



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Report Date: January 16, 2007
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Meeting Date: **January 30, 2006**

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of the Housing Centre

SUBJECT: Supportive Housing Strategy for Vancouver Coastal Health's *Mental Health & Addictions Supported Housing Framework*

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the attached draft *Supportive Housing Strategy* be received for information and distributed for public discussion and report back.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

COUNCIL POLICY

In 1989 City policy was established to encourage social housing, which includes supportive housing, throughout all residential neighbourhoods in Vancouver. This was confirmed in 1995 through "CityPlan Directions for Vancouver" policies.

In 2001 Council's housing priorities for social housing are families with children; seniors on fixed incomes or in need of support; SRO residents; and the mentally ill, physically disabled and others at risk of homelessness.

In 2001 the *Four Pillars Strategy* was adopted emphasizing the need for a continuum of supportive housing for those using drugs and alcohol as well as those wanting alcohol and drug free housing.

In June 2005 Council adopted the *Homeless Action Plan*. One of the actions in the Plan was that: "The City to work with Vancouver Coastal Health and the Provincial Government to develop a strategy to locate supportive and transitional housing throughout the city".

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to summarize the attached draft 'Supportive Housing Strategy for Vancouver Coastal Health's Mental Health & Addictions Supported Housing Framework', and to seek approval to distribute the document for public discussion and report back, particularly relating to how supportive housing can be successfully integrated into neighbourhoods.

BACKGROUND

The City has long been an active partner in the development of supportive housing. For over twenty years Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) has been involved with the development and operations of supported housing for people with mental illnesses. This kind of housing is part of Vancouver's housing continuum and part of the City's commitment to creating inclusive neighbourhoods open to all residents. It is also part of a more general movement toward health care delivery which puts increasing emphasis on community-based (as opposed to institutionally-based) services.

The Supportive Housing Strategy is part of the implementation of the Homeless Action Plan (HAP) adopted in 2005. A ten-year planning horizon has been established, consistent with the Homeless Action Plan.

The Strategy has been prepared in consultation with VCH and BC Housing and both organizations support the general directions of the recommendations. The VCH planning document, *Vancouver Coastal Health: A Mental Health & Addictions Supported Housing Framework* (April 2006), is appended to the draft Strategy.

There are several other companion documents provided by VCH and referenced in the Strategy including:

- *A Mental Health and Addiction Framework for Services*
- *Housing for People with Substance Use and Concurrent Disorders: Summary of Literature and Annotated Bibliography*
- *Review of Alcohol and Drug Free Housing for People in Recovery from Substance Use - Executive Summary*

These are available through the City of Vancouver's web-site:
<http://www.vancouver.ca/housing/supportivehousingstrategy/>

It should be noted that this Strategy addresses a segment of the need for supportive housing in the city - the housing requirements that VCH has identified for people throughout the city with mental illness and/or substance use issues and co-occurring chronic health conditions. This is distinct from the HAP which considered the full range of supportive housing not only for people with a mental illness and/or an addiction, but also people with HIV/AIDs, head/brain injuries, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, physical disabilities, as well as transitional housing for youth, refugee claimants and women fleeing violence. The supportive housing needs of other groups (for example, vulnerable people living in the Downtown, people with physical disabilities or seniors with health conditions) are considered in other strategies. For example, City policy is to replace the SRO stock in Downtown South and the Downtown Eastside with better quality housing on a one-for one basis. Those replacement efforts will include some supportive housing and a portion of that need is included in this Strategy. Similarly, social housing for low-income singles will continue to be built throughout the city.

DISCUSSION

What is 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. Part of the work of the staff is to link tenants to services that are available throughout the community in places such as health centres, schools, recreation and community centres, and so on.

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.

VCH categorizes supported and low barrier housing as follows:

- **Mental Health Supported Housing**
Options range from scattered apartment units in market rental buildings in which clients receive a rent supplement along with outreach support (these units are termed "SILs" or supported independent living units), to dedicated or mixed apartment buildings with on-site staff support. Some apartment buildings, termed "enhanced" apartments, may provide additional supports, such as meals.
- **Addictions Supported Housing**
This housing serves individuals in recovery from addiction who want to live in an alcohol and drug free environment and includes scattered units and dedicated or mixed buildings.
- **Low Barrier Housing (Housing First)**
"Housing First" provides stable housing and the support services to individuals who may not yet be engaged in any treatment. Low barrier housing supports people to achieve greater self-sufficiency and housing stability. This type of housing is provided generally in dedicated buildings. It is not alcohol and drug free.

