual number of people experiencing homelessness or are impacted by COVID. For example, an increase in 311 calls may be due to an actual increase in homelessness, or because people are working from home and are more alert to their surroundings and are more likely to report something that they see. So, in short, while one can look at the overall trends based on the alternative data sources, one cannot know how they directly relate to the current number of people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver.

#### Final Assessment of Alternative Data Sources

While the alternative data sources reviewed by staff cannot replace the PiT count in providing a reasonable assessment of the number of people experiencing homelessness, they do suggest that despite the significant investments in new space creation (supportive housing and shelter) over the past two years, there does not appear to be a decrease in the need for housing, shelter, and supports for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Specifically, the upward trend on access to Homelessness Services by people needing support suggests that the rate of homelessness remains the same or perhaps may have even increased by Q1 2021 despite 490 spaces being created in 2020.

Comparative data for Q1 2022 will be needed before staff can confirm whether Homelessness Services service use levels have increased, decreased, or stayed relatively the same since Q1 2021. Again, this will not be a perfect proxy as people access Homelessness Services to support ID replacement, tenancy issues, and other housing-related needs. It will, however, point to demand for services.

## **NEXT STEPS**

### Understanding Homelessness in 2022

Staff do not believe it is feasible to implement a PiT count in 2022 given the ongoing challenges arising from the pandemic which, while less complex than in 2021, still remain. The most significant barrier is that the implementation of the count in Vancouver relies on the training and deployment of over 500 community volunteers to conduct surveys with individuals experiencing homelessness.<sup>8</sup> There is no way to conduct the count in Vancouver – given the scale of the count– without this high number of resident and community service provider volunteers. As we are not currently seeing the return to full volunteerism across the sector and the rates of volunteerism pre-COVID, staff do not believe we would recruit the necessary number of volunteers to complete the count.

Given that planning for a spring PiT count typically begins in the preceding December and requires significant planning to be ready for March, it is not realistic to anticipate a full PiT count in 2022.

Instead, for 2022 staff plan two activities:

1. Continuing to explore and update the data sources included in this memo, including discussing with MSDPR whether there could be some further nuancing of the NFA data collection, and
2. Conducting a smaller scale survey using only staff resources (i.e., Homelessness Outreach Team).

Staff anticipate that by 2023, the pandemic and response will have stabilized sufficiently that a count could be conducted by then, possibly even the currently anticipated 2023 Metro regional count if it proceeds, subject to continued direction from public health to keep staff, volunteers and individuals experiencing homelessness safe.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

In the absence of a 2021 PiT count, staff explored and collected a number of alternative sources of data to understand the state of homelessness in Vancouver. The alternate data sources – while not a reliable proxy for the PiT count – demonstrate that the demand for shelter, outreach and other homelessness services continues to be significant.

Staff will continue to refine our analysis of alternative data sources to PiT counts to understand homelessness during the ongoing COVID pandemic. A significant number of new spaces were brought online in 2021 and staff will have a better sense by spring 2022 as to whether those spaces have impacted service demand.

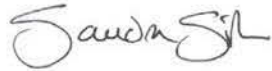
Staff are also aware of the associated impacts of unsheltered homelessness on the broader community and will be reporting to Council early in the new year with recommendations to address some of these issues. Discussions with senior government on the urgent need for

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<sup>8</sup> The City and other non-profit partners have witnessed a sharp decline in volunteers available to support programs. Furthermore, vaccination policies may impact our ability to recruit sufficient volunteers. It is also important to note that counts that occurred in BC in 2021 did not use volunteers, but utilized outreach teams and were conducted in small urban centers. No communities in Metro Vancouver or Fraser Valley conducted a homeless count in 2021.

more supportive and social housing, increased mental health supports and access to safe supply, and emergency measures to support people experiencing homelessness also continues.

If Council has any further questions or needs additional information, please feel free to contact Sandra Singh directly at [sandra.singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandra.singh@vancouver.ca).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandra Singh'.

Sandra Singh, General Manager  
Arts, Culture, and Community Services

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## Appendix A - Alternative Data Sources for PiT Count

The following provides further information regarding alternative data sources analysed instead of the Point in Time (PiT) count.

### 1. Shelter Occupancy and No Fixed Address Data

Point in Time (PiT) counts consist of an unsheltered count and a sheltered count. Consistent with the PiT sheltered count methodology, staff collected shelter occupancy data from permanent and temporary shelter providers, including transition houses, and extreme weather response (EWR) shelters. Additionally, data was collected from shelters in operation due to COVID, including hotels, and isolation shelters. The data was collected for the evening of March 16 to remain consistent with previous PiT counts. Shelter staff filled out a form that indicated the number of people who stayed that night, as well as the shelters capacity, number of turnaways, and if there was anything to note that specific evening. Supplementary data was provided by BC Housing.

