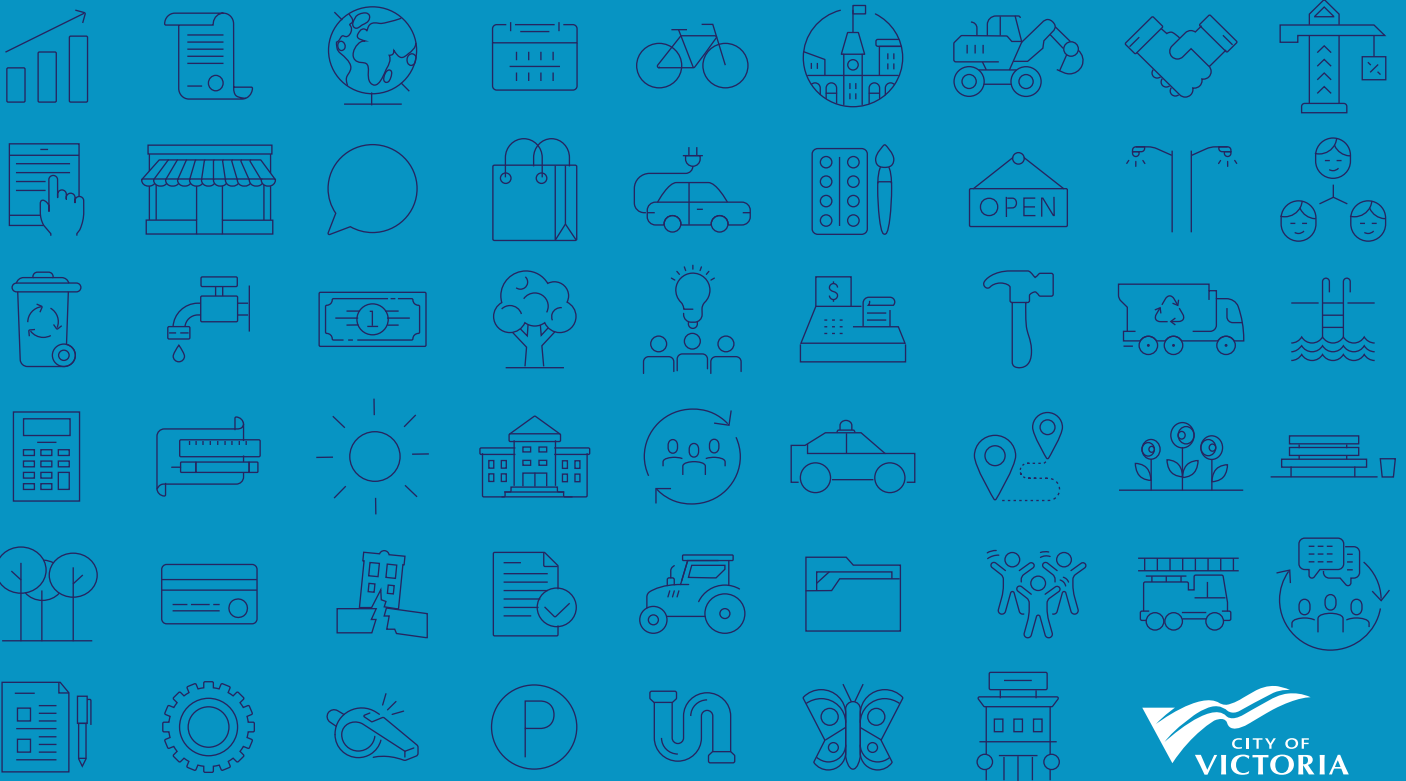


2024

ATTACHMENT C

# Budget Community Conversation Series Notes



**Budget Community Conversation #1: Silver Threads Service**  
**Monday, September 11, 2023, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.**  
**Silver Threads Service, 1911 Quadra Street**  
**(10 Participants)**

**ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas (30:00)**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, when applicable.

**NEW DEVELOPMENT / HOUSING**

- Make life easier on builders, still include parking
- Avoid tacky boxy look for new construction
- Housing
- Remove profit motive from housing
- More supportive housing for the unhoused

**Comments:**

- MURBS model for housing like what was used in 70's and 80's for rich people to invest in and to increase the rental supply.
- Does Victoria have any input on the rental cap?
- I see the City's just approved a unit for the service sector... why only for the service sector?
- Council houses ... for a housing solution
- Co-op housing... apparently, it's been very successful in Ontario for seniors.
- New need more affordable housing for the unhoused.
- Designated senior housing i.e., Amica frees up housing
- Roof-top solar gardens

**SIDEWALKS**

- Sidewalks wider, clear of growth and not slanted
- Level sidewalks

**Comments:**

- Growth over the sidewalks, from the yards, cuts down on sidewalk space.
- When you call to tell them vegetation is in the way of sidewalks... who comes to fix that?

## WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

- Safer parks and walking trails
- Walkable neighborhoods with amenities

### Comments:

- With respect to walkability in North Park... I also mean safety ... particularly as it relates to motor vehicles speeding in front of you at a crosswalk.
- The crosswalk was long enough... it was just arrogant drivers.
- For accessibility, I have a couple of blind friends... is that being worked on?
- Make Government Street nicer and more walkable

## SAFETY

- Safer parks and walking trails
- Mental health and addiction
- Mental health coordinators
- Loitering safety concern in parks
- Clear tenting

### Comments:

- I feel unsafe in almost all parks at this particular time. I definitely used to feel safe... but now I don't visit parks, in and around North Park because it doesn't feel safe.
- Are the bylaws being enforced, I am still seeing a lot of tents?'
- Obviously we need to have some understanding of who is tenting... not everyone is a drug dealer.
- Is there a mechanism for people to understand who exactly is living in the parks?
- You don't want to jump to conclusions that all unhoused are dangerous.
- Don't make eye contact, don't engage with respect to safety... I had an incident on Cook Street where someone wanted to fight me.
- There was a stick guy, a screamer, who used terrible language, and he came right up even with me, and he said mornin' .... But it's the random attacks which we here about that is concerning.
- When we're talking about safety... I think it goes beyond whether people are sheltering, and bleeds over into when people are loitering from a safety perspective.

## WORLD-CLASS CITY, SMALL TOWN CHARM

- Revitalize downtown with new ideas... boutique village?
- Clear tenting

### Comments:

- For any type of budget, you have to be realistic and pragmatic ... Based on that... See notes.... **See provided notes (attachment 1 and 2).**

## **CLEAN STREETS**

- Clean streets
- Seagull droppings
- Smell (downtown core)

### **Comments:**

- I said clean streets, because I walk in North Park and I see lots of refuse on the streets from homelessness... often times on the sidewalk itself
- With respect to street cleanliness, often times the smell closer to the downtown core smells like a urinal. Douglas in the main stretch, from the Bay Centre, right down to Yates, and then down to Broad... has a particular bad smell.
- Also, there is a tremendous amount of bird droppings.

## **COMMUNICATION AND GOVERNANCE**

- Mental health coordinators
- Lower parking fees

### **Comments:**

- Obviously we need to have some understanding of who is tenting... not everyone is a drug dealer.
- Is there a mechanism for people to understand who exactly is living in the parks?
- The 1-hour free parking... when I went for a doctor's appointment... I didn't know if I could stay longer and pay?... you won't get towed away either will you?
- Is BC Housing involved with mental health and addiction?
- mental health issues, and it's hard to understand which organization is best served to help?
- Would be helpful to have a one stop shop for mental health services.
- Merge services like police and fire

## **REFRESH DOWNTOWN**

- Clean streets
- Seagull droppings
- Smell (downtown core)
- Revitalize downtown with new ideas... boutique village?

### **Comments:**

- Make Government Street nicer and more walkable
- I said clean streets, because I walk in North Park and I see lots of refuse on the streets from homelessness... often times on the sidewalk itself
- With respect to street cleanliness, often times the smell closer to the downtown core smells like a urinal. Douglas in the main stretch, from the Bay Centre, right down to Yates, and then down to Broad... has a particular bad smell.

- Also, there is a tremendous amount of bird droppings.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Light rail commuter train
- Partner with BC transit to free up parking
- Barriers to driving

### **Comments:**

- Maybe you can partner with BC Transit for special events to offer free transportation... that will cut down on the mess of parking.
- Driving barriers set up by Engineering Department.
- Light rail commuter train
- Add View Street bike lane
- Move Pandora bike lane to the other side of the street

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Revitalize downtown with new ideas... boutique village?

### **Comments:**

- Make Government Street nicer and more walkable

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

- Funding for Silver Threads service, exemption for property tax (grant in lieu)
- Crystal pool and library (remain central for walkability)

### **Comments:**

- Long term plan for Silver Threads is to eventually exist in the new Crystal Pool facility... but in order to get us to that time, when the new facility is built, we need funding to bridge that gap.
- Two years ago, I joined Crystal Pool, and what's happening is at 11 am the showers are lukewarm because the boilers are 50 years old.... I am hoping they get new boilers when they build the new facility.
- Crystal Pool is very nice as it is, but maybe spending a smaller amount of money in the meantime, could get us over until we build a new one.

**12:35 p.m.     ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council’s 8 Priorities (20:00)**

**Activity Results:**

**Most important:** Community Well-Being and Safety (3), Housing (2), Transportation (2), Economic Health and Community Vitality (2), Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (1)

**Second most important TIE:** Community Well-Being and Safety (3), Economic Health and Community Vitality (3), Housing (2), Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (2)

**Least important:** Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (6), Housing (2), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (1)



**Dialogue:**

- These all look important.
- Maybe the fact that there are no stickers on Reconciliation means that people are okay with how it's going.
- Centennial Square is a waste of time and money... is that really supposed to be a shower for the unhouse? No one is bringing their kids downtown.
- With respect to the arts and culture piece.... The reason it's low is because it's sort of outside of the City's immediate purview.
- The one thing we hear a lot at Silver Threads is bike lanes... and it hasn't come up here.
- I thought there was no sense in complaining about bike lanes since it seems like they are here to stay.
- What do we have left to do on the bike lanes?
- Would the City consider licensing cyclists?

