

# Fitting the Pieces Together: Youth Homelessness in the WestShore

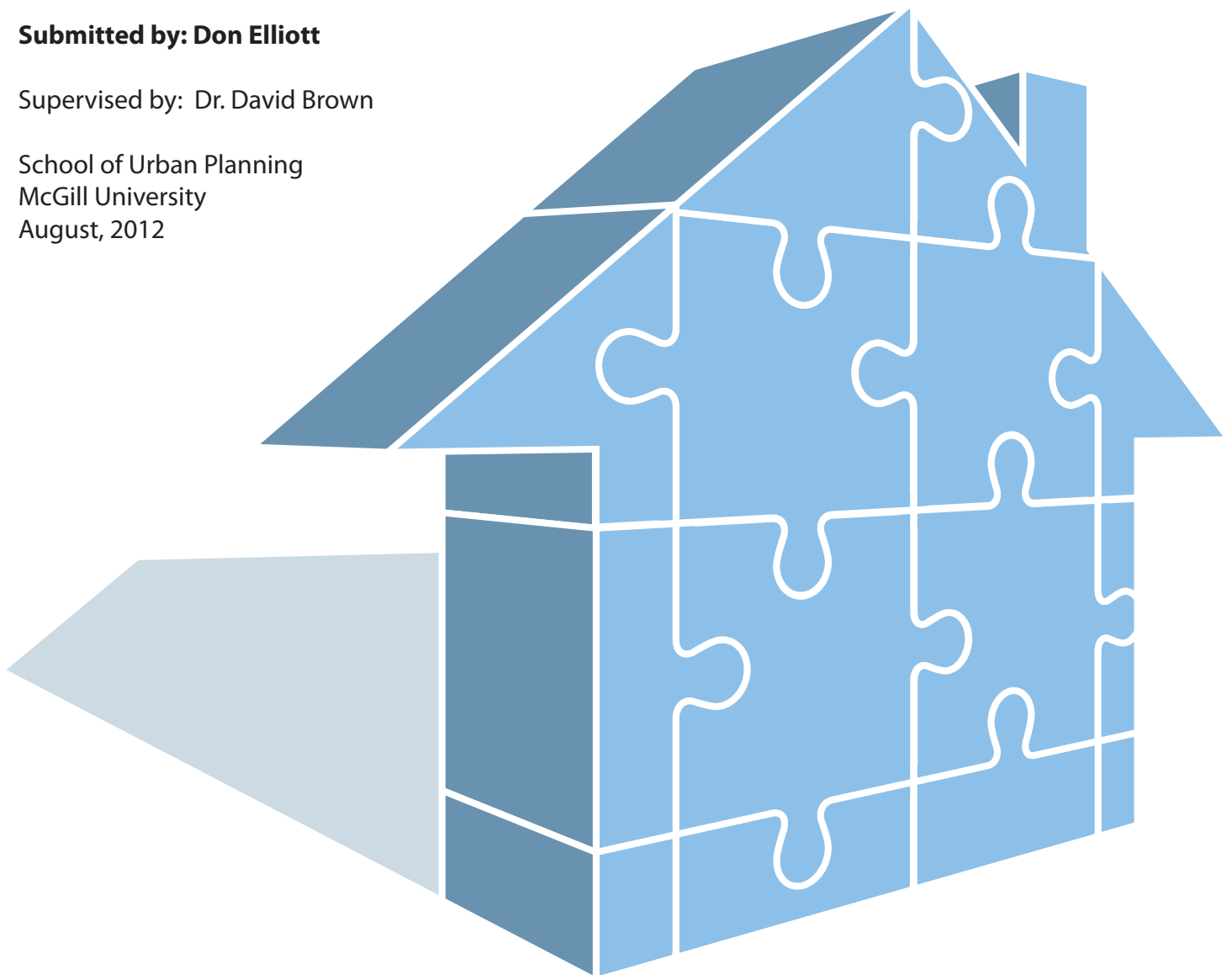
Supervised Research Project Report

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of  
Urban Planning degree

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# Abstract

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Significant population growth in the WestShore area of Vancouver Island has occurred in recent years, fuelled in part by the proximity to downtown Victoria, cheaper housing, and newer schools. This area has been particularly desirable for families, which has increased the youth population significantly, often overwhelming the available health and social supports. This has been particularly problematic for 'street-involved' youth as well as those youth who may be experiencing varying degrees of homelessness.

To assist youth-focused service and housing organizations in the area, the author first examines the complex social and economic character of five municipalities, looking specifically at indicators relevant to youth such as: rental housing cost, cohort size, population growth, and employment opportunities. He then examines youth homelessness focusing on some of the contributing factors and challenges. Finally, the author explores various housing typologies as a way to potentially address youth homelessness within the WestShore area. The purpose is to gain an understanding of youth homelessness reduction and prevention in general terms and based on this understanding, provide short, medium, and long-term recommendations to address youth homelessness within the WestShore.

This issue is an extremely complex one as there is no singular cause, nor is there a simple solution. Additionally, many of the possible interventions are extremely costly and are perhaps beyond the capacity of the service providers and housing organizations to immediately address. The most effective way to immediately address the growing need in the area for youth homelessness reduction and reduction is to first establish a youth specific shelter, while working towards establishing more permanent housing options once funding becomes available.

# Résumé

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La croissance démographique importante dans la WestShore superficie de l'île de Vancouver s'est produite ces dernières années, foulée en partie par la proximité du centre-ville de Victoria, écoles, logements moins cher et plus récentes. Cette région a été particulièrement souhaitable pour les familles, qui a augmenté la population des jeunes significativement, souvent écrasante la santé disponible et les soutiens sociaux. Cela a été particulièrement problématique pour les « » jeunes de rue, mais aussi des jeunes qui peuvent être confronté à des degrés divers de l'itinérance.

Pour aider les organisations dans le domaine du logement et services axés sur les jeunes, l'auteur examine tout d'abord le caractère social et économique complexe de cinq municipalités, examinant spécifiquement les indicateurs pertinentes aux jeunes comme: location logement coût, taille de la cohorte, la croissance démographique et possibilités d'emploi. Il examine ensuite les jeunes sans-abri en mettant l'accent sur certains des facteurs contributifs et des défis. Enfin, l'auteur explore les diverses typologies de logement comme un moyen potentiellement les jeunes adresse jeunes sans-abri dans la région de WestShore. Le but est de mieux comprendre des jeunes sans-abri réduction et la prévention en général termes et basée sur cette compréhension, fournir à court, moyen et à long terme de recommandations à l'adresse jeunes sans-abri dans le WestShore.

Cette question est extrêmement complexe car il n'y a aucune cause du singulier, ni y a-t-il une solution simple. En outre, plusieurs des interventions possibles sont extrêmement coûteuses et sont peut-être au-delà de la capacité des fournisseurs de services et organismes d'habitation à répondre immédiatement. Le moyen le plus efficace d'attaquer immédiatement la croissance nécessaire dans la région pour la réduction de jeunes sans-abri et de réduction doit d'abord établir un refuge spécifique pour les jeunes, alors qu'il travaillait à l'élaboration d'options de logement plus permanentes.

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# Introduction

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This report represents seven months of research conducted between December, 2011 and July, 2012 in the WestShore area of Vancouver Island. The WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force with support from the M'akola Group of Societies, the Threshold Housing Society, the WestShore Chamber of Commerce, and the Victoria Real Estate Board were instrumental in assisting with this research.

On November 21st, 2011, the Times Colonist ran an article titled, "Housing, poverty the top issues for young people, report finds", which cited a report from the Victoria Foundation, published November 16th, 2011. In this report, local youth ranked Youth and Homelessness first in terms of the top five areas that need attention. In the same report, Affordable Housing is ranked second in the top priority areas to dedicate more money, time and leadership. This first finding is the most telling and links closely to the motivations behind this report. This was echoed at the Bright Ideas Conference, 2011, where the youth expressed a concern "that there is nowhere to go if we get kicked out at night" (WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Taskforce Business Plan).

Rapid growth in the Victoria area has encouraged large numbers of families to move into the WestShore. This significant shift is due in part to "the proximity to downtown Victoria, cheaper housing, and newer schools" (WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Taskforce Business Plan). The Principal of Belmont Secondary School in Langford explained that this growth has resulted in more youth living within the WestShore and, in some instances, it has been reported that services and resources for youth have not been able to increase in proportion to the demand (Carl Repp, personal communication, January

30, 2012). The resulting service gaps have had significant impacts upon youth within the WestShore.

He further explained that while student intake numbers are declining for Saanich and Victoria, they are increasing by approximately 300 students annually for Belmont Secondary School. He continued to highlight one of the key challenges for local youth by explaining that though some resources for youth are shifting to follow this trend, it is not matching the rate of the "youth boom" in the WestShore (January 30, 2012).

## Terms of Reference:

To provide professional services in connection with understanding and providing for emergency, interim, and long-term youth housing needs in the WestShore area of Vancouver Island through a case study approach, and with an exploration of possible funding sources in order to both outline the best housing/shelter typology and provide potential resources for development.

The reality is that the WestShore currently lacks a safe place for youth to turn to when home is no longer an option. Youth in the WestShore are forced to make their way downtown to use shelter or accommodation services that are located there.

## Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to develop an in-depth understanding of housing need and demand for youth within the WestShore as well

as to produce a clear path towards an informed option for service providers to best assist youth. This report, in its entirety, stands as a first step towards a priority action plan for youth in the WestShore.

It has already been widely accepted that within the Capital Regional District that homelessness is a significant issue. Unfortunately however, much of this discussion has not evolved to include a clear path towards prevention and reduction of homelessness, more specifically, youth homelessness. To this end, this report will address the following research objectives:

- to understand what 'street involved' and 'youth homeless' mean within the context of the WestShore;
- to understand what factors may be affecting youth within the WestShore, or what challenges they may be facing;
- to provide a comprehensive overview of each of the five municipalities that, together, comprise the WestShore;
- to explore five different types of youth shelter and housing options; and,
- to establish a clear path forward for the Youth Homelessness Task Force to best assist youth within the WestShore.

It is expected that this research will be vital to the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force in outlining their next steps in addressing youth need within the community.

It is also the hope that this research will raise the profile of youth homelessness within the CRD and will increase funding of programs and support the eventual establishment a permanent shelter and housing solution for the WestShore municipalities.

## Definition of Youth

The definition of youth often varies among service providers and groups. Youth can face the challenges of homelessness at a young age, and it is typical that girls can face challenges at a younger age than boys (Lillian Szpak, personal communication, January 16, 2012).

For the purpose of this study two cohorts are identified and used in qualitative data analysis: ages 13-18, defined as adolescent youth in the Youth Housing Study for BC's Capital Region, and ages 19-24, defined as emerging adults in the Youth Housing Study for BC's Capital Region. However, this study does recognize that the 25-30 range, defined as young adults in the Youth Housing Study for BC's Capital Region, often still utilizes youth support resources, and display important demographic trends in several of the municipalities in the WestShore. Due to the breakdown of statistical data, the range expands to include 10 - 24 year-olds in order to include the full range of youth in quantitative data analysis and population projections.

## WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force

The WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force was created in October of 2011 as a response to concerns that arose from the Bright Ideas Conference that took place on October 25th in Langford. The Task Force consists of a number of concerned organizations and individuals that, when prompted to design a priority action plan, decided that a collaborative approach to finding implementable solutions to the issues raised would best serve the overarching goal. Instead of creating a new society or organization, the group thought it would be more beneficial to work together in a task force consisting of, and operated by, existing organizations (WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force, 2011).

The WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force is made up of representatives of many organizations concerned about the well-being of youth in the WestShore area of Greater Victoria. Organizations



represented include: Pacific Centre Family Services Association, Capital Region Action Team for Sexually Exploited Youth, Threshold Housing Society, M'akola Housing, VanCity Credit Union, Coast Capital Credit Union, Pacifica Housing, Burnside- Gorge Community Association, Coalition to end Homelessness, Greater Victoria United Way, WestShore Chamber of Commerce, Victoria Real Estate Board, Worklink Employment Society, Pathway Project and members of the WestShore business community. Funding for this study was made available by the Greater Victoria United Way.

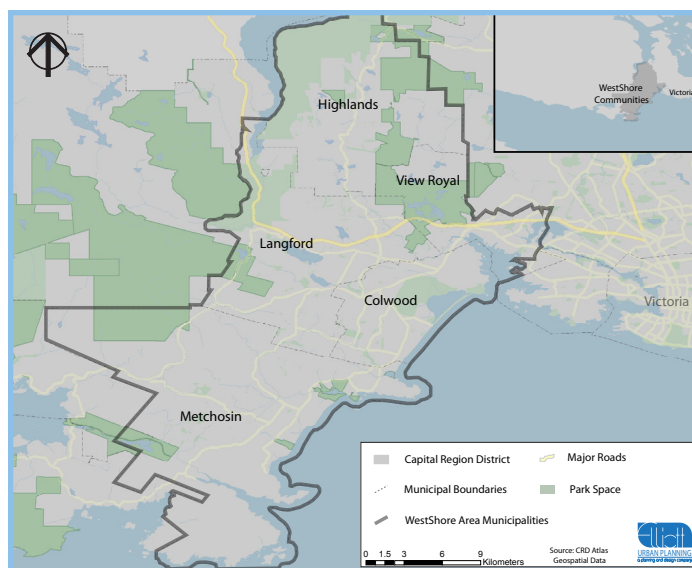
## CMHC Seed Funding for Housing Developments

This document is designed to fit the requirements established by the CMHC affordable housing development seed funding guidelines, which includes a comprehensive discussion of local communities. This program provides any proponent of an affordable housing project with up to \$20,000 towards the “initial activities required to develop a proposal for an affordable housing project that will result in increasing the stock of affordable housing in Canada” (CMHC, 2012).