In this Strategy, supportive housing refers to all of the above housing - i.e. both supported and low barrier.

Most supportive housing is provided in apartment buildings that have no special exterior features that would distinguish them from other buildings. For the most part, tenants in supportive housing have their own self-contained apartments complete with private bathrooms and cooking facilities. There are a few examples of supportive housing that, in addition to individual apartments, offer tenants an opportunity to eat a meal together each day. This is called an enhanced apartment model.

Low barrier options are generally located in the Downtown Eastside and are a mix of apartment and hotel rooms (SROs).

This Strategy focuses on the location of supportive housing in dedicated or mixed social housing buildings and does not cover the location of supportive housing provided in scattered market apartments with rent supplements. Rent supplements may move from one building to another when tenants move. It also does not include provincially-licensed residential care homes or group homes. These usually house ten or fewer people in single-family neighbourhoods, are licensed and monitored through the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, and are classified in zoning as SNRF - Community Care - Class A.

Supportive housing is one type of housing available in the city. The housing continuum contains: independent housing, which can be provided in market housing or social housing; supportive housing, which is also available in both market and social housing; residential care facilities; and shelters.

Rationale for Supportive Housing

There is much evidence that supportive housing provides positive outcomes and is cost effective. For example there are studies showing a reduction in emergency room visits by 32% and hospital bed use by 57%, as well as savings of \$16,282 per year per unit of supportive housing. The savings were from reduced use of shelters, psychiatric hospitals, medical services, prisons and jails.

Existing Supportive Housing

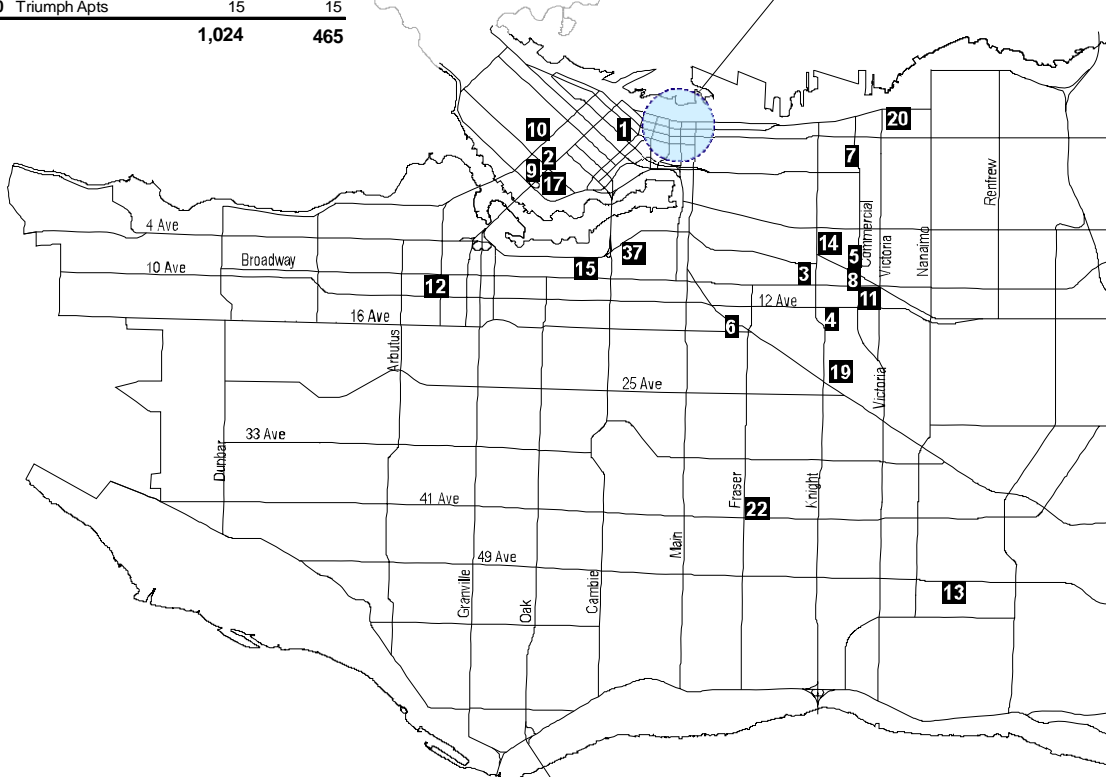
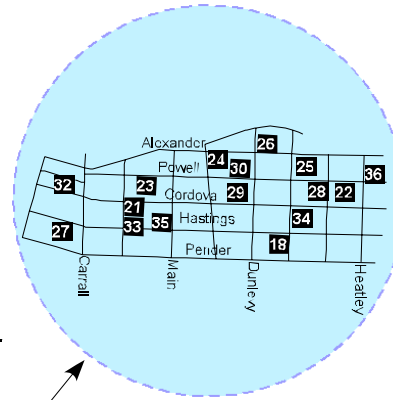
There are over 1,800 units of supportive housing currently in the city - in dedicated or mixed buildings and in scattered market apartments with rent supplements.

