after homelessness…
Community Action Report

Policy Recommendations arising from audience responses to the Headlines Theatre production

If you use this report in any concrete way, please let us know at: outreach@headlinestheatre.com

February 2010
Gail Franklin
Community Scribe to the "…after homelessness…" project

Headlines Theatre
#323-350 East 2nd Ave.
Vancouver, BC
Canada V5T 4R8
604-871-0508
www.headlinestheatre.com

Table of Contents

Introduction

This is a report of comments, suggestions and recommendations arising from an interactive theatre production called *"…after homelessness…"*, created by Headlines Theatre Company. The remarks and recommendations presented here are based on audience input over 14 nights of performance, as well as that of participants and expert panellists in a series of three related community dialogues.

The intention is to provide policy makers in all jurisdictions with a record of public input focussed on practical suggestions for a more effective response to social needs, of which homelessness is often a feature and a symptom.

The production

*"…after homelessness…"*was performed at the Firehall Arts Centre in Vancouver, BC, and at Holy Trinity Cathedral in neighbouring New Westminster BC, from November 21 to December 6, 2009. A series of three related Community Dialogues was held at the Firehall Arts Centre on November 24, 25 and 26, 2009.

Why the play was produced

For decades, Headlines Theatre Company has produced widely acclaimed vehicles for social engagement, in the form of interactive performances known as "forum theatre" or "legislative theatre."[1]

The intention in this case was not to call public attention to the existence of homelessness, as attention was already aroused. Instead it was to inquire into ways to create safe and appropriate housing, in the context of people having been homeless and of the mental health issues that often go along with that state, in Vancouver and in other communities throughout BC and Canada.

The development of the play

Under artistic director David Diamond, the production was created by a cast of six and a group of 17 additional workshop participants. All 23 of these participants had direct experience of homelessness. They spent six days together in a directed exploration of the nature of their experiences. This process "tilled the soil" out of which the play grew. Following this process, the cast, director and production team worked for three more weeks to create the final product.

Method

Engaging audiences

On each performance night, the cast acted out the play in about 30 minutes. Then, starting again from the beginning, they played each scene individually, inviting members of the audience to stop the action and take the role of a character whose struggle they understood, if they could see a practical and realistic way to make a positive change in the outcome of the action. At each performance, between eight and twelve audience members intervened.

Following each intervention, the director held a discussion of the action and its outcomes with the intervenor, the cast and the audience. Suggestions, comments and outcomes were recorded at every performance by the community scribe, for the purposes of this report. Some audience members provided additional comments and ideas as they departed after the show.

---

[1] Both "Forum Theatre" and "Legislative Theatre" originate with Brazilian Theatre innovator Augusto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed" and have been adapted by Headlines Theatre's Artistic Director David Diamond into "Theatre for Living". www.headlinestheatre.com.

As well as the play itself, *"…after homelessness…"* involved three Community Dialogues. Expert panelists were invited to speak at these events, which were held on three different themes. "What Makes a House a Home?" followed the theme of the stage production in examining the personal and relational issues of homelessness and living at risk. "Location, Location, Location" focussed on the construction and operation of social housing, as well as neighbourhood reaction to such projects. "Where's the Money?" discussed the financing of non-market and low-income market housing, in general and specifically by jurisdiction and geography. Again, at each dialogue event, comments and suggestions from all participants were noted for this report.

Compiling the recommendations

Following the performance run it was the community scribe's task to consider the many observations and suggestions that had been collected; categorize them by themes; sort for practicality and likelihood of effect; and develop them as recommendations for the attention of particular organizations or levels of government.

The recommendations that appear here, then, are the result of 17 different public gatherings. They reflect the collected views and information of over 1600 people with a wide range of experience and expertise.[2]

Focus question

"What can we do to make a safe and appropriate home, in the context of homelessness and the mental illness that often accompanies it?"

The target population referred to in this paper is commonly identified as "chronically or episodically homeless", but "homelessness" is a relative term. It includes a wide range of living conditions that range from literally sleeping on the streets to being unstably housed (and therefore "at risk") for a variety of reasons.

This population could equally logically be described as "unsupported". As individuals they are without adequate physical, professional and relational support to address their life circumstances in ways that offer genuine hope of substantial improvement.

Although adequate and stable housing is typically the most visibly urgent and crucial of their needs, many other unmet needs are part of each individual person's complex story.

In the course of this Headlines production, these other needs were portrayed on stage and identified in audience interactions.