In an effort to ensure that this report meets or exceeds the requirements of CMHC, I have additionally elected to use the guidelines as they are published by BC Housing.

## Study Area

The WestShore is located just to the northwest of Victoria, BC on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Part of the Capital Regional District, the area consists of the municipalities of Langford, Colwood, Metchosin, View Royal, and the Highlands. These municipalities are often linked due to geographic proximity, similar developmental patterns and their growth as suburbs of the City of Victoria. In 2006, the WestShore had a total population of 52,612 individuals. This grew to 61,626 in 2011, which accounts for a combined, overall growth rate of 17.1%. This growth is in stark contrast to the Capital Regional District total growth rate of just 4.3% and the provincial growth rate of 7%.



# Literature Review

This literature review will first examine what is meant by homelessness in general terms. It will then explore the definition of both 'youth homelessness' and 'street-involved' youth within the context of this paper. There will then be a discussion of some of the forces affecting youth and contributing to unstable living situations.

This section will lay out the foundation for an informed discussion of various interventions that could be undertaken by the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force in the effort to reduce the number of youth who are without safe, suitable accommodation.

## Homelessness

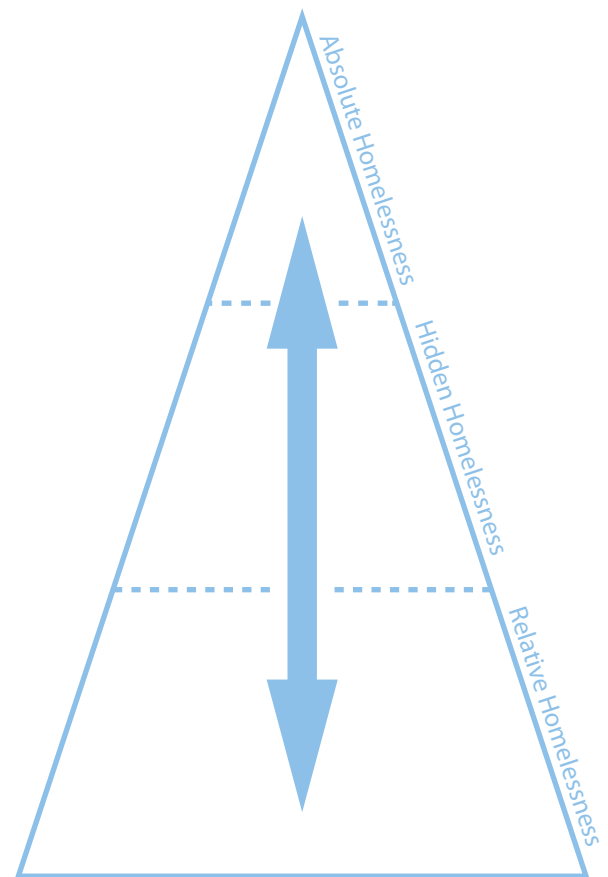
The way a problem is defined can have important influence on the very perception of the problem as well as limit the possible solutions. There is currently no "official" definition for homelessness within Canada. Rather, the term is interpreted in a multitude of ways by researchers, advocates and policy makers (Echenberg, H. & Jensen, H. 2008).

Essentially, there are two critical components that are fundamental to any discussion of homelessness: the housing situation (shelter); and, the element of time (temporal) (Echenberg, H. & Jensen, H. 2008).

Echenberg and Jensen describe a continuum for housing conditions based on types of shelter, above, right (2008). In this model there are three distinct classifications:

- Absolute Homelessness, Includes those living on the street or in emergency shelters;
- Hidden Homelessness, Includes people who may reside in a vehicle, with friends, with family, or in a long-term institution; and,
- Relative Homelessness, Includes those who may be at-risk of losing their homes or who live in substandard shelter.

Source: Echenberg, H. & Jensen, H. 2008.



Source: Echenberg, H. & Jensen, H. 2008.

This pyramid diagram is useful in that absolute homelessness is depicted as just the tip of the iceberg. The Social Planning and Research Council of Canada for example, estimate that for every person on the street suffering from homelessness, there are four whose homelessness is not visible (2007).

The European Federation of National Associations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) has developed another conceptual framework that places homelessness within three "domains" called ETHOS. According to FEANTSA, the three domains are:

*Having an adequate dwelling (or space) over which a person and his/her family can exercise exclusive possession (physical domain); being able to maintain privacy and enjoy relations (social domain) and having a legal title to occupation (legal domain).*

FEANTSA, 2007

ETHOS can be understood as a classification for people who are homeless based on their living situation, which includes four main concepts of:

1. Rooflessness, living on the street or in shelters;
2. Houselessness, living in shelters or institutions;
3. Insecure Housing, living under threat of eviction or violence; and,
4. Inadequate Housing, living in unfit or overcrowded conditions.

Source: FEANTSA, 2007

The second critical element of this discussion is the temporal aspect of homelessness. The amount of time a person suffers from homelessness or the frequency of homelessness events has a significant impact on the understanding of, and the possible solutions to the problem. Echenberg & Jensen define three broad categories and they include:

1. Chronic Homelessness, long-term or repeated homelessness;
2. Cyclical Homelessness, resulting from change of circumstance; and,
3. Temporary Homelessness, short in duration and sometimes caused by external circumstances.

Source: Echenberg, H. & Jensen, H. 2008

Through looking at both the pyramid diagram of homelessness and the more comprehensive ETHOS model it becomes clear that the definition of homelessness almost as complex as the very issue itself. It is clear however, that there are two elements that are critical to the discussion: shelter and time.

Gordon Laird speaks of a shift in homelessness across Canada. He explains that homelessness in Canada is a "symptom of deepening poverty - but it also reflects a broader and less visible erosion of housing security for a broad spectrum of Canadians: the working poor, seniors, immigrants and students" (2007).

He writes of these homeless as the "new homeless" that can be found across the country in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. This is the new underclass - "one that

includes the declining fortunes of a surprising number of suburbanites as well as the hard-living drug addicts" (Laird, 2007).

This discussion of the "new homeless" is one that is particularly profound because it increases the scope of the issue and expands on potential solutions beyond what Laird labels Canada's "explicitly welfarist approach to assisting those suffering from homelessness" (2007).

Within the context of this report, this definition of homelessness is expanded to include youth as youth have been identified by the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force as being particularly in need of assistance.

## Youth Homelessness

Youth homelessness, within this report, will refer to youth, who for whatever reason, may be either homeless, street involved, or trapped in a cycle of housing instability.

Jeff Evenson reports that the youth questioned make an important distinction between 'at-risk' and 'street involved.' The youth overwhelmingly preferred the term 'street involved' as it is considered more appropriate and they felt that 'at-risk' was too vague (2009).

Throughout this report I will use the term street involved as opposed to at-risk where appropriate. Within the context of this report, the term street involved youth is defined as: young people whose background or current situation places them at risk of future offending or victimization. This could be due to environmental, social and family conditions that could hinder their personal development and successful integration into the economy and society (UN-Habitat, 2003).

The transition into adulthood can be an extremely challenging time for youth as they are expected to have developed the skills needed to become responsible for their own well being. Unfortunately, in cities and towns throughout Canada, it is estimated that about one-third of the total homeless population are youth, and the

population of homeless under 24 are considered to be the single fastest growing segment of this population (Raising the Roof, 2001; Mochrie, 2009). This trend has fed into a rapidly expanding body of literature addressing solutions to youth homelessness.

A discussion of contributing factors for youth homelessness is a very complex one, as there are potentially as many contributing factors to youth homelessness as there are youth themselves.

The Broadview Applied Research Group (2005), in looking at understanding homelessness in Calgary, identified two distinct types of factors contributing to youth homelessness: push factors (shown right), and pull factors (next page).

The push factors are those that encourage or “push” a youth from their place of residence. These factors often are those that relate to youth in general terms and illustrate the diversity of services and supports that youth may need in order to be appropriately assisted (Broadview Applied Research Group, 2005).

The pull factors on the other hand, are those that encourage a youth to leave home due to situations that exist beyond the home. According to the Broadview Applied Research Group, 2005, these include drug use and relationships, particularly with older individuals.

Youth are an especially vulnerable population with less financial and emotional resources to assist their transition into adulthood. Further, these youth can often have troubled family histories, or maintain extremely limited contact with their family of origin.

The truth of the situation is that the youth homeless population is a heterogeneous one that tends to cycle in and out of homelessness at different speeds. Because of their unique backgrounds and different reasons for experiencing homelessness, they often do not respond solely to a single suite of supports (Mochrie, 2009).

## Push Factors

### Family Conflict

Conflict between family members that stems from a difference in values or beliefs with respect to behavioral patterns or expectations.

### Sexual Orientation

Many young people find themselves ejected from the house and abandoned after identifying their sexual preference to parents.

### Family Structure

Changes in the family resulting from such elements as remarriage, divorce, death in the family, or stepparent relationships.

### Poverty

Often results from overcrowding or inadequate living conditions and can have a wide array of symptoms affecting health and/or life opportunities.

### Abuse and Neglect

Can result from, or be related to any of the other push factors and can have lasting impacts upon the individuals ability to trust or relate to other adults.

### Learning and development disabilities

Can impact the youth’s ability to develop into a fully integrated member of society with the appropriate sense of social norms or behavioral patterns.

### Alienation

This can be either perceived or real and can have significant impacts on the youth’s ability to “fit in” with others which can result in increased the vulnerability of the youth.

Source: Broadview Applied Research Group, 2005

Other studies discuss the difference between macro and micro forces in contributing to youth homelessness. In this framework, macro or structural forces refer to social or economic policy that contribute to problems of poverty or affordable housing. In contrast, micro or biographical forces often relate to issues affecting the individual such as abuse, conflict, health, etc. (Mochrie, 2009; Harter et al, 2005; Daily, 1999).

Without question the most important finding from the literature is that though most youth suffer from a combination of macro and micro challenges, the dominant trend is that many homeless youth have suffered from physical or sexual abuse. According to the Corporation for Supportive Housing, 60-80% of adolescents staying in shelters or transitional housing have experienced sexual or physical abuse from either a parent or guardian (2007).

This report seeks to add another layer of analysis to the youth housing needs dialogue in the WestShore by incorporating best and promising practices of established housing and service providers. The literature suggests that intermediaries, either individuals or organizations that are responsible for the provision of goods and services to a target group, are generally more equipped to identify and promote best practices through their services and expertise. Community organizations with less experience, however, will likely benefit from the incorporation of these best practices, rather than using unproven methods (Department of Health and Human Services, 2003). By broadening of the scope of local dialogue, this report aims to provide a more comprehensive and progressive list of practices that are being utilized through other housing case studies and could be effectively implemented within the WestShore.

An important distinction can be made between best practices and promising practices. One challenge is that there is currently no single definition of what constitutes a best practice within the non-profit sector and therefore many different organizations use a different criteria for identifying best practices.

## Pull Factors

### Substance and addiction

Is generally incompatible with a home or family environment and can cause significant tensions with parents or care givers. The dependency upon substances can draw youth out into an environment that appears more accepting of the dependency.

### Boyfriend/Girlfriend hetero and homosexual relationships

Youth can become involved with other individuals that are often older and can result in instances of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse or exploitation.

Source: Broadview Applied Research Group, 2005

This report will use, as a general working definition for best practice:

*a program, activity, or strategy that has a proven or demonstrated degree of success that is proven through objective and comprehensive research and evaluation (Department of Health and Human Services, 2003)*

A promising practice, on the other hand, is defined as:

*a program, activity, or strategy that has demonstrated effectiveness within a particular organization but shows promise for eventually becoming a best practice with a long-term sustainable impact and the opportunity for replication by other service providers (Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).*

The reason for this distinction is to better inform decision makers and communities about the complex issues and approaches to youth housing and support initiatives. Through this report I will be drawing upon both best and promising practices to lay a framework for youth housing within the WestShore.

There are some critical components of housing support provision, outlined in the literature, that are unique to youth. Youth need to be challenged, supported and permitted to grow and mature within their own homes. In this situation, parents or guardians typically provide the structure, guidance, understanding, and encouragement that youth need, all in a safe, protective and secure environment. When this living situation is not an option, or is no longer suitable, youth are left without this critical developmental foundation and this is where housing support services must fit. These services “should be designed to promote the youth’s independence, they must also ensure a sense of safety and security” (Mochrie, 2009).

Youth homelessness differs widely from that of adult homelessness as the focus is not solely on returning the individual to a state of healthy independence. Often youth who are experiencing homelessness, or are street involved come from environments where they were “dependent - financially and emotionally - on adults” (Mochrie, 2009). A specific set of intervention strategies and approaches are required to foster healthy, independent, and social connectedness and emotional development. Programs and housing initiatives targeting youth, therefore, need to maintain a degree of emotional care and support, in addition to meeting the basic living needs of the user population (Mochrie, 2009; Broadview Research Group, 2005).

Mochrie (2009) identifies, through a review of the literature, three critical over-arching aspects that enable effective housing and supports for youth (shown below).

## Three Critical Aspects

1. The integration of housing and services
2. Culturally appropriate services
3. Provision of health services

Source: Mochrie, 2009

The integration of housing and services offers youth an environment that mirrors that of a typical home experience with supports, safety, boundaries, and expectations all offered within a comfortable structure that provides shelter familiarity and security.

Integral to the structuring and administration of services for youth is the understanding of cultural diversity among the population. Homelessness and street involvement are concepts that are influenced through cultural definitions and behaviors and as Mochrie explains, “what may appear to be an unhealthy living situation from the outside, may not be the case if a youth has a social sense of belonging that provides the security of a home even in the absence of one particular physical space” (2009).



Because there are additional health concerns impacting youth homeless or street involved populations, there must be housing supports that connect physical health, mental health, and substance abuse services, to provide a suite of services readily available to youth, that is delivered in a holistic fashion. This should be offered in line with a “housing first” philosophy that identifies the immediate need of ensuring that a youth, is first and foremost, safe and secure. This is then the first step towards addressing the need of the individual and where additional services can then be offered.

