

**RCSAC REPORT ON
MUNICIPAL RESPONSES TO CHILD/YOUTH POVERTY
SEPTEMBER 2015**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary and Recommendations	Page 1
Introduction and Parameters of Study	Page 4
Child Poverty in Study Municipalities	Page 4
Findings from Study Municipalities	Page 6
Study Results	Page 7
➤ Recreation	Page 8
➤ Community Grants	Page 10
➤ Housing	Page 11
➤ Food Security	Page 13
➤ Child Care	Page 14
➤ Health	Page 15
➤ Income Subsidies	Page 16
➤ Transit	Page 16

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Background

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal # 2: A Vibrant, Active and Connected City: *"Continue the development and implementation of an excellent and accessible system of programs and services, and public spaces that reflect Richmond's demographics, heritage, diverse needs, and unique opportunities, and that facilitate active caring, and connected communities."*

This RCSAC report was commissioned to investigate and report back on municipal responses to child/youth poverty in a number of Metro Vancouver municipalities. Cities included in the study were: Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Richmond, Coquitlam, Township of Langley, Delta and New Westminster. Criteria studied were: income subsidies, housing, childcare, food security, health, transportation and recreation.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to review and compare responses that these eight (8) municipalities have adopted to address the needs of low-income families with children and youth. Richmond compares favourably in the number and types of services targeted to low-income residents in comparison to other Metro municipalities. However Richmond still has the highest level of people living in poverty at 22.4% compared to all the studied cities and the Metro Vancouver average of 17.4%. In addition, subsequent to the completion of this report, the "My Health, My Community" report was released and it reports that Richmond residents' "overall general and mental health is significantly lower compared to health authority and regional averages." It also reports that 38% of residents have a household income of less than \$40,000/year. This result, combined with a higher child/youth poverty rate indicates that there is still work to be done.

Data from this report may be used by Richmond service agencies and the City of Richmond to further support services and programs that lessen the impact of poverty on Richmond families. The report will also be shared with the other Metro Vancouver cities for their information and action.

Richmond's Strengths

- Low Income Resource Directory administered by Richmond Cares Richmond Gives
- Roving Leaders outreach and recreation program for vulnerable youth;
- Current review of the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program;
- Low Cost/ No Cost recreation activities brochures;
- Community Grant program for community non-profits delivering \$2.2 m in 2015;
- Affordable Housing Strategy securing 500 affordable rental units;
- Nine (9) community gardens on City-owned land;
- 200 childcare spaces in City-owned facilities;
- Adoption of the Richmond Children's Charter;
- Ongoing operation of the Garrett Wellness Centre;
- Richmond Social Development Strategy.

Building on Richmond's Strengths

Richmond Social Development Strategy in particular, directly addresses the criteria chosen for the study. The First Theme is: *Equity and Inclusion—e.g. improving efforts to reduce financial barriers to participation in City programs, finding ways to address affordable housing and homelessness concerns in Richmond.*

Goal 1 Action 5 also states: *Acknowledging that income data from Statistics Canada and other sources alone does not present a complete or fully reliable picture of poverty in Richmond, work with community based organizations, senior governments and other partners to initiate culturally-sensitive process to: (5.1) improve the characteristics and challenges of low income residents in Richmond and (5.2) Support initiatives to help individuals and families move out of poverty, specifying the roles that the City and other partners and jurisdictions can play in pursuing viable solutions (i.e. job readiness programs, affordable housing measures).*

Recommendations:

1. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond makes poverty objectives of the Social Development Strategy a priority for implementation and that this priority is well understood by City Council and Staff and communicated to the citizenry.
2. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond works with community based organizations and other partners to develop a process for a made-in-Richmond Poverty Reduction Plan Strategy, using the City of Surrey's Poverty Reduction Plan (2012) as a guide. See link: <http://www.surrey.ca/community/11554.aspx>
3. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond Community Grants program funding be augmented with 15% of gaming revenues in order to increase the total funds available for community service agencies.
4. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond engages in discussion with the City of Burnaby and the City of Surrey regarding their innovative programs serving low-income children, youth and families, expressly:
 - Burnaby and Surrey's cost-sharing agreements for recreational, educational and social programs for vulnerable neighbourhoods, with a view to implementing agreements with School District 38 and other funders such as the United Way of Lower Mainland; and
 - Burnaby's Youth Hub that provides a youth clinic, alternative school and youth centre, with a view to establishing a Youth Hub in Richmond.
5. Recommendation: That the City of Richmond requests the Provincial Government to adopt a B.C. Poverty Reduction Plan with targets and timelines.

**Report prepared by Lynda Brummitt,
Project Coordinator, Richmond Poverty Response Committee**

Introduction

Child Poverty in British Columbia and Richmond in particular has remained stubbornly high since the beginning of the 21st century. As provinces across the country have initiated Poverty Reduction Strategies with targets and timelines to address systemic issues relating to poverty, the call for a similar strategy for BC has gone unheeded by the provincial government. In the place of provincial strategy, community poverty reduction pilot projects were put in place in 2012 by the BC Government, in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities, in seven BC communities. Two of the communities, Surrey and New Westminster, are included in this current study. The first progress report on the pilot communities was released in spring 2014. The communities selected for the pilot benefitted from funding for coordination for development of community action plans and 72 families of 108 referred, benefitted from tailor-made strategies out of poverty. The report itself acknowledged “that families cannot forge a path out of poverty until their most basic needs – including food, shelter and health care – are addressed”.¹ This is the same challenge that faces local municipalities, the level of government closest to the children living in poverty, with the least means to make the systemic changes contributing to poverty in their community.

Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC) and Richmond Poverty Response Committee (RPRC) share an interest in where the City of Richmond fits with other Metro Vancouver cities, with regard to finding workable responses that assist families living in poverty. The purpose of this report is to review and compare the responses that the selected municipalities of the lower mainland (study municipalities) are adopting to address child/youth poverty issues in their communities. The data from this report may be used by RCSAC member agencies to further support programs and services that lessen the impact of poverty on Richmond families. The report will also be shared with the City of Richmond and other Metro Vancouver cities for their information and action.

Parameters of Study

As requested by the RCSAC Executive, the Richmond PRC agreed to undertake a study to review municipal responses to child/youth poverty. The age demographic is birth to 18 years and geographic scope is municipalities with similar populations. Initiatives were included in areas such as: income subsidies, housing, childcare, food security, health, transportation and recreation.

Prior to commencing this project, a consultation was held with a task group of Richmond PRC and the Child Poverty Action Team of Richmond Children First to review the criteria and determine the lower mainland communities to be included in the study. By population, compared to Richmond, the municipalities of Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Langley and Delta were selected (three communities of higher population and three of lower population). Giving consideration to the social planning capacity of lower mainland communities, it was agreed to include New Westminster, which has a much smaller population than the seven others, but has a social planner on staff. The criteria

for collecting information was expanded to include community grants, and information to be gathered included process, policy and programs, as each apply to the criteria selected.

Child Poverty in Study Municipalities

Poverty is: Not having breakfast sometimes; being afraid to tell your mom that you need new shoes; sometimes really hard because my mom gets scared and she cries; not being able to take swimming lessons; not getting to go on school trips; being teased about the way you are dressed; (Grade 4 & 5 children- ISARC: 1998)ⁱⁱ

In Metro Vancouver, using the low-income after tax measure (LIM-AT), 395,095 individuals are considered to be living in poverty, or 17.4% of the total population. Metro Vancouver is slightly higher than the provincial rate of 16.4%. The following table compares the general poverty rate between the study municipalities, using the after-tax low income measure.ⁱⁱⁱ Six of the study municipalities have a higher proportion of their population living in poverty compared to the provincial rate of 16.4%. However, when compared to the poverty rate in Metro Vancouver of 17.4%, only 3 of the study municipalities, Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond have higher proportions of people living in poverty.

	Population/private households for income status	In low income in 2010 based on LIM-AT	Prevalence of low income in 2010 based on LIM-AT (%)
Province BC	4,245,795	696,850	16.4%
Metro Vancouver	2,272,730	395,095	17.4%
Vancouver	590,210	121,020	20.5%
Surrey	463,340	71,695	15.5%
Burnaby	220,260	46,360	21%
Richmond	189,305	42,365	22.4%
Coquitlam	125,015	21,620	17.3%
Township of Langley	103,145	11,730	11.4%
Delta	98,745	10,105	10.2%
New Westminister	65,090	10,980	16.9%

National Household Survey Community Profiles 2011

When considering child poverty, the picture is slightly different. Among the study municipalities, 4 have higher proportions of their populations under age 18 living in poverty compared to the BC and Metro Vancouver average. At 25.4%, Richmond has the highest proportion of children under 18 living in poverty, followed by Burnaby (23.1%), Vancouver (22.4%) and Coquitlam (21.1%). In absolute numbers, the City of Surrey has the most children, 20,355, living in poverty but proportionally, it represents 18.7% of children under the age of 18.

The table below considers the child poverty rate for children under the age of 18. It does not show proportion of the subset of children under 6 living in poverty. For all study municipalities, except New Westminister, the proportion of children under 6 living in poverty is less. In New Westminister, the proportion of children under 6 living in poverty is 18.9%, while the proportion of children under 18 living in poverty is 17.2%. This is of particular concern given the influence of early years of life on a child's future health and development.

	Population in Private households for income status u/18 &	Prevalence of low income in 2010 based on after –tax measure u/18	Prevalence of low income in 2010 based on LIM-AT (%)
Province BC	823,410	157,250	19.1
Metro Vancouver	439,425	85,535	19.5
Vancouver	88,470	19,855	22.4

Surrey	109,045	20,355	18.7
Burnaby	38,215	8,835	23.1
Richmond	34,790	8,820	25.4
Coquitlam	26,150	5,515	21.1
Township of Langley	24,080	3,415	14.2
Delta	21,980	2,720	12.4
New Westminster	10,360	1,780	17.2

National Household Survey Community Profiles 2011

To add to our understanding of poverty within Metro Vancouver and the study municipalities it is helpful to note the mapping information that is provided in the 2014 Child Poverty Report Card issued by First Call^{iv}. Based on the LIM-AT 2012, poverty data was mapped by census tract and illustrates where the children living in poverty live. The following table compares the study municipalities using the two extreme categories – proportion of children living in poverty of >40% and proportion of children living in poverty <10%.

	# of Census Tracts >40% Child Poverty	# of Census Tract <10% Child Poverty
Vancouver	5	2
Surrey	2	3
Burnaby	2	0
Richmond	2	0
Coquitlam	1	1
Township of Langley	0	3
Delta	0	4
New Westminster	0	0

Source: Fact Sheet #10: Child Poverty in Metro Vancouver

It is generally accepted that growing up in a poor household negatively affects children, not only in the short term but potentially across the life-cycle. These effects also have implications for society which means it is important that local governments take into account the plight of children and youth living in poverty within their jurisdiction.