- Bikes are not supposed to be driven on sidewalks or crosswalks.... Someone should be policing this behavior.
- Two-way bike lanes on one-way streets are unsafe and don't make sense.
- Why do cyclists have priority at intersections when you're turning right... because then you are encouraging more idling.

**12:55 p.m.    WRAP UP (5:00)**

**Questions:**

- It appears to me that Victoria is landlocked... where are we going to get all this land?

**1p.m.** City team remains for any one-on-one discussions. Wrap up.

**Additional Comments:**

- Do timed off-leash dog areas... create a schedule to have a better park balance.
- Repurpose office buildings and cruise ships for housing... we need to be more out-of-the-box.
- The Mayor should ask the police to come and clear out Douglas and Pandora of homeless sheltering because the status quo gives the wrong idea to visitors... because of this there will be a decrease in tourism which will negatively impact Victoria's economy.
- The Mayor should take a salary cut.
- Here are some extra notes I took down. **(See attachment)**

**Tracy Ryan, CEO, Silver Threads Service, Submission:**

The City delivers community recreation programming in partnership with neighbourhood associations at seven community centres and three seniors centres.

Silver Threads Service (STS) is one of the three senior centres and the only one of the 11 that is not in a City-owned facility.

The City moved STS out of a City-owned facility in Centennial Square for the CRD Building. Currently, STS is the lease holder for a site at 1911 Quadra.

Since 2014, STS has received \$122,389 annually from the City of Victoria to cover the lease expenses. This has not increased.

As the organization is not the Building Owner, they pay approximately **\$25,000 annually back to City for property tax**. This makes leasing a community centre for under \$100K impossible.

**REQUEST:** Review of a grant in lieu or other solution is requested.



## Community Forum on the City Budget Process Meeting

11:30am – 1:00pm 11 September at Silver Threads

**Philosophy:** Community (City Hall) is family. Family is community.

**Aim:** Victoria as a world class city, but keep its small town charm (Bouchard Garden) → long term process → now to future → set up several objectives to achieve it

**2024 objectives:** prioritize council's priorities

### **Prioritize 2024 council's priorities based on the needs assessment**

1. Guiding principles of prioritizing
  - Family needs (basic short term 2024), e.g., what I must eat to keep me going
  - City Hall community needs (Future, long term ) e.g., what I like to eat
2. **Prioritize Economic Health & Community Vitality + Transportation**
  - A strong and vibrant economy will create the budget for the rest of the eight priorities.

### **Transportation**

- An LRT (Light-Rail Transit) providing frequent, reliable, and green energy transit in the downtown core

### **Economic Vitality**

- Create a safe, affordable environment for small, unique, one of a kind , high end business
- Designate Government St for pedestrian only street
- A one stop center to set up small business including legal and financial resources, mentorship & networking, as well as licensing and permits
- **Tap into the professional senior community as a volunteer resource for some City and community projects that would otherwise be carried out by a paid contractor (See below - Active Senior Participation)**
- Create a more accessible City Hall with a community bulletin board in the Centennial Square to communicate with residents and visitors
- Clean up Pandora St from Cook St to Quadra



## Active Senior Participation

Senior involvement in city leadership should be much more impactful. This is of high importance in the world stage. The United Nations has identified this to be a goal for all developed nations, and so there is plenty of justification for this to be a goal of your municipality.

One of the prominent initiatives set forward by United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals is Mainstreaming Ageing'.

The initiative's guidelines make clear the long- and short-term importance of including senior participation in policy making in the introduction,

"By 2050 about one in every four persons in the UNECE region will be over the age of 65. Population ageing affects almost all aspects of society. The transformative change required to adapt societies to the implications of population ageing and individual longevity cannot be achieved without a whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort."

Given the high demographic representation of seniors in our municipality, it's time to make active senior participation in our municipal governance not only a priority, but a reality.

Active senior participation can take many forms. A current example is: Leamington Municipal Seniors' Advisory Committee

<https://www.leamington.ca/en/municipal-services/seniors-advisory-committee.aspx#Purpose>

This is the UN website for the initiative: <https://unece.org/population/ageing/mainstreaming-ageing>

### Resources for active senior participation

**Mainstreaming Ageing by UNECE:** <https://unece.org/population/ageing/mainstreaming-ageing>

**Seniors' Advisory Committee:** <https://www.leamington.ca/en/municipal-services/seniors-advisory-committee.aspx#Purpose>

**Meaningful participation of older persons and civils society in policymaking by UNECE:** <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/WhctKKZGdHZDjwbSHmlTQtwMCNkbzNCrWhzDfqkKnRTjWQJMjXkBbCqFstnZFvjmFXtrTKB?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>



## Council's Priorities

City Council has identified **eight priorities** in their 2023-2026 Strategic Plan for investment.

### Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship

(e.g., create and lead bold climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and actions; reduce greenhouse gas emissions from new and existing buildings, transportation and waste; set and track reduction targets)

### Housing

(e.g., enable more market, non-market and rental housing; simplify City processes to accelerate housing development, affordable housing and mixed-use residential/commercial/community service developments; increase tenant protections, work with community partners to create innovative forms of interim housing in the region; explore land acquisition to achieve City housing goals)

### Transportation

(e.g., accelerate work to create complete, compact communities, continue to expand AAA bike and roll network including quick solutions to improve safety for all users; work with partners to accelerate rapid transit, more frequent transit and transit-oriented mixed-used development; install new amenities to improve the "moving experience" of pedestrians and all modes of transportation, explore future parking norms and opportunities)

### Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces

(e.g., begin major projects to support parks, recreation and public experiences such as a new Crystal Pool, revitalized Centennial Square, re-imagined Ship Point, new central library and a refreshed Royal Athletic Park; increase water access to Gorge and Inner Harbour; protect our urban forest, create more experiential public gathering spaces, invest in community and seniors' centres) and seniors' centres)

### Community Well-Being and Safety

(e.g., support a range of civilian, bylaw and policing crisis response and prevention services; beautify and enhance downtown and our urban villages; advance City policies to support accessibility, diversity and inclusion through a social justice lens; develop a community safety plan; support innovative solutions to reduce harm for housed and unhoused people living in neighbourhoods near shelters; work with partner agencies to create life opportunities for unhoused people)

### Economic Health and Community Vitality

(e.g., accelerate Victoria 3.0 economic action plan; support small business and visitor economy downtown; activate streets, patios and public spaces downtown; streamline permitting and business processes; investigate partnerships to generate City revenue to fund new services and amenities; expand supports for urban agriculture, gardening and food security initiatives; continue exploring governance reforms and citizen assembly process)

### Truth and Reconciliation

(e.g., implement the City's own 32 Calls to Action to Reconciliation and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action that are directed to governments; develop new ways to partner on economic development opportunities with the Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation; embrace an ongoing process to decolonize Victoria's culture and governance)

### Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment

(e.g., build the Victoria Arts and Innovation District to create more spaces for performance venues, rehearsal spaces, street activations and artists residences; support and invest in Create Victoria, the City's Arts and Culture Master Plan and the Victoria Music Strategy to support artistic, theatrical and music programming, murals, festivals and public art; enhance support and amenities for recreational, youth and professional supports)

YOUR CITY BUDGET.

**Tell us what matters most.**



root-top solar & gardens  
Senior housing  
ie Africa House  
repurpose unused office space

Light Rail!!  
move Pandora  
lane by street  
View St. Bike Lane

remove parking from waterfront

make a nicer Govt.  
street promenade  
is more of st. for walking

merge services fire, SAR like police.



## **Budget Conversation #2: Victoria Native Friendship Centre**

**Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 10-11:30 a.m.**

**Victoria Native Friendship Centre**

**231 Regina Street**

**(11 Participants)**

### **ACTIVITY #1**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, where applicable.

#### **INDIGENOUS**

- Help Songhees build/expand housing for band members (also Housing)
- Support funding for Indigenous Elder Health Liaisons (that check in/life skills)
- Indigenous elders and youth health and wellness – food hampers, wellness packages created by indigenous community
- Truth and Reconciliation – more involvement as an Indigenous person “ask us”
- Youth housing for Indigenous people with cultural needs met (gathering space/food support). (also Housing)
- \_\_\_\_\_ included in the conversation. Metis \_\_\_\_\_ are usually forgotten in the “First Nation” conversation whether it be at local level or other government.

Comments:

- Support for Indigenous-led drop-in space downtown

#### **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

- To have more input as a first nations

#### **SAFETY AND WELL-BEING**

- Safe walks home from bars
- Stopping Police sweeps of encampments
- Need more policing in Downtown area regarding the drugs/alcohol use on street and around children.
- How do we bring back the city our children grew up in? Will our children today ever know what it is like to feel safe and enjoy being a child here in this new reality? Enjoy downtown or going to a park or walking to school?
- The city starting an advertising initiative to “de-stigmatize” and de-criminalize the unhoused.
- Need to find a way for the city to help homeless so we can do away with camping in City Parks. People don't feel safe using our parks.
- How can you help seniors feel safe downtown anymore? Our residents should not have to step around people using or passed out on our downtown sidewalks.
- Develop Street Patrols – non-violent presence in neighbourhoods.
- CRD - More clean ups on streets and back alleys.