In the 2007 Vancouver Youth Options Study there were 31 listed “best practices”. Mochrie has presented seven distinct and comprehensive key success factors that are visible left (2009). These seven elements flow directly from the three over-arching Critical Aspects for Youth Housing listed below.

## Seven Key Success Factors

1. Ensure basic needs are met
2. Provide options to remain in the community
3. Ensure coordination between service providers
4. Have well-trained, non-judgemental, compassionate and multidisciplinary staff
5. Be flexible
6. Take a youth development approach
7. Facilitate community integration

Source: Mochrie, 2009

The next section will build off of this literature review by providing illustrating how these definitions and common themes will be applied to the WestShore youth in a way that is both specific to the needs of the community and is firmly grounded in a body of literature.

# Methodology

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Because it was critical that this study complied with the requirements of the CMHC Housing Seed Funding for Housing Developments it was recommended to me to follow the BC Housing Templates for establishing need and demand as well as to look at the CMHC Guidelines for the feasibility phase of a housing development available at: [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/afhoce/tore/lerc/lerc\\_028.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/afhoce/tore/lerc/lerc_028.cfm)

Respecting these two sources, I looked at data obtained from the Canadian Census and BC Stats for the years 2001 and 2006. BC Stats cites unpublished Statistics Canada data in their Community Facts document from 2010 on labour force employment by industry, which is included as an economic indicator in this study. A geometric population projection was used to determine the potential population for the years 2016 through to 2026.

I elected to use a geometric population projection because with this type of growth calculation accurately the large population growth increments visible in these communities. This is due to the self-reinforcing nature of the growth patterns in this calculation in that the rates are based on a constant ratio rather than fixed population growth increments.

I also used data collected from interviews with individuals working within the WestShore and the Victoria area. Because of time, resource and geographic constraints I was not able to contact individuals directly. Rather, I have worked with members of the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force who were able to engage youth and experts through their organizations and programs. A complete list of all persons who contributed to these findings can be found in the Appendix of this report.

I have also reviewed a great deal of “grey literature,” such as municipal documents, and other professional studies and reports as a means to present a complete, comprehensive discussion of housing need and demand for youth within the WestShore.

For this report I have focused the methodology in two principal ways. The first way involves a comprehensive literature and case study review. The case study review is of policy initiatives to address youth homelessness through different housing typologies.

The literature review essentially sets the foundation for the rest of the discussion and places this report within a larger body of research and writing. By beginning the report in this fashion it ensures the dialogue will remain theoretically grounded as well as practice-based. The case study review begins to build upon this foundation by illustrating four key youth-based housing typologies. For this report, I will be exploring the housing models listed below.

I have chosen to look at a wide range of housing typologies, from all over North America, as a way to encourage a diverse discussion of housing models, and homelessness reduction and prevention initiatives. It is also critical to look at local Victoria examples to address what have been done locally. This methodology enables me to do both.

The next step in this report was to work with members of the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force to compile their findings and experiences into this report. The individuals contributions are woven throughout this document in an effort to provide a level of local validity for this discussion.

In initial phone conferences with the Task Force, it was evident that the directors and members of the various youth and homelessness agencies in the Victoria area felt that too often outside “experts” created certain



recommendations or conducted local research on issues with insufficient consideration of people that have spent their careers involved in these issues.

By including the Task Force and its member agencies from the very onset was a way to ensure there was adequate consultation with these groups.

Perhaps the most critical and informative step in this process was the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force Youth Focus Group that took place on February 23, 2012. This focus group provided me with invaluable insight from the perspective of WestShore youth about what they actually need. This outreach, combined with a literature and case study review ensures that this report effectively represents the body of literature from academics and experience from service providers as well as the wishes and needs of those youth that represent the target population within the WestShore.

There is also the added element of cost and limitations of the recommendation towards the end of this report. The Task Force is not a wealthy or well funded organization. They are a group that is actively involved in the community in an effort to assist those who may be street involved or experiencing homelessness. Because of this, funding sources become a key component of any recommendations and potential interventions.

I have reviewed thoroughly, a number of funding sources and have included ones that I think are appropriate. This is by no means an exhaustive list, nor was it intended to be. Rather, it is a first step towards meeting the need of youth and service providers in the community.

These funding opportunities can effectively “buy time” while more long-term and sustainable sources can be explored.

The final step in the completion of this report are the recommendations. A lengthy list of all possible recommendations was initially provided to the Task Force and through consultation, we collectively whittled

the recommendations down to clear, obtainable goals that respect the overall tone and vision of the report as well as local service organization resources.

I wanted to provide a clear and direct path towards a long-term, financially sustainable housing program for youth and these recommendations are the first steps towards this end goal.

# Case Studies

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The case study component of this report is an essential step towards addressing the need within this community. This case study will take place in two key ways. First, there will be a through analysis of the five municipalities that make up the WestShore area of Victoria, BC. This is in accordance with the CMHC Seed Finding for Housing Developments program. At this stage it is important to highlight that though the Task Force is not actively pursuing seed funding I wish to ensure that if and when they do, they are able to have this report included as one of the eligible components.

Second, there is a look at five different shelter models as a means to explore all available options that are currently available to the service providers within the WestShore.

It is through, first, laying out the characteristics of the WestShore, and then exploring the possible solutions that the recommendations best address youth housing need within this community can be laid out and potentially realized.

## Case Studies:

### Emergency Shelter Models

- Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (Victoria, BC)
- Out of the Rain Youth Shelter (Victoria, BC)

### Transitional Housing Models

- Threshold Youth Housing (Victoria, BC)
- Pandora Youth Apartments (Victoria, BC)

### Supportive Housing Models

- First Place Fund for Youth (Oakland, CA)\*
- Seventh Landing (Saint Paul, MN)\*

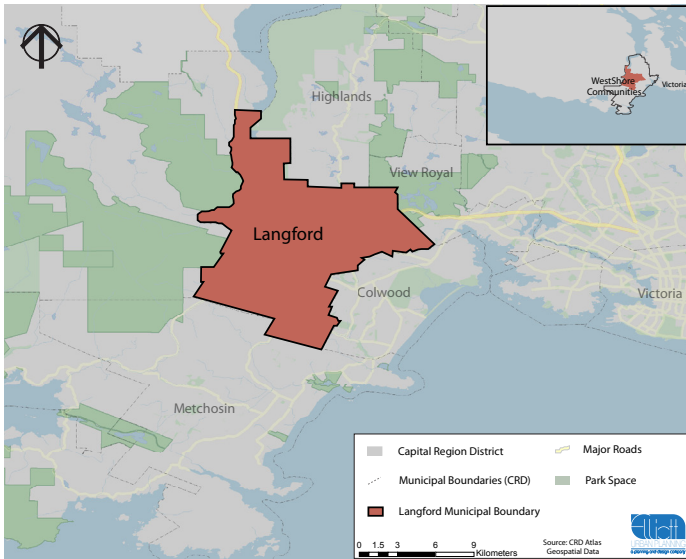
### Continuum Youth Housing Models

- Covenant House Vancouver (Vancouver, BC)
- Larkin Street Youth Services (San Francisco, CA)

### Other

- Victoria Human Exchange Society (Victoria, BC)

# The City of Langford

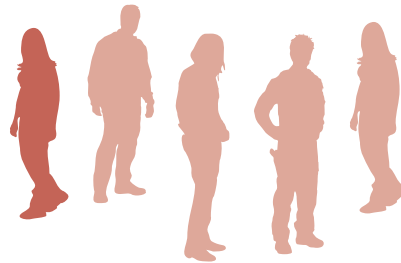
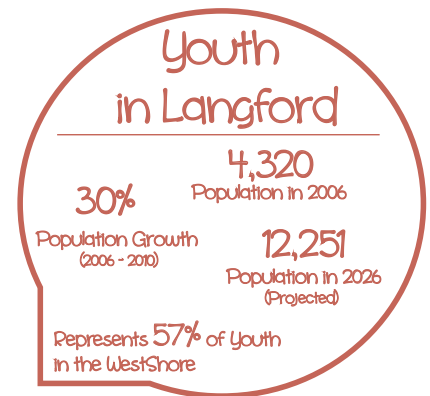


The City of Langford has a total land area of 39.55 square kilometers and is neighboured by View Royal to the east and Colwood to the south. Since becoming incorporated in 1992, Langford has been committed to creating a community that attracts young families and new businesses. The City prizes its progressive planning, which has supported a bustling downtown core through innovative urban design principles, the creation of a network of active transportation lanes, and the construction of the new City Centre Park and sportsplex.

## Key Demographics, Population Growth and the Local Economy

In terms of population, Langford is one of the fastest growing municipalities in the WestShore. The growth rate of 19% between 2001 and 2006 is significantly higher than the provincial average of 5.3% (Stats Can, 2006). Recent population estimations by BC Stats places the population in Langford at 29,158 for 2010, suggesting the area is continuing its pattern of rapid development and growth. Based on the BC Stats growth rate of 30% between 2006 and 2010, the population for Langford will be 63,806 in 2026.

The rapidly growing population of Langford consists of 8,685 private households, of which 1,295 are single person households. This represents 14% of all households and is

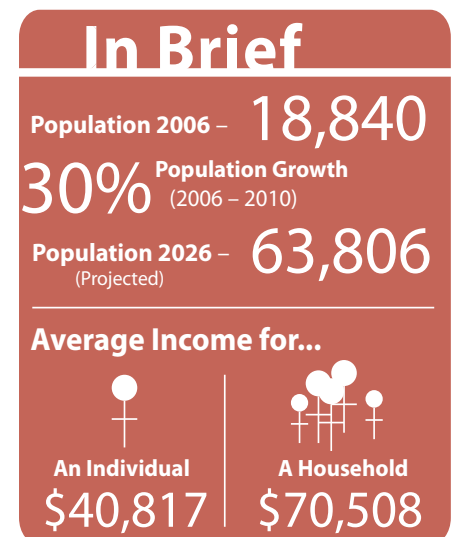


a 37% increase from 2001. According to BC Stats, 7,001 children live at home, which is just over one per census family. Youth (10-24) account for 4,320 individuals, or 19% of the total population.

The accompanying population pyramid on the following page clearly displays this large population of youth in Langford (BC Stats, 2010 and 2011). In contrast, the population pyramid also shows a significant decline amongst the "emerging adults" cohort (ages 19-24).

Within the City of Langford, BC Stats reports on 37 different industry classifications within their Community Profiles Report, of which 36 allow for a trend analysis from 2001 to 2006. Of these 36, only six industries within

Langford have experienced a decline in terms of the numbers of individuals employed. All told, these six industries in the community represent a total of 60 jobs in the community. The industries

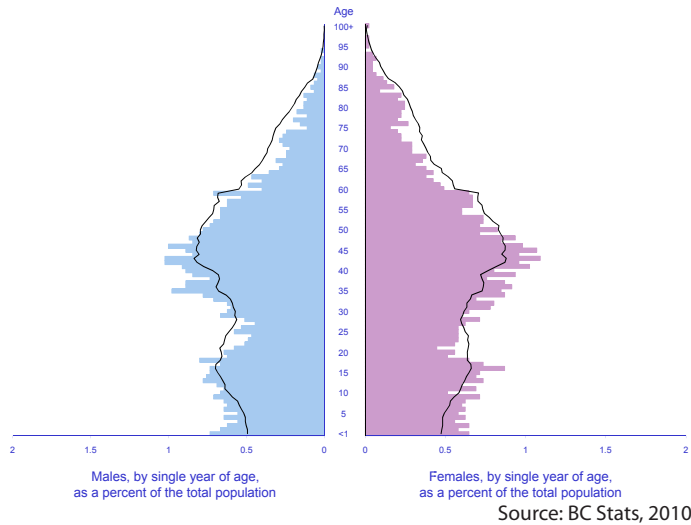
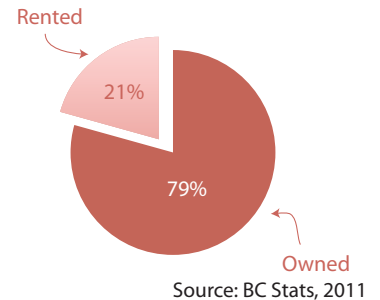


## Income and Housing

The relationship between housing prices and income is an important measure in determining housing affordability as income levels directly affect an individual's ability to rent or purchase housing. Income and housing affordability are shown in the chart below. The following discussion is divided into rental and owner-occupied.

### Rental

In the City of Langford, of the 8,685 private dwellings, about 21% or 1,795 dwellings are rental, with an average gross rent of \$856 per month, which is slightly higher than the provincial average of \$828 per month. While the percentage of rental to owned dwellings in Langford is much lower than the 30% average for the Province, the number of rental units has increase by 8% since 2001, which is significantly higher than the decrease of 3.6% for the Province overall. Also, while the accompanying housing typology chart exhibits a diverse spread of housing more suited to youth renters, the single-family detached house still dominates the landscape.



experiencing decline include those such as utilities (-17%) and paper manufacturing (-100%). This is in contrast to industries such as general merchandise stores (+83%), professional, scientific and technical services (+35%), educational services (+50%), construction (+60%) and accommodation and food services (+45%), which have all experienced significant increases in the number of workers employed (2011). These industries that are on the rise in Langford are both those that are specialized in nature that require a high level of education or training, and those offering lower-skilled, entry-level access into the job market. Overall, Langford has the most stable and diverse economy in the WestShore area.