The stage production, the community dialogues, and this report all attempt to provide a picture of these related needs, and some suggestions about how they might be addressed by the local community and various levels of government.

Unsurprisingly, night after night, many suggestions related to the urgent need for coherent and effective national policies and sustained funding for housing and mental health services. They attest to public awareness and concern for these issues.

However, this paper focusses on action that can be taken while these larger changes get under way. It seeks to address the situation "from the inside". Most of the recommendations presented here can be implemented in a short time, and at relatively low cost. All are intended to help directly increase stability, trust and hope among people living at risk, particularly in Metro Vancouver and BC's other urban centres.

---

[2] Based on 14 performances x 110 average attendance, plus three dialogues at 30-40 each.

For purposes of clarity the Policy Recommendations appear in point form with "bullets".

Recommendations

All ministries, agencies and policy-makers

Consult those most affected by given policies and practices.

"Ministers and high-level bureaucrats and policy-makers should come and talk directly to the people that their work affects. Come down with a non-profit organization and visit your 'constituents' for a day or two every few months."[3]

- Co-ordinate regular tours for political leaders, of service facilities and informal chat opportunities with community service providers and their clients.

- Encourage political leaders and policy makers at all levels to seek information from the people most affected by current issues and by any changes being contemplated. Gather and consider information acquired by direct personal experience.[4]

- Conduct qualitative surveys asking people what they want and need (as compared to collecting general and quantitative demographic information through a traditional homeless count).

Municipal governments

1. Enforce wholesome standards of housing maintenance.

At every performance and in the community dialogues there was general agreement that municipal and provincial standards of maintenance of apartment buildings and residential hotels is egregiously lacking, and should be implemented and aggressively enforced.

"If you're pocketing public funds you have to provide proper service in return."

Tenants at risk need support in filing and pursuing legitimate complaints if the building owner or manager refuses to hear and act on them. Such tenants often lack the resources and/or confidence to be effective in pursuing their own cases.

Suggested strategies for enforcement include:
- Encourage and support tenants at risk in pursuing the right to withhold rent or damage deposits, in making or arranging for repairs at the landlord's expense, and in getting appropriate reimbursement.

---

[3]   Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from audience members at various performances of *after homelessness*….

[4]   "Forty years of efforts in development have taught the World Bank that unless the intended beneficiaries of development are involved in a project's design, operation and ownership, the project will ultimately fail - or make people even worse off." Bergdall, Terry D. (1993). Methods for Active Participation. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

- Make it easy for tenants to report building maintenance violations "over the manager's head". Require all residential hotels to post the phone number of the manager as well as of the City Inspection office and emergency numbers, in a permanent and conspicuous way.

2. Manage tent squatting and humane evictions.

"Bouncing around town from one tarp to another isn't right."

In the play, the character "Otis" physically resists being evicted from his home (a tarp on the street), and is tasered, with grave consequences for himself and others near to him. His resistance comes from a decision that he can't live in an SRO again, because the environment will compromise his health and safety. He has been "moved on" too many times by police and city workers, and has decided to make a stand. This experience, and the decision, mirrors the experience of many of the workshop participants, cast members and members of the audience.

Implement a humane relocation assistance policy.

- In view of the BC Court of Appeal's recent decision in favour of allowing people to sleep in city parks when no other housing is available, offer genuine housing options (beyond temporary shelter) before negotiating the relocation of people that are living on the street. Do not evict from current living arrangements without negotiating a safe, wholesome, and mutually agreed alternative.

- Integrate policies and specific responses (Police, By-laws Enforcement, Engineering, MHSD[5] community service providers, health authorities, etc.) to create a more humane and promising negotiating environment. Work across jurisdictional lines to share information and to arrange this support.

- Plan and prepare to avoid arrests and physical resistance, by creating personal relationships in preference to forcible confrontation. The "command and control" style of management presents a frightening "trigger" for many people with mental health issues. When legal eviction is the only reasonable option, assign special police and city workers specifically trained to work with diversity and to de-escalate conflict. Where possible, build relationships with campers well in advance of eviction.

  In relocating, respect the psychological need for time to adjust to a different housing environment. A safe and welcoming social environment is critical to the success of the relocation.

"Recognize that it takes time to move, psychologically. It's not just an overnight thing."

"Assume it's the same as you or me being evacuated into a new town – we're going to need a hell of a lot of support to make the move."