- Organizing green spaces in neighbourhoods for special gathering, storytelling and free activities
- Speak up to Racism!
- Detox/Incarceration

Comments:

- Safety goes both ways, not just people walking down the street, but it is often not safe to live on the street.
- There is a senior's building in Vic West which is right near the park where encampments have sprung up. This is causing stress among the seniors as this park has a short cut to their grocery store – they don't feel safe in their neighborhoods.
- Substances are so much more dangerous, our people are so unsafe on their own territories – abstinence is a colonial concept (also Youth/Harm Reduction/Indigenous)

## HOUSING

- Housing for low income
- Low-income housing
- Youth Housing
- More support for abused/domestic violence survivors with transition housing
- Help Songhees build and expand housing for their band members (also indigenous)
- Youth Housing for Indigenous peoples with cultural needs met (gathering space, food support)
- Housing is or can be difficult for single senior women. Often, they took care of children and have no CPP/pensions and even with supplement, they find it hard to find or get housing they can afford.
- Affordable family housing in **safe** neighbourhoods
- Camping/shelter sites for unhoused to live in
- Help with funding for housing
- Housing seems to be the high priority in BC and cost is way too high for poverty level families living on social assistance.
- Supportive housing for folks to enter into after detox/treatment.
- Temporary pop-up Habitat dwellings
- With the hotel made into housing for unhoused, can the parking lot be used for **storage**?
- Housing for Indigenous people with cultural needs
- Second stage housing for folks to enter into after detox/treatment
- Cost of housing, needs to be more affordable

Comments:

- facing homelessness due to eviction – went everywhere but there is no emergency housing UNTIL you are homeless.
- We need some type of support for in between – it wears a person down doing all the things needed to secure housing
- It is a chicken and egg scenario – you can't access funding until you have a place/you can't get a place without funding.



## **SHELTERING**

- Campsites for houseless folks to live in.
- Homeless having to move from one site to another – losing their possessions and rebuilding tent city at a new location.
- Removal of personal belongings – increased waste when Bylaw is removing and throwing tents in the garbage.
- Where do the homeless go?
- Have Bylaw take extensive training regarding colonialism, trauma, informed care and understanding poverty politics and reconsider ways regarding removal of folks' belongings (1 of 2)  
Disrupt the cycle that non-profits/unhoused and Bylaw have entered into. Outreach support folks (with their limited funding) with basic needs. Folks struggle, are unwell, etc. and miss deadlines for taking tents/encampments down, they lose everything and the cycle starts again (2 of 2)
- Bylaw staff decide what belongings to keep and what to throw away
- Taking care of homeless
- Staff for encampment sites to provide community liaison and health/wellness supplies
- Funding for tiny town
- Family Shelter spaces (x 2 notations)
- Homeless persons losing tons of items. Bylaw confiscating – where are these tons of items going? Landfill?!
- More drop-ins for homeless

### **Comments:**

- Essentially the City is throwing away federal funding when Bylaw confiscates belongings.
- What about the waste? Environmental impact? Zero Waste Policy?
- It is inhumane.
- These are fellow humans – it is our responsibility to look after these people.
- They shouldn't have taken those containers down – they should build them higher and more of them.
- Why are we closing tiny town? What happens to those people?

## **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

- More schooling for young adults with children

### **Comments:**

- I like the movement in the 70's with pop-up universities with volunteer teachers and help figuring out where they want to go.

## **DIFFERENTLY ABLED**

- Free bus passes for disabled and Elders – not only for those with physical disabilities, but people with PTSD, paying for transportation is challenging.

## **CLIMATE ACTION/ENVIRONMENT**

- Better recycling system in the city!
- Soft plastic recycling pick-up
- Ocean cleaning and eliminate greenhouse gas emissions, Gorge and rivers
- We like to promote electric cars and bikes. What about more free charging centers?

### **Comments:**

- What is the point of the city encouraging though we aren't making any money on recycling?

## **YOUTH**

- Youth aging out of care
- Youth support around drug abuse (sheltering)
- More support around children in care
- Youth times at safe injection and inhalation sites
- Youth services not just downtown
- Youth app re: services

### **Comments:**

- Vancouver has apps for Youth, telling them where everything is.
- Keep youth out of the core.
- The street community is a community so many youth are drawn to it since that is lacking in their own lives.
- Substances our youth are using are so much more dangerous than they used to be – landing youth on the street. Our people are so unsafe on their own territories.
- Abstinence is a colonial concept.
- Would like to see awareness/harm reduction ads at high schools (or sooner).
- Better communication around the resources that **are** available – there aren't even signs around locations i.e., YES (Youth Empowerment Society) and the other one that is in a church – no signs identifying it.

## **COUNSELLING/ MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION**

- More support for survivors
- Mental Health Facilities with access to everyone
- Treatment Centres with Care Facilities
- More Mental Health/Drug Addiction Resources

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Free Downtown shuttle
- More slow signs around school and playgrounds or in back alleys – speed is the factor!
- Bike lanes – More driver education
- Free transport for youth and elders
- Need more transit service to reduce car traffic
- More car-free zones
- Cyclist education and licensing
- Rapid Transit!!!! – sky train



- Protected bike lanes – more with concrete barriers scary to get on the Goose

#### Comments:

- Run a shuttle up and down Douglas or Blanshard so people can avoid the ‘unpleasant’ areas and don’t have to park.
- Many more car-free zones in the downtown and around. I am anti-car, seeing most of downtown car free would make me feel safe and change the feel of the city.  
RESPONSE to comment: Thank you for mentioning that, as I avoid downtown, that would change the dynamic
- More cyclist and driver education, as a driver I don’t know where to go

### **ECONOMIC HEALTH**

- Childcare
- More childcare for families
- Developing new micro-loans for cottage industry in marginalized populations as with mentoring and training opportunities.

### **FOOD SECURITY**

- More community gardens!! More land to grow food to share
- Clean and safe land to grow medicines
- Food support deposit and withdrawal
- More community gardens – donate extra food to food pantries/banks

### **PARKS**

- Dog friendly parks
- Need a new pool for Quadra area

### **FACILITIES**

- Bathrooms/toilet on Pandora
- Recreation venues need to be affordable for everyone
- Park bathrooms need to be cleaned more due to drug use – especially at kiddie parks, bike, etc. Safety!
- Support for Indigenous-led drop-in space in the downtown core, for Indigenous street family. A space that would provide safe and low barrier access: cultural healing, basic needs, housing and health referrals and advocacy, etc.

### **ARTS AND CULTURE**

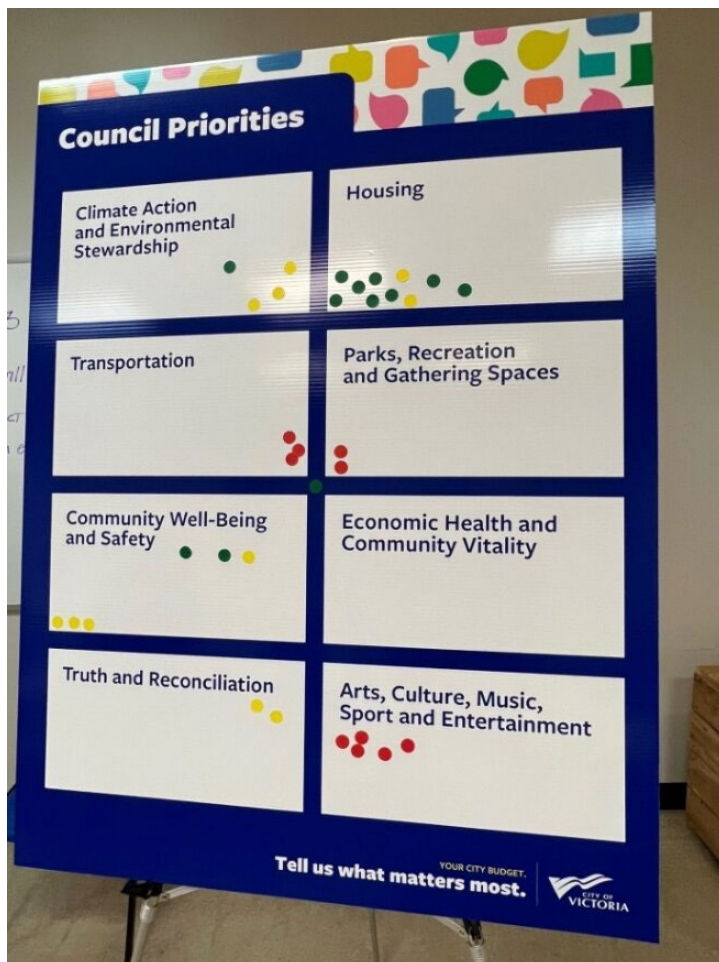
- Affordable cost for events for families

## **ACTIVITY #2: Ranking of Council's 8 Priorities**

### **Results:**

- **Most important:** Housing (8), Community Well-Being and Safety (2), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (1),
- **Second most important:** Community Well-Being and Safety (4), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (3) Housing (2) Truth and Reconciliation (2)
- **Least Important:** Arts, Culture, Music, Sports and Entertainment (5), Transportation (3), Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (2))

**Note:** An Elder placed his green sticky dot in the centre to show that all priorities are equally important.



### **Report back to Victoria Native Friendship Centre:**

- Information on e-bike charging and charging areas/costs in parkades

**Budget Community Conversation #3**  
**Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria**  
**Friday, September 22, 2023, 10-11:30 a.m.**  
**808 Douglas Street, Suite 102**  
**11 participants**  
**(2 participants have been in Victoria 5+ years)**

**ACTIVITY #1**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, where applicable.

**HOUSING**

- Affordable housing – co-ops
- Housing cost is getting high, it doesn't match the salary rise
- Increasing the number of co-ops
- Provide incentive for developers to build affordable housing units
- Affordable housing x 2
- More affordable housing and rent

**Comments:**

- Families with 3 or 4 children are forced into two-bedroom apartment and are paying so high rent
- Co-ops are needed.