“The economic benefits of investing in children have been extensively documented. Investing fully in children today, will ensure the well-being and productivity of future generations for decades to come. By contrast, the physical, emotional and intellectual impairment that poverty inflicts on children can mean a lifetime of suffering and want - a legacy of poverty for the next generation...” Carol Bellamy, Executive of UNICEF, 1995-2005^v

FINDINGS FROM STUDY MUNICIPALITIES

Local governments have a unique and important role in building communities that matter. They shape the conditions that attract people and capital and ensure funding is used effectively to build attractive and sustainable communities that offer opportunities to all residents. A municipality’s services, programs and facilities form a social infrastructure upon which people rely to earn a living and raise their families.^{vi}

The above quote is taken from a report by Vibrant Communities Canada, based on the results of work done in 13 communities across Canada, over 10 years. The report notes that while senior levels of government control the majority of political levers that influence prosperity, the full benefit of such of those policies can not be realized without the coordination at the city-region level. The report goes on to identify and provide illustrations of ways in which municipal governments across Canada have raised awareness and changed attitudes, addressed needs of those currently living in poverty and focused on changing public policy to break the cycle of poverty.

Through the process of gathering information for this report, it was identified that several municipalities have developed overarching social planning strategies that have helped to “connect the dots” and knit together other strategies and initiatives that contribute to addressing quality of life and well-being, including poverty. It is interesting to note that all four municipalities with social planning strategies also have social planners and/or social planning departments. The development of the strategies included information gathering and data sharing as well as extensive community consultation and poverty was included as an important community concern. Each of the documents is comprehensive and reflects the high level priorities of each city or municipality. The following are some interesting notes relating to poverty reduction and alleviation.

- The City of Vancouver, A Health City for All. This strategy is a long-term, integrated plan to improve the health of people, the community and the environment. Vancouver’s strategy was adopted in September 2014, with 13 major goals and targets for each goal. There is a goal for “Making Ends Meet” and the targets are to reduce the poverty rate by 75% and increase the median income by at least 3% per year.
- City of Surrey, Plan for Society Wellbeing of Surrey Residents. The City of Surrey’s Social plan was adopted in 2006 and has five priority areas that include community development and inclusion, housing and homelessness and poverty reduction strategy. The poverty reduction strategy was developed by a community group Vibrant Surrey. The City of Surrey and other community partners participated in the development and it was adopted by Council in 2012. Council receives regular staff progress reports on the social plan. Continued participation in the Surrey Poverty Reduction Coalition and implementation of the poverty reduction plan was identified as a priority for 2015-2017 in latest progress report.
- City of Richmond, Building our Social Future. Council adopted the Social Development Strategy in 2013. Future steps include developing the work plan for implementation and regular monitoring and reporting. The needs of people living in poverty are woven within the goal for social equity and inclusion - expanding housing choices, enhancing community accessibility and acknowledging working with community-based organizations and senior levels of government to understand the characteristics of people living in poverty and supporting initiatives to help families move out of poverty, as well as poverty alleviation initiatives.
- City of Burnaby, Social Sustainability Strategy. The strategy was adopted in 2011 and an implementation plan was adopted in 2013. Priority actions for phase 1 include economic security and affordable, suitable housing, and leasing of city-owned properties for non-market supportive housing.

The City of Surrey and New Westminster are participating in the community poverty reduction pilot project of the Province of BC. City of Surrey, has adopted a poverty reduction strategy and New Westminster is in the process of developing a poverty reduction strategy. In the City of New Westminster the social planner was able to provide support to the working group that was formed. The initial work has identified 6 priority areas, several of which are poverty related – childcare, access and inclusion and affordable housing. The remaining study municipality with social planning capacity is the City of Coquitlam which has identified 2 priorities – housing affordability and multiculturalism.

Study Results

The following table provides an overview of the results of this study with the details in the following paragraphs.

	Vancouver	Surrey	Burnaby	Richmond	Coquitlam	Langley	Delta	New West
Social Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓				
1.Recreation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.Grants	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3.Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
4. Food Security	✓	✓	✓	✓				

5. Childcare	✓		✓	✓				✓
6. Health			✓	✓		✓		
7. Income Subsidy	✓							✓
8. Transit								

1. Recreation

Vancouver: The City of Vancouver has the Leisure Access Program for low income residents and provides access to basic recreation programs – pools, rinks, fitness centres and participating community Centres. The subsidy is loaded on the “OneCard” (used by all residents regardless of income) for discounted access to facilities. Included is free admission and rentals for skating and swimming, 50% discounts for admissions/passes for recreational facilities and programs and local attractions. Youth also are able to receive discounts for fitness centre admissions and the “flexipass” (1, 3 and 12 month passes) for swimming pools, ice rinks and fitness centres although costs may be prohibitive). A Leisure Access Agency pass is available for non-profit staff and volunteers when they accompany and assist clients and foster parents when they supervise their foster children.

Community-based youth workers provide additional supports and resources to youth ages 8 to 18, with a broad range of developmental issues facing youth. Programming varies across the city and is designed and led by local youth in consultation with staff and youth volunteers.

Surrey: The Leisure Access Program in Surrey includes one-year full facility passes for children and youth that includes swimming, skating (including free helmet and skate rental), weight room, fitness classes, and sports drop in. Discounts of 75% are offered for most registered programs. In addition to the Leisure Access Program, information about Kidsport grants and Jumpstart are made available to families for children/youth who want to participate in organized sports or recreation programs.

