



Vancouver: Responses to Unsheltered Houselessness

BCRPA Symposium

Bruk Melles

Director,
Homelessness Services
City of Vancouver

Betty Lepps

Director,
Urban Relationships
Vancouver Parks & Recreation

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CITY OF
VANCOUVER

Homelessness
Services



We acknowledge our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded $tmx^wúla?x^w$ (land) of the syilx / Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial.



We acknowledge we live, work and play on the unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, the x^wməθk^wəy'əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selíłwítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Vancouver: Responses to Unsheltered Houselessness

PRESENTATION

- Background
- Responses to Unsheltered Houselessness
 - City of Vancouver, Homelessness Services
 - Vancouver Parks & Recreation
- Working Together
- What's Next?

Background

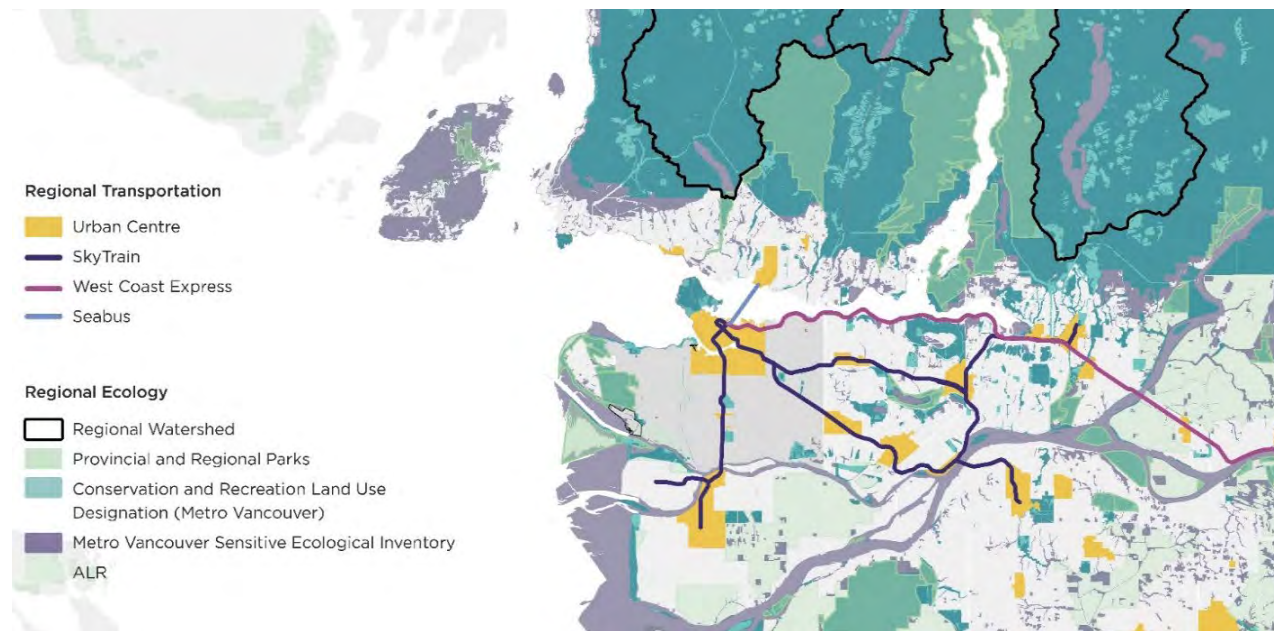
Homeless Count