**HOMELESSNESS & SHELTERING**

- Make better support for homeless people
- Care for homeless people – many tents set up on the grass of some parks affect the appearance of the city; increase the social unrest factors. Remove the tents to keep the homeless with their fixed homes open.

**Comments:**

- Wondering how government is thinking about this – seeing Pandora Street is sad and disappointing. People need help.

**SAFETY**

- Fraud telephone safety? Miss some important call
- Handle the homeless problem well (also homelessness)
- Make a serious penalty for both drug seller and buyer – more police



## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

- Wildfire alert system

### **Comments:**

- Vic-Alert was discussed.

## **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

- ICA connected with Silver Threads (City staff to follow up)

### **Comments:**

- There are programs (perhaps library or coffee shops) where you can go in and have a card on the table indicating your willingness to chat – connecting newcomers with people in their community.
- Connecting seniors with newcomers would be beneficial to both.

## **LIBRARY SERVICES**

- More books and other at GVPL – for both children and adult
- Free programs for immigrants (i.e., not just in summer but for adults not just children)
- Group, club, etc, for immigrants (i.e., a book club, that is accessible

### **Comments:**

- There are only 180 books in Chinese in the library none of them are for children and the adult books are old and of little interest.
- I went to a book club that had a theme, and so everyone was discussing different books, with my English this made it very difficult to participate – I wanted to hear discussion on the same book to help my understanding.

## **PUBLIC WORKS**

- Clean water – water pipe renewal
- Upgrade power grid

### **Comments:**

- I live in Oak Bay and my water filter is full of mucky substance when I clean it
- The power goes out so much, every time the wind comes up

## **HEALTH CARE**

- More doctors – we have to wait too much time to see doctor. I think we need another hospital.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

- Mental health programs for newcomers for all ages
- Consider funding mental health programs for those in need
- Programs are needed before severe state is reached – preventative

## **EDUCATION FOR IMMIGRANTS**

- To offer affordable education for immigrants – like programs in healthcare, nurse, child-care (where the needs are)
- Free education courses – equivalency courses to bring skills we have to a point where we can use them in Canada.

## **RECREATION AND ARTS**

- For children – I think we need more sports and training in each recreation centre
- For children – more places for teaching art and other skills (and not just in summer, in the fall and winter too)
- Indoor playground/space for kids to use on rainy days (low-cost or free)
- Spaces to make new friends and do things together in person - like a chat room
- Entertainment performance venues art

## **ECONOMY/DOWNTOWN**

- Bright downtown (improve lighting) – extend business hours

## **DOWNTOWN**

- Make downtown better
- More long park time in downtown
- Parking on a Sunday now costs to park

### **Comments:**

- Downtown is not a happy place – it feels unsafe and unclean and is not available to me to visit or look. This is connected to the homeless and everything is expensive.
- Whenever I come downtown, I feel disappointed.
- Downtown should be a symbol of the city.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACCESS**

- Easy way to know one service phone number for municipal government services

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Transportation systems need to be upgraded. Part of the problem is parking spaces are finite in quantity.
- Paid parking is higher than before and parking lots are limited. Reduce the pay or make free after 6pm daily.
- Free transit pass should be available for those under 18 for all areas of (Greater) Victoria for low-income individuals.
- Workshops for how to drive in Victoria are necessary for newcomer drivers in their first few months (possibly through ICA + VIRC).
- More buses
- Traffic signs – for limited vision (due to geography) e.g., Cedar Hill Cross Road and both Cadboro Bay and Henderson

## ACTIVITY #2

### Results:

- **Most important:** Housing (7); Community Well-Being and Safety (3), Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (1)
- **Second most important:** **TIE** Community Well-Being and Safety (3) and Parks, Recreation/Gathering Spaces (3), Transportation (2), Economic Health and Community Vitality (2), Arts, Culture, Music and Community Vitality (1)
- **Least Important:** **TIE** Community Well-Being and Safety (3); Arts Culture Music and Entertainment (3), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (1), Transportation (1), Truth and Reconciliation (1); Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (1)

**NOTE:** Community Well-Being and Safety had 3 green, 3 yellow and 3 red dots.





**Budget Community Conversation #4: City of Victoria Youth Council/Youth**  
**Monday, September 25, 2023, 6-8 p.m.**  
**Victoria City Hall, Antechamber**  
**9 participants (5 Youth Council; 2 Youth 2020, 2 community youth)**

**ACTIVITY #1: Share Your Ideas**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, where applicable.

**HOUSING**

- Affordable housing for everyone
- Housing laws to help the prices flatten; increase in prices instead of building new projects for years in the future – more short-term solutions with what already exists
- Affordable housing and programs to reduce homelessness
- Pandora Street isn't safe for anyone
- Affordable housing links to a lot of the other priorities

Comments:

- My family has friends that are refugees and can't afford any housing so the family of SEVEN live in a small apartment.
- More turning existing housing into lower cost housing until the new builds are complete.
- Homelessness has gotten so much worse, there must be something we can do to increase the number of occupants to help lower the cost of housing.
- There must be something the city can do.

**POLICING**

- Changing the way we fund the police force – mental health services including mental health trained staff working with police or attending calls instead of police.
- Less aggressive response.
- Better funding for police – as that could help with the amount of incidents especially in the downtown area.

Comments:

- There appears to be systemic racism and aggression with the Police. During climate action protests, I witnessed Indigenous protestors often being arrested and forcibly removed when those who were white were left alone – saw this again when the Indigenous protest was at the legislature.
- There needs to be proper training and understanding on how to deal with all types of people. A lot of times there is no talking, it immediately goes to aggression.
- More mental health workers alongside police.
- If you are a woman, trans or non-binary, there is a reaction to the aggressive personality that is typically attracted to police work.
- More follow up and support after a call (mental health) often these people are left to fend for themselves and don't have the capacity to heal. (also Mental Health)

## **SAFETY**

- Confronting racism in schools in Victoria
- Drug testing sites – we need more of them

### **Comments:**

- Seminars for teachers – their racism isn't always out of hatred, more from ignorance
- Racism coming from teachers towards students
- Some teachers are culturally-insensitive and some are too sensitive and afraid
- Drug testing sites have been so positive and welcoming, especially for youth

## **SCHOOLS/TEACHERS/EDUCATION**

- Students should have the ability to do teacher evaluations
- Funding for schools and educations – specifically arts/music
- Guest experts – there is a lack of these due to funding and teachers aren't always comfortable/qualified to cover topic i.e., Indigenous studies class
- Performing arts and entertainment education

### **Comments:**

- Programs like music and clubs get cut when funding is tight. So many in school clubs don't get funding. This tells students these things aren't valued so students get discouraged and don't sign up, so it looks like no one is interested so the funding continues to be cut.
- With music and art cuts, they are removing an outlet for many students that count on that to get them through other subjects – the creative area could also be their future.

## **YOUTH**

- More teen/youth focused public events
- Youth-led missions and goals, youth related stuff, youth led initiatives
- More promotion of Youth Council – on the website, in schools, on Instagram
- Youth Council input on City decisions
- Encourage youth in leadership at their schools – high school leadership programs

### **Comments:**

- We need more funding for youth-led initiatives
- Reach youth with promotion that is initiated BY students
- Youth know what youth want and how to grab their peers' attention
- Sometimes its hard to find out about things
- How should we reach you? "Instagram"
- It would be nice to have things like the Youth Laureate program to get youth involved

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

- Mental health support for LGBTQIA+ community – specifically transitioning youth
- Mental health resources – young adult/homelessness focus
- Required mental health and inclusivity training for all government workers and teachers

### **Comments:**

- More mental health workers with police (also police)
- More support as well as follow up after an incident ( also police)

## **HEALTHCARE**

- There are no doctors
- If young people leave the province for school, they won't be treated by their doctor even online which is ridiculous especially if they have complex health needs

## **CLEAN DOWNTOWN**

- More funding for cleaning and maintaining the downtown area as it tends to be the dirtiest area in town
- More funding for clean up around the city.

## **FACILITIES**

- Add more public bathrooms

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Bus pass free for 18 and under for Victoria (Saanich and Esquimalt included)
- Lower rates for bus pass
- Free bus passes – good for climate action and transportation

## **INDIGENOUS**

- What can we do to help Indigenous people NOW?
- Working with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations to improve our city.
- Systemic police racism and aggression – Cultural sensitivity training (also police)
- Follow up support after an incident with police response (also police)

## **IMMIGRANT SUPPORT**

- Housing for immigrants
- They have to completely restart their education once they arrive and don't have the required funds as they are stuck in low-paying jobs
- Immigration aid/cost of living - so many immigrants are moving with no help whatsoever.
- inclusion for neglected communities such as North African and Middle Eastern immigrants
- Jobs available are often minimum wage



Comments:

- I'm an immigrant and the costs are so high. When you're an immigrant, you start work at the very low minimum wage jobs. Housing is expensive, renewing work permits and applying for permanent residency is extremely expensive on top of all the other expenses. There are families of SEVEN living in studio apartments because of cost. (also housing)
- Canada wants to bring them over but then they are on their own.
- It is not easy to get permanent residency. Just because you are going to school here, doesn't mean you will get your permanent residency.