Surrey has seven youth centres with drop-in lounges, registered programs and activity-specific nights. Free annual memberships provide preteens and youth free access to the youth lounge and drop-in activities. Drop-in activities include video games, foosball, air hockey, gym activities, sports equipment and pool tables. Youth Engagement Projects Teams support youth to plan events that they have developed or support small projects developed by youth. The youth centres also offer pre-teen activities. In addition there are eight Youth Parks for BMX and skateboarding. The City provides year road programming called Surrey Rides and hosts special skateboarding events and camps.

The Community-Schools Partnership (C-SP), an initiative of the school district in collaboration with the City of Surrey, involves community partners working alongside schools in addressing vulnerabilities and creating opportunities for all children to flourish. This initiative supports 25 identified schools, (22 elementary, 3 secondary). The C-SP staff work with schools and partners to develop activities that best meet the needs of the school. Programs include afterschool extended enrichment and learning, recreation and culture programs, parent engagement, youth transition, English Language Learning, school break programming and early learning. In addition to C-SP staff, school and City staff support is provided.

Burnaby: The Recreation Credit program provides financial assistance for low income residents. The program is set up by Burnaby but the application process is administered by designated non-profit agencies. A credit amount for one year is registered in the computer system for the individual who can then use the credit to access swimming pools, skating rinks, fitness classes, indoor cycling, or weight rooms. Information about the Fitness and Arts Tax Credit (federal), is also available on the City of Burnaby website along with a list of Burnaby programs that qualify for the tax credit and links to the relevant Government of Canada website. For grade five students, who are residents of Burnaby, a “Be Active” pass provides free access to a number of activities such as swimming, skating, golf and activities at community centres.

Burnaby has five city-operated youth centres or lounges located in town centres. Depending on the facility, free drop-in activities include a variety of recreational activities, including a pool table, foosball, outdoor games, open gym time,

computer, board games, cards, TV, and access to kitchen space. Programming is geared to both preteen (10-12) and teen (13-18). Special events are also organized.

In addition to the youth centres, The City of Burnaby has a cost sharing agreement with the School District for coordination of seven community schools to offer a variety of programs and services to meet specific educational, recreational and social needs of the neighbourhood. Most schools are located in more vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Richmond: The Recreation Subsidy Program is available to low income families for admissions and program registration. Each child within a family may access one activity or program per quarter. The fee subsidy program is complemented by a range of free events such as the Arts Centre Truck, Youth Media Arts Lab, Summer Park Program, outdoor movie nights, community festivals and events. The City of Richmond also provides a Grade 5 Activity Pass to all grade 5 students who are Richmond residents. For one year, grade five students have free admission to drop-in swim and skating sessions at Richmond facilities, pre-teen drop-in at local community centres and pitch and putt. In addition, City of Richmond staff are involved in the administration of Kidsport and JumpStart programs that provide further financial assistance for access to organized sports and other costs relating to participation in physical activity such as fees, transportation and equipment.

Currently the Recreation Subsidy program is under comprehensive review as an initiative of the Social Development Strategy. The review will consider fee subsidies within the context of enhanced community accessibility and consideration will be given to program expansion for low income residents, increasing opportunities for participation, better communication about the program, alternate administration and technology improvements.

Youth recreation services are provided through a network of area and youth development coordinators (based at local community centres) and partnerships with youth-serving community organizations. The youth development coordinators, in partnership with the local community association, plan a broad range of youth recreation and activity opportunities for the local area. Several locations have created dedicated youth spaces. At five sites, Nightshift, a free Friday night drop in, is offered that includes activities and gym time. Pre-teen Hangout, is a similar program for pre-teens. Several city facilities have created dedicated youth spaces for youth programming. The media lab at the Richmond Cultural Centre offers the Richmond Youth Media Program.

Local youth programming also supports positive development through leadership development and volunteer opportunities for youth. Several community centres have youth councils or leadership groups. The Roving Leaders program is done city wide, on an outreach basis, to connect with vulnerable youth (which may include low income youth). Youth are mentored and guided through the program and may ultimately end up participating in more traditional youth programs.

The Roving Leaders program provides outreach to vulnerable youth, including low income youth. The focus is to connect and establish positive relations with unaffiliated youth (13 to 18). Youth are mentored and guided through the program with bridging of recreation and cultural activities and/or appropriate services. Youth may be referred to this program and service is individualized to the interests and needs of the youth.

Coquitlam: Get Connected, Get Active is the financial assistance program for recreation activities. Applicants may choose one of three options – 50 free drop-in admissions, 50% off 4 programs over a year or 2 free programs over one year. Each family member may choose the option that best meets their needs. Grade 5 Get Active, Grade 6 Stay program provides free access to recreation programs. In Grade 5, the cardholder has access to all drop-in activities during the school year and in Grade 6 the cardholder has 12 free admissions. The subsidy program is complemented by once a month free swimming and skating sessions, sponsored by a credit union.

Coquitlam offers a Youth Leadership Committee, at two sites. It is no cost and provides bi-weekly meetings for leadership development and volunteer opportunities at community events.

Township of Langley – financial assistance is available through an application process available at local community centres. Financial assistance is in the form of reduced admission or program fees. In addition to financial assistance, reduced admission community swims and swim and gym activities are offered weekly throughout the year. Information about Kidsport and Jumpstart programs is available in the Leisure guide. At one community centre, a weekly youth

lounge drop in and preteen hangout program is offered. A monthly Just Boys and Just Girls session is offered at the same centre for a nominal fee.