3. Increase neighbourhood acceptance of social housing projects.

Encourage community initiatives to support vulnerable neighbours.

When decisions are to be made on issues involving people at risk, public opinion is usually based on denial of the problem, or fearful reaction to an unknown and objectified other ("them"). Objections to the development of non-market housing are usually based in a lack of accurate public information about the nature of the project or of its management. Similarly, derogatory opinions of people at risk can arise from assumptions (for instance) that they have

---

[5] Ministry of Housing and Social Development

the same choices as anyone else, without an appreciation of the very limited range of choices actually available to them.

As the homeless population comes from all over Metro Vancouver, supportive housing is needed in their home neighbourhoods, not only in certain areas such as Vancouver's Downtown East Side.

The experience of the City of Vancouver is that a well-managed community residential facility can be successful in any neighbourhood.[6] This fact, however, is inevitably lost on participants at rezoning hearings, unless there is a sincere and well-conceived effort to establish good local relationships well before the development application is submitted.

- Educate and encourage non-profit developers to use effective engagement strategies, such as Good Neighbour agreements, neighbourhood advisory committees, block parties, and individual efforts by the non-profit leadership to connect personally with neighbours, all while the application is still being prepared. Encourage the use of local information parties and social networking tools to inform neighbours about projects, rather than relying on large public meetings (which invite uninformed dissent) or mainstream media (which tend to "filter" stories for their sensational aspects).

- Fund and facilitate initiatives such as the "Homeless Connect" and "Seeing is Believing" events and the weekly neighbourhood support days (shower programs, public breakfast programs, etc.) that are now regularly held in various parts of Vancouver. Encourage neighbourhoods to recognize, organize and respond to vulnerable local residents.

  "Connection to the neighbourhood will do more to reduce public antipathy than any number of newspaper articles."

- At public hearings where opposition is strong, make it the chair's responsibility to limit and moderate derogatory comments and hate language. Require respectful language in recognition of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

4. In regulations for construction development, explicitly describe acceptable community contributions.

To negotiate the requirements of development applications, developers need explicit, detailed examples and descriptions of the City's expectations. For instance, where the City expects to trade additional density for housing or community amenities, the developer needs to know exactly what types of housing and amenities are preferred, and what features they should include.

Without this information, developers find it difficult to estimate their costs and prepare their bargaining positions, and they may prefer not to pursue an application as a result. Make it easy for developers to understand and accept the city's requirements.

- In zoning definitions and in the early stages of negotiating development applications, provide explicit definitions and detailed examples of preferred amenities for offer in kind.

---

[6] Senior planner Anne Kloppenborg described how, in 2006, she conducted a review of social housing development applications approved by the City of Vancouver over the past 30 years. They included 115 applications that were not related to seniors' housing (e.g. transition houses, drug and alcohol recovery houses, mental health housing, etc.). These were compared with police reports from the neighbourhood. In every case there had been vocal public opposition to the project at its inception. Also in every case, one or two years after the projects were completed, neighbourhood opposition was absent. Three quarters of the projects had no complaints whatsoever against them. The complaints that had been made of the others were all minor in nature (such as a complaint of someone banging loudly on a door, or of a bike having been stolen in the neighbourhood).

Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD)

1. Enforce wholesome standards of housing maintenance.

Suggested strategies for enforcement include:

- Investigate complaints of sub-standard living conditions when landlords are receiving BC Shelter Allowance payments. Pursue the right of the Province to withhold such payments for just cause, as MHSD is currently doing in the Fraser region.[7]

- Support tenants, particularly those living on low incomes, in pursuing their rights to withhold rent or damage deposits, or to order and charge for necessary repairs arising from landlords' negligence.

- Work with local government to identify, monitor and require proper maintenance of buildings to wholesome and humane standards of living.

- Through the Residential Tenancy Branch, apply administrative levies to property owners that do not maintain their properties to safe and wholesome standards, in recognition of a public nuisance.

- Recognizing the public cost of mischief and illness accruing to negligent building management, apply the Province's Civil Forfeiture Act to seize private congregate housing when other measures fail to bring about the required improvements in a reasonable amount of time.

2. Maintain basic stability and security of private congregate housing.

It is widely acknowledged that a large proportion of people at risk, especially those that are chronically homeless, experience mental health and behavioural disorders. The stability of the person's environment, particularly the safety and secure tenure of their housing, is a vital part of their recovery.