There are about 1,200 units in 37 dedicated or mixed buildings as shown on Map 1.

There are also 600 units of supported housing in Richmond and the North Shore which are also part of VCH.

Map 1: Existing Supportive Housing in Vancouver, December 2006

ADDICTIONS & MENTAL HEALTH		UNITS		LOW BARRIER HOUSING		UNITS	
		TOTAL	SUPPORTED	TOTAL	SUPPORTED	TOTAL	SUPPORTED
1	Belkin House	230	4	21	Bridge Housing	48	36
2	Candela Place	63	20	22	Bridget Moran Place	61	26
3	China Creek Apts	30	30	23	Hampton Hotel	46	46
4	Clark Apts	17	17	24	Hazelton Residence	39	39
5	Coastview Apts	33	33	25	Jeffrey Ross Residence	37	37
6	East 16th Apts	18	18	26	Jim Green Residence	66	66
7	Frances Court	34	34	27	Portland Hotel	86	86
8	Friendship Court	19	19	28	Princess Rooms	45	45
9	Granville Residence	83	15	29	Sakura So	38	38
10	Hooper Apts	31	31	30	Santiago/Cecilia Apts	32	32
11	Hydrecs Apts	9	9	31	Silver/Avalon Hotel	86	35
12	Irvine Apts	10	10	32	Stanley/New Fountain	103	65
13	Killarney Gardens	145	29	33	Sunrise Hotel	52	52
14	McLean Apt	25	25	34	Vivian Hotel	24	24
15	Phoenix Apts	14	14	35	Washington Hotel	84	84
16	Regal Hotel	40	40	36	Windchimes Apts	27	27
17	Seymour Place	136	30	37	Yukon Apts	37	37
18	Smith-Yuen Apts	52	52				
19	St. Margaret Apts	20	20				
20	Triumph Apts	15	15				
		1,024	465			911	775



Future Need

VCH has analyzed the demand by individuals for supportive housing over the next ten years and predicts the need to be:

- 800 units of mental health supported housing
- 675 units of addictions supported housing
- 725 units of low barrier housing

This is a total of 2,200 supportive housing units.

The projected need could be met by either rent supplements in existing private market rental buildings or in dedicated or mixed social housing buildings. VCH has assumed that 40% of the low barrier units and 25% of the mental health and addictions housing would be located in dedicated or mixed buildings. In total it is expected that 660 supportive housing units will be needed in dedicated or mixed buildings. Table 1 shows these projections.

Table 1: Summary of Existing and Future Supportive Housing

	EXISTING UNITS			FUTURE UNITS NEEDED					
	Total	Rent Supp	Dedicated & Mixed	Total	Rent Supp	IN DEDICATED OR MIXED BLDGS			
						Total	In Process	Additional Units	Additional Buildings
Mental health	871	465	406	800	600	200	30	170	6
Addictions	166	107	59	675	505	170	60	110	4
Low barrier	775	N/A	775	725	435	290	120	170	3
TOTAL	1,812	572	1,240	2,200	1,540	660	210	450	13

There are five dedicated or mixed buildings already funded for both capital and support services and these are in the development approval stages. They include:

- **Fraser Street** - 30 apartments of mental health supported housing (alcohol and drug free) for individuals with both an addiction and a mental illness. This project is under construction with occupancy in 2007.
- **Woodward's** - 30 apartments of addictions supported housing (alcohol and drug free) for individuals in recovery from addictions who wish to stay in the Downtown Eastside - under construction with occupancy in 2009.
- **65 East Hastings** - 92 apartments of low barrier housing which will offer a range of housing supports. This building is under construction with occupancy in 2008.
- **1321 Richards** - 30 apartments of addictions supported housing (alcohol and drug free). This building is in the development approvals process with occupancy in 2008.
- **137 East Hastings** - On-Site, 30 units of low barrier housing for multiply-challenged people and users of In-Site (supervised injection site) who are waiting to get into detox or drug treatment.