Delta: The Leisure Access Assistance Program access to drop-in land and aquatic fitness classes, weight room sessions, public swims, open gyms and public skating. The applications to the program are administered through a central location. Information about Kidsport and Jumpstart is available on the website and in the Leisure Guide. In addition Delta has two memorial funds that provide complete or partial funding for swimming lessons (ages 6 months-12) and introductory recreation programs (ages 6-18) for children. In addition to financial subsidy, Delta has Grade 5 and 6 free Admission Passes for public skate, swim or open gym sessions and for Grade 7 students, a free 10-Admission Pass card. Children's Fitness Tax Credit information is also available.

New Westminster: New Westminster has an income assistance program that provides low income residents with a 50% discount on most programs offered in the Active Living Guide throughout the year. The program is administered by Fraserside Community Services on behalf of the City.

For youth, there is a centrally located youth centre (co-located with Seniors Century House). This youth centre includes a computer lab, full kitchen, multipurpose room for sports and special events, laundry and shower facilities, and a youth lounge. Seniors access the space during the day, and youth have after school/evening access. The Youth Centre is open daily and has a \$15.00 annual membership. An exercise room is on site with weight and cardio equipment. There is a \$1.00 drop in fee or \$10.00 monthly fee for use of this room. Acting as a hub, there are also youth programs in four neighbourhoods throughout New Westminster. Leadership opportunities are offered through the Youth Centre Committee and other committees organized around interests (music, arts, advisory, etc).

2. Community Grants

Vancouver – The grant program is design to strengthen communities and is a comprehensive program with grants provided in 15 areas of funding. In relation to child poverty, the following grant areas are relevant: social innovation, direct social service grants, small capital projects, childcare, neighbourhood organizations (mainly neighbourhood houses), organizational capacity and vantage point bursaries (access to workshops for staff/board members on non-profits).

Surrey: The grant program in Surrey includes the areas of community promotion, cultural and recreational, environment and taxes. The grants are in two categories – on-going from year to year and one time only. A global grant budget is established for each year.

Burnaby: Community grants in Burnaby support volunteer assistance groups including (non-profit community groups) as well as cultural and athletic organizations. Non-profit groups may apply for start-up funding towards overhead but not for salaries or wages.

Community grants falls within a larger program, "Community Capacity Building and Support". This program is based on citizen participation and includes:

- Citizen Plaza Pavers - a community project that celebrates the City and raises funds to benefit Burnaby based charities and non-profits
- Burnaby Interagency Council – for networking and partnership opportunities
- Festivals Burnaby – grants to support neighbourhood and City wide events
- Community Resource Centres – four community resource centres owned by City and other properties provide affordable office space/programming space for non-profits (lease grant to offset lease costs)
- Free meeting space – free or low cost meeting space in municipal facilities for non-profit groups
- Community Benefit Bonus Policy – develops community amenity space including non-profit office space, childcare centres and affordable housing in Burnaby's four town centres.

- Community Schools – cost of the coordinator (at each of seven schools) is shared with school district and municipality
- Establishing Business Associations

Richmond: The goals for the community grant program clearly state the intention to assist Council with achieving term goals and adopted strategies, to improve quality of life, assist Richmond based community groups to provide programs to residents and build community and organizational capacity. City grants fund in the areas of arts and culture, child care, health, social and safety and parks, recreation and community events. Each grant area has its own criteria and allocation budget. One and three year grants are awarded. An annual cost of living increase is also factored into the community grants awarded.

Coquitlam: The annual grant program supports community groups and non-profits in the areas of arts, culture and heritage, sports and community. The grant program will fund events, programs, equipment, public art and capital expenditures. A current initiative included in the grant program is Spirit 125 related to the City's upcoming 125th. Eligible expenses include staff/volunteer training, program supplies, marketing and special event costs. On-going operating expenses are ineligible. In addition to the formal community grant program, the City of Coquitlam provides an annual service grant of \$25,000 to Share Family and Community Services, an organization that provides most of the poverty-related services in Coquitlam.

Township of Langley: The annual grant program consists of grants for events and projects and capital improvements (for community halls only). The grants for events and projects have four categories – general, dry grad, major festival grant, scholarship (for each secondary school) and “Nothing without Effort” grant. The general grant is for special events and projects that benefit the Township and involve local residents, has a limit of \$2,500 and funds must not be used for administrative salaries. “Nothing without Effort” is a community matching grant for which a poverty related project could possibly be eligible. The Township will match up to \$5,000 per community (7) for a project that is planned, initiated, and implemented by community members in partnership with the Township. The funds raised by the group in initiating the project may include cash as well as in-kind volunteer labour, donated materials or professional services.

Delta: There is no formal community grant program in Delta. However there are annual service agreements with two Delta community agencies relevant to this report. One agency provides poverty related supports and another provides family resources centres and social/recreation club programs for children and youth. The service agreement for the former includes a grant of \$29,000 and municipal property tax exemption amount. The service agreement for the latter includes a grant for \$113,000 and the municipal property tax exemption amount. This agency also has a license renewal (5-year term) for access to the building where their programs are held.

There is a Facility Rental Fee Grant up to \$1000 that community groups providing an event of benefit to Delta and its residents may access. The grant maybe used for the facility fee or showstage rental. Dry Grads are included in this grant and may receive a grant up to \$1200.