> *"Basic stability creates the ground from which to gravitate toward health."*
> *– Mark Smith, Executive Director, RainCity Housing Society*

- Require the continuous presence of a resourceful, authoritative tenant support worker in all private SRO's. (Suggestions varied from a "live-in manager" to a "resident peer support worker".) The common intention of the suggestions is to keep the peace by addressing building issues and supporting a healthy relational environment among the tenants.

- Ensure that skilled outreach workers have access to residential hotel buildings without a specific invitation, and without paying "guest fees".

- Wherever possible, support and encourage responsible self-organization among SRO tenants, to help manage their buildings themselves. [8] Work with and encourage building owners to develop management strategies that benefit tenants and reduce unwanted public attention to the owners' business practices.

---

[7] MHSD's Prevention and Loss Management Department employs a two-person Housing and Integrated Task team in its Surrey office. The HIT team's responsibility is to inspect housing and review payments to landlords receiving BC Shelter Allowance cheques from tenants, to ensure compliance with basic standards of accommodation. The HIT team operates in the Fraser region, which extends from Burnaby to Boston Bar.

[8] Examples of private hotels with volunteer managers include the Jubilee Rooms and the Dodson Rooms, both run by Best Practice Market Housing (www.communitybuilders.ca)

3. Improve Outreach Services.

Street outreach workers (usually employed by not-for-profit societies) create opportunities to connect people at risk with important information, goods and services that they might otherwise not obtain. (Outreach workers are different from street nurses, who are professional public health care providers.)

By offering information and small comforts free of obligation, the street outreach worker begins the process of creating a trusting relationship, which can lead the recipient to take positive steps toward support.

- Deploy skilled outreach workers after midnight, to respond to the nocturnal street culture.
- Provide outreach workers with funds for cell phones and buses for communication and transportation in the line of their work.

BC Housing

1. Maintain active status on BC Housing wait lists.

"Do away with call-ins."
In the play, a character has spent more than seven months on the BC Housing wait list for subsidized housing, calling in each month as required. She is called to a meeting with a BC Housing worker. Because she is perceived to have missed one of her required monthly phone calls, it develops that she is no longer on the "active status" list, and must start her wait again.

Experiences of this type of mishap were common to many of the 23 workshop and cast members, as well as to audience members responding from their seats each night.[9]

- Eliminate the need for monthly call-ins to maintain applicants' active status. Audience members commented:

  "It works against applicants with undisclosed barriers."

  "People can't be expected to call in regularly when they lead such chaotic lives."

  "Get rid of the monthly check-in. If you're on the list, you (should) stay on it, all the way through."

  "There should be a transparent, streamlined process to a clear, dated end point."

  "More transparency - tell people where they are on the list with no hassle."

  "Housing first - THEN worry about the paperwork."

  "...(Provide) proper resources to get you on the wait list. Right now there's a three-month wait list, just to get on the wait list!"

2. Help applicants and users to navigate the system.

The task of understanding the requirements and properly acting to obtain social service resources is a significant challenge to many people with multiple barriers. Issues range from the absence of proper information to learning disabilities and (usually undisclosed) low levels of literacy. Help is needed both by people already recognized as clients, and also by those not yet registered for services.

---

[9] Some workshop participants had been on BC Housing wait lists for as much as two years, repeatedly losing their places in line.

"My son can't even get <u>on</u> the list. He needs to be overseen with connections to help him get on and stay on."

"Some clients need help to fill in the forms, and keep track of appointments and call times."

"Integrate BC Housing and MHSD services, to get help back & forth. We don't all have phones."

- Encourage clients to bring informed and resourceful advocates to BC Housing interviews. Refer clients to social advocacy groups that can help with paperwork, as well as with providing and getting important information by phone and at interviews.

  "Most people don't have support at these meetings. When they do, although BC Housing policy allows it, it's often read as a suspicious signal."

- Hold public workshops on how to attend BC Housing meetings, through community service points such as the Carnegie Centre and the SRO's themselves. Address topics such as how to fill out paperwork, and how to make and keep records. Include an orientation to questions typically asked at interviews (for instance, what sort of information the questions are intended to gather, and why.)

3. Maintain a continuous personal relationship with clients at risk.

- Arrange for clients to deal with the same worker at every visit. This would enable workers to become familiar with individual cases as human beings, and avoid losing track of information or action related to specific clients.

4. Improve interaction between staff and clients.

- Record and study client interviews for quality assurance, and for the purposes of developing training models. Track and analyze outcomes of housing interventions.