## **ECONOMY**

- Local business support – promote rent support
- Cost of living – housing, transport

## **CLIMATE ACTION:**

- Cheap and green alternatives developed i.e., materials
- Recycling – more education and awareness about it needed in schools, etc.
- More green spaces and community gardens
- Festival/parade to promote becoming a greener city
- React to environment – for example drought – close the pool once a week
- Free bus passes to any extent is good for environment (also Transportation)

Comments:

- Everyone does recycling differently which is concerning

## **ACTIVITY #2**

### **Results:**

- **Most important:** Housing (4) Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (3), Economic Health and Community Vitality (2), Community Well-Being and Safety (1)
- **Second most important:** Housing (4) Economic Health (3), Community Well-Being and Safety (2)
- **Least Important:** Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (4) Community Well-Being and Safety (3), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (1), Transportation (1), Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (1)



**City Budget Conversation #5: Action Committee of People with Disabilities**  
**Tuesday, September 26, 2023, 6:30-8 p.m.**  
**Victoria City Hall, Antechamber**  
**8 participants (6 in-person/2 online)**

**ACTIVITY 1 – Share Your Ideas (30:00)**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, where applicable.

**TENANTS RIGHTS & ADVOCACY**

- Tenant rights and advocacy and arbitrations

Comments:

- Residential Tenancy Dispute system is so complicated, since COVID everything changed to online.
- There should be another branch to assist with residential tenancy disputes.

**HOUSING**

- Affordable Housing
- Housing Solutions
- Housing
- Subsidized Housing
- Homelessness, Sheltering, Respect
- Rent control
- Increase to PWD benefits

Comments:

- Community based housing for low-income folks, particularly folks that are on provincial benefits. Community based partners would be in control of those buildings. There needs to be more of this type of housing.
- What they consider “affordable” is far too high, especially for folks with disabilities and those on provincial assistance.
- People don’t know what “affordable” housing means. Most people require a “deep subsidy”. Most people on disability only make \$1,400, which is less than most rental places in Victoria.
- People should be allowed to choose where they’re allowed to live.
- The more we can build choice into programs, the better they are.
- Density funding doesn’t result in the price going down, the developer just gets more money... people with disabilities would like to access some of that money.
- Landlords even want to allow renters that they like to stay so a subsidy there would be win-win.
- The issue of subsidized housing is a good route for getting people off the streets.
- There is more need for shelter support for PWD benefits

## **SAFETY**

- Going home late night in the dark actually felt very safe on Quadra
- Unsafe for the unhoused
- Parking for the invisible homeless living in cars, vans and campers
- Increased public washrooms access for the unhoused

### **Comments:**

- We must actually have adequate services because I felt safe walking home last night on Quadra
- Unhoused people's safety needs to be considered as well
- Unhoused should have 24-hour access to tents in parks

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Accessible transportation for people with disabilities
- Transportation
- Bikes vs accessible mobility
- Bring the services where the people are
- Subsidies to taxi companies
- Handy Dart – have to share a ride, needs lift, needs interpreter
- Taxi saver program – need to increase number of trips per month

### **Comments:**

- Transportation is multi-faceted because Handy Dart is not handy
- We need more choices to make it more accessible for people
- Taxi saver program has been positive and is accessible
- COV bike lanes are accessible but bike behaviour makes it unsafe
- There are also some real issues with crosswalks re: safety
- The door-to-door bus system would be ideal, but they often come with far too many limitations around schedules.
- For Handy Dart you have to book the ride 14 days in advance in order to be guaranteed a ride, otherwise you get put on standby. Who can always plan their lives 14 days in advance? This is a huge barrier. Handy Dart services needs to be improved. They pack you in with other people so it takes even longer for you to reach your destination. It's not direct like a taxi.
- Taxi saver program needs to see a considerable increase in how much people with disabilities can purchase in a month.
- The process for the taxi company for getting reimbursed is very frustrating and as a result some companies boycott them. One taxi company has already stopped using the program.
- Bring the service to a target population when it's possible
- Subsidies to taxi companies are exploited and the drivers used the vans to drive out to the airport.

## **INCLUSION**

- Inclusion – needs to be more than just a word
- Simplify forums for accessing supports
- What comes to the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee?
- Observe + the internal

- More thoughts need to go into City projects about inclusion
- Advisory Committee doesn't connect with the community
- Hear more from people on inclusion

Comments:

- All Council meetings should be as accessible as this evening has been. (*Staff explained accessible options; how to participate in a Public Meeting, etc.*)
- Accessible Advisory Committee has major failures, in particular around bike lanes and how they affect getting off a bus for those with disabilities.
- If you really want input, you have to prepare for it properly – provide accessible accommodations.
- People often use words around accessibility without knowing what it really means
- Those advising need to be connected to the communities they claim to represent
- Form committees where people with disabilities are actively matched with the professional who is designing the infrastructure.

## ADVOCACY

- Advocacy
- Funding for advocacy
- Greater funding for advocacy

Comments:

- Only two non-profits that help with residential tenancy issues. Need more advocacy.

## WELL-BEING

- Community well-being

Comments:

- Remember that inclusiveness begins in childhood with anti-bullying programs in schools.
- We need to teach what it is to respect accessibility.

## ENVIRONMENT

- No AstroTurf
- Happy with landscape gardening in public areas, in particularly around the Queens area
- Loved the portable water tanks at Cook Street Village
- Mandatory scent-free environments

Comments:

- I heard a rumor that AstroTurf was being put into the Inner Harbor and that doesn't sound environmentally friendly
- Happy to see boulevards used as community gardens
- The downtown clean-up has been great and it's giving people employment – The clean team... they do a wonderful job.
- Also, an additional comment in clarification around stronger language regarding scent free, often the wording on signage etc. is a request to avoid wearing scents, rather than wording prohibits no scents. A comparison is we don't use signage that asks people to avoid



smoking, rather we use wording that no smoking is permitted. And there needs to be education around what's scent free means, it's beyond not wearing perfume or cologne, it includes scent free deodorant, skin and hair products, and scent free laundry soap and dryer sheets.

## **CONSTRUCTION NOISE**

- Construction noise - Fairfield

Comments:

- View Street has constant banging.
- The TELUS construction in Fairfield is so intrusive from a noise perspective.
- *Staff explained process for inquiring with Permits or Bylaw staff on construction noise.*

## **CLEAN DOWNTOWN**

- Clean team

Comments:

- I enjoyed seeing the clean-up Victoria folks; they're doing a great job and it's a wonderful idea.

## **HOMELESS & SHELTERING + RESPECT**

- See ***Attachment 1*** submitted and read aloud by participant

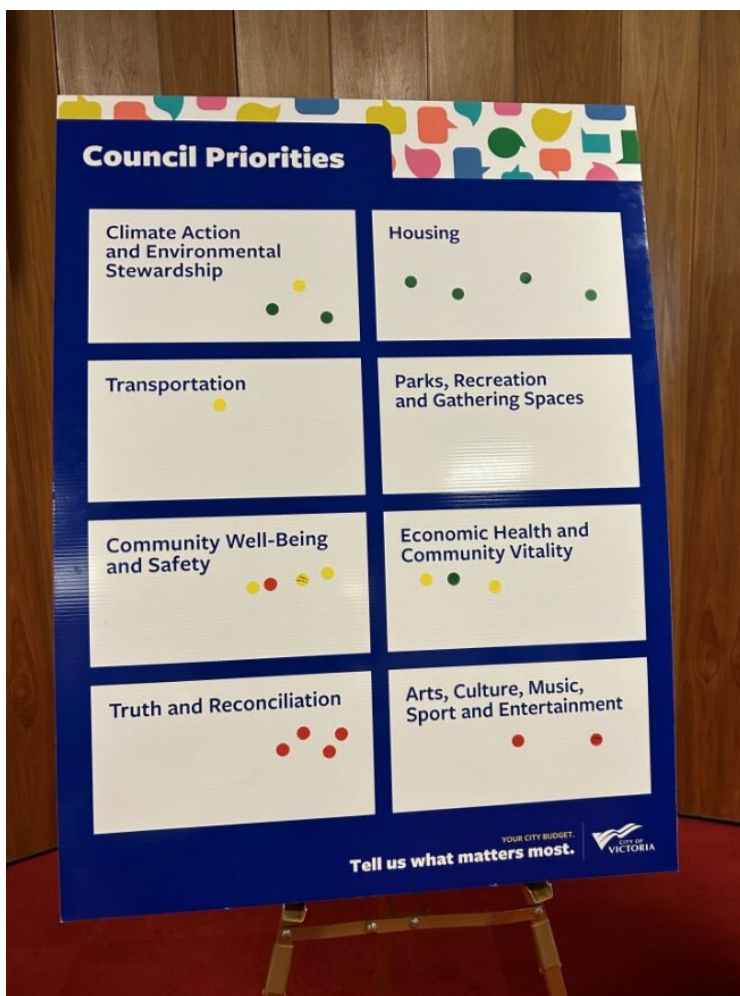
## **LIVABLE INCOME**

- Increase to PWD so it's livable income

## ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council's 8 Priorities (20:00)

**Activity Results:** (Missing one online participant's rankings.)

- **Most important:** Housing (4), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (2), Economic Health and Community Vitality (1)
- **Second most important:** Community Well-Being and Safety (3), Economic Health and Community Vitality (2), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (1), Transportation (1)
- **Least important:** Truth and Reconciliation (4), Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (2), Community Well-Being and Safety (1)



I feel very passionate about the housing situation. I wanted to express my support and concern about the rising rental crisis. I greatly appreciate your work on this serious issue.

I never thought that I would say this, but I think that you should seriously consider re opening 7 Oaks Hospital. The majority of homeless people are mentally ill and in desperate need of health care. This would take many off the streets. It would ease the critical demand on health care workers, the emergency, food banks, kitchens and shelters. The mentally ill are living in soaking wet sleeping bags and blankets. Now they are not allowed to sleep on sidewalks or in our parks.

Maybe something similar to the dorms that were built last year at UVIC? UVIC rose to fight the housing crisis they built 783 student spaces and 398 beds for the new Cheko'nien lodge last summer. It is the latest in green technology. They did it in less than 1 year.