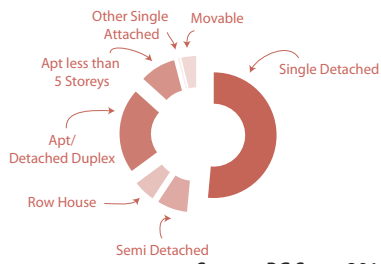
### Langford Housing and Affordability

|                                     | 2001     | 2006     | % Change |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Average Household Income            | \$54,911 | \$70,508 | 28%      |
| Average Income One Person Household | \$29,828 | \$40,817 | 39%      |
| Average Rent                        | \$780    | \$856    | 23%      |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Renters | 46       | 34       | -33%     |
| Average Owner Payment               | \$975    | \$1,223  | 28%      |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Owners  | 23       | 23       | 28%      |

Source: BC Stats, 2011

## Affordable Housing Policy in the City of Langford

The Local Government Act of British Columbia requires that municipalities address and “work toward” the goal of affordable, rental and special needs housing (Local Government Act, Section 877 and 878, 1996). All the municipalities that make up the WestShore mention affordable housing in their Official Community Plans. Housing policies provide the framework to address short-term and long-term solutions to issues in the community. The Cities of Langford and Colwood have mirroring housing policies because of their pioneering “sub-regional” joint planning process (Langford and Colwood, 2008). Langford has a highly developed affordable housing policy, which includes an Affordable Housing, Park and Amenity Contribution Fund. Much of the focus on this policy, however, is on families or those in single-parent households. This focus is the result of the confidential selection criteria that is based on a point system that includes such requirements as: a connection to the community, a minimum of two people, and those without means to purchase a home. Langford’s senior planner, Leanne Taylor, confirmed the popularity of this program by estimating a wait-list for this housing at about 100 (personal communication, January 24, 2012). Working simultaneously with this aforementioned policy are numerous incentive based initiatives such as, 10 year tax exemptions to encourage affordable housing, a minimum of 50% of new homes having live-in suites, and other incentives to encourage the development and construction of non-market rentals.



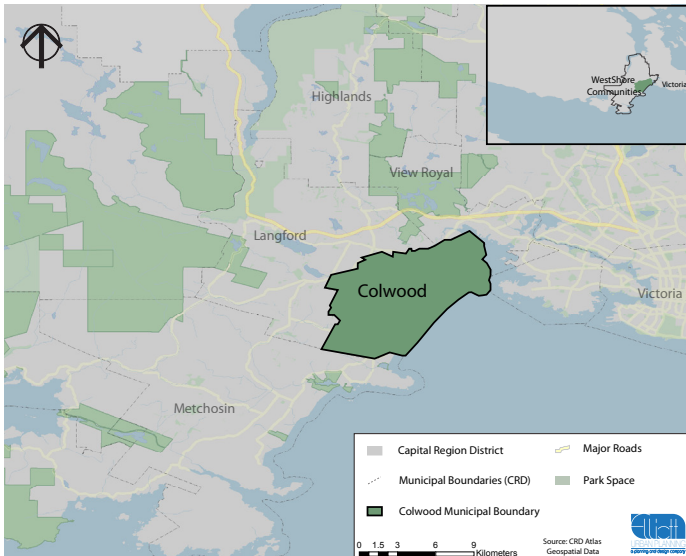
One of the planners at Langford has acknowledged a push by the City to increase rental stock through the recent approval of several multi-unit

projects that will be located throughout the City. In terms of current affordability in Langford, 34% of renters pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing, which is well below the provincial average of 43% of renters in core housing need.

## Owner-Occupied

Although youth are not generally homeowners, homeownership is still often a long-term priority. Therefore it is important to briefly illustrate the following figures on owner-occupied affordability. Within the City of Langford, the average value of an owner-occupied house is \$384,938 (a 101% increase in value since 2001), with an average monthly payment of \$1,223 per household. In order to afford this cost, an individual would have to have an annual minimal net income of \$48,920.

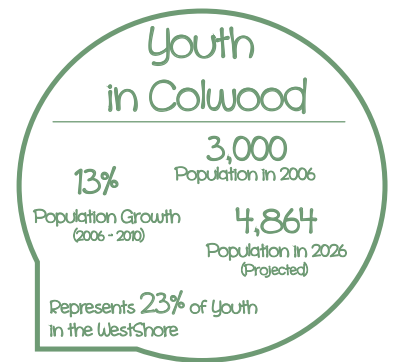
# The City of Colwood



Incorporated in 1985 and located within the Capital Regional District, the City of Colwood has a total area of 17.76 square kilometers. The City is nestled between Esquimalt to the west, View Royal to the north, and Metchosin to the south (BC Stats, 2011). This rapidly growing seaside municipality boasts a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit that includes a strong economy of home-based businesses. There are numerous award-winning developments that offer ample high profile commercial spaces within the community. The City of Colwood is also a leader in sustainability initiatives with projects like the Solar Colwood Project, announced January 2011, tackling residential energy consumption and pioneering residential clean energy initiatives (WestShore Chamber of Commerce, 2012).

## Key Demographics, Population Growth and the Local Economy

Colwood experienced a population growth of 7% between 2001 and 2006 with the population sitting at 14,687 in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006). This population is expected to continue to grow with BC Stats estimating a population in 2010 of 16,579. This represents a growth rate between 2006 and 2010 of 13% or almost double that of the growth rate between 2001 and 2006 (2011). Based on the BC Stats predicted growth rate of 13%, the expected population in 2026 is 23,847.



This rapidly growing population consists of 5,500 private households, of which 1,010 are single-person households. According to Statistics Canada, 4,815 children live at home, which is 1.1 per census family. The largest age cohort of those children living at home is the 6-14 age range accounting for 40%. This is followed very closely by the age cohort of 15-24, which makes up 35% of youth living at home (BC Stats, 2010).

## In Brief

Population 2006 – 14,687

13% Population Growth (2006 – 2010)

Population 2026 – 23,847 (Projected)

Average Income for...



An Individual

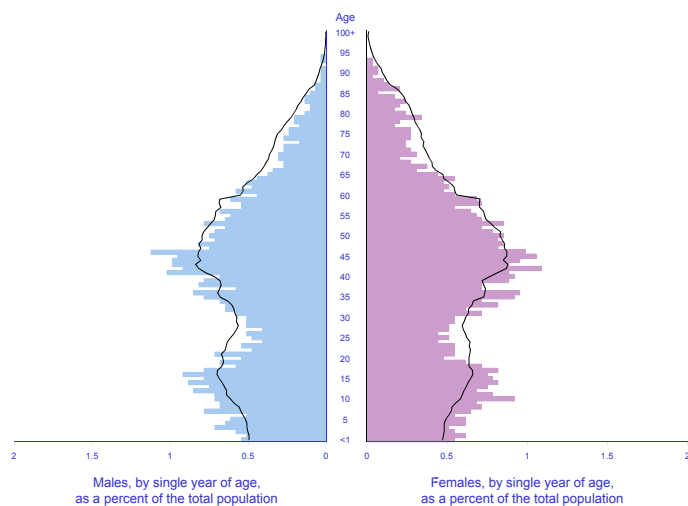
\$35,558



A Household

\$74,162





As the population pyramid shows, the age group 0-19 account for 27.4% of the total population, which is 4.2% larger than the provincial average. In contrast, the group 20-29, or those who are transitioning into adulthood, account for just 10% of the total population, slightly less than the provincial average of 12% (BC Stats, 2010). The City of Colwood displays a large youth population (those <19) while at the same time demonstrating a slightly less than average proportion of the population in the 20-29 range.

The total labour force employed in the City of Colwood increased 13% between 2001 and 2006. This is significantly higher than the provincial average of 8%. Of the 37 different industry classifications that BC Stats reports on, 28 allow for a summary trend analysis. Six industries of the 28 have experienced a decline in terms of the numbers of individuals employed. Industries such as utilities (-43%), manufacturing (-2%), and health care and social assistance (-12%) have experienced some level of decline. The most significant industries that experienced a sharp growth are food manufacturing (+200%), wood product manufacturing (+150%), and mining and oil and gas extraction, which increased 133% between 2001 and 2006. There is a wide range within the City of Colwood of the types of jobs that are experiencing growth. Manufacturing for example, can often serve as a pathway into the workforce for many youth and though it is often dependent on external market conditions

and raw material costs, it can provide a high degree of stability for a wide array of individuals. Other industries that are on the rise include educational services (+7.7%) and professional, scientific and technological services (+59.4%) are specialized, provide a great deal of job security but are not often suitable for many youth looking for entry into the workforce.

## Income and Housing

The relationship between housing prices and income is an important measure in determining housing affordability, as income levels directly affect an individual's ability to rent or purchase housing. Income and housing affordability are shown in the chart below. The following discussion is divided into rental and owner-occupied.

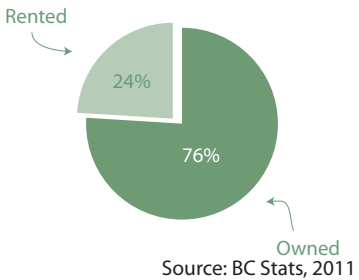
### Colwood Housing and Affordability

|                                     | 2001     | 2006     | % Change |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Average Household Income            | \$62,341 | \$74,162 | 19%      |
| Average Income One Person Household | \$30,479 | \$35,558 | 17%      |
| Average Rent                        | \$811    | \$948    | 17%      |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Renters | 26       | 31       | 20%      |
| Average Owner Payment               | \$998    | \$1,153  | 16%      |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Owners  | 20       | 20       | 3%       |

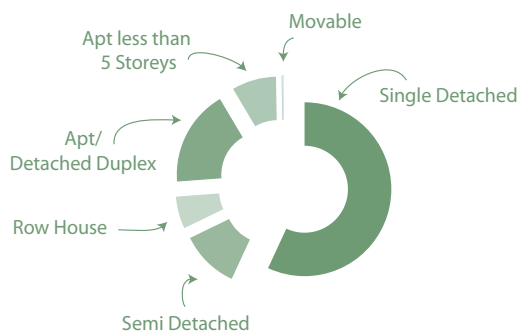
Source: BC Stats, 2011

## Rental

Within the City of Colwood, 24%, or 1,330 of the 5,500 occupied dwellings are rentals with an average gross rent of \$948. Colwood, according to BC Stats, is the third most expensive area to reside within the WestShore, based on average gross rents (2011). The City of Colwood Official Community Plan reports that, within Colwood "incomes have risen by 16% from 2000 to 2006, while housing costs rose 107% in the same period" (2008). The rental costs represents an increase of 17% from 2001. The implications for the population from this significant increase in rental cost are further compounded by the decrease in total number of rental units.



"There is a lack of construction of new purpose-built rental housing and a gradual loss of existing affordable housing stock" (Colwood OCP, 2008). Though owned dwellings increased 18% between 2001 and 2006, rental units experienced a decrease of 1% (BC Stats, 2011). The landscape of Colwood is dominated by single-family detached homes accounting for almost 56% of existing housing stock. As shown in the accompanying chart, the remaining 44% consists of a fairly even distribution of semi-detached, row houses, and apartments below five stories (Statistics Canada, 2006). In terms of affordability, 31% of renters pay more than 30% of their gross income on rent, which is 12% below the provincial average of renters in core housing need as defined by CMHC.



Source: BC Stats, 2010

## Owner-Occupied

Within the City of Colwood, the average value of an owner-occupied house is \$415,643 with an average monthly payment of \$1,153 per household. While this represents a 16% increase in monthly housing cost since 2001, average household incomes have risen by 19%. Looking at owner affordability in 2006, 20% of households paid more than 30% gross income on housing and are therefore, in core need of housing, as defined by CMHC. To get a sense of what this means on the individual level, in order to afford this cost, an individual would have to have an annual net income of \$46,120.

## Affordable Housing Policy in the City of Colwood

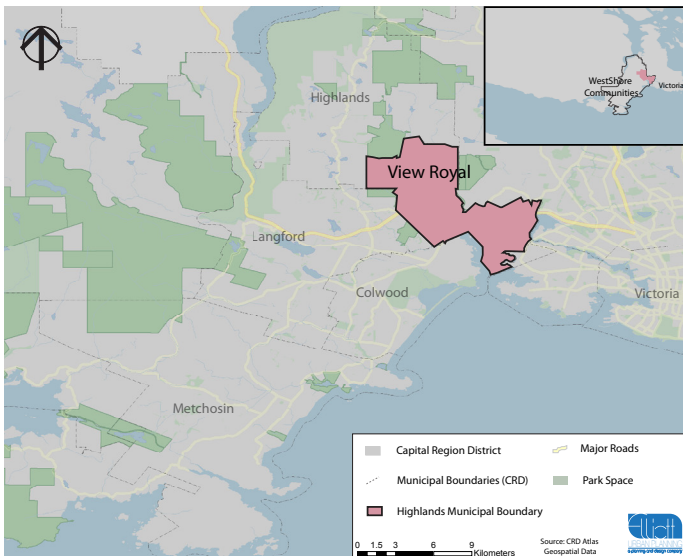
The City of Colwood provides the following affordable housing objectives in their Official Community Plan: preserving and increase the stock of safe and affordable housing (7.1), support residents in moving through the stages of the housing continuum (7.2), identify the full scope of special needs housing in the community (7.3), aging in place (7.4), and targets for family and ground-oriented housing in high density development projects (7.5). In order to achieve these objectives they have introduced an attainable housing policy, policies around contributing to housing funds, encouraging innovative additional dwelling units (such as secondary suites, flex housing, mingle suites and lock-off suites), forming partnerships and streamlining the approvals process for affordable housing projects. The City of Colwood also included policy 7.2.1:

*To meet the needs of those residents needing emergency shelter and/or supportive housing, the city will work with local social service providers, culture or religious groups, and senior levels of government to locate emergency shelter facilities in the community on an as need basis. The City will work with partners to ensure appropriate supportive services are implemented.*

City of Colwood OCP, 2008



# The Town of View Royal



Since being incorporated in 1988, the 14.48 square kilometer Town of View Royal has experienced significant growth and development while still striving to maintain its natural character. As the gateway between the City of Victoria's urban core and the WestShore municipalities, View Royal is bounded by the District of Saanich to the north, the City of Colwood to the south, and the City of Langford to the west. View Royal boasts some of the best of both worlds, focusing on achieving walkability and the accessibility of urban areas, while maintaining an extensive network of parks and waterways for active and passive recreation. Housing policies such as secondary suites permits and encourages a diversification of housing options in the View Royal area. The WestShore Chamber of Commerce cites "the goal is for View Royal to be one of the best places to call home: livable, green,

and sustainable," (BC Stats, 2011 and WestShore Chamber of Commerce, 2012).