- Ensure that interviews are conducted in a way that does not communicate a punitive attitude or a poor opinion of the client's worth. Change any internal cultural response to recognize all clients' needs for support in words, tone, body language, and action.

5. Reinstate the "tenant starter kit" for clients at risk.

The new tenants' kit of basic household supplies was praised by audience and cast members. The kit was provided to people at risk when they were first accommodated in non-profit housing. It was packed in a large plastic storage container, and included such items as pots and pans, bedding, towels, eating utensils and drinking glasses, as well as a first aid kit, a flashlight and a small tool kit.

The kit played an important role in comfortably stabilizing the lives of people at risk. In addition to its practical value to the new tenant, it had the effect of relieving anxiety about how to obtain the basic tools for living, which would otherwise be bought from the tenant's meagre Income Assistance cheques, or obtained by other (sometimes illegal) means.

It was also a valued gesture of community inclusion and hope to people that may never before in their lives have been able to buy new sheets and utensils. On announcing additional funding for the kit's distribution in 2008, Hon. Claude Richmond described the reaction of a recipient:

"Mike told me that the kit would change his apartment from just a place to live into something that he could call his own." [10]

- Provincial funding cuts have recently resulted in an end to the distribution of these kits. Reinstate funding to enable their continued provision.

BC Ministry of Health; Regional Health Authorities; Mental Health Commission of Canada

1. Integrate and align policies and practices between departments, ministries and agencies.

- Create and support a collaborative inter-ministerial environment to identify and remove obstacles caused by contradictions and disconnects in policy and practice.

- Review and revise privacy laws and policies to enable effective sharing of files and information between offices and ministries, in the service of clients and applicants.

- Provide essential elements of human health and safety to people at risk. Ensure that basic human needs of all people are met, for adequate, nutritious food; security of the person, and humane living conditions, including wholesome and adequate accommodation.

2. Provide responsive detox and addictions treatment services.

- Provide adequate and proper facilities and support for "detox on demand".

The need for this help was mentioned frequently. When an addict makes a choice to quit the addiction, there is only a brief opportunity to respond with support before the addictive craving becomes too intense to manage. The current requirement for applicants to be "clean" for 72 hours before entering detox is a barrier that many addicts are unable to overcome independently.

Frequently, support is also needed to navigate the application requirements and arrive on time for a set appointment. (A significant number of substance addicts seeking help, including a cast member, also have histories of developmental or acquired brain disorders and other issues that make barriers of these requirements.)

"The help has to be there immediately. People can't be expected to call every day – they can't get it together. They may be too sick to get to a phone, if there is a phone."

- Continue efforts within the health system to eliminate barriers to admission to treatment for people with concurrent disorders. It has been the standard practice to require applicants to quit active addiction before seeking professional help for mental health issues, or to present without active mental health challenges before getting addictions treatment.

People with co-occurring substance addictions and mental health challenges are not served when they are directed into an endless loop of referrals to mutually exclusive services. The needs and difficulties can be even greater when acquired and/or developmental brain disorders are part of the picture.

"It's a Catch-22 that creates homelessness."

---

[10] From a speech by Hon. Claude Richmond, MLA to the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, April 10, 2008. http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/speeches/2008/nonprofit_housing.html

3. Use a case management approach to support clients at risk.

- Help ensure that clients at risk do not "slip through the cracks", by assigning each client file to a single case manager for all needs.

    "Provide case management for each mental health and addictions applicant. Not a separate financial assistance worker, detox worker, and registration worker for their room; but a more holistic approach. Deal with it the way we do with my geriatric psych patients: one person to handle all of the applicants' needs."

    "The case manager works closely with home care, who would help (the clients) keep their apartments clean, so as not to be evicted."

4. Improve access to mental health care and resources.

Provide information and access to resources

- Supply a card or handbill listing contact information for local mental health services, to accompany all prescriptions for Lithium, Seroquel and other medications prescribed for mental health needs.
- Make counselling available 24 hours per day, by drop-in and phone.
- Provide community outreach centres for easier access to mental health care, in addition to hospitals.

    "A centre for connecting with services; with Mental Health and Housing people on staff; a place to rest and calm down, have some respite."

    "The 'psych ward' suggestion scares people. Make outreach messages friendlier, and make the psych ward not scary."

Help families to remain supportive

- Help prevent severe relational breakdown in families in which a member has a mental health challenge. Provide education, counselling and respite support for family members.