Drivers of Homelessness



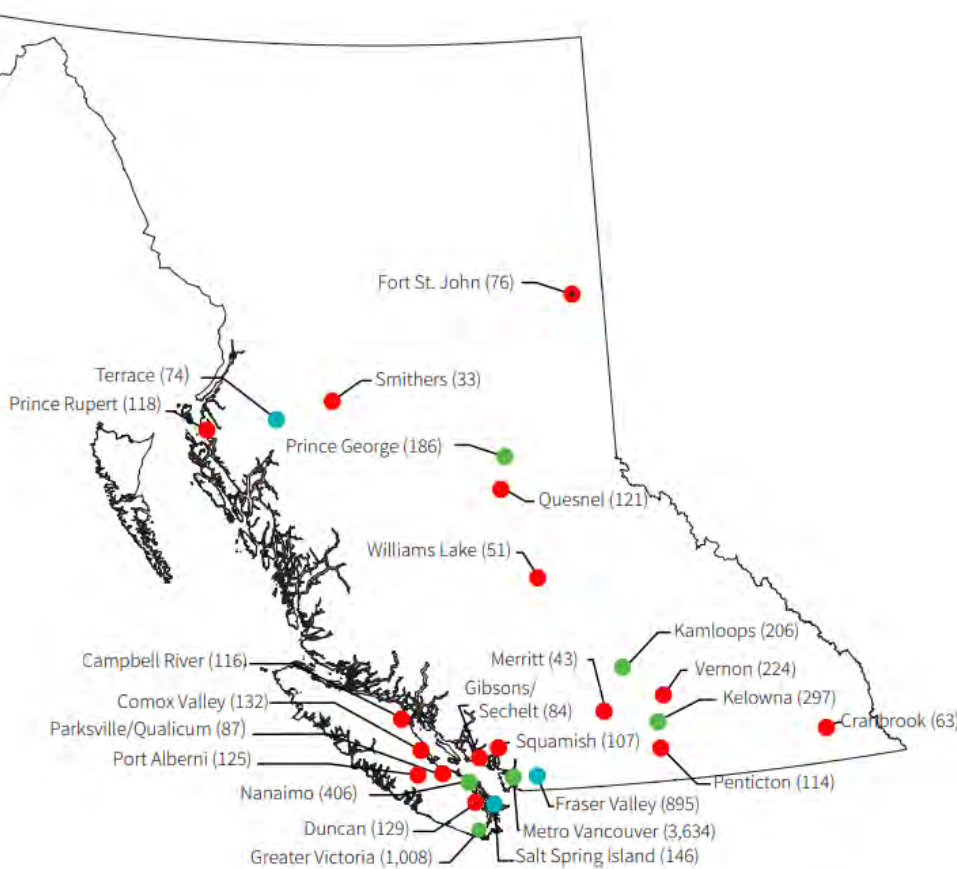
- **Vancouver's role in the region**

- Destination for new arrivals
- Regional employment hub
- Rental and non-market housing

- **A tale of two cities**
- Rising incomes + wealth
- Higher share of low-income residents, homelessness, renters in subsidized housing



2020/21 Homeless Counts in B.C.



2023 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count

Sub-Region	Total
Burnaby	209
Delta	44
Langley	235
New Westminster	203
North Shore	168
Richmond	162
Ridge Meadows	135
Surrey	1,060
Tri-Cities	160
Vancouver	2,420
White Rock	17
UBC	8
Total	4,821

2020/21 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C. identified 8,665 individuals experiencing homelessness

Vancouver has 25% of the Metro Vancouver population, but represent 50% of the Homeless Count

2023 Homeless Count Results

2,420

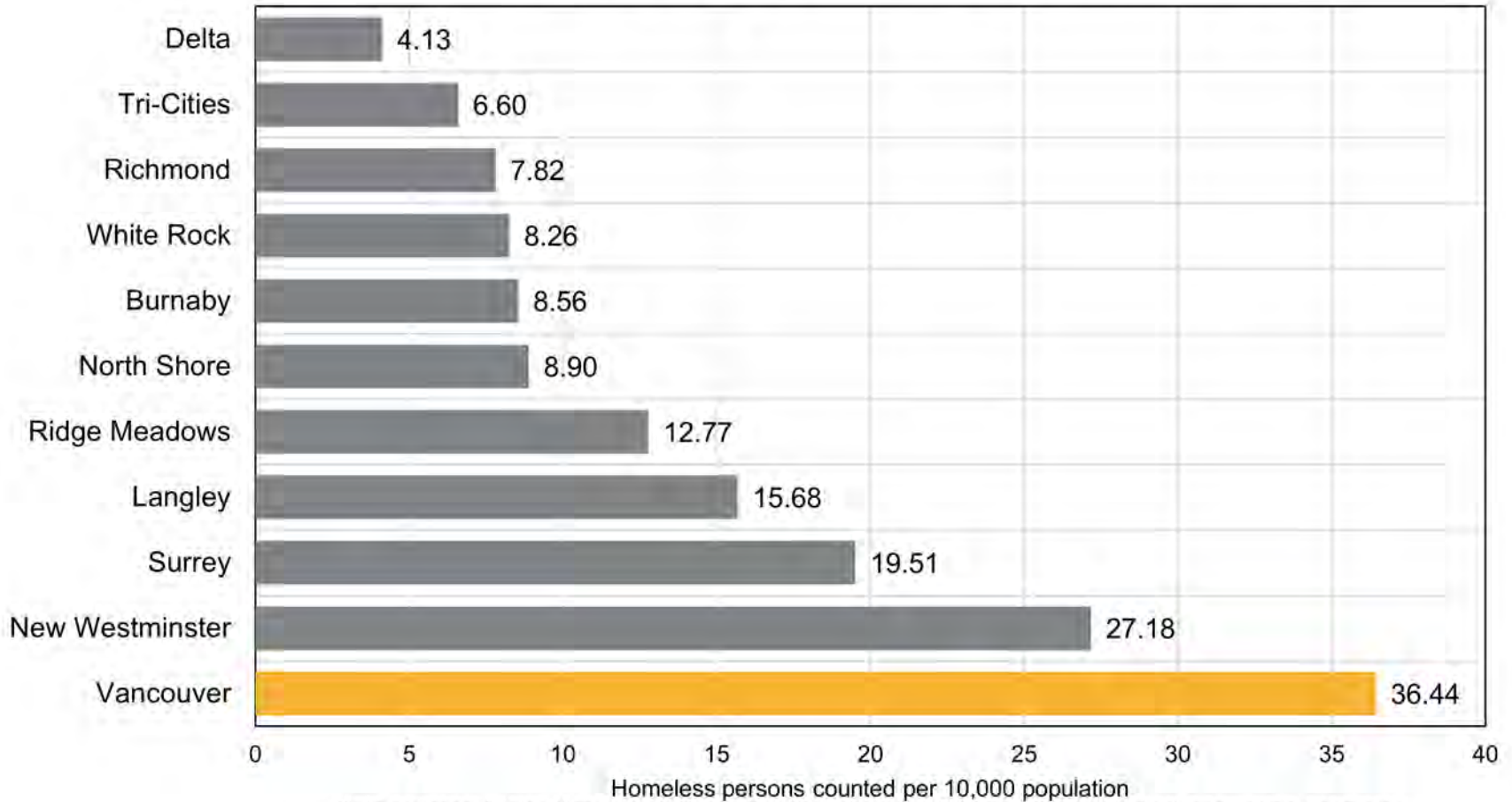
**PEOPLE IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS
IN VANCOUVER ON MARCH 9, 2023**