## In Brief

Population 2006 – **8,768**

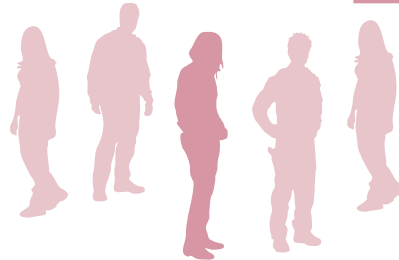
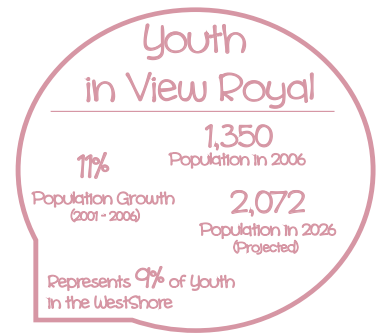
**11%** Population Growth  
(2006 – 2010)

Population 2026 – **13,368**  
(Projected)

### Average Income for...

An Individual  
**\$34,299**

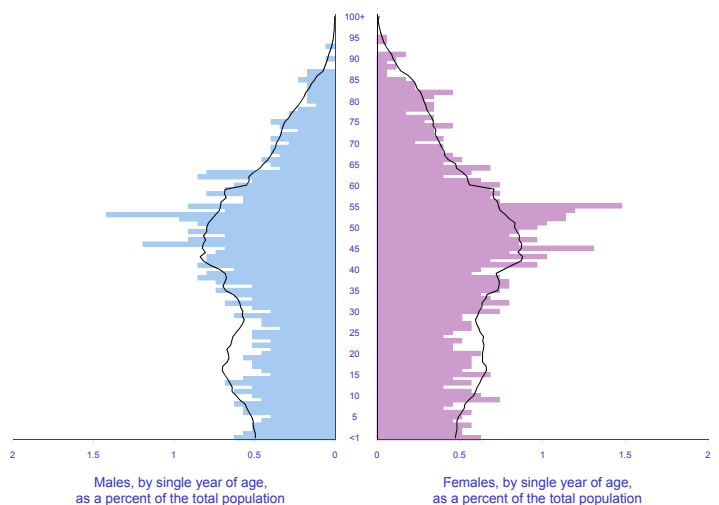
A Household  
**\$78,7511**



## Key Demographics, Population Growth and the Local Economy

In terms of population, between 2001 and 2006, View Royal is the fastest growing municipality in the WestShore. The growth rate of 21% between 2001 and 2006 is significantly higher than the provincial average of 5.3% between the years 2001 and 2006 (Stats Can, 2006). BC Stats has estimated the population at 9,743 in 2010, suggesting the area will continue to grow, though at the reduced rate of 11%. Using this BC Stat population growth prediction, the population in 2026 is expected to be 13,368.

The rapidly growing population of View Royal consists of 3,340 households, of which 795 are single-person households. The 795 single-person households in 2006 represents a 5% increase over 2001. According to BC



Stats, 2,290 children live at home. The age range of 10 – 24 accounts for 10% of the total population, which is much lower than the provincial average of 19.4%- see population pyramid below (BC Stats, 2010 and 2011).

Within the Town of View Royal, BC Stats reports on 37 different industry classifications within their Community Profiles Report, of which 32 allow for a trend analysis from 2001 to 2006. Of these 32, 14 industries within View Royal have experienced a decline in terms of the numbers of individuals employed. Industries such as fishing and forestry (-100%), manufacturing (-27%), and transportation and warehousing (-7%) have all experienced declines. Even food and beverage stores (-19%) and accommodation services (-11%) have decreased during this time. This is in contrast to industries such as real estate and rental/leasing (+57%), Professional, scientific and technical services (+70%), educational services (+50%), and construction (+59%) that have experienced significant increases. These industries on the rise in View Royal are specialized in nature and require a high level of education or training, which may contribute to youth of employable age looking outside of the community for job opportunities. There are however, some significant opportunities for youth employment in View Royal such as, increases in clothing and clothing accessories (+75%) and food services and drinking places (+62%), for a combined total of 375 jobs, many of which provide entry-level access into the job market (2011).

## Income and Housing

The relationship between housing prices and income is an important measure in determining housing affordability. Income levels directly affect an individual's ability to rent or purchase housing. Income and housing affordability are shown in the chart below. The following discussion is divided into rental and owner-occupied.

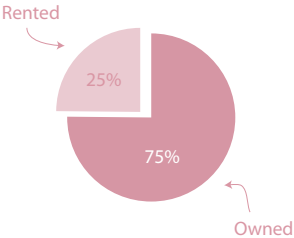
View Royal Housing and Affordability

|                                     | 2001     | 2006     | % Change |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Average Household Income            | \$61,535 | \$78,511 | 28%      |
| Average Income One Person Household | \$30,500 | \$42,299 | 39%      |
| Average Rent                        | \$780    | \$958    | 23%      |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Renters | 45       | 30       | -33%     |
| Average Owner Payment               | \$939    | \$1,206  | 28%      |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Owners  | 16       | 21       | 28%      |

Source: BC Stats, 2011

## Rental

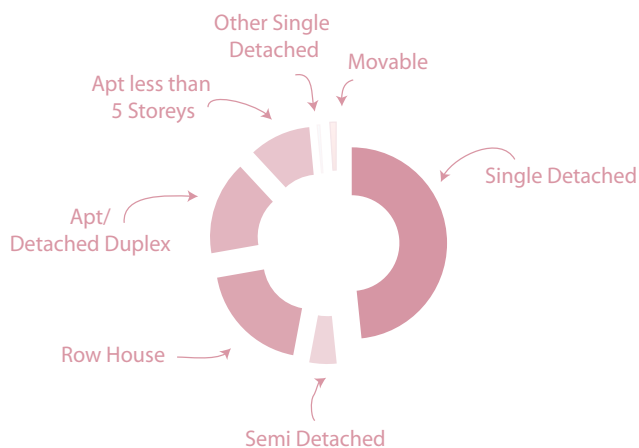
Of the 3,340 private dwellings, about 25% or 830 dwellings are rental, with an average gross rent of \$958 per month. This is significantly higher than the provincial average of \$820 per month. Also, the number of rental units has remained stagnant since 2001, with no increase in the number of units by 2006. While the accompanying housing typology chart exhibits a diverse spread of housing more suited to youth renters, the single-family detached house still dominates the landscape of View Royal. In terms of current affordability in View Royal, 30% of renters pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing, which is below the provincial average of 43% of renters in core housing need. However, youth encounter significantly different barriers to housing than the general population, which will be discussed further in the Youth Housing section in the later portion of this report.



Source: BC Stats, 2010

## Owner-Occupied

Within the Town of View Royal, the average value of an owner-occupied house is \$ 460,288 (a 109% increase in value since 2001), with an average monthly payment of \$1,206 per household. This figure represents a 28% increase in monthly payments, which results in 21% of homeowners paying more than 30% income on housing. In order to afford the cost of a home in View Royal, an individual needs to have an annual net income of \$48,240.



Source: BC Stats, 2011

## Affordable Housing Policy in the Town of View Royal

In the View Royal Official Community Plan, housing affordability is supported through the development of non-market affordable housing, “affordability through design,” a secondary suites policy, financial contributions to the Regional Housing Trust Fund, density bonusing, partnerships, targeted infill, and incentives for smaller, more affordable units. Within the Official Community Plan, the Town also identifies ideal neighborhoods for increasing affordable housing stock. While View Royal focuses on affordable “ground-oriented” housing, attractive to young families, youth are still a planning priority:

The Town has a particular focus on youth, as was evident from the outreach and consultation undertaken in the OCP planning process. Today’s young people are tomorrow’s leaders and View Royal is committed to finding ways to continue to engage youth in matters of civic and societal interests.

View Royal OCP, 2011

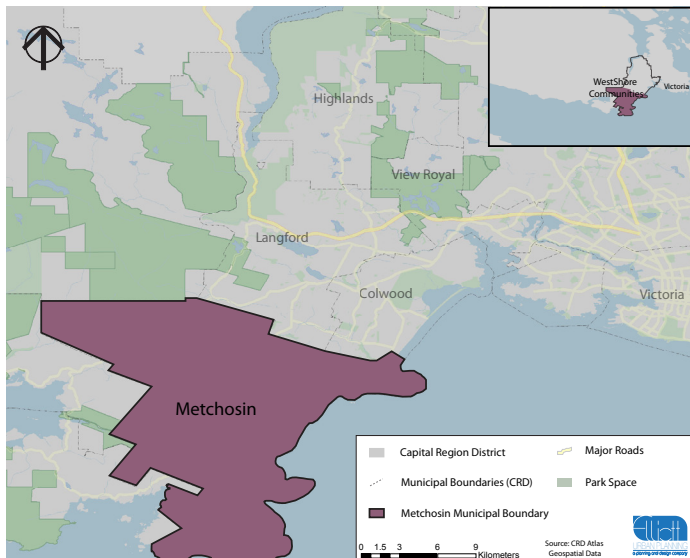
This can be seen in Policy HS2.1 Change Areas Housing, which provides policy to address youth housing:

Promote the location of higher density housing in the mixed-use Change Areas to bring people closer to transit, shops and services, create vibrant hubs and reduce the need for car travel. New housing should respond to housing needs not currently met in the community. This includes housing for young adults, young families and seniors.

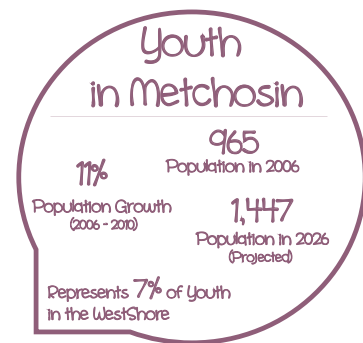
View Royal OCP, 2011

The accompanying action is to consider preparing a comprehensive Housing Strategy, which would identify gaps in the provision of non-market and market housing options. While this policy is still in its infancy (adopted in September, 2011), the impact potential is great.

# The District of Metchosin



First incorporated in 1984, the District of Metchosin is very rural in nature, boasting local activities like fishing, hiking, and farmers markets. Metchosin is also proud of its artist community, which showcases a variety of talents from crafts and pottery, to jam-making and wood arts. Spanning 71.32 square kilometers from the eastern shoreline of the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the western Sooke Hills, the City of Colwood sits to the north-east of Metchosin, while the District of Sooke rounds out the south-western border (BC Stats, 2011 and District of Metchosin, 2012).



## Key Demographics, Population Growth and the Local Economy

In terms of population, Metchosin is the only municipality in the West Shore that experienced a decline in population between 2001 and 2006. The population declined at a rate of 1.3%. It is important to mention that it is unlikely the population will continue to decline, with BC Stats estimating the local population to be 5,308 in 2010, representing a growth rate of 11%. If the 2011 Statistics Canada Report confirms BC Stats prediction then the population in 2026 could be as high as 7,200.

This small, but mostly stable population consists of 1,730 households, of which 325, or 8% are single-person households. According to BC Stats, 1,255 children live at home. The target population cohort of 10-24 accounts for 730 individuals of this population. This

### In Brief

Population 2006 – 4,795

11% Population Growth  
(2006 – 2010)

Population 2026 – 7,200  
(Projected)

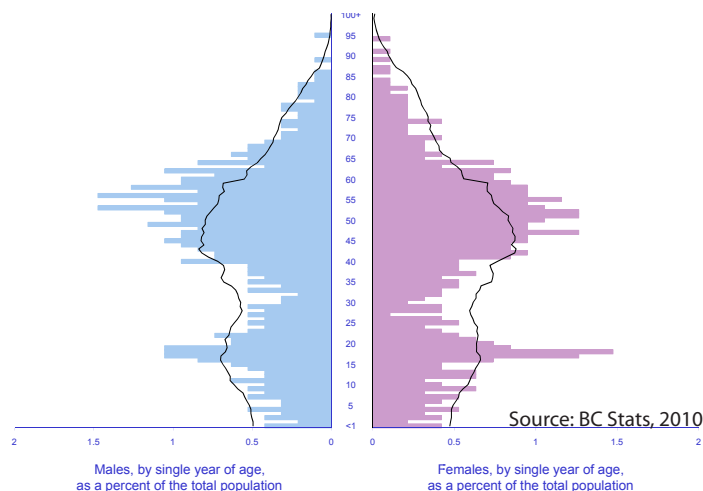
#### Average Income for...



An Individual  
\$38,706



A Household  
\$93,743



group then represents 58% of the total population of children living at home, which is slightly higher than the provincial average. This age distribution is shown in the accompanying age pyramid with also illustrates that this age cohort accounts for 15% of the total population in Metchosin. This is slightly higher than the provincial average of 13%. In contrast, there seems to be gap in the age cohort of 25 – 31.

