

CITY OF BURNABY

HOUSING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

**RE: 2005 GREATER VANCOUVER HOMELESS COUNT – DETAILED
RESULTS**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information.

R E P O R T

The Housing Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2005 October 12, received and adopted the *attached* report providing detailed results of the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Redman
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston
Vice Chair

Councillor C. Jordan
Member

COPY: CITY MANAGER DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING
--

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
HOUSING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2005 October 6

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 16000 20

Reference: Homelessness

SUBJECT: 2005 GREATER VANCOUVER HOMELESS COUNT - DETAILED RESULTS

PURPOSE: To provide the Committee with the detailed results of the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT this report be received for information.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Housing Committee, at its regular meeting held on 2005 September 20, requested information on the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count. This report responds to that request by providing an overview of the count findings, including totals for Burnaby.

2.0 DISCUSSION

The 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count was conducted on March 15, 2005 by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, with funding provided by the Federal Government Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI). The preliminary and final detailed results of the count were released in June 2005 and 2005 September 21, respectively (*provided under separate cover*). The count is undertaken as one of the actions of the Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver which recommends that regular homeless counts be conducted. The objectives of the count are to:

1. provide an updated estimate of the number of homeless persons, by sub-region and regionally in Greater Vancouver;
2. provide a demographic profile of this population; and
3. identify trends in relation to the 2002 homeless count.

To: *Housing Committee*
From: *Director Planning and Building*
Re: *2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count - Detailed Results*
2005 October 6 Page 2

The count was conducted from 12:01 am to 11:59 pm. and included people who had no physical shelter and those who were staying in emergency shelters, safe houses for youth or transition houses for women and their children fleeing violence. People who were staying with friends because they had nowhere to live were also included, if they could be identified by outreach workers and service agencies.

The results show that on March 15, 2005 there were 2,174 homeless people counted in the region, almost double the 1,121 persons counted in 2002. The report includes separate figures for street homeless and people in shelters, safe houses, and transition houses. There are profiles of the homeless population by gender, age, Aboriginal identify, ethnic or cultural group, reason for being homeless, length of time being homeless, last permanent home, major source of income, health conditions, and where the people stayed if not in a shelter. Some of the key findings include:

- More homeless people were found on the street than in shelters.
- People with Aboriginal identity were over-represented among the region's homeless population compared to their share of the total population (30% compared to 2%).
- Forty families with children were counted. Most stayed in a shelter or transition house, although some families were among the street homeless.
- Over 600 people, or one third of those counted, have been homeless for over one year.
- Less than half of those counted had a steady income source such as income assistance, pension or disability benefits.
- Health conditions were common among the homeless, with 74% of those counted having one or more health conditions (addiction, medical condition, mental illness, and physical disability). Almost half of the homeless who responded to this question reported addiction problems.
- 84% of the homeless were found in the Vancouver and south of Fraser sub-regions.

In Burnaby, there were 40 homeless persons counted (two sheltered homeless and 38 street homeless), which is over double the 2002 count figure of 17 persons. The 2005 count also revealed that 70 people identified Burnaby as the municipality where they last had a permanent home. The report cautions that the results may underestimate homelessness because of the difficulty in finding those who do not use services or spend time where homeless people congregate. The count does not include people who are "sofa surfing" (staying with friends). It also does not include people staying in detox facilities, recovery houses and hospitals who would not have a place to stay upon leaving these facilities.

The Homeless Count report recommends improvements to the methodology for future counts and areas for further research. The report concludes by confirming that the key planning issues for homelessness are income, support services, and housing. Addiction

To: *Housing Committee*
From: *Director Planning and Building*
Re: *2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count - Detailed Results*
2005 October 6..... Page 3

treatment, the increase in Aboriginal homelessness and the aging of the homeless population are also identified as areas that may need more focus.

3.0 CONCLUSION

This report has presented the findings of the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count, including the numbers for the City of Burnaby. It is recommended that the report be received by the Housing Committee for information.

B. Lukson

for Jack Belhouse
DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SF:lr

cc: City Manager

P:\Sharon Folkes\Reports\Housing Committee\2005\Greater Vancouver Homeless Count.doc