605 UNSHELTERED

1,815 SHELTERED

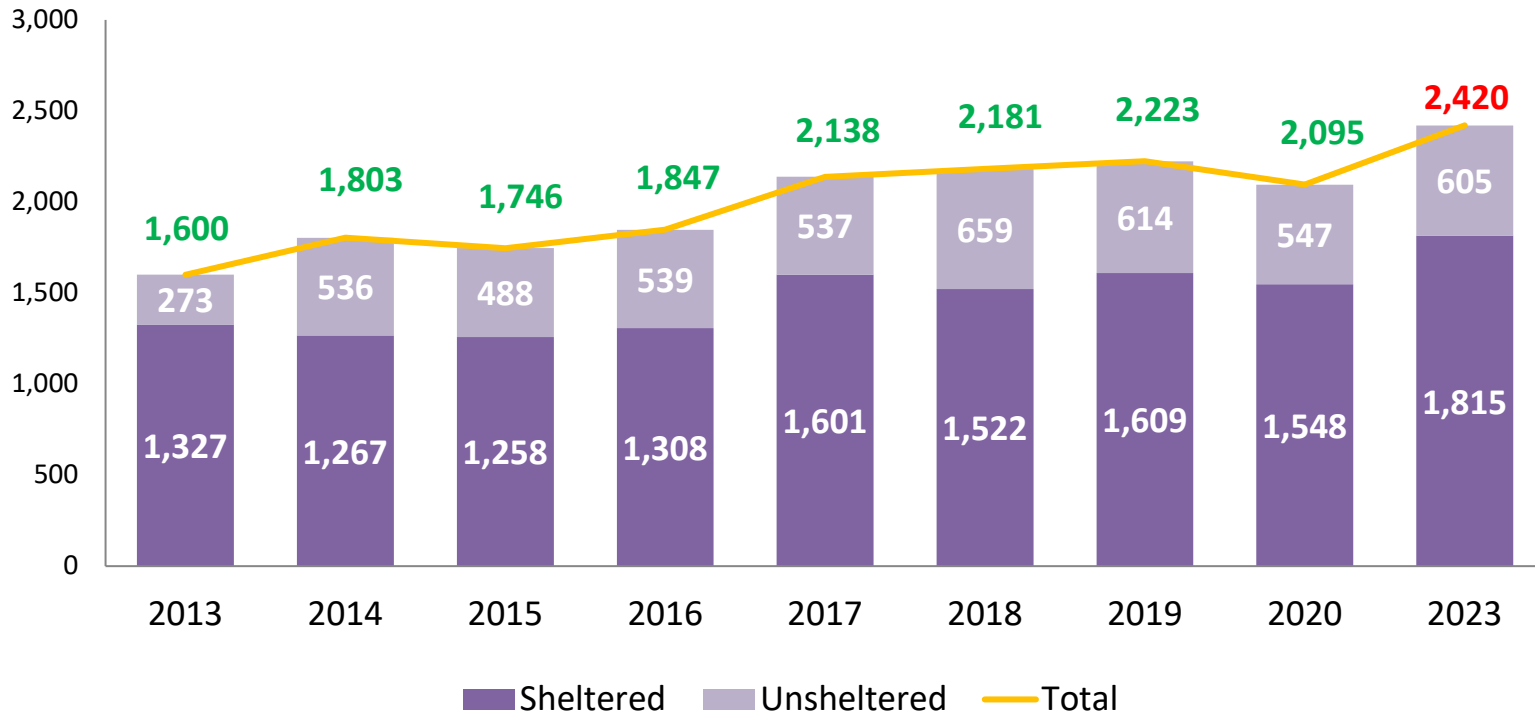
- 24-hour Point-in-Time snapshot of people who are experiencing homelessness
- Provides a basic demographic profile and tracks trends over time