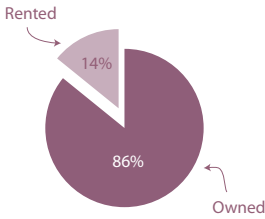
Within the District of Metchosin, BC Stats reports on 37 different industry classifications in their Community Facts Report, of which 34 allow for a trend analysis from 2001 to 2006. Of these 34, 13 industries within Metchosin have experienced a decline in terms of the numbers of individuals employed. Industries such as utilities (-100%), cultural industries (-54%), and transportation and warehousing (-70%) have all experienced declines. Even retail trade (-19%) and real estate and rental/leasing (-80%) have decreased during this time. This is in contrast to industries such as arts, entertainment and recreation (+125%), accommodation services (+60%), and, contrary to regional trends, farming (143%) have all experienced significant increases (2011). The industries on the rise in Metchosin are specialized and seasonal in nature, which may account for some of the population decline amongst young adults 25 – 30 looking to establish a stable career. This places a significant pressure on the youth population to look outside of this community for stable employment as they transition into adulthood.

## Income and Housing

The relationship between housing prices and income is an important measure in determining housing affordability, as income levels directly affect an individual’s ability to rent or purchase housing. Income and housing affordability are shown in the chart below. The following discussion is divided into rental and owner-occupied.

## Rental

In Metchosin, of the 1,685 private dwellings, about 14% or 250 dwellings are rental (compared to the provincial average of 30%), with an average gross rent of \$864 per month. While this is still higher than the provincial average of \$820 per month, it is the second most affordable municipality for renters. There has however, been a decline of rental units since 2001, with the total number of units available for rent decreasing from 300 to 245 in 2006. This represents an 18% reduction in the number of existing units. This trend is also made clear in the accompanying housing typology chart, which exhibits a fairly sizable gap when it comes to apartment dwellings or other forms of housing more suited to youth renters. In terms of current affordability in Metchosin, 13% of renters pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing, which is significantly less than the provincial average of 43% of renters in core housing need (BC Stats, 2010). Metchosin is also working to increase its stock of affordable rental units through a secondary suite bylaw-please refer to the section on municipal affordable housing policy below (The District of Metchosin, 2012).



Source: BC Stats, 2011

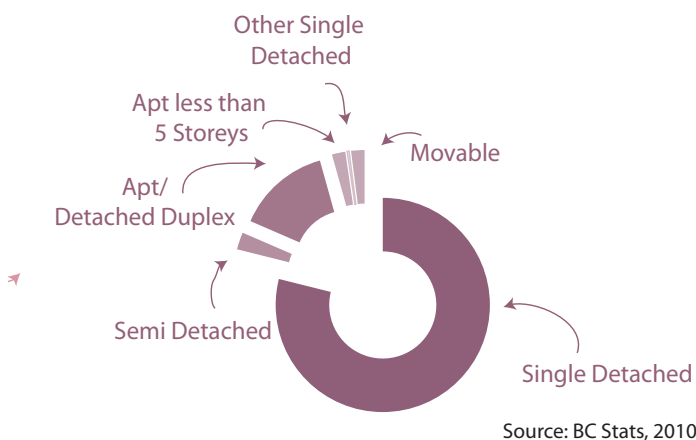
Metchosin Housing and Affordability

|                                     | 2001     | 2006     | % Change |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Average Household Income            | \$63,773 | \$93,743 | 47%      |
| Average Income One Person Household | \$25,828 | \$38,706 | 50%      |
| Average Rent                        | \$810    | \$864    | 7%       |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Renters | 42       | 13       | -69%     |
| Average Owner Payment               | \$961    | \$1,111  | 16%      |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Owners  | 18       | 24       | 31%      |

Source: BC Stats, 2011

## Owner-Occupied

Within the District of Metchosin, the average value of an owner-occupied house is \$629,368 (a 121% increase in value since 2001), with an average monthly payment of \$1,111 per household (BC Stats, 2011). This average monthly cost of home ownership has increased significantly (31%) between 2001 and 2006. In order to afford this cost and individual would have to have an annual net income of \$44,440.

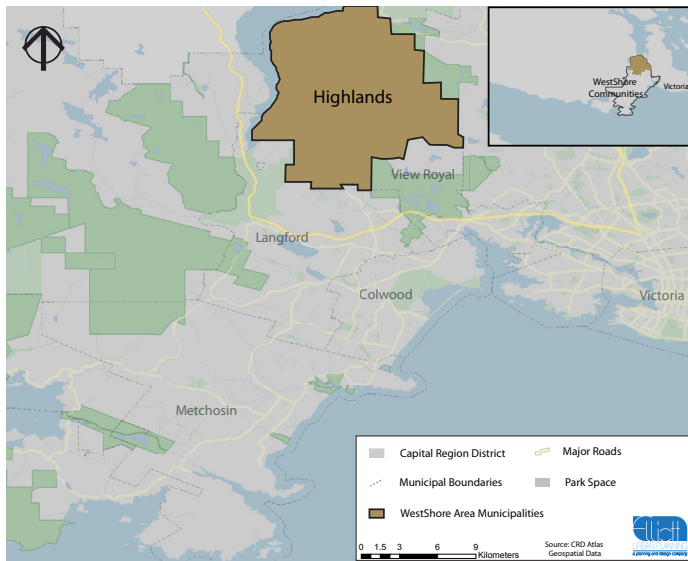


## Affordable Housing Policy in the District of Metchosin

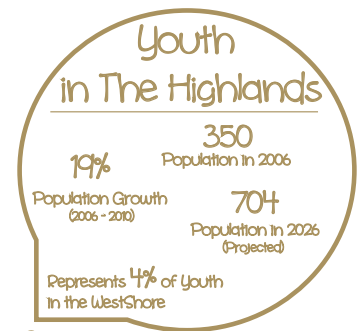
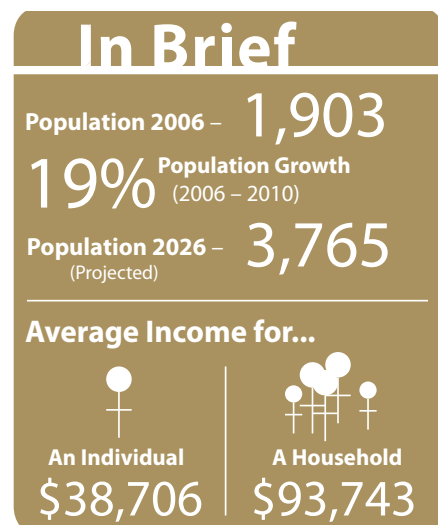
The District of Metchosin, much like that of the Highlands, values its rural context. One of the key objectives outlined in the OCP is to “provide opportunity for a range of housing types, size, prices and tenure consistent with maintaining a rural community,” (1995). The main way they encourage affordable housing in a rural context is to support secondary suites. While currently under revision, the secondary suites policy is specifically encouraged throughout all residential zones in section 6.3.6 of the OCP (1995).



# The District of the Highlands —



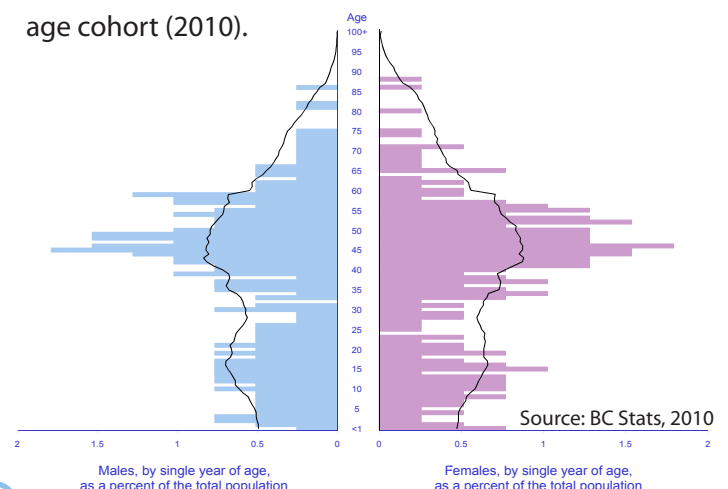
The Highlands has a strong rural character and is a predominantly residential community. Incorporated in 1993, the district municipality has a total land area of 37.87 square kilometers and is bounded by the District of Saanich to the east and the City of Langford to the South (BC Stats, 2011). The Highlands places a great deal of pride in its community involvement, rural lifestyle and natural setting, exemplified by the fact that over one-third of the district has been set aside for municipal, regional, and provincial parkland (District Municipality of Highlands, 2012).



## Key Demographics, Population Growth and the Local Economy —

The Highlands has one of the highest population growth rates in the WestShore. The growth rate of 14% between 2001-2006 was significantly higher than the provincial average of 5.3% between those same years (Stats Can, 2006). BC Stats estimates the population of the Highlands to be at 2,257 in 2010. Based on this growth rate, the projected population for the year of 2026 is 3,765.

This small, but growing population consists of 705 households, of which 14% are one-person households. There are also 35 single-parent families, of which 57% are male parent households. According to BC Stats, 590 children live at home. Our target population, ages 10 – 24 accounts for 215 individuals, or 11% of the total population, as is illustrated in the accompanying population pyramid (BC Stats, 2011). Also illustrated in this pyramid is a significant decline amongst the 20-29 age cohort (2010).



This population trend, as it pertains to emerging and young adults, appears consistent with other communities that are experiencing shifting economic structures. Within the District Municipality of the Highlands, BC Stats reports on 37 different industry classifications in their Community Facts Report, of which 22 allow for a trend analysis from 2001 to 2006. Of these 22, 16 industries within the Highlands have experienced a decline in terms of the numbers of individuals employed. Industries such as finance and insurance (-50%), information and cultural industries (-25%), and transportation and warehousing (-70%) have all experienced declines. This is in contrast to industries such as administration and support (+150%), and professional, scientific and tech services (+158%) that have experienced significant increases. It is likely that the types of jobs that are the most suitable for the age cohort of 20-29 are shifting to other locations and the individuals within that cohort are mirroring this trend (2011).

## Income and Housing

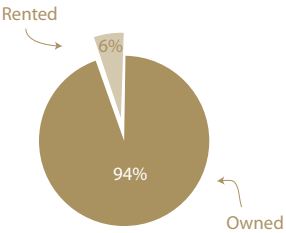
The relationship between housing prices and income is an important measure in determining housing affordability, as income levels directly affect an individual's ability to rent or purchase housing. Income and housing affordability are shown in the chart below. The following discussion is divided into rental and owner-occupied.

| Highlands Housing and Affordability |          |          |          |  |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|--|
|                                     | 2001     | 2006     | % Change |  |
| Average Household Income            | \$78,061 | \$85,443 | 9%       |  |
| Average Income One Person Household | \$37,613 | \$46,644 | 24%      |  |
| Average Rent                        | \$1,023  | \$1,005  | -2%      |  |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Renters | 54       | 50       | -7%      |  |
| Average Owner Payment               | \$1,090  | \$1,196  | 10%      |  |
| % Greater than 30% Income - Owners  | 17       | 23       | 35%      |  |

Source: BC Stats, 2011

## Rental

In the Highlands, of the 705 private dwellings, only about 6% or 40 dwellings are rental, with an average gross rent of \$1,005 per month. This is much higher than the provincial average of \$820 per month. There has also been a decline in rental units since 2001, with the total number of units available for rent decreasing from 65 to 40 in 2006. This represents a 39% reduction in the number of existing units. This trend is also made clear in the accompanying housing typology chart, which exhibits the lack of apartment dwellings or other forms of housing more suited to youth renters. The high average rent coupled with the low availability of rental units places additional pressures on youth wishing to rent. In terms of current affordability in the Highlands, 50% of renters pay more than 30% of their gross income on housing (BC Stats, 2010 and 2011).



Source: BC Stats, 2011

## Owner-Occupied

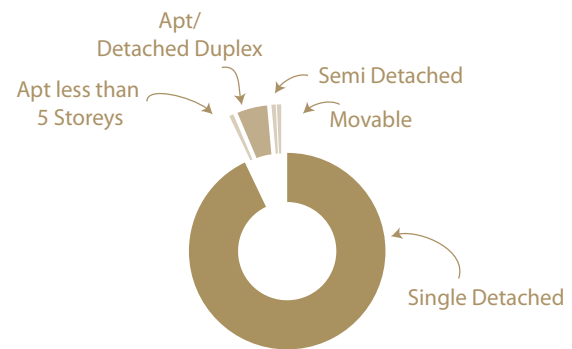
Within the District Municipality of the Highlands, the average value of an owner-occupied house is \$629,864 (a 105% increase in value since 2001), with an average monthly payment of \$1,196 (BC Stats, 2011). In order to afford this cost, the average household would have to have an annual net income of at least \$47,840.



## Affordable Housing Policy in the District Municipality of the Highlands

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In the Highlands Official Community Plan, affordable housing policies include: encouraging a range of housing forms in order to increase affordable housing, which could include cluster housing, or secondary suites, and encouraging “sweat equity” housing programs such as Habitat for Humanity (2007). Besides this general “encouragement,” there are no official policies supporting a variety of housing types. There is also no mention of youth, or youth specific housing policies or goals.