<https://www.uvic.ca/campusplanning/current-projects/new-student-housing/index.php>

For those living with a disability the provincial rate of disability (PWD) is about \$1,400 per month and the rate of income assistance is \$935 per month. Many critically disabled people are becoming homeless and totally destitute. Many people are visually impaired, in power chairs, scooters and walkers. People who cannot walk. Rent in Victoria has reached \$2,100 per month. People with disabilities and people on income assistance do not have enough income to even apply for an apartment. There is very little that an experienced ACPD advocate can do to help.

I was deeply concerned that the unhoused are no longer allowed to shelter in our parks such as Stadacona Park. I volunteered meeting and baking for the campers last year. I met all of them and I was at no time concerned about my safety. The park was full of regular people and the tennis courts were always full. Where are people expected to sleep now? This is a critical component to basic human health rights. **Overnight bathrooms in parks and around town are needed desperately for those without a home.** At least 1,665 people are unhoused in Victoria.

To make matters worse, the By Law Officers with the Victoria Police would come every morning at 7 am. Oftentimes, they take everything that they owned, like everything. Wallets, phones, keys, food, tents, tarps, winter coats, winter boots, wheelchairs, prosthetics', everything. This is police brutality. What a brutal response to those shivering and drenched in the winter months.

One situation I will never forget. prosthetic leg take by  
the officers. They are simply merciless.

Another winter is on its way. Mother Nature is merciless and unstoppable. As the weather turns colder and rain and wind storms become more powerful it is essential that we find solutions that allow people to either leave their tents up or, if the tents must come down, to provide them with clean, dry, secure storage for their things during the day. They are worried that their things may be stolen by police. If this was in place people would be able to more easily get themselves fed, washed, and maybe even do laundry or visit with friends or enjoy a takeout coffee - things that you and I take for granted each and every day. Why can't they respond with kindness and humanity? Can you imagine living out there?

**Can we please have a special shelter for those with severe and critical disabilities?** There are also many unhoused people who cannot access desperately needed surgeries like amputations. How would you feel? They cannot have their surgeries done because they are homeless and have nowhere to be discharged to. Can we please make a shelter bed available for them in these extreme situations? It's fundamental.

I witnessed many people in chairs become homeless to live at least a decade on the streets with no hope of finding a home. The waitlist for BC Housing is at least 10 years long. That is the minimum length of time that they will be homeless. I have heard of people who have been on the BC Housing waiting list for 20 years. BC Housing is hard to navigate. Many could not do it and will lose their place in line entirely.

Can you please make the landlords reduce the rent? We desperately need rent control? **We are all being held hostage by these landlords. The government must pay more and more for income, benefits, and subsidies and build more and more housing.** The rate of disability, income assistance, minimum wage, and financial support for seniors must be increased again and again to keep up with the skyrocketing rents. We have to fight so hard to see any increase in our benefits. It takes decades for our benefits to increase at all. It is very hard. It's impossible to convince them to increase our benefits.

Rent control – rent control must be tied to the unit that doesn't end when a tenant leaves, this is very important. That way, landlords will not force tenants to leave in order to raise rents. British Columbia had real rent control for a number of years back in the 1970s brought in by the provincial government.

I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for taking homelessness so seriously. Thank you for your efforts to help people with diverse abilities this year and in the future. I cannot tell you how much it helps and thank you for listening and for your efforts and for all that you do.

**Budget Community Conversation #6: Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness**  
**Wednesday, September 27, 2023, noon-2 p.m.**  
**Victoria City Hall, Antechamber**  
**11 Participants (5 Female, 4 Male)**

**ACTIVITY #1**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, where applicable.

**TRANSPORTATION**

- Van for people who need a ride to a sobering centre or a ride home
- Bus passes for street family
- Have someone to check on the situation of people struggling with transportation
- Free shuttle around downtown
- Free transit passes for all
- More bike lanes

**Comments:**

- Not bus tickets – they get lost
- Have outreach such as PEERS + Aids Vancouver Island (AVI)
- Help to get to appointments
- Offer free education / bike licences
- Shuttle is better than a bus pass – hop on/hop off
- People need bike/scooter education – bike licences – both should be free
- Calgary has van to sobering centres

**YOUTH SAFETY**

- How to keep our youth on the street safe – mental health and prevention
- Talk to Ministry of Children and Family Services to continue supporting foster children aging out of homes – they need continued support to age of 25

**Comments:**

- A lot of youth aging out do not have family to support them
- Overdose crisis means more support is needed
- More prevention education to keep youth safe

**SUPPORTING FACILITIES and INDIVIDUALS**

- Free training for Naloxone
- Indigenous day programs for people with developmental delays



- As outreach workers we get to know our street family until they get into housing
- Invest in housing project using the 'House of Courage' model
- Adopt a street person
- Move the VNFC back downtown
- More facilities downtown to open up for arts and crafts
- More outside washrooms

Comments:

- More people need training – outreach workers need training re/training on Naloxone
- Naloxone training for whomever wants it
- House of Courage in Vic West has health supports and other supports that are culturally based (good model)
- More outreach workers needed for unhoused
- More people to check in on street family - outreach workers
- Volunteers to help be a liaison at the hospital
- Volunteers helping with transportation
- Arts and crafts are very culturally grounding for people
- Transportation is an issue
- Cultural healing changes people's lives
- Need to have the ability to conduct smudging where we live

## HOUSING

- More housing for homeless (x2)
- Housing for couples (shelters and affordable)
- Halfway house for women who have been incarcerated (x2)
- Supportive housing for elderly Indigenous people
- More information for people looking for housing
- Affordable housing for all – especially the unhoused

Comments:

- Indigenously-culturally supported (all types of housing)
- When one of the couple gets into housing it is usually for single people and the partner sneaks in then, when they are caught, they both get kicked out
- No housing for someone with mental health – brain injury
- There needs to be more transitional housing – help for people going from the street to being housed
- Pay for a housing advocate for continuity

## **OUTDOOR FURNITURE**

- More benches to sit down at

Comments:

- City is taking benches away and people have to sit on the ground
- No where to sit/rest

## **HEALTHCARE**

- More doctors and clinics needed
- More money for hygiene
- More outreach workers for hospital visits
- Overdose crisis
- A place for street family to go to after released from hospital to recover

Comments:

- People banned from Our Place have nowhere to shower
- Pop-up shower facilities – need to be safe with supplies (soap, shampoo)
- Example: Soap for Hope
- Island Health is not doing what they should do – more education needed
- Need pop-up shower facilities with supplies (shampoo/soap)
- Some people leave the hospital because they are being abused verbally by staff
- 3-4 weeks to get into detox – not good enough
- Hospitals are kicking people out with nowhere to go and no supports
- People released from hospital have no where to go
- One person said they were on a suicide watch, asked a few questions, and then let go with no follow-up supports discussed or connections

## **COURT SUPPORT**

- Street support around court system

Comments:

- Someone to go with people to court
- More people or justice team outreach
- Advocates needed so that justice is served
-

## **ECONOMY**

- Change permitting to allow selling of arts/crafts downtown
- A market space downtown for Aboriginal art for carvers

## **EDUCATION**

- Education for the little ones – mentorship – for Indigenous youth
- Stop judging. Start helping.

## **ARTS + CULTURE**

- If VNFC gets moved downtown, use the current space for arts and crafts
- More funding to ACEH to support cultural activities

### Comments:

- Supplies needed: drum making, large smoker for meat, beading, sewing machine
- Large space needed

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Bulletin board for info on programs available for street family

### Comments:

- Not everybody has access to online information
- Let different organizations have access to the Bulletin Board to share program information with street family
- Have a big screen with information (like SOFMA)
- Location: Pandora and Quadra

## **FOOD SECURITY**

- Have a free fridge (access to food for all street family)
- Food places besides food banks (accessibility)

### Comments:

- Other communities already have free fridges (Food Libraries) – Nanaimo, Alberta, Yellowknife

## **RECREATION**

- More outdoor recreation tables
- People could donate their time to teach guitar lessons for example
- Access to leisure places like Crystal Pool etc.

## **STORAGE**

- A place for those who need a place for stuff while they go to work
- Storage facility (safe and secure for all)

Comments:

- Bylaw throws out belongings

## **SAFETY & WELL-BEING**

- Adopt a (street) family member
- Outreach workers on the weekend (especially at night)

Comments:

- Help with laundry
- Rides to the hospital
- People could be billeted – coordinated by and agency with funding from the city
- People need to be educated and then maybe they would help

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

- Someone to talk to young ones about stability in life
- Mental health facility other than the hospital (for long term)
- Housing support for people with brain damage suffering from addictions
- More info on mental wellness

Comments:

- No support – people can't get the help they need
- Treatment needed for specifically for brain injured – they end up in a vicious circle of jail and addiction
- People get kicked out of psych ward before they are ready with no support and no referrals
- There is no safety net
- The mental health spaces for treatment are all filled
- More long-term support is needed

## **TRUTH & RECONCILIATION**

- Less problems around landlords being strict with our traditional rights

### **Comments:**

- Was not allowed to smudge outside of apartment building
- Landlords need to know about Indigenous rights
- Where is the information available?