New Westminster: The community grant program has eight funding areas. Those most relevant to children and youth are community grants, childcare and city partnership grants. Community grants support both new and established organizations with start-up or projects on a one-time basis. Eligible activities include special programs, events, community workshops, seed funds for new initiatives and specialized equipment but grant must not be used for operating costs. Child care grants assist licensed, non-profit child care operators with capital expenditures. City partnership grants are designed specifically to assist non-profit, incorporated organizations with the delivery of major services to the community. Non-profit organization involved in poverty reduction and poverty alleviation related activities would be eligible. The focus of the funding is community livability, and social equity, vibrant economy, arts and culture and environmental leadership. Funding is available for one to three years and allows for operating grants.

3. Housing

Vancouver: In the "Healthy City for All" strategy the goal for housing is to have a range of affordable housing choices available for all Vancouver residents. The strategy has housing targets that include 2,900 supportive housing (for specific populations including women and youth), 5,000 new social housing units and 5,000 new units of secured market rental by 2021. Strategies include leveraging City assets to build more affordable housing, and target shelters and supportive and social housing to underserved neighbourhoods. In July 2013 a Chief Housing Officer was appointed by Council to oversee the affordable housing strategy. In July 2014 The Affordable Housing Agency (city owned housing authority) was formed. The goal of the agency is to expedite affordable housing with a focus on incremental non market/ social housing (leveraging city land and partners land), renewal and increased capacity and sustained affordability of aging public social housing stock and private market rental stock, rezoning for new mixed income affordable housing with an emphasis on 2-3 bedroom family housing.

Market rental housing will likely not be affordable for low income families. Within the housing and homelessness strategy, protecting existing supply of affordable rental housing and secondary suites in single family areas will support purpose build rental and provide accommodation for low to moderate income families are included. Specifically related to children and families, in December, 2013 Council appointed the YWCA Metro Vancouver as a lease holder for 31 units of non-market rental housing as part of the New Fire Hall No. 5 building. Low to moderate-income single mothers and their children will be housed in 2 and 3 bedroom units.

In support of the above, Vancouver owns market rental housing and vacancies are posted on the website, along with a database of non-market rental and co-op housing inventory available on line to assist with locating subsidized housing. There is also information available for rental properties with health and safety issues. The City of Vancouver also operates a rent bank. The rent bank aims to increase housing stability by preventing evictions or loss of essential services. One-time interest free loans are available to low income people in temporary financial crisis.

Surrey: The Social Plan for Surrey identified affordable housing and homelessness as a critical component of a healthy community. Implementing the Master Plan for Housing the Homeless is a priority for 2015 to 2017. The Master Plan for Housing the Homelessness has identified women with children and youth among the group of at-risk populations. Council allocated \$9 million+ from the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to seed the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Fund. The fund is to support made in Surrey solutions to homelessness and housing. The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society was established by Council to oversee the management and growth of the fund and to make recommendations for awarding grants. Approximately \$200,000 to \$240,000 in grants are awarded annually.

Housing is also included in the Poverty Reduction Plan that was approved by Surrey Council. The biannual 2012-2014 report on the Social Plan, included a report on the Housing First Landlord Project which facilitates a connection between private landlords and the health and services agencies that support people who are chronically or episodically homeless. The Poverty Reduction Coalition hosted a breakfast session with landlords to increase their awareness and understanding of the issue homelessness and experience of the service providers. This event was sponsored by The Surrey Board of Trade.

Burnaby: Affordable and suitable housing is identified in the Social Sustainability Strategy as foundation strategy for achieving economic security. Actions included developing and clarifying criteria for use of the Housing Fund to fill gaps in the city's housing continuum, continue to lease City-owned properties for non-market and supportive housing which is affordable for low income households and advocate the seniors levels of government for programs and policies that reflect a full continuum of housing options and make it easier for municipalities to support affordable and suitable housing.

Previous to the Social Sustainability Strategy Burnaby had adopted policies such as fast-track approvals process, permit fees deferral for non-market housing, grants from the Housing Fund, reduced parking standards, requirement that 20% of units in newly developing community of publicly owned land be affordable.

The Community Benefit Bonus Policy (BBP) is a tool for securing community amenities through development that is occurring in Burnaby's four town centres. This policy has been applied for security affordable/special needs housing. Under this program 6 units of affordable housing, 2-bedroom were secured for families and a nine-unit second stage transition house for women and children fleeing violence (maximum stay 18 months) Housing Fund disbursements have also been made to advance affordable housing within Burnaby.

Richmond: Expanding housing options is included in the social planning strategy as a means for social equity and includes development of a shelter for women and children and using the Affordable Housing Reserve for land acquisitions that will facilitate provision of subsidized housing. The Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted by Council in 2007. The strategy identified 5 policy areas for responding to the need for affordable housing - identified priority housing types and annual targets for each priority, regulatory tools to facilitate the creation of affordable housing, preservation and maintenance of existing rental housing stock, incentives, building community capacity and advocacy, the position of Affordable Housing Coordinator and maintains a housing reserve fund.

Under the affordable housing strategy, the following has been secured for families and children. Subsidized rental – 15 units to support lone-parent families, with access to child care; Affordable rental housing – 16 3 and 4 bedroom units for women and children will be included in Storeys development; and low end market rental units 238 low end market rental units and an additional 70,857 square feet of floor space in large phased developments which equates to approximately 80-130 units.