Source: BC Stats, 2011

# WestShore Need and Demand

In order to better discuss the number of renters and the vacancy rates within the WestShore, it is first important to outline the basic housing trends within the area. Because the discussion is starting to transition into one with a focus on youth, all of the dwelling types are presented in the chart but much of the discussion will focus on bachelor and the one-bedroom apartments, with these unit types often being the most suitable for youth seeking independent living opportunities. The chart below demonstrates the percent change in housing by dwelling type across the five municipalities that make up the study area. The housing typology having the largest growth within the WestShore between 2001 and 2006 is the apartment/detached duplex dwelling. This dwelling type has had a growth of 127%, which represents the addition of 2025 units into the housing market, with the largest contribution being Langford, adding a total of 1055 units. Colwood has experienced the second largest growth in terms of additional units with an increase of 495 apartment/detached duplexes. View Royal has added 355 units of this type to the housing stock, with this growth representing an increase of 203%, or nearly double the rate of Langford or Colwood.

| WestShore Housing Trends  |          |         |            |           |           |                |
|---------------------------|----------|---------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
|                           | Langford | Colwood | View Royal | Metchosin | Highlands | Total % Change |
| Dwelling Type             |          |         |            |           |           |                |
| Single Detached           | 2%       | -3%     | 0%         | -3%       | 17%       | 3%             |
| Semi Detached             | -3%      | 2%      | 19%        | 80%       | -50%      | 10%            |
| Row House                 | -1%      | 10%     | 19%        | -100%     | 0%        | -14%           |
| Apt / Detached Duplex     | 127%     | 104%    | 203%       | 69%       | 133%      | 127%           |
| Apt Greater than 5 Floors | 0%       | -100%   | -100%      | 0%        | 0%        | -40%           |
| Apt Less than 5 Floors    | 142%     | 82%     | -4%        | 40%       | 500%      | 152%           |
| Other Single Attached     | 33%      | 0%      | 50%        | 0%        | 0%        | 17%            |
| Movable                   | 2%       | -33%    | -79%       | -53%      | -50%      | -43%           |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006

Apartments less than five floors have experienced an even larger rate of increase in housing stock with an increase of 152% across the WestShore. This growth rate represents an increase of 675 units with the largest contributor, in terms of the number of units built, is Langford, accounting for 67% of the increases of apartments less than five floors within the WestShore. This is particularly important because it is these types of dwellings that are often the most suitable for youth, particularly those in transition. These types of dwellings represent medium and long-term independent living

opportunities for youth and often have a lower cost of rental.

These costs are shown in the chart below for rental units within the WestShore, based on Fall 2011 data. For youth, or for those transitioning towards independence, bachelor and one-bedroom apartments are often thought to be the most suitable and they cost \$589 and \$725 per month respectively. These two dwelling types have both experienced increases from 2010 – 2011 with bachelors increasing in cost an average of \$5 per month. One-bedrooms within the WestShore have increased an average of \$39 per month. Of all the housing types, one-bedrooms have experienced the most significant increase between 2010 and 2011 with an increase in cost of 6%.

| Private Apartment Average Rents |          |           |           |             |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
|                                 | Bachelor | 1 Bedroom | 2 Bedroom | 3 Bedroom + |
| WestShore                       | \$589    | \$725     | \$981     | \$1,125     |
| Victoria CMA                    | \$676    | \$819     | \$1,045   | \$1,244     |

Source: CMHC, 2011

Below is a geometric population projection calculated using a combination of Statistics Canada, 2006 data and BC Stats, 2011. The reason for this combination of data sources is due to the significant difference in predicted growth rates between the Statistics Canada 2001 – 2006 and the BC Stats predicted growth rates for 2006 – 2010.

BC Stats predicts significant growth rate increases between 2006 and 2010 for all municipalities with the exception of View Royal. This is not to suggest that View Royal is not growing, it is just at a reduced rate when compared to the rest of the WestShore municipalities. Using this calculation, the projected population in the entire WestShore will be 108,480 in 2026. If the population age cohort distribution ratio remains consistent, with youth 10 – 24 accounting for an average of 18% of the total population, this target population would account for 20,373 individuals with the largest relative proportions being in Colwood and Metchosin. Both of these municipalities have a disproportionately

large amount of youth within their population when compared to the rest of the province. Langford sits just below the provincial average followed by the Highlands and View Royal.

In order to enable a finer grain of analysis as to which specific age groups are experiencing growth, the age groups of 10 to 14, 15 to 19, and 20 to 24 were chosen based on Statistics Canada age data breaks. Using the above population projection these three groups represent 4,889, 8,760, and 6,723 individuals respectively. The largest age cohort in the entire WestShore using these projections would be the 15 to 19 age cohort accounting for 43% of the total youth.

| WestShore Youth by Cohort |       |        |          |        |        |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|----------|--------|--------|
| Age Cohort                | 2001  | 2006   | % Change | 2011   | 2026   |
| 10 to 14                  | 3,495 | 3,614  | 3%       | 3,783  | 4,600  |
| 15 to 19                  | 3,285 | 3,925  | 19%      | 4,771  | 9,430  |
| 20 to 24                  | 2,580 | 2,836  | 10%      | 3,446  | 6,343  |
| Total                     | 9,360 | 10,375 | 11%      | 12,000 | 20,373 |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006; BC Stats, 2011

As a whole, the WestShore area is experiencing an increase in vacancy rates for 2011 (CMHC, 2011). The Chart below shows the vacancy rates by dwelling type compared to the Victoria CMA.

| Private Apartment Vacancy Rates (%) |          |           |           |             |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
|                                     | Bachelor | 1 Bedroom | 2 Bedroom | 3 Bedroom + |
| WestShore                           | 4.7      | 1.9       | 0.7       | 3.2         |
| Victoria CMA                        | 1.7      | 2.5       | 1.7       | 1.0         |

Source: CMHC, 2011

By far the largest change in vacancy rates was for bachelor apartments between Oct – 2010 and Oct – 2011 with a change of 4.7%. According to CMHC there are 43 bachelor apartments in the entire west shore and if 4.7% of vacant at the time of publication, there are approximately 2 units vacant. There is a similar situation with one-bedroom units where the vacancy rate is 1.9%, which means that approximately 3 of the 156 units of this type are vacant. Though the vacancy rates are increasing, the housing stock cannot keep pace with the rapidly growing population. Having no more than 5 units available in the WestShore that are suited to youth means that there is significant competition for any available units further driving the cost upward and increasing the challenge for those individuals that could be considered to be at risk.

# Youth Housing Profile

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After the discussion above of housing typology and current trends, rental cost, population growth, and vacancy rates, the discussion now turns to youth renters. With an average 32% of the WestShore renters in core housing need, paying on average \$926 a month, the picture of housing affordability for youth is only partially complete (Statistics Canada, 2006 and BC Stats, 2010). First, it is important to note that only 62% of WestShore youth ages 15-24 are employed (Statistics Canada, 2006). While Statistics Canada does not provide data on income by age group, we can create a picture of the minimum wage worker in BC, which would include a majority of employed youth who are just entering the workforce and are looking for entry-level jobs (Randy Waldie and Jen Harrison of Worklink's Pathway Project, personal communication, January 17, 2012).

The British Columbia government has a general minimum wage of \$9.50 per hour (British Columbia Department of Labour, 2012). Assuming an individual with a full-time job (which can be hard for youth to find, see specific barriers to housing for youth below) works a 40-hour work week, a minimum wage earner will gross approximately \$19,760 per year, or \$1,647 per month. This income allows for a minimum wage earner to spend no more than \$494 per month on housing for it to be affordable. If you will recall, a bachelor apartment in the WestShore costs \$598 per month and a one-bedroom costs \$725 per month. Youth making minimum wage would need to use 36% of their income to rent a bachelor unit and 44% of their income to rent a one-bedroom unit in the WestShore area. With the May 2012 increase of the minimum wage in BC to \$10.25 per hour, a minimum wage earner moves closer to affording housing in the WestShore area, having \$533 to spend per month on housing costs (British Columbia Department of Labour, 2012).

## Specific Barriers to Housing for Youth

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What the previous section on approximated youth earnings compared to housing affordability does not take into account are the specific barriers that the general youth population faces when trying to find housing. Speaking with WestShore service providers Randy Waldie and Jen Harrison at Worklink's Pathway Project, a 16-week minimum wage paying, life skill building and job search program, that is in contact with around 200 youth at any given time, they classified one of the general barriers to youth employment and youth housing as their lack of knowledge of how to search for housing or employment (personal communication, January 17, 2012). Other service providers also mention affordability and prejudice as a barrier most youth face in finding housing. Mark Muldoon of the Threshold Housing Society in Victoria characterized the basic housing barriers for youth as including the generally low-vacancy-rate, but more importantly, the fact that landlords do not trust youth. He adds that, "youth often don't have the money for deposits, or even a job to pay rent" (personal communication, January 19, 2012).

Cynthia Day, a Colwood Councillor, described the lack of affordability as the result of a lot of success in the region, which has resulted in a decline in older housing stock. She says that "anything that is affordable is outside of the WestShore, like in James Bay, for example, which is one hour by car and one and a half hours by bus, and requires youth to completely leave their community structure in order to find affordable housing" (personal communication, January 20, 2012). While these are general housing issues facing all youth in the WestShore, there are also a variety challenges that youth face which put them at greater risk of homelessness to begin with.

## Specific Challenges Facing Youth in the WestShore:

Youth in the WestShore can be dealing with a variety of issues that contribute to their struggles with maintaining a stable housing situation, a job, or complete school. Past studies have shown youth in the WestShore and Sooke communities are participating in high-risk activities at a greater level than their counterparts in other areas in British Columbia (McCreary Centre Society's Provincial Youth Health Survey, 2003, and Violence in the Lives of Sexually Exploited Youth and Adult Sex Workers- Provincial Research, 2006). In 2010-2011, the Community Outreach Prevention and Education/Youthtalk Email Counselling program (COPE), run through the Pacific Centre Family Services Association (PCFSA), provided 101 youth ages 4 to 18 with face-to-face service, while 146 youth ages 13-18 partook in the email counseling service. In the annual COPE report, PCFSA classified the following as key issues facing youth in the WestShore:

### Key Issues

- A reduction in provision of services for youth in West Shore communities over the past several years;
- Childhood trauma and disproportionately high rates of child sexual abuse;
- Sexual exploitation, and associated violence, drug use and abuse;
- Substance abuse and misuse, and a disproportionately high prevalence of marijuana and alcohol use among youth;
- One of the highest rates of school drop out in the province, and one of the lowest rates of graduation;
- Unplanned pregnancies, and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases; and,
- A range of personal issues affecting youth including: depression, anxiety, anger, grief and loss, and associated symptoms.

(Excerpt from the Pacific Center Family Services Association COPE 2010-2011 Annual Report)

WestShore service providers interviewed for this report point to mental health issues and addiction first and foremost among the challenges youth face in this area. The list also includes:

### Challenges

- Learning disabilities,
- A lack of transportation options - Colwood Councillor Cynthia Day explained that youth are often afraid to ride bikes, or do not have the knowledge or money to maintain a bicycle, the same goes for cars,
- The current economic situation,
- Family instability,
- Foster care,
- Violence,
- and sexual health.

According to Mark Muldoon of the Threshold Housing Society, which provides housing for up to eight youth at a time (four for women and four for men), the majority of which are from the WestShore, "each youth has a unique story, with a fairly high trauma load. The goal then, with youth, is to build relationships" (personal communication, January 19, 2012). These youth most often have what he described as a "relationship deficit," or a mistrust of adults, however, he was clear to explain that the youth he serves really want a "hand-up, not a hand-out."

Young women in the WestShore deal with a special set of circumstances. According to Lillian Szpak, author of the research into young women at risk on the West Shore, "Giving Voice to Adolescent Women, 2008", explained that girls are developing as young as 8, 11, or 12, much earlier than boys, and therefore can be considered especially vulnerable. These young women often feel they have a lower sense of value within their families, and they are often at risk of participating in drugs or alcohol, or could be dealing with violence at home, and bullying. They also feel as though they are falling through the cracks because

there are not enough community resources and services available to them (personal communication, January 17, 2012).

Aboriginal youth are also dealing with a specific set of circumstances. The Youth Housing Study for BC's Capital Region points out that all operating emergency and transitional housing facilities are owned and managed by non-aboriginal organizations (Community Council, 2008). The Executive Director of the M'akola Group of Societies explained that cultural insensitivities, direct racism, being of legal age to enter into a Tenancy Agreement, as well as access to education, training, and employment are all issues aboriginal youth encounter (personal communication, Kevin Albers, January 17, 2012).

## Where Do WestShore Homeless Youth Go?

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As reported by A Youth Housing Study for BC's Capital Region, 220 youth ages 13-18, and 323 youth ages 19-24 "are currently without safe, stable housing in BC's Capital Region," which is a conservative estimate based on an extensive survey of service providers in the Capital Regional District (Community Council, 2008). Of the service providers interviewed for this study, many were able to assess a high level of risk of homelessness amongst the youth they work with, demonstrating a high demand for alternative housing options for youth in the WestShore.

For example, out of the last four groups of 48 youth in total that Worklink's Pathway Project served, they assessed that 38 were at risk for homelessness. Principal Carl Repp estimates that 5-8 students at Belmont Secondary currently live on their own for various reasons. The Threshold Housing Society, which provides semi-independent living for youth in Victoria, classified the majority of the youth they serve, around 25 a year, as originating from the WestShore. Tara Skobel, the Youth and Family Outreach Worker at the Burnside Gorge Community Centre works with over twenty youth in her program, of which two are currently from the WestShore,

although the program has had to turn away several (at least a handful) from the WestShore, because this area is not in the Centre's catchment zone. Of the 20 or so youth that this program serves, she estimates about half are in need of supported, independent housing (personal communication, January 20, 2012). According to Steven McHugh, Vice Principal and the Director of Continuing Education, the WestShore Centre for Learning, which provides an alternative education program for grades 9 – 12 for approximately 2600 students, mostly online, has assessed around 50% of the students in their physical classes to be at risk of homelessness (personal communication, January 30, 2012).

According to Mitzi Dean Executive Director of PCFSA, when WestShore youth are homeless it is usually because they are kicked out, or in an abusive situation. These youth have no options for emergency or temporary shelter except in downtown Victoria. Carl Repp of Belmont Secondary says that most of his students end up in the Kiwanis Emergency Shelter in downtown Victoria, which has ten beds for ages 13-18. Out of the Rain now also provides 30 mats for youth shelter in downtown Victoria between the months of October and April. However, as there is no transitional housing for youth "in between," in the WestShore and in Victoria they are vulnerable to being exploited by "entrenched" homeless, where there is no local community, and it then becomes harder to return back to the community. For example, Tara Skobel, provided a story of a youth residing in supported independent living in greater Victoria who has no option but to endure a lengthy commute between his residence and the WestShore for employment and educational opportunities. Unfortunately, this is far too common a situation for many youth who have little opportunity for accommodation within the WestShore.