This is a total of 212 units which are in process, leaving a need for sites for about 450 units. The projected need of 450 units would be located in about 13 new buildings:

- 6 mental health
- 4 addictions
- 3 low barrier

The actual number of buildings needed could range from 10 to 15, depending on how many units are in dedicated or mixed buildings, the size of buildings, and the availability of capital and operating funds.

Location of Future Supportive Housing

Mental illness and addictions are health conditions which can affect people of all socio-economic backgrounds and living in all city neighbourhoods. Council policy is to locate supportive housing, which is a form of social housing, throughout the city. If supportive housing is located throughout the city, it provides opportunities for people to access this kind of housing where family and friends are nearby and where they are familiar with the services and the neighbourhood.

Zoning is a major consideration in locating supportive housing. All new developments must be located in areas zoned for that use. Buildings of 30 or more units require zoning which allows apartments. This is available in only certain locations in the city. The locational requirements of supportive housing are not different from other higher density residential buildings. Accessibility to transit, commercial and community services are features in zoning districts permitting higher densities.

Zoning capacity is also a consideration. In the Downtown Core, land values reflect maximum permitted densities and on most sites the permitted density yields at least 90 units. Generally buildings are constructed to the maximum density.

A related zoning issue is the land use classification of supportive housing. City Council will soon receive a report on Special Needs Residential Facilities (SNRFs). As described in that report, the Zoning and Development By-law distinguishes SNRFs from dwelling or residential uses. Under the existing and proposed regulations, SNRFs provide an intensive level of personal services related to activities such as assistance with the basics of daily living, administration of medications, money maintenance, food intake monitoring, psycho-social rehabilitation or structured behaviour modification.

It is expected that most of the supportive housing identified in this Strategy will be classified as housing rather than SNRFs, because the tenants do not need and are not provided with such an intense level of personal support services. Supportive housing is housing first and foremost, providing all the attributes of a 'home' - a safe, secure and private place to provide for basic human needs, a place to socialize with friends and family, and so on. Supportive housing is not an institution or a facility. However the determination of which zoning category is appropriate for a future supportive housing project will be made through the development permit process, at which time a full description of the particular program will be known and can be reviewed. This Strategy identifies areas where apartments, whether residential/dwelling uses or SNRFs, are permitted.