Coquitlam: An Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted in 2007 and an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund in 2008. The Affordable Housing Strategy is currently being reviewed. The goal is to work with partners from the non-profit, private and public sectors to ensure a wide variety of housing types, sizes, tenures and prices to meet future housing needs. A draft Housing Affordability Strategy has been developed for discussion purposes.

New Westminster: An Affordable Housing Strategy was prepared in 2010 that includes actions in support of developing affordable, non-market and rental housing. A Tenant Displacement Policy was adopted in 2011 which includes procedures for dealing with displaced tenants. In 2013 a Secure Market Rental Housing policy was adopted that includes strategies and actions aimed at retaining and renewing and enhancing the supply of market rental housing. There is a non-profit rental (100 units)/market rental (80 units) development with Onni Development in progress.

To support the above initiatives, an Affordable Housing Reserve Fund has been established which receives 30% of density bonus revenues. An Inter-Departmental Affordable Housing Review Committee was established to review affordable housing proposals for purposes of coordination, expediting approvals and fast tracking approvals. A Secondary Suite Readiness Guide to assist homeowners with legalizing a suite or building a new one.

4. Food Security

Vancouver: A goal in the Health City Strategy is "Feeding Ourselves Well" and a target for food security includes increasing city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% over 2010 levels by 2020. Food assets include community gardens and orchards, community kitchens, community produce stands, etc. The Vancouver Food Strategy has five goals, one being to improve access to health, affordable and cultural diverse foods for all residents. The Vancouver Food Policy Council, provides input to Council regarding the development of food security policies and assists the City with community engagement. The Council also works cooperatively with other agencies to initiate and develop relevant projects.

The community grant program includes sustainable food system grants to non-profits. The focus of the grant program is to support projects that increase access to food, promote inclusion and participation or build sustainable food systems. The Park Board has developed a Local Food Assets Task Force that makes policy recommendations for expanding food assets within Vancouver parks and recreation systems. Neighbourhood food networks are coalitions of citizens, organizations and agencies that act on food security policies - community based food programs that include food

building, education and awareness, engagement opportunities. Asset maps identify community gardens, food programs, kitchen spaces, food stores (particularly for those at risk of food security). Examples of work by the neighbourhood food networks include mobile pocket markets and community food markets that provide fresh food in “food deserts” or lower income areas of the city where access to health, and affordable food is limited., meals programs and bulk buying and community kitchens and food skills training.

Surrey: In the Surrey Sustainability Charter, food and farming is identified as an economic pillar. Recent work has focussed on farming and agriculture business but the City has four established and one proposed community gardens in Surrey parks, with an invitation on its website to community groups to start new ones.

Burnaby: Within the Social Sustainability Strategy, meeting basic needs is the first priority. Updating and relaunching the Healthy Community Initiative is identified as an action as well as working with multiple sectors of the community to develop community gardening and development of a food strategy.

Currently Burnaby has a network of community gardens administered by several non-profit organizations. The information about the location, number of plots, etc is available on the City website. A representative of the City of Burnaby sits on the Burnaby Food First, a group of individuals and community organizations working on food Issues. The City of Burnaby partners The City is also a partner in the bi-annual Empty Bowls Fundraising Gala, which raises money to feed hungry people in Burnaby through a variety of community programs. New community spaces owned by the City include kitchens for programming.

Richmond: Food security is identified in the Building Our Social Future social plan. Among the proposed actions is encouraging development of community gardens and farmers markets along with working with community partners to facilitate food security initiatives. In another section of the plan that focuses on social equity and inclusion, food initiatives such as community gardens and community meals, are identified as community initiatives that promote independence and reduce the cost of living for low income households.

In Richmond there are nine community gardens throughout Richmond. Developed on City properties, the City contributes to on-going development, maintenance and supplies for the sites. The Richmond Food Security Society administers the community gardens. Development of a Food Charter is on-going, led by Richmond Food Security Society. Representatives of City of Richmond, Vancouver Coastal Health and other community partners are involved in this project.

In the remainder of the study municipalities, food security initiatives are less formalized and/or led by local non-profits or community groups. Coquitlam and the Township of Langley have demonstration gardens, in Langley it is a partnership with Langley Environment Partners (LEPS). LEPS also runs community gardens. On the Corporation of Delta website information is posted about local community gardens operated by a local groups. Delta also has a service agreement with Earthwise Society to manage a community garden of eight plots located in a Delta park. The City of New Westminster has a partnership with the New Westminster Community Gardening Society for community gardens located in two parks.

5. Childcare

Vancouver: “A Good Start and a Healthy Childhood” is the first goal in the Healthy City Strategy. In achieving this goal, the City of Vancouver has comprehensive childcare and child development strategies. Childcare is recognized as a public amenity and partnership with non-profit organizations to deliver quality, affordable and accessible childcare. The City role includes facilitating the development of infrastructure to support integrated childcare services, including both licensed group care and other family support services, use of financial tools to leverage facilities and land and offset some operation costs. Within the community grant program there are separate funding streams for childcare enhancement, childcare program development, childcare program stabilization, childcare research, policy development and innovation and school-age care expansion projects.

The Joint Childcare Council, made up of City, Park Board and School District (who work together to provide childcare) along with business and academic institutions have a target of 500 new childcare spaces in Vancouver over 3 years.

Burnaby: The City of Burnaby has a Child Care Policy, since 1993, that outlines a commitment to the critical social and economic role quality childcare has in community well-being. The policy includes municipal mechanisms (planning rezoning, etc) for improving availability, access and affordability. The policy also established the Child Care Resources Group as an advisory body to the Community Issues and Social Planning Committee of Council and also sets out policy for the City of Burnaby, as an employer in relation to personnel practises and options for employees in meeting their childcare needs.

