HOMELESS IN THE FRASER VALLEY
the continuing challenge

Fraser Valley Regional District

May 13, 2014
Addressing Homelessness Issues in the FVRD

Homelessness is not just a Metro Vancouver issue.

- The FVRD has been involved in addressing affordable housing and homelessness in the region through research, data and several housing forums.

- The FVRD has contributed funding to the last three homelessness counts.

- FVRD’s collaboration with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has produced research, reports and inventories that have supported affordable housing and homelessness initiatives throughout the Region.
2014 FVRD Homelessness Count

- Purpose was to determine whether homelessness is increasing or decreasing in the Region.
- Teams of volunteers conducted a formal count of homeless people in the FVRD on March 11 and 12.
- Survey coordinated with similar process taking place at the same time in the Metro Vancouver region
- Is a "snapshot" of homelessness throughout the Fraser Valley, from Boston Bar to Abbotsford, and west through the Lower Mainland to Bowen Island.
- A similar survey in 2011 found 345 people in Fraser Valley living homeless.
2014 FVRD Homelessness Count
Abbotsford

• The count could not have been accomplished without community partners and volunteers.

• **Partners**
  – **Funding:** Fraser Valley Regional District
  – **Abbotsford Community partners:** The 5 and 2 Ministries; The Salvation Army; Abbotsford Community Services (Foodbank); Cyrus Centre; Women's Resource Society of the Fraser Valley; and United Way

• Approximately 20 individual volunteers also aided in the count.
2014 FVRD Homelessness Count
Preliminary Totals

- Total number of homeless persons in Region remained flat from 2011 in the FVRD.
- In Abbotsford, the 2014 total is still well below the high of 235 homeless people counted in 2008.
- Abbotsford has seen the greatest increase within the FVRD since 2011 (29%).
2014 Abbotsford Homelessness Count
Preliminary Totals

- Consistent with 2011 count the majority of homeless persons (70%) have come to the FVRD from elsewhere.
• Nearly 40% of homeless individuals in Abbotsford have lived here for over 10 years.

• Only 1 in 10 people who are homeless in Abbotsford have lived here for less than 6 months.
Disproportionate numbers of homeless persons are in the 15-19, 30-39, and 40-49, age cohorts.

Youth homelessness, for those between the ages of 15-19, is a continuing concern.
2014 Abbotsford Homelessness Count
Preliminary Totals

• More men than women are homeless.
• The general population has 50-50 gender split.
• Most people are living unsheltered.
• Sheltered: emergency shelter (youth and general) & transition house
• Unsheltered: outside, car/camper and couch surfing

![2014 Gender Chart]

![2014 Sheltered/Unsheltered Chart]
2014 Abbotsford Homelessness Count
Preliminary Totals

- A significant proportion of homeless persons are on welfare.
- Just under 12% report no income and 9.7% rely on family and friends for assistance.
- Of those with health issues, many reported having multiple conditions.
• Majority of homeless persons view the lack of affordable housing as a barrier to becoming permanently housed.

What one thing would help end Homelessness for you?

- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**: 42.2%
- **INCOME**: 32.0%
- **OVERCOMING ADDICTION**: 6.2%
- **SUPPORT/ADVOCACY**: 5.2%
- **EMPLOYMENT**: 5.2%
- **OTHER**: 9.2%
2014 FVRD Homelessness Count
Next Steps

• More detailed analysis of survey data
• Full Report later this year
• Review/identify funding gaps and opportunities
• Separate Project: Social Housing Inventory update
  – updating 2009 inventories for each community.
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