## **INDIGENOUS FUNDING / SUPPORT**

- More outreach workers
- Support ACEH – once a month or every four months with funding for food to feed homeless and cultural activities

## **SHELTERS / SHELTERING**

- More monies for tents or more people helping with providing these
- Places to shelter people with their pets
- Building more shelters having more staffing for these shelters
- Do not tear down homeless people's tents so early in the morning – especially with winter coming
- Have better systems in place regarding places to place tents
- People opening up around the city to help – maybe having people in their backyards
- Affordable housing
- Designated park for long term tenting for people who don't have shelter or housing to keep stuff safe
- Set up pop-up tents during winter season for those who have no place to go – to stay warm and get out of the rain

### **Comments:**

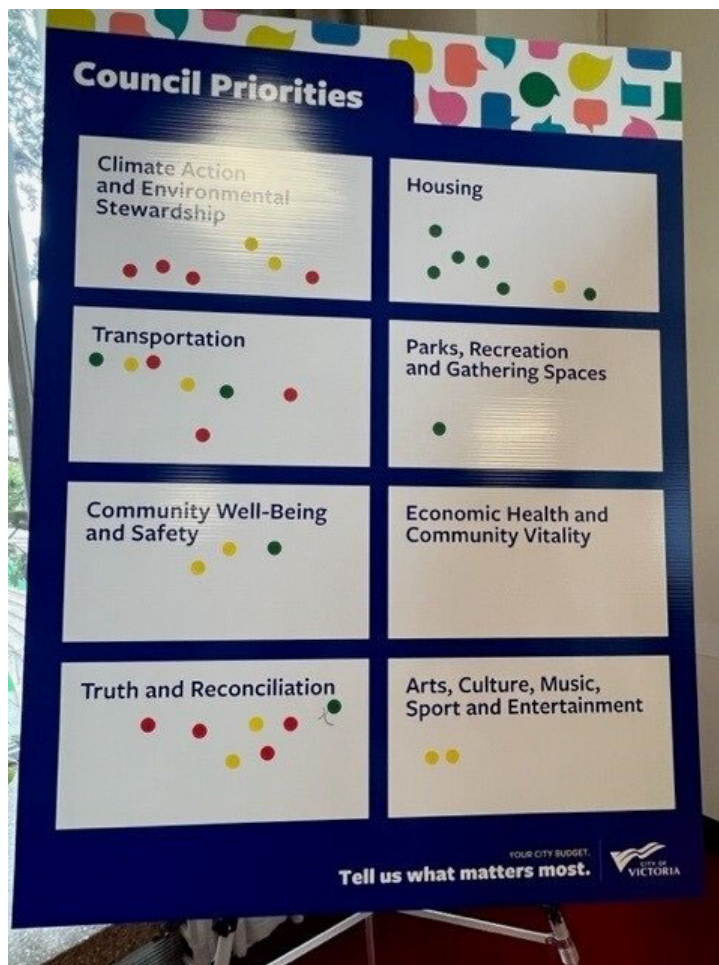
- There needs to be more than two shelters
- More consistency is needed surrounding rules
- Have warming tents near Pandora, PEERS
- People like to complain but why not help
- Allow people to sleep/store stuff in backyards
- More different types of shelters needed
- Where does bylaw take impounded belongings?
- Information needed on how to get belongings returned
- Only one shelter allows pets and only in cold weather



## ACTIVITY 2 – Rank Council's 8 Priorities

### Activity Results:

- **Most important:** Housing (6), Transportation (2), Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (1), Truth and Reconciliation (1), Community Well-Being and Safety (1)
- **Second most important TIED:** Community Well-Being and Safety (2), Truth and Reconciliation (2), Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (2), Transportation (2), Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (2), Housing (1)
- **Least important:** Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (4), Truth and Reconciliation (4), Transportation (3)



## **Budget Conversation #7: Peers Resource Centre**

**Wednesday, September 27, 2023, noon-2 p.m.**

**Victoria City Hall, Antechamber**

**6 Participants (2 male, 4 female)**

### **ACTIVITY #1**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, where applicable.

### **HOUSING**

- Better housing – more complete
- Housing
- Housing – loft beds per room. No one wants to be in bed all day it's depressing. Loft beds can be made with stairs w/ storage for elders.
- House and safety
- Investing in low-barrier housing supports (shelters/supportive housing/housing subsidies)
- Housing
- Rent control when people move out
- Sex-worker specific housing (supportive housing) in Victoria. Where guests are allowed.
- Better informed staff at housing places.
- Supportive Housing – WTF is a program fee because to me it sounds like a loophole to make sure the deplorable conditions even the hundreds of rats and mice and thousands of cockroaches are not impressed with the living arrangement. We have serious mold and asbestos from the basement to the top floor. The basic food groups are not even close to being met. Milk once a week on the exp. Date breakfast items such as buns, yogurt etc. The dinners are absolutely OFFENSIVE & my partner and myself have been food poisoned as well as other people SEVERAL TIMES. We have no voice because if we rock the boat we're booted out!

### **Comments:**

- Stove, fridge, laundry (so it doesn't get stolen), a more complete unit per person
- Bigger unit for each person (loft bed to create a living space...maximize space in unit), full fridges, storage space) food that we get is terrible. Portion of rent goes to food, but we don't eat it. (laundry, food are included in program fee) No say in what food we get. No nutritional value, milk once a week.
- Pest control for cockroaches, rats
- Basic needs addressed within supportive housing
- Supportive housing sites don't allow guests, so sex workers need to work on the street in unsafe conditions. A program to address this was piloted in Vancouver and it's quite successful.
- Piece of land that is dedicated to people who don't want to stay in shelters (due to drug use, etc.). Many older folks are in this category. The fact that this is a federal issue was discussed...not necessarily known among vulnerable populations. Are there mechanisms that give Council more power over these issues? What are the limitations of the provincial/federal government that make these things so difficult?
- People should be able to smoke in their own place.

## **BASIC NEEDS WITHIN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (HOUSING/FOOD)**

- More control over food choice
- Loft beds to create a “living space” + storage
- Better Food. Rats won’t eat some of what we get
- Housing. Food. It’s terrible. Many don’t eat it and it’s definitely not worth what we are paying for
- Food → get a bun & that’s it until dinner
- More groups providing food and shelter and clothes

### **Comments:**

- I’d like the ability to choose my own food.
- Everything is on rice. Not enough food, everything smushed in a bowl. Housing program fee encompasses more than housing. Depends on where you live. Some locations offer good food. Breakfast: 9-10:30 a.m.: stale bun, drink (maybe) needs to hold you over until dinner at 6 p.m.
- More clothing for the street people - Stuff to keep warm. You need to keep your feet dry to be healthy (if you get street feet, you won’t be able to walk)

## **INDIGENOUS**

- Invest in Indigenous-led programming for our Indigenous street community

### **Comments:**

- Invest in Indigenous

## FOOD

- Community farm that feeds folks + volunteer opportunities + community hours
- Food security better support around food access for low-income folks
- City-run grocery store
- Different prices depending on income
- Grocery stores featuring local farms

### Comments:

- We don't like eating cardboard, it's getting worse and worse. Grocery stores could have a tiered payment system. You pay what you can afford. The class system is unfair. A rich person pays the same as a poor person. Subsidies haven't kept up with the times (disability payment for example).
- Venue for local farmers (micro-farms).
- Farm run by the people (a community farm that produces). Volunteer for a few hours and get food in return or those who must do community service can complete their hours at the farm. People would enjoy the work.
- Grocery grants are nice but not sustainable and are more like band-aid solutions.
- Do something that eventually becomes self-sustainable. It needs to make sense in the long run. So much need, but not enough money for everything. All cities have the same problems. Victoria is not unique.

## ARTS/CULTURE

- Supplies + courses
- A showcase for art
- Use storefronts to showcase art

### Comments:

- I'd like to see more done post-Covid with arts and culture. Users are an artistic bunch...
- Offer supplies and courses for free.
- Venues to show art. Use empty stores along Government Street. Currently it looks bad to tourists, like a ghost town. Merchants are unhappy. Fill empty stores to showcase the culture of users.
- Funding for spray paint to beautify spaces with art.
- Arts will also help with mental health.
- More arts, culture, cafés and playgrounds.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

- Pest control
- More clothing for the street people
- Provide more resources towards the development of safer supply initiatives.
- Invest in Peer-led initiatives to address the overdose crisis and GBV (gender-based violence).
- Investing in community-based non-profits addressing the overdose crisis
- More awareness
- More outreach
- Safe injection sites should have outside spaces (smoking)
- More injection sites
- Mental health outreach
- I would like to see more done for mental health – more outreach and safety.
- Safe disposal of used drug materials
- Harm reduction
- Greater investment in navigation supports for people in crisis/in shelters/supportive housing
- More awareness in community about drug checks
- Drug checks
- Washroom on Pandora
- Safe supply – more places to consume.
- More safe supply places
- Community safety
- Security – why do we have it? It's so the public feels safer themselves because they do nothing.
- People prescribed opioids for pain and then it's taken away without warning forcing street drugs.
- Pest control in encampments
- Safe supply disposal

### Comments:

- More training on Narcan, bigger outreach programs, build awareness in broader community.
- Mental health outreach: We need more people who walk the streets and aren't far away if there's a crisis. PAC team isn't around.
- If people can't smoke at injection/inhalation sites, they won't come.
- Injection sites are important to keep people safe, (drug checking and monitoring) so supplies are disposed of safely (not in public areas).
- People are dying because of cross contamination. There needs to be more awareness about getting a safe supply, and access to resources. (Substance is a drug checking location.)
- Users care a lot about safety.
- Street outreach. There are a couple spots on Pandora and in Rock Bay where sanitization is terrible (rat infestations, garbage).
- Porta-potties, garbage collection would do a lot of good. Conditions are sad. Hesitant to ask for this, because a sweep of area to get people out is not what's wanted.
- Legalize hard drugs.

## **COLD WEATHER PROTOCOL**

- Cold weather protocols are late and clunky.
- Have the cold weather protocols come through the existing non-profits who are tapped in. Fire Department is not always dialed in or sensitive.