Homeless Population Per 10,000 Population - Metro Vancouver, 2023



Data sources: Metro Vancouver 2023 Homeless Count; BC Stats, 2022 municipal population estimates

Vancouver: Persistent Homelessness



Age

- **21%** Seniors (55+)
- **72%** Adults (25-54)
- **8%** Youth (Under 25)

- **47%** of seniors experienced homelessness for the first time when they were already a senior.

- **35%** of youths are/were in the care of the Ministry as a child or youth

Gender

- **73%** Men
- **23%** Women
- **3%** Another Gender Identity

Indigenous Status

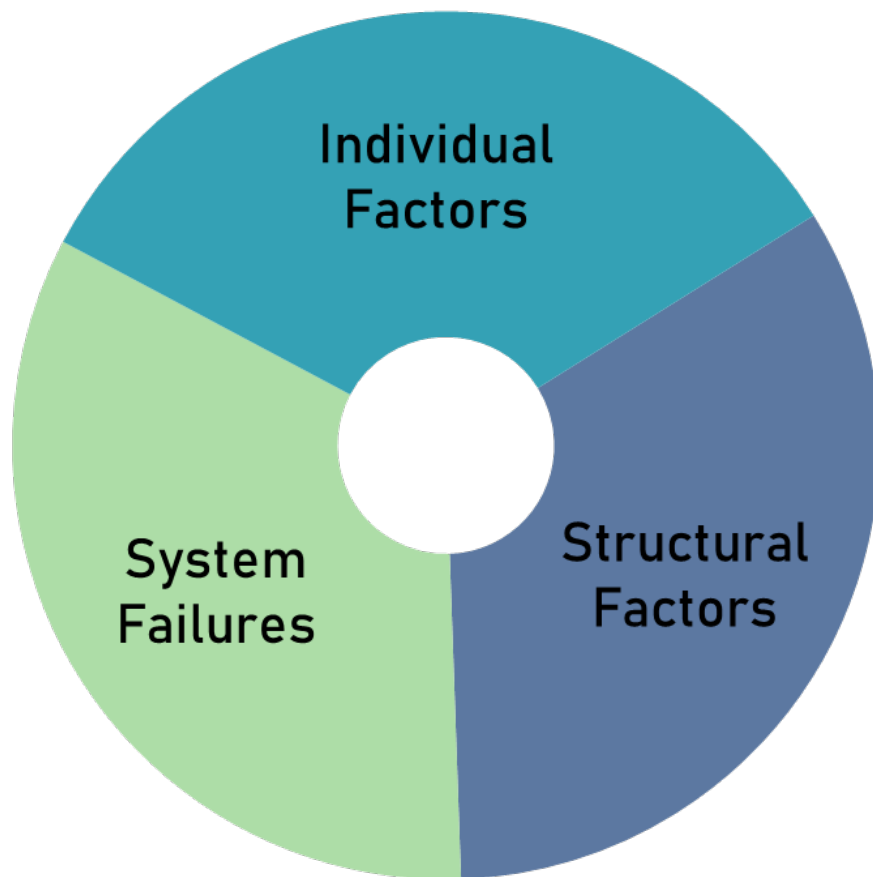
- **39%** identified as Indigenous
 - Compared to 2.3% of the population

- Indigenous people are **18 times more likely** to be homeless than non-Indigenous people

- **67%** of Indigenous respondents reported experiences with Residential School, either themselves, a parent, or grandparent



Traumatic events, mental health and addictions, etc.



Aging out of care, discharge into homelessness, intergenerational trauma etc.