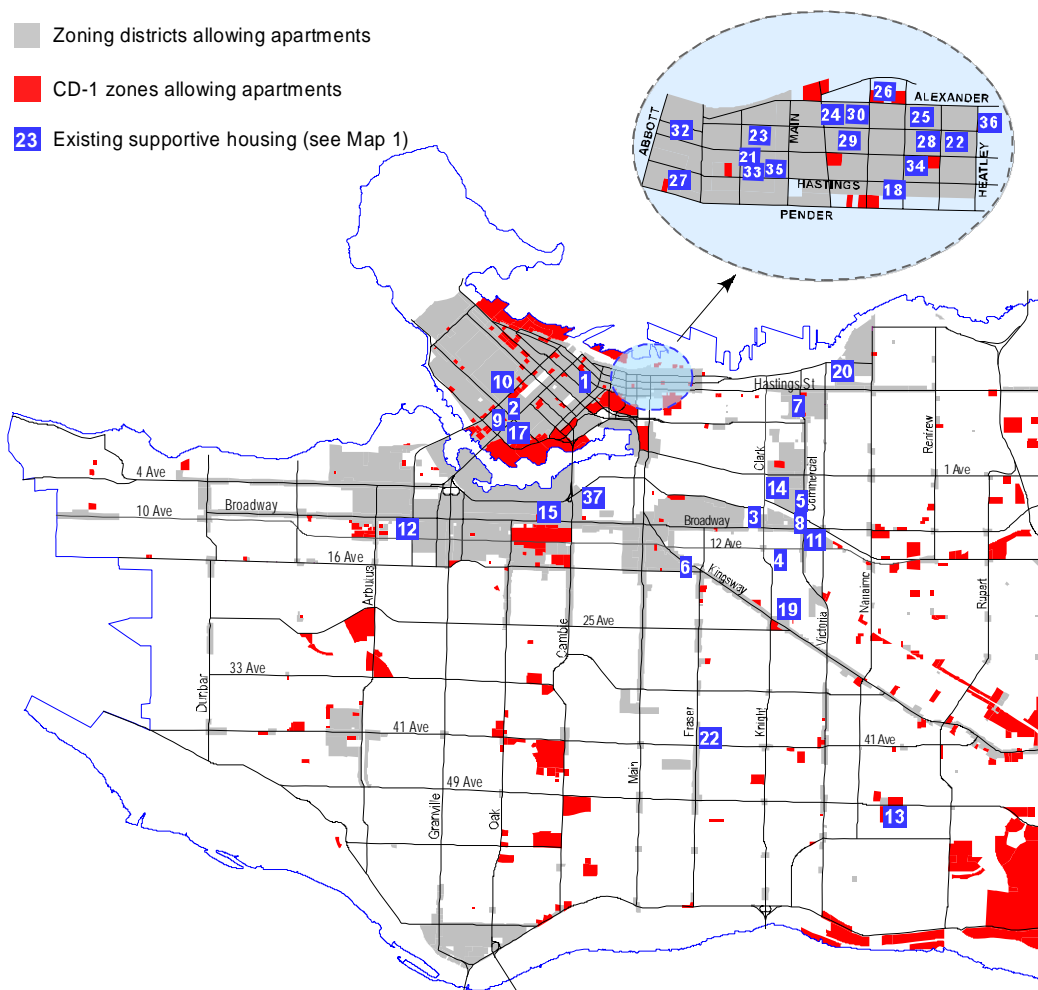
It is estimated that 13 new buildings need to be developed over the next 10 years, assuming funding for construction, operations and support services is made available through senior government housing programs and VCH support services. In terms of dedicated supportive housing buildings, three would be low barrier with 50 to 100 units each. It is recommended these be located in the Downtown Core. This is where most prospective tenants now live and is close to many related community services. It is not expected that low barrier housing would be located outside the Downtown peninsula.

The remaining approximately ten buildings should be located throughout the city both inside and outside the Downtown Core. These would be buildings serving individuals with a mental illness and/or an addiction. The latter would be in alcohol and drug-free buildings.

Supportive housing should continue to be located in those zones where apartments are permitted. These zones have been established through land use planning processes and in the future, additional higher density areas may be added through a formal city process.

Map 2 shows the areas which are currently zoned for higher density apartments, such as the RM zones. Also included are those areas designated as CD-1 (Comprehensive Development District) which is a site-specific zoning. The intent is to include only those CD-1s where apartments are now permitted. However it is difficult to specify which of the 400 plus CD-1s allow higher density residential/dwelling or SNRF uses, and a few of the CD-1s shown on Map 2 may not be appropriate for supportive housing, as higher densities may not be permitted.

Map 2: Possible Locations for Future Supportive Housing



Supportive housing exists in a number of neighbourhoods, and wherever reasonably possible, new supportive housing should be located to support geographic balance across the city. As a result, much of the future supportive housing should not be located near to existing social housing, except in the Downtown Core where higher densities are permitted and low barrier housing in particular should be developed.

The exact location of any additional supportive housing will not be determined until project funding is available, and this supportive housing strategy is completed.

The City has a long-standing policy of purchasing sites for social housing and leasing sites to non-profit societies who manage the housing. The City owns or controls a number of sites that have been purchased for social housing for singles. These sites could be used for various forms of social housing, including housing for seniors, low-income singles or supportive housing. The sites are listed below and are within the areas shown on the map of possible locations:

- 2265 Fir St
- 1308-1332 Seymour St
- 1134 Burrard St
- 1721-1723 Main St
- 337 West Pender
- 946-950 Main St
- 3204-3212 Dunbar St
- 1237 Howe St
- 900 Pacific Blvd
- 505 Abbott St
- 1005 Station St

It should be emphasized that no decision has been made on the form of social housing for these sites. The nature of development on each site will be determined as project funding becomes available and based on the social housing needs and priorities within the city and neighbourhood. If supportive housing were proposed for any of these sites, it would need to be consistent with the conclusions of this Strategy and would proceed through the city approvals process discussed in the next section.

It is recommended that the City continue to purchase sites for supportive housing. Land prices may vary and acquisition costs may be higher in certain areas, but it is important to ensure a distribution throughout the city.