As seen in the table below, there were 1,483 individuals accessing shelter services during the evening of March 16<sup>th</sup>. This is a reduction from 2020, where 1,548 individuals were accessing shelter during the 2020 Homeless Count. It is important to note that during the shelter count there were five sites that were not taking new intakes due to present COVID outbreaks. As well, there were 18 sites that were either at or over capacity.

Sheltered Total - March 16, 2021	Occupancy
Year Round Shelters	991
Transition House	44
Safehouse	10
EWR	81
Detox Centre	28
No fixed address NFA	25
COVID Response sites	304
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,483</b>

In addition to the above, there were 10 sites operating due to COVID-19, including five hotels leased by BC Housing, three shelters, and two COVID isolation shelters. There were 304 additional individuals staying at these sites. Including these sites, there were 1,483 individuals enumerated in the shelter count.

### 2. Outreach Data collected by the City of Vancouver's Homelessness Outreach Team

The Homelessness Services Outreach Team ("Outreach Team") connects directly with individuals in need of housing, income, and other support services, both at the outreach office and in neighbourhoods throughout the city.

The Homeless Count takes place during Q1 annually. Looking at the number of unique clients who the Outreach Team provided services to during Q1 between 2018 and 2020 there is a range per below table. The average during Q1 over these years was 2,761 unique clients served. As seen in the table below, during Q1 of 2021, the Outreach Team

served 3,474 unique clients, which represents a 26% increase compared to the previous 3 year average.

	2018 (Q1)	2019 (Q1)	2020 (Q1)	2021 (Q1)
<b>Total # of Unique clients served</b>	2,994	2,567	2,723	3,474

Since Q2 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the total number of unique clients served per quarter has consistently been about 3,500 individuals. The highest number of unique clients served, was during the first 3 months of the pandemic (Q2 2020) when outreach served 3,757 unique clients. Between July - September 2021, outreach served 3,484 unique clients.

### 3. Community-Based Data

As part of the Homeless Count preparation, staff conduct an annual mapping workshop with outreach program providers to identify locations across the city where street homelessness is observed. In place of the in-person workshop, staff reached out to these organizations through an online survey to gather their perspectives on how street homelessness has changed over the year, and their ability to provide services.

Respondents were asked if they have noticed changes to the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness during the pandemic. Some respondents indicated there had not been a change, while others thought the number had increased, especially due to the CERB program ending, as well as buildings implementing guest policy restrictions.

Respondents indicated that while service levels originally dropped, they have almost returned to, or exceeded, pre-pandemic levels. Multiple respondents indicated that for unsheltered individuals, the limitations on access to public spaces continues to have a large impact. This includes access to drop in centres, safe bathrooms and showers. Respondents indicated that the demographics of individuals experiencing homelessness have remained relatively the same as prior to COVID-19, but it was noted that there has been an increase Individuals that are senior (age 55+) or gender diverse.

Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC) received a grant as part of Homelessness Action Week (HAW) to conduct a needs assessment on obtaining and maintaining housing for women in the DTES. Part of the needs assessment was a survey conducted with individuals accessing women's drop in centres in the Downtown Eastside. Of the 120 respondents, 65 met the definition of homelessness used in the homeless count, meaning they were staying in a shelter (39 individuals), at someone else's place (2 individuals), or were unsheltered, or street entrenched (24 individuals). Over 75% of respondents were adults between the ages of 25-54. Respondents primarily identified as Indigenous (40%), white (32%) or Black (8%).

As part of the survey respondents were asked if they feel safe where they live. All 24 individuals who were street entrenched indicated they did not feel safe where they lived. Of sheltered respondents, 44% indicated they felt safe where they live. However, while 50% of Indigenous respondents and 60% of white respondents indicated they felt safe, only 18% of respondents who were not Indigenous or white felt safe.

#### 4. 311 Homeless Related Cases

The City collects reports of citizen feedback on issues related to homelessness through 311. Two sources of data directly related to homelessness are through “reporting an encampment,” or “reporting tents or structures on sidewalks or streets.” During Q2 2020, the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a 93% increase in the number of 311 reported cases related to homelessness compared to 2019. This increase in number of cases began to level off, as in Q3 2020 there was only a 30% increase in 311 reported cases compared to 2019. There are varied reasons for the increased number of calls, and important to note that this data does not directly correlate to an increase in homelessness.

By Q4 2020 through Q2 2021, the number of reported cases related to homelessness began to return to pre-pandemic volumes. In Q2 2021, there was a 36% reduction in reported cases compared to 2021.

#### 5. NFA Income Assistance Data from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Staff reached out to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) for records of people receiving income assistance who are recorded as NFA. MSDPR indicated that NFA is not always an indicator of homelessness, and would not correlate to homeless counts. As such, we are not able to utilize NFA case numbers as a direct indicator of the homeless count.