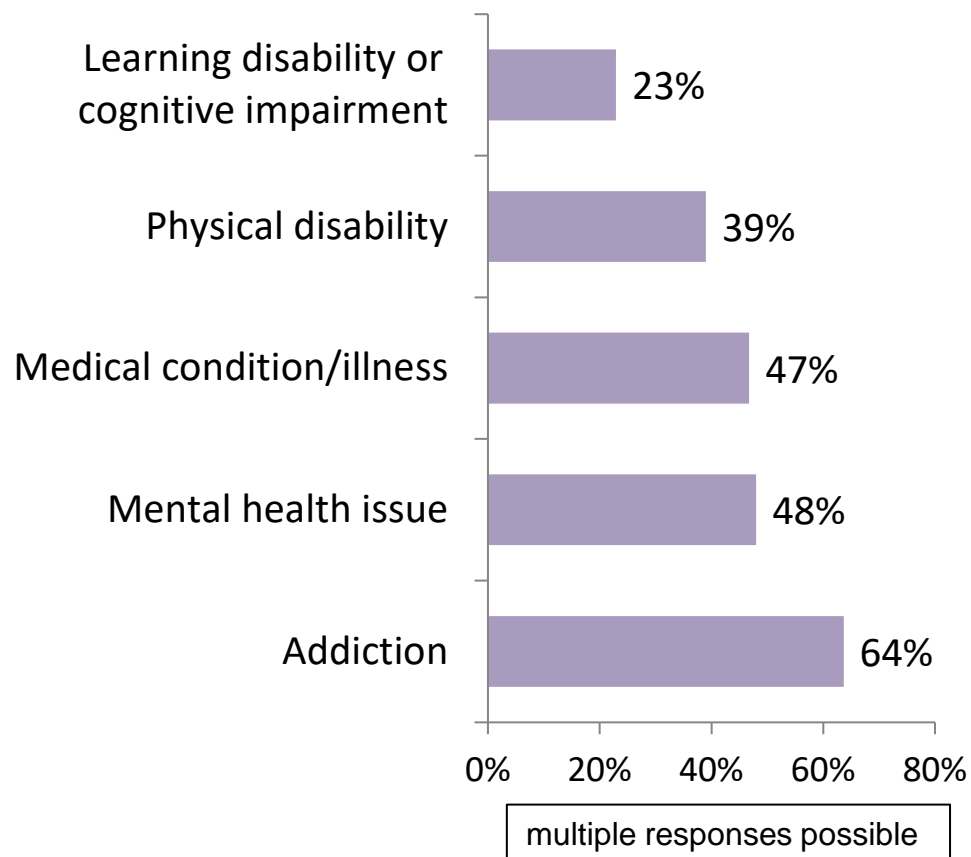
Poverty, lack of affordable housing, lack of appropriate health care, racism, etc.

63% (n=1,123) of respondents indicated two or more health concerns

32% (n=1,083) of respondents reported having an acquired brain injury

Services in Previous Year:

- Emergency Room: **52%** (n=1088)
- Hospital (non-emerg): **47%** (n=1,088)
- Health Clinic: **46%** (n=1,088)
- Ambulance: **42%** (n=1,088)





Responses to Homelessness
Homelessness Services
Vancouver Parks & Recreation

Homelessness Services



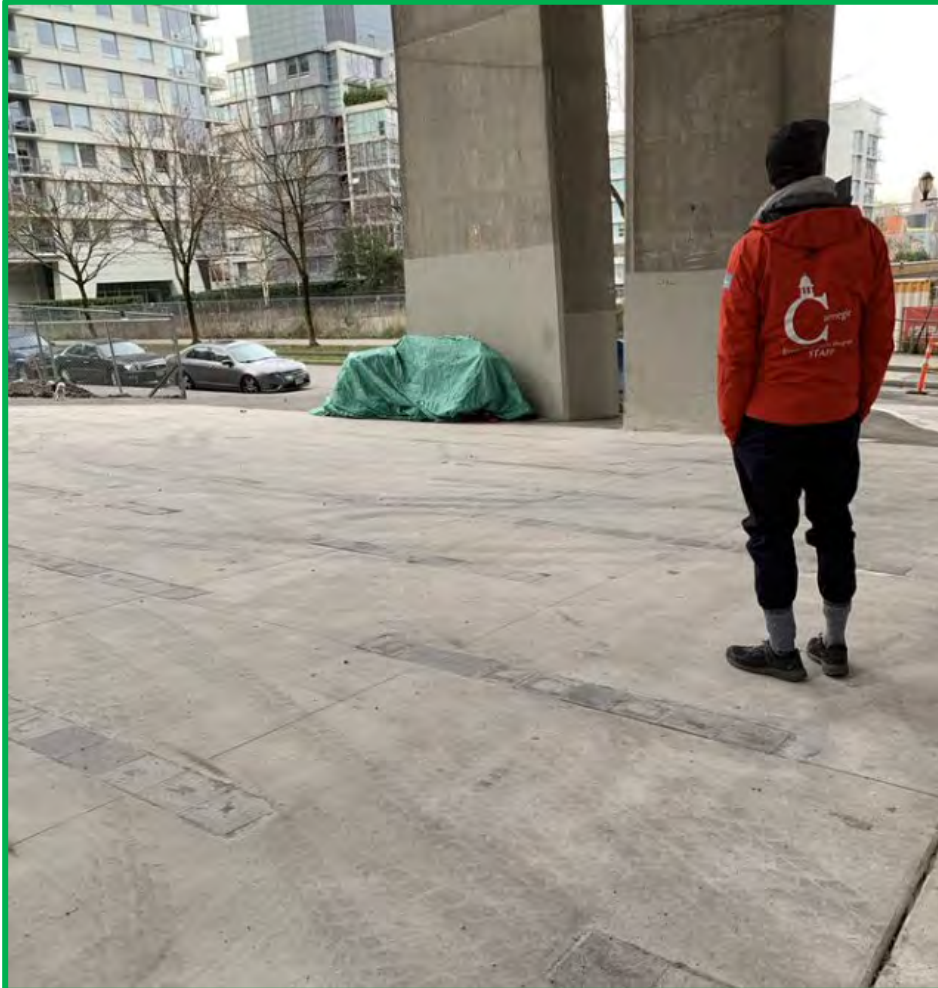
Approach:

- Accessible, low barrier
- Client centered
- Trauma informed

Services:

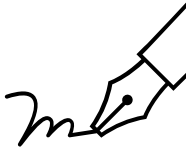
- Housing and Housing Loss Prevention (rent subsidies, housing)
- Access to Income (identification, taxes, Service Canada + CRA)
- Connections to Support Services (shelter and support referrals)
- Work with BC Housing through Coordinated Access & Assessment (CAA)
- STEP program - transition tenants who can live more independently and maximize benefits of supportive housing





2023 Statistics

- ~**120** unique people/day
- ~**6,500** unique individuals served
- ~**2,000** new clients that had never accessed Homelessness Services Outreach previously
- Over **800** housing units secured for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness



Creation of Urban Relationships Department

April 2022

- A new department was created from a rights-based lens for those sheltering in the park
- A Director was hired as part of its efforts working with hundreds of vulnerable park users sleeping or sheltering in parks and to work with partners to help fulfill the City's humanitarian responsibilities to their citizens and improve the use in Vancouver parks
- The department works on JEDDI (Justice, Equity, Decolonization, Diversity, and Inclusion), in collaboration with other Park Board departments, most often Park Operations (Rangers) and is part of the Provincial encampment response
- This department is one of the first in North America doing this rights/equity based work in parks. Therefore, municipalities receiving the similar ruling or experiencing a higher number of individuals sleeping in parks, are asking for consultation, our participation at round tables, and involvement in research to further the work on encampments

- **Oppenheimer Encampment(s)**
 - First long-standing critical mass encampment
 - Resolved via a legal injunction (Board Decision)
- **Strathcona Encampment**
 - Grew as a result of the injunction at port of Vancouver encampment (established soon after Oppenheimer was decamped)
 - Resolved via a legal injunction (Board Decision) – MOU established
- **CRAB Park Encampment**
 - Grew as a result of the Strathcona closure
 - A legal injunction was requested (Board Decision), final ruling on hold – housing available OR critical health and safety risk
 - GM notice in place, to allow for special consideration from the by-law



National Housing Strategy Act. Justice Laws Website. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/>

- Housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person and to building sustainable and inclusive communities
- Advocate for appropriate long term supportive housing, if unable to, ensure encampments support the human rights and dignity of those in them, in a manner that respects human rights and promotes human well-being and safe communities
- Improved housing outcomes are best achieved through cooperation between governments and civil society as well as the meaningful involvement of local communities



July 2020 a revision of the Parks Control By-Law around sheltering in the parks

- **11A** - New section “person experiencing homelessness to take up temporary abode in a park” as long as the shelter complies with the provisions outlined in section 11B
- **11B** - outlines where temporary shelters are prohibited, when they can be erected, what restrictions apply, and how the space can be used