Through the Community Benefit Bonus Policy, five city-owned childcare facilities (143 spaces), have been created. Each centre is leased on a rent free basis to non-profit child care providers for quality reasonably-priced child care. In 2014 The Lease Grant Guidelines Agreement was signed with the school district that will create up to 12 new childcare centre (potentially 500-600 new spaces).

Richmond: In the social plan childcare infrastructure is acknowledged as important to the health and wellbeing of children and families. A key action is supporting the establishment of high quality and safe childcare. In a commitment to childcare document the City outlines a comprehensive child care development policy that includes: child care development advisory committee to advise council on quality, affordable and accessible childcare; the child care statutory reserve fund for child care facility development; city-owned child care facilities that are leased to non-profit childcare providers at a nominal rate; within the city grant program, two grant streams - child care capital grant and child care professional and program development grants available to non-profit child care providers; and regular childcare needs assessments for planning. The City also has a full time Child Care Coordinator to manage City childcare initiatives.

Currently city owned facilities offer 195 licensed childcare spaces, five additional child care facilities have been negotiated which will increase the inventory by 200 and the number of City-owned facilities to nine. In addition, the City of Richmond endorsed the Richmond Children's Charter, developed by Richmond Children First.

New Westminster: The City of New Westminister prepared a child care needs assessment in 2007, and a strategy in 2008, which assisted in creating over 500 licensed child care spaces. In 2014 a new needs assessment was completed that has identified community needs for affordable child care (particularly infant/toddler), lack of licenses spaces, limited availability of flexible, occasional and part-time care, and inability of child care subsidy and special needs supplement to bridge the affordability gap between a parent's ability to pay and the actual cost of child care.

The City of New Westminister has a number of childcare initiatives. Child Care Protocol between the city and school district to provide child care together. The Civic Child Care Grant Program and Reserve Fund, with the former providing \$147,898 to non-profit childcare providers since inception in 2011. The development of the Queensborough Child Education Hub, with 25 spaces for childcare is the first of four planned hubs. The City has endorsed the New Westminister Children's Charter and the Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning (\$10/day Childcare).

6. Health

Burnaby: Burnaby Youth Services developed in 1974 was intended to serve as an alternative to youth court. This service provides short term guidance and counselling for youth and their parents, with a view to preventing future criminal activity. The City of Burnaby is also a partner in the Youth Hub, a multi-sectoral collaborative, integrated youth resource that provides a youth health clinic, alternate school and youth centre.

Richmond: The Garrett Wellness Centre is a community health partnership. It is owned by the City of Richmond and operated by Vancouver Coast Health. The purpose of the centre is to promote independence and empower people to

improve or maintain health status through increased awareness and access to health promotion services. Children, youth and family programs are included. The centre acts as a hub for community wellness.

Township of Langley: Jointly operated by the City and Township of Langley, provides counselling and intervention for children and youth up to age 17 to prevent anti-social behaviour and conflict with the law.

7. Income subsidies

There were no cities or municipalities that had income subsidies for low income families. The City of Vancouver provides financial aid through a Rent Bank Program which provides one-time, interest-free loans to low income people in temporary financial crisis. The City of New Westminster implemented a Living Wage Bylaw in 2011 which ensures that municipal staff, as well as contracted workers, are paid enough to meet basic, locally calculated living expenses.

Many of the study municipalities however, provide low cost, no cost information in the form of brochures and information on websites. Many of the study municipalities however, provide low cost, no cost information in the form of brochures and information on websites.

- The City of Surrey in particular, through the information services of the Surrey Library have a comprehensive list of such brochures in the areas of Education/ESL/Citizenship, Employment and Income, Food and Transportation, Health Services, Housing, Household Goods, Legal Services, Activities in the Community, Activities in the Library. This information is also available on line.
- The City of Richmond provides a seasonal low cost no cost brochure both in hard copy and on line. In addition the Library in partnership with Volunteer Richmond Information Services maintains an on-line Low Income Resource Directory.
- City of Coquitlam has the low cost recreation activities posted on its website.
- City of New Westminster has an Affordable Active Living brochures which lists free and low-cost parks, culture and recreational programs. The “Helping Hand” brochure that covers broad social services and “Survival Guide” includes drop in and food services.

8. Transit

There were no transit/transportation services found that were directed towards low income families. The planning for transit is done at the Metro Vancouver level and the Mayor’s Council prepared a transit plan that will be decided by plebiscite. As low income people are higher users of public transit, the outcome of the plebiscite will have an impact on low income families and their access to transit.

Several of the study municipalities have identified active transportation as a priority thorough their social plans or other documents. Safe pedestrian and bicycle lanes and paths provide more options for low income families to get about in their communities.

ⁱ Community Poverty Reduction Pilot Projects 2014 Progress Report, page ii

ⁱⁱ The Impact of Poverty on the Health of Children and Youth, Rachel Singer, April 2003, page 2

ⁱⁱⁱ National Household Survey, Community Profiles 2011

^{iv} 2014 Child Poverty Report Card, British Columbia, First Call Coalition, BC Child Poverty in Maps

^v <http://www.doonething.org/quotes/children-quotes.htm>

^{vi} Creating Shared Prosperity: Cities that Lead, Succeed, Vibrant Communities Canada, 2014, page 5