As discussed in the next section, public engagement occurs around specific projects, once funding has been obtained. The City does not engage in public discussion around specific site purchases, as the City must negotiate property transactions in private, and real estate decisions are made at In Camera Council meetings as required by the Vancouver Charter.

City Approvals Process and Neighbourhood Relations

The Strategy describes the review process which is used for supportive housing projects. It is recognized that supportive housing can be controversial and it is important to provide as much information as possible to the community. The Strategy describes how concerns by neighbours can be addressed if neighbourhood impact issues are raised during the approvals process or during operations. For example, an Operations Management Plan (OMP) can be required. The OMP describes the project and associated programs. It can clarify details such as how the building will operate, staffing, safety and security protocols, and reporting. A neighbourhood advisory committee can be established to work with the management of the housing to ensure that issues are addressed.

Recommendations

This report builds from City policy of locating supportive housing throughout the city in appropriately zoned areas.

The Strategy notes that public discussion and education is needed about mental health, addictions and supportive housing. It is recommended that the Strategy be circulated for public discussion to provide information about the needs for and location of future supportive housing.

The Strategy contains recommendations as follows:

1. The City work with VCH and BC Housing to balance geographically new supportive housing across the city where reasonably possible.
2. The City assist by buying appropriate sites as they become available, recognizing that acquisition costs will be higher in some locations.
3. The City purchases one or two sites for supportive housing in 2007, providing funding and suitable sites are available.
4. The City urge the Provincial and Federal governments to further expand their social housing programs to fund supportive housing projects as described in this Strategy.
5. The City work in partnership with VCH to secure new Provincial funding to provide support services for the supportive housing projects in this Strategy, and ensure that the related community health services are available.
6. The City assist VCH in providing public information related to mental illness and addictions in general, and supportive housing in particular.
7. The City work with BC Housing, VCH and neighbourhoods to provide information about project planning, program and operations, and identify and address project concerns once sites have been purchased and project funding is available.
8. The City to monitor implementation of this Strategy and, with input from VCH and BC Housing, report back every three years.

Public Discussion Process

The public discussion process will involve sharing information and facilitating neighbourhood discussions, particularly on how supportive housing can be successfully integrated into neighbourhoods. Comments received during the process will be included in the report back to Council. The City will work jointly with VCH and BC Housing as partners in the public consultation.

Initially the draft Supportive Housing Strategy will be distributed to:

- community centres and neighbourhood houses;
- Business Improvement Associations;
- Vision Implementation Committees
- resident associations, agencies working in mental health and addictions;
- The Vancouver School Board;
- The Vancouver Parks Board, and;
- Others who express an interest.

The draft Strategy will be available for comment on the Housing Centre's website, and staff will answer all enquiries with relevant factual information. As well the Housing Centre's website will provide information on existing projects and examples of existing Operations management Plans.

A series of public discussions will be held across the city in February and March. Neighbourhoods have been grouped into the following eight larger geographic areas for the purposes of this discussion:

- Hastings-Sunrise/Renfrew Collingwood
- Victoria/Fraserview-Killarney
- Downtown Eastside/Strathcona/Grandview Woodlands
- Dunbar/West Point Grey/Kitsilano
- Kensington-Cedar Cottage/Sunset
- WestEnd/Yaletown/Coal Harbour
- Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shaugnessy/Marpole
- Fairview/Riley Park/South Cambie

The meetings will be advertised as a group so that if anyone who is interested in attending a meeting but can't make the one in their neighbourhood, they will still be able to attend one of the other ones. We would hope to have meetings of a size that will facilitate discussion and allow people to comment on the aspects of the Strategy that are most significant for local neighbourhoods.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The budget for the public process has previously been approved as part of the implementation of the Homeless Action Plan. The City's financial contribution to any future supportive housing projects (the purchase of sites using the Affordable Housing Fund or DCLs, for example) will be reported to Council on a case-by-case basis.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Vancouver strives to be a great city of communities in which people are well cared for. An important part of making this happen is to ensure that our vulnerable residents have decent affordable housing. Supportive housing provides the stability that allows people with mental illnesses and/or addictions to live healthier lives and to better participate in society. This form of housing has also been integrated successfully within neighbourhoods in Vancouver. The Supportive Housing Strategy provides more clarity about how and where future VCH-funded supportive housing will be developed.

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