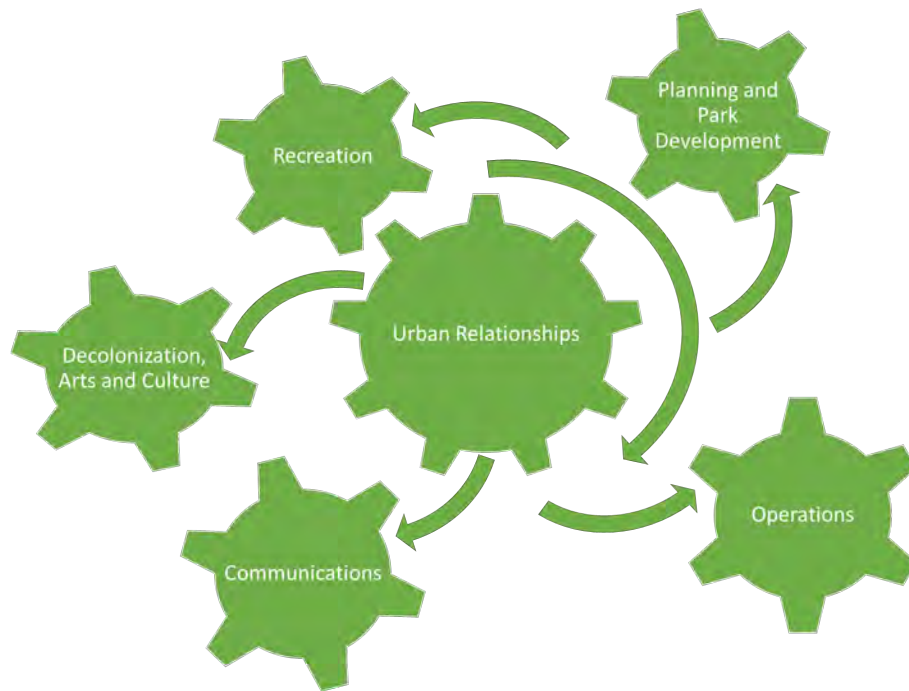
It should be noted that year to date compared to 2022 the following areas show increases overall.

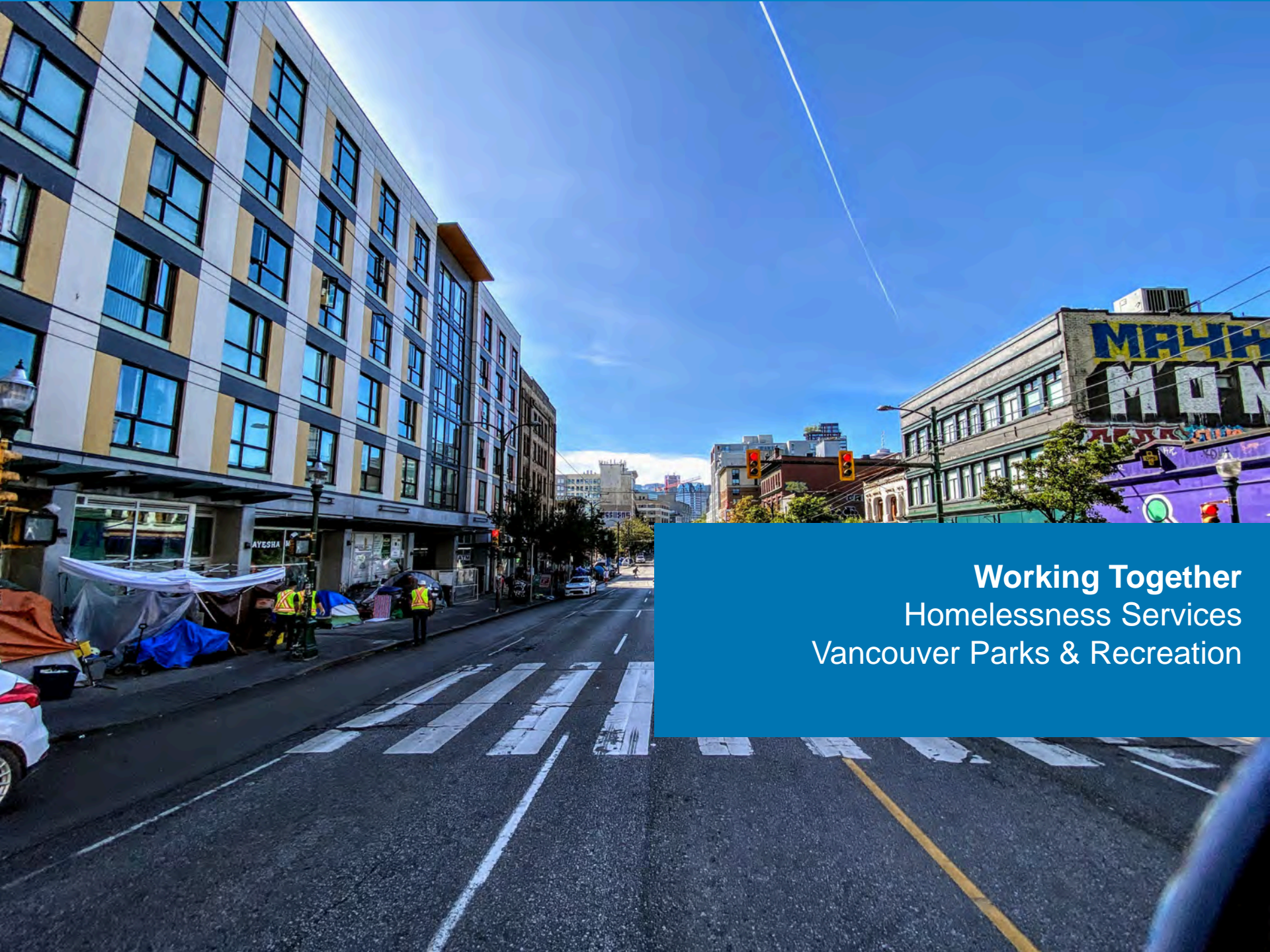
In 2023:

- Homelessness: 1,436 more cases compared to 2022, a 25.8% increase year over year
- Fires: 182 more fires compared to 2022
- Noise: 784 more files compared to 2022
- Illegal Parking: 341 more files compared to 2022

1120	Type of Call	December 2023	November	Same Period 2022	YEAR TO DATE 2022	YEARTO DATE 2023
1	Homeless	541	705	269	7628	9255
2	Bylaw/Noise	19	51	27	1643	2498
3	Smoking	7	14	5	323	549
4	Film	0	0	0	2	6
5	Assist Public	10	17	13	583	356
6	Inspect Hazard	25	24	25	748	532
7	Outdoor facility	8	6	4	225	165
8	Lost Child	2	0	0	29	50
9	Unlock Facility	26	28	15	227	487
10	Wildlife	10	12	13	450	386
11	Special Events	1	0	0	37	17
12	Property Damage	5	5	13	117	101
13	Patrol	627	433	202	4983	5296
14	Unsecure facility	0	1	1	31	41
15	First Aid	4	3	3	46	100
16	Needle	2	8	8	76	114
17	Crime	35	77	6	241	622
18	Aggressive Person	6	6	6	93	102
19	Dog Off Leash	8	9	19	346	512
20	illegal parking	15	11	9	210	573
21	Vending	0	1	2	83	76
22	Permit	3	2	0	43	51
23	COVID	0	0	0	4	0
24	Fire	32	19	11	365	566
25	Assist Internal Dept.	8	6	6	156	184
		1394	1438	657	19,218	22,639

YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON 2023			
	CURRENT	PREVIOUS	2023 YTD
TOTALS	1394	1438	22,639
			19,218





Working Together
Homelessness Services
Vancouver Parks & Recreation



March 2021

- Came about as an outcome of the Strathcona encampment.
- Between City of Vancouver and Province of BC (via BC Housing), the Park Board
- Aligns the above parties on the Commitment to preventing encampments in Vancouver parks and enforcing the Parks Control By-laws when there are suitable spaces available for unsheltered people to move indoors

Year Round

- Outreach services to individuals sheltering outdoors
 - Parks & Encampments

Seasonal

- Community Centres used as Warming Centres (winter) and Cooling Centres (summer)

Better Together Pilot

- Neighbourhood-based approach to tackling the issues of homelessness, poverty, mental health, and addictions in our community



2023/24 Winter Season



2 Community centres operated as overnight warming centres

- Provide a safe, warm place to come inside and have a snack and warm drink.
- Staffed by City and Parks Board staff

Collaboration leads to success

- Extended hours to provide individuals a warm space as temperatures drop
- **More than 170** visitors over 13 nights (combined)
 - Average # visitors at one site increased by 5x compared to 2022/2023 season





- **Collaboration**
 - Homelessness Services (Carnegie Outreach & Manager, Homelessness Response Coordination)
 - Multi-sector approach
- **Communication**
 - Share information to support those sheltering outside
 - Joint communications
- **Coordination**
 - People moving into indoor spaces

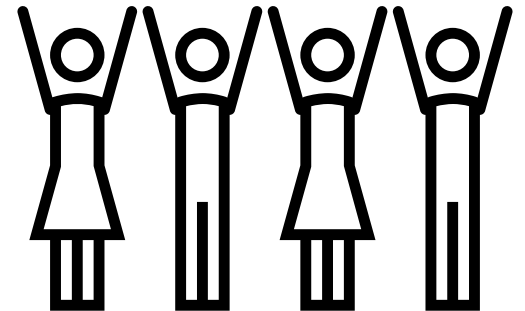




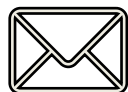
Supporting Communities Through Collaboration

Ray Cam Community Centre Redevelopment

- Community led visioning
- Collaboration amongst various City departments and Park Board
- Working together to meet the current and future needs of the community



Thank You!



City of Vancouver
Bruk.Melles@Vancouver.ca

Vancouver Park Board
Betty.Lepps@Vancouver.ca