### **Comments:**

- Cold weather protocols are called late and disorganized.
- There is a need for shelters, tents, etc. Needs to be better thought out in advance.
- Downtown community centres and churches open up, but it's hard to figure out which locations are open.
- Other organizations would be better suited to hand out supplies, as they are more aware of the communities' needs and better able to reach community members and reduce stigma.
- PEERS pulls money out of donations to buy supplies like tents and additional comforts for cold weather (Advil/Tylenol, hot pads). It's important to provide not just the bare necessities, but something to make it more comfortable for folks. Ideally, they would receive funding for this rather than having to use donations.

## **COMMUNITY**

- Create a culture where we take care of each other
- Don't litter. Care.
- Build community.
- Housing – more group togetherness. If we're living here, let's love being here.

### **Comments:**

- How can we create a culture that takes care of itself? Community takes care of itself, older users set examples for younger users. Education to help keep the community clean, avoiding extra costs.
- The using community are stigmatized (all levels of society) Users can destigmatize themselves. Needs to be a sense of community to take care of issues. Community will care about each other and take care of each other.

## TRANSPORTATION

- No left turns on major arteries (only right)
- Close downtown to cars (create a plaza)
- Bottle neck traffic
- Make Government Street more closed

### Comments:

- Infrastructure: bottle necks, driving is challenging. Shut the whole city centre down to cars like in Europe. Just a main artery that goes around the city. All right turns to decrease blocking traffic. Roundabouts also work.

## MENTAL HEALTH

- MENTAL HEALTH RESCUE – So many undiagnosed, falsely diagnosed untreated/mistreated and hugely unmedicated, whether it's natural or pharmaceutical. I am truly of the belief that if medicine and/or rehab to a reputable program, people that are wandering the streets screaming at walls with a simple diagnosis and pill w/ongoing care can become an important/integral part of our community and workforce again, rather than continuously rolling through the revolving door of jail, institutions, shelters, etc. and repeat. Mobile mental health teams are a huge answer to the homeless problem, but the \$ to treat and house isn't there.
- Mental health crisis support
- (can't make out writing)

### Comments:

- Touch base with a mentally ill person without the money for treatment or follow up support isn't useful.
- People in supportive housing are kicked out for poor behaviour and end up on streets again. Other tenants who offered to pay double rent and take in these people were denied the opportunity.
- Psychiatric assessments/autism spectrum assessments are not covered. Costs are very high (\$2,500).
- Services are overloaded.
- People who are prescribed pain meds and then their prescription is not renewed, end up on opiates (heroin) for pain relief. There needs to be more medical help with weaning.



## **ACTIVITY #2: Ranking Council's 8 Priorities**

**Most important:** Community Well-Being and Safety (5); Housing (2)

**Second most important:** Housing (4); Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (2); Community Well-Being and Safety (1), Housing/Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (1)

**Least important:** Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (4); Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (1); Transportation (1); Housing (1)



### **DISCUSSION:**

- Community safety and well-being should include housing.
- Housing is my first, second and third priority. (one person put all three dots under housing)
- Everyone needs to be housed for community safety and vice versa.

**Budget Community Conversation #8 - Our Place Society**  
**Wednesday, September 27, 2023, noon-2 p.m.**  
**Victoria City Hall, Antechamber**  
**(11 Participants)**

**ACTIVITY #1: Share Your Ideas**

The following notes depict the agreed upon themes, the content of each sticky-note and the associated comments captured during the community conversation, where applicable.

**HOUSING**

- Need affordable and low-income housing
- Need housing options

Comments:

- Need additional housing including shelters and hotel housing.
- UVic is on Oak Bay and Saanich land, which gives Saanich a good opportunity to increase housing for students.
- Victoria has high-tech opportunity - build satellite city. Build out in Saanich where they have more room.
- Don't have enough supportive housing that has enough mental health and other living supports.
- Need for privacy and space and security in housing.
- Items are often stolen, like work boots and other important belongings preventing people from going to work.
- Some people don't feel safe in supportive housing units and shelters.

**SHELTERS**

- Hours should not be interrupted by closing at morning for a few hours and evening to be on street in wet and cold...
- Need shelters for women not necessarily who are victims of crime
- Need better place for campers to put up tents that is not in parks
- Need useable lockers at shelters that people can access all day
- No notice on shelter closures

Comments:

- Shelter mats are full every night and there is a waiting list.
- People are worried about the colder months.
- Housing and shelter specifically for women and housing and shelter specifically for men.
- Some people feel like they have to sleep with one eye open, in shelters, etc. Staff can't tell you who stole your stuff. And police don't come to help people. Work boots are stolen and then people can't go to work. Theft is a huge issue.
- Need more staff support to help with lockers and security. Facility won't let them use locker due to staff shortages. So, the lockers are unused. You can't go to work if you don't have a locker. You have to take all your belongings with you. People need

individualized lockers that they can access throughout the day. Key lockers are better than number code. Give human beings dignity by giving them a key to their own locker.

- Our Place shelter often has long line ups for showers.
- No notice about shelters closing, etc. No communication. Need more notice given for shelter and moving and storage.
- Shelters are overwhelmed in colder months. Maybe larger shelters where you can have less staff for larger areas.

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION**

- Demand for residential mental health facility
- Need treatment centres and drug rehabilitation centres
- More funding for counsellors
- There is a lack of access for mental health support
- Separate the “drug issue” into multiple actionable items, for example, 1) prevent spread of drug use, 2) deal with those currently addicted.

### **Comments:**

- Lack of access to mental health support.
- Need support to FIND support.
- Need drug rehabilitation centres and residential mental health facilities
- “Mental health support is pitiful. We have counsellors/therapy once a week in residential hotels, for 50-60 people. Half a day, and you have to make an appointment. People need more help; many are suicidal and need help for survival. Our Place is not trained to deal with that.
- One way to get mental support, start educating and incentivizing people (putting people through school system).
- More First Nations education and incentives for training for mental health support.
- Clinical psychologists are hard to come by and very expensive.
- Mental health, addiction and housing are all interlinked.
- Need treatment beds for young people.
- Our Place has a lot of people on street outside who have desperate condition. There is nothing Our Place can do unless people find hope and support.
- Child abuse and violence leads to addiction. And vice versa. There is generational trauma.
- There have been generations of people using Our Place services.

## **BYLAW, POLICE & SAFETY**

- Start by reining in bylaw aggressiveness
- Have on-site services and security in areas of high incidence
- Need more police liaison officers stationed full time in areas of high incidence
- Need police to deal with property theft in shelters

### **Comments:**

- Need to have the same person who is the police liaison officer who was in the downtown core.
- Police should be in schools educating.
- Bylaw officers think they have so much power. They come in once a day, they take everything and police slow them down. City needs to reign in their bylaw officers and let police department guide them. Bylaw are far too aggressive. More aggressive than police.
- Need on-site or nearby services in areas of high incidence.
- Need police to help with property theft in shelters and supportive housing units.
- Underhoused people feel they can't go to police.

## **PHYSICAL HEALTH**

- The medical system is complex
- Customer service is poor
- Make it easier to go to the clinic and get flu shots
- Hard to find a doctor
- Need homecare for when sick or hurt
- Need to simplify forms and processes

### **Comments:**

- Health care is under-funded.
- People need help getting to a clinic and get a flu shot.
- Need private homecare and home assistance (used to exist) for cooking, cleaning. Lots of people use it. Exists in Esquimalt but they can't find staff. Individuals in homecare, they charge them \$65 an hour for service.
- Many people don't have doctors. Urgent care you get different doctor every time.
- Newcomers need help in filling out forms.

## **CULTURE AND COMMUNITY**

- People feel they do not have access to politicians
- Desire for more leadership
- No sympathy for the unhoused

### **Comments:**

- Need creative outlets, there are barriers to contribute for new immigrants, new immigrants want to know how they can contribute.
- Newcomers need support finding services like health services.
- If you take care of young people, you will foster a healthier community.

- There is a big loss of communication.
- Need to train more young people to do something.
- Need more access to talk to leaders and politicians.
- Desire for better leadership.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Transit and housing need to be hand in hand
- Bus system is great up until Saanich and then it gets bad

### **Comments:**

- The bus system is great in Victoria, especially downtown. Bus downtown core is great up to Saanich, where Royal Oak exchange is.
- Langford and Sooke areas need more transit.
- If you are making a housing area, you need transportation/transit.

## **INDIGENOUS**

- Treatment beds for young people

### **Comments:**

- Kids are still suffering from residential school systems — now called Foster Care. Generations of kids still experiencing intergenerational trauma. Language and culture coming back is important.
- People hear things on the radio and are scared, general feeling of invisibility and lack of sympathy for homeless population and those with addiction.
- Need more leadership. City Hall does not show leadership.
- Even on reserve, many folks have to move off reserve to receive housing support.
- Langford is coming up with facilities for native housing.

## **ECONOMIC/BUSINESS**

- Involve business organizations in community issues/solutions

### **Comments:**

- Involve businesses in downtown support.
- Similar to the Clean Team. More programs like the Clean Team.

### Questions that came from the group:

- Who is responsible for housing in terms of transitional housing, tiny town, etc.?
- What can the City do when it comes to asking funding for province to support housing?
- Are there any more hotels for BC Housing to take over?
- Is there any opportunity for Indigenous housing?
- What is the City's/Council's ability to advocate to the CRHC?

### ACTIVITY #2

#### Results:

- **Most important:** Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship (3), Housing (2), Community Well-Being and Safety (2), Economic Health and Community Vitality (2), Truth and Reconciliation (1)
- **Second most important:** Housing (4), Transportation (2), Community Well-Being and Safety (1), Economic Health and Community Vitality (1), Truth and Reconciliation (1)
- **Least Important:** Arts, Culture, Music, Sport and Entertainment (3), Community Well-Being and Safety (2), Parks, Recreation and Gathering Spaces (2), Economic Health and Community Vitality (1), Transportation (1)