Not-for-Profit Service Agencies

Experienced members of the service community referred to the basic needs of individuals recovering from severe psychological trauma, mental illness and addiction. They described practices that promote recovery through community relationship.

Three needs are recognized as common to all people, especially those at risk: physical and emotional safety; security of tenure; and stable, warm human relationships ("attachment" or "connection").

"Getting inside cuts people off from the community they'd created outside. It's very difficult to deal with the isolation when you come inside."

While the security of housing must be addressed by other means, community service agencies are doing, and can do, much to create a favourable relational atmosphere.

"Even in a building where all residents have experienced severe trauma, there is hope for supportive community." Mark Smith, Executive Director, RainCity Housing Society

1. Facilitate community within and around congregate low-income housing.

- Place experienced community facilitators to help stabilize the relational environment in residential hotels.

    "You could use common kitchen space as the meeting space in an SRO. A volunteer from Narconon could be in there, to create a safe space in the building, where people would gravitate. Put peer support and food and coffee all in one place, and let it stay open around the clock. Use welcoming language, but be firm about making the shared space a safe space."

- Develop and train naturally emerging leaders in congregate residences, to help make a positive environment. Refer to existing organizations that train community facilitators.

    "Identify the leaders in a group, and encourage and support their leadership to create stronger community within the houses."

2. Provide information and access to resources for tenants and service providers.

Website
- Create and maintain a comprehensive and accurate list of resources to service providers.

    "There is currently no comprehensive, accurate and complete list of services available anywhere. Even Watari's survivor list, good as it is, is incomplete."

    "Strathcona Mental Health has a website with a database for peer support. Make it available for any community support group to sign up and add its information."

Public notice board
- Provide tenants of residential hotels and congregate housing with accurate, up-to-date information such as the current manager's name and phone number, the contact information for the City Inspector (Permits & Licences Dept.), and emergency service numbers. This might be posted on a notice board in the foyer or a common room. Social services and alternative housing could also be advertised.

Handbills and brochures
- distributed through social services offices, with information about services and events.

Information resource cards
- a two-sided, laminated folding wallet card listing phone numbers of social services, mental health and addiction resources, and municipal offices (inspection, bylaws, health, police non-emergency, etc.)

5. Encourage community engagement through the arts.

One of the most effective ways to build community is through the shared creation of art. Audience members recalled "the transformative value of creativity and creative work" and "the desire for art and beauty".

"The arts are crucial – an integral part of the mix."

- Identify ways to involve artists in supporting the voices of low-income communities and neighbourhoods. Consult organizations and individuals already engaged in this practice.

- Work with government and the business sector to organize small and large public events and spectacles that encourage youth and adults on low incomes to participate in making visual and performance art.

6. **Provide space and support to grieve.**

Grief is especially challenging in situations in which people are not supported. It was mentioned numerous times in the course of the play and the community dialogues. The need to mourn personal hurts and losses is important in the process of regaining stability and independence.

- Provide grief-support groups to help people work through their experiences in a safe way.

- Support people living in poverty and at risk in retaining the dignity of grief and formal remembrance of people dear to them. Provide and publicize the availability of inner-city spaces (indoor and outdoor) for small and larger memorial ceremonies. Offer the opportunity to create and maintain commemorative sites such as local community memorial gardens.

Government of Canada

Implement a strong national housing policy.

All audiences made and strongly supported suggestions that:

- the Government of Canada create a coherent and effective national strategy for affordable housing, including support for adequate annual production of non-market and co-operative housing.

"In the 80's, under the federal funding scheme, we built 700 units (of social housing) per year. We're now down to building 200 per year. If the feds had continued the funding, we would have built 8000 units by now. The same number, it turns out, that we calculate we need now."
Jill Davidson, Assistant Director of Housing Policy, City of Vancouver

"If the Canadian Government, the Province of BC, the City of Vancouver, and the corporate and not-for-profit sectors can come together and harness both the finances and the human will to have the Olympics in Vancouver in 2010, there is no reason on earth we cannot solve the homeless issue. The Olympics cost, in fact, far more money. The logistics are far more complicated... If we understood the actual monetary profit of having a universally healthy, housed population, and committed even half the monetary and human resources that have gone into the Olympics into homelessness, we would not be dealing with thousands of people living in the streets."
David Diamond, Artistic Director, Headlines Theatre Company, to the audience
(Community Dialogue: "Where's the Money?" 26 November, 2009)

"Housing (people at risk) is an investment, not an expense." audience member