Service providers also agree that the most common trend for youth threatened with homelessness in the WestShore is to live in other people's houses, also known as "couch surfing." This may include the homes of friends, but many times youth end up in a situation where they are at risk of being exploited. The street is also an option, but contrary to many of the "entrenched homeless" in



downtown Victoria, youth in the WestShore stay out of sight, in places they can hide such as stairwells (personal communication, Mitzi Dean, January 19, 2012).

These are the “unofficially homeless,” or the “invisible homeless,” who deal with very different barriers than the “entrenched” homeless of downtown Victoria. However, any youth that are on the street are generally equated with the street-entrenched homeless on the streets of Victoria. The difference for these youth is that on any given night a youth might be kicked out of the house, there is no “core” of homeless youth, they are not street-entrenched, they are not working with agencies for aid (maybe a school counselor), they are not on drugs, but they do exist (personal communication, Mitzi Dean, January 19, 2012).

## So What Do Youth Need? —————

Being homeless affects all aspects of one’s life. According to Carl Repp, Principal at Belmont Secondary School, “often when there are challenges with housing, or any basic living needs, the academic performance suffers. On the otherhand, often when the stability of the individual improves, the academic performance follows suit” (personal communication, January 30, 2012). Jen Harrison of Worklink’s Pathways Project put it this way, “worklink is funded to help youth find employment, but without a secure place to live, these youth are less employable and jobs are not sustainable. This basic need (homelessness) needs to be addressed first and foremost” (personal communication, January 17, 2012).

## Youth Housing Need —————

PCFSA, which serves around 300 youth mostly from the WestShore, provided a youth estimated number of about 6-8 beds needed on a given night in the WestShore area, but from her assessment of the youth PCFSA serves, Mitzi Dean believes that 20 youth between 13 and 18 could be easily identified as in need of shelter. In terms of transitional, or non-shelter options, service providers point out that the Threshold Housing Society and the

Pandora Youth Apartments are the only other youth housing option, which means there are only 16 dedicated youth beds in the entire Capital Regional District.

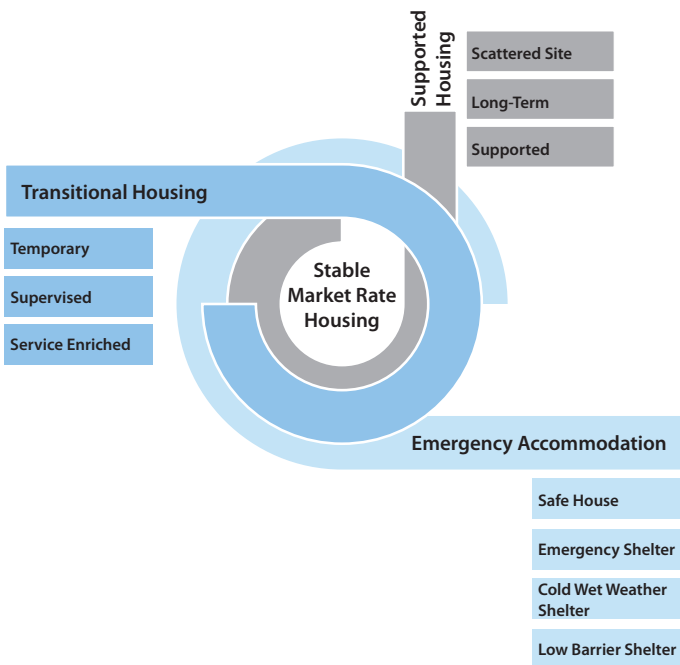
All those who contributed to this study have overwhelmingly confirmed the need for an emergency shelter in the WestShore. According to Lillian Szpak, author of the research into young women at risk on the West Shore, “Giving Voice to Adolescent Women, 2008”, young women told her they needed a “safe and friendly place to go,” such as a local drop-in shelter, something that is their “own place”. She added that a local drop-in shelter that is not co-ed would be equally as important, so that young women have a place to go that is female specific (personal communication, January 17, 2012).

However, emergency shelter provides the answer to only one element of the youth housing need in the WestShore. Mark Muldoon made sure to point out that while shelters and short-term options are important, shelters are not homes, “They do not provide the comfort of a home, a stable place to sleep and cook a meal. Shelters are often prone to violence or drug-use or other problems” (personal communication, January 19, 2012). In his opinion the real issue is the need for more concrete assistance in a more long-term process, the key to which is transitional housing. Mitzi Dean also agrees that there needs to be viable options and a range of options.

Ideally this would be manifested as a drop-in center with a “low-barrier” shelter, transitional housing and longer-term stable housing. This housing would have to be “unconditional,” and forgiving. “Too many rules will scare youth away from using resources, and housing in particular,” according to Mitzi Dean. Mark Muldoon was also quick to point out that achieving this range of solutions is something that will take time to develop. He continues, “there is a standard saying in youth housing that ‘it is more than just a roof.’ Youth housing, therefore, is always expensive because of the supports required” (personal communication, January 19, 2012).

# Youth Housing Continuum

When it comes to youth housing, the process is not linear. A Youth Housing Study for BC’s Capital Region characterizes the “fluidity between resources [as] central to supporting youth, who tend to take two steps forward then one step back, en route to full independence” (2008). Often the journey between shelter, transitional and supported housing is portrayed as a linear, step by step process. This housing continuum recognizes that youth housing solutions must acknowledge the fluidity of the housing process, demonstrating the flexibility youth need to move between resources with the changing circumstances in their lives, while also illustrating a central goal of achieving market-rate housing. While those with special needs may never reach this point, most youth are still capable of attaining this goal in their lifetime.



Adapted from: A Youth Housing Study for BC’s Capital Region, 2008

# Other Gaps in Services

In order to properly assess some of the gaps in services in the WestShore, it is also imperative to discuss some of the strengths in this area. In order to complete this study, I have contacted a number of local services, providing much needed support for youth in the WestShore. Worklink and the Pathways Program provides employment support, PCFSA provides some counselling services and family support services, and there are a wide-range of flexible educational opportunities, especially for non-traditional students, for example the WestShore Centre for Learning.

However, there still seems to be a gap in how many youth these services can provide for. For instance, while Worklink provides much needed employment support for youth, they are limited to helping only ten youth at a time. Mental health services and improved access to sexual health clinic services are also in need in this area.

More importantly there is a need for a 24 hour drop-in centre where youth can be referred to a variety of expanded services, including housing. This is especially important because, as Cynthia Day, a Colwood Councillor, put it, “youth on the fringe are often unable to use the existing facilities aimed at youth.” Another way this could be achieved would be through a youth navigator, someone that youth trust, that can connect them with the services they need (personal communication, January 20, 2012).



## Youth Focus Group

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On February 23, 2012, the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force conducted a youth focus group. The goal of this focus group was to reach out to youth within the community and collect youth-identified preferences for housing initiatives. Though many of the findings are linked to service provisions and programming for youth housing, there are numerous results that communicate the specific needs for youth within the WestShore. It is important to document that 30% of the participants indicated that they had at one time experienced some degree of homelessness. On top of that, others in attendance indicated that they had couch surfed when they had to leave home. Drug and alcohol use by the youth or parents, or the presence of abuse within the home, were cited by youth as the most common reasons for having to leave home.

Also, it was noted that those youth under the age of 16 are often unable to use government-run initiatives due to their inability to obtain the necessary parent permissions, without which youth suggest that assistance would not be offered. Parent permission can be hard for a youth to get, because as one youth mentioned, when these youth leave home the parents are often not concerned, or “don’t want them back” (Youth Focus Group, 2012).

The youth indicate that ideally, youth housing would be “a close walk to the WestShore Mall/Belmont Secondary School area” (Youth Focus Group, 2012). This suggestion is one that is echoed by the service providers and key informants from the community interviewed for the WestShore Youth Housing Study: A Need and Demand Analysis companion piece. Youth also expressed a wish that the housing would include both short and long-term housing options, that offer key supports tailored to the resident population. This recommendation by the youth suggests the need for a continuum of services and housing options in the WestShore.

There were also comments regarding the need for a low barrier shelter. They wish for a place that would “allow kids to go who are high or drunk” (Youth Focus Group, 2012). Also, there was a mention that this place should permit kids to stay “even if they don’t have their parent’s OK, because the alternative is homelessness” (Youth Focus Group, 2012).

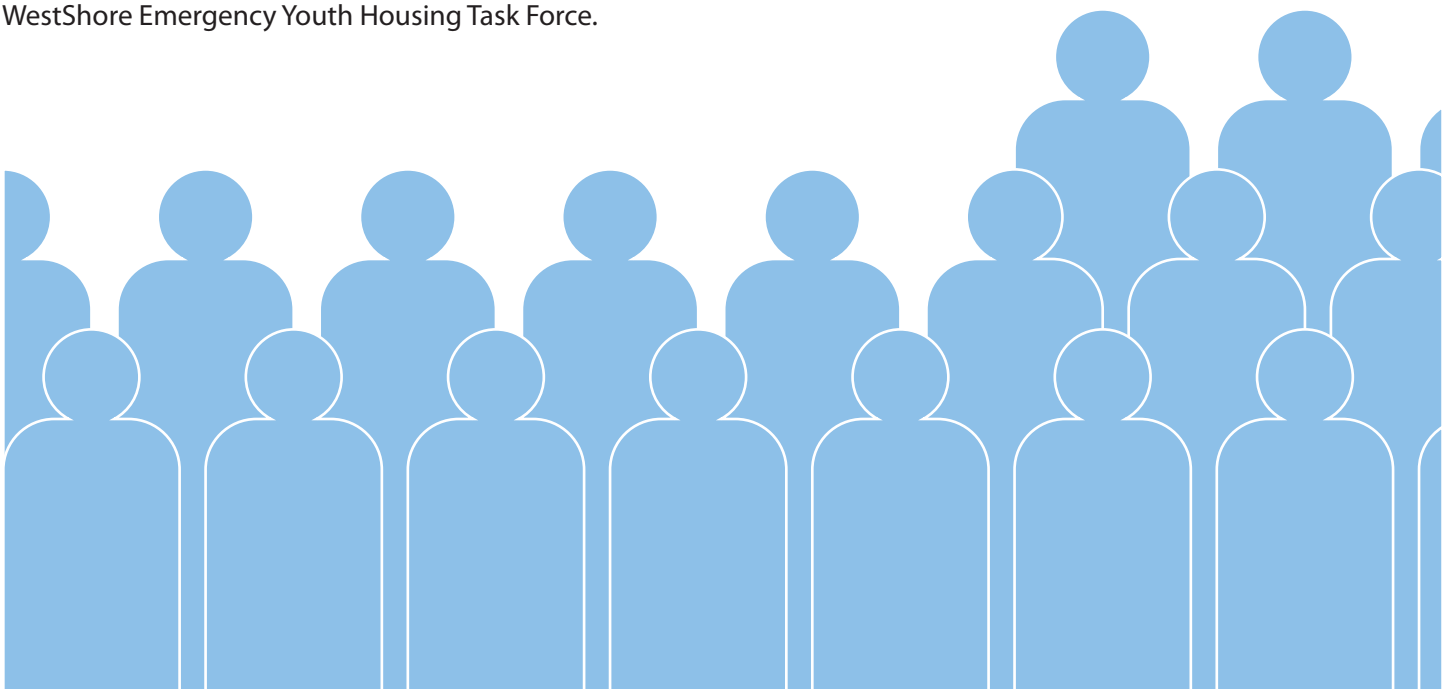
It is also important to note that youth in this focus group communicated that, “above all, the youth housing needs to be a safe place. It should be free of weapons and any gang-like influence” (Youth Focus Group, 2012). There was also a call for a degree of segregation within the housing. Youth felt that within a shelter there may need to be a separation of youth under the influence from those who are not “because they might be a danger to other youth” (Youth Focus Group, 2012). There was a similar feeling with respect to pets. Generally, they were not seen as a significant concern as “one youth felt that pets were more of an issue with street entrenched youth” (Youth Focus Group, 2012). If pets are to be permitted, the feeling is that “they should be segregated to ensure that those with allergies are not affected” (Youth Focus Group, 2012).

Right, is a listing of suggested youth services as they appear from notes taken during the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force Youth Focus Group. It is essential to integrate youth comments and recommendations into any youth housing initiative as a way to ensure the services best serve the user population and connect future developments to the in-need population. This outreach stands as a significant step in the process of providing youth with a voice within the WestShore and works towards a lasting, sustainable, and trusting relationship between local youth and the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force.

## Suggested Youth Services

recommended by youth, for youth

1. Social Programs
2. Food programs such as food banks and meal programs
3. Counsellors
4. Showers
5. Laundry
6. Outreach Vehicle
7. Youth Advocate
8. Youth Navigator
9. Drop in centre
10. Medical supplies
11. Sexual health clinic
12. Peer counsellor
13. Sobering centre
14. Drug and alcohol counsellors
15. Day and night programs
16. Transition Support
17. Transportation support
18. Life Skills
19. Food supplies in shelter/housing situation



# Youth Housing Models and Case Studies

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In order to better inform the programming and development of youth housing initiatives within the WestShore there must first be a discussion of other successful housing programs. This section provides some examples of successful programs and housing models that have been developed as a response to the needs of homeless or street involved youth across North America. The previous review of literature and other studies establishes a baseline of considerations for youth housing. I have chosen to also look at case studies in order to understand how these ideas and models are implemented and create a profile of best or promising practices that are happening on the ground now.

I have identified local case studies in the area first to establish, not only what youth in this area have access to, but also to understand what is successful, or not, in the local context. Additional case studies were added through the review of other reports, in order to fill in the gaps where there were no local examples within the identified housing categories. Case study criteria and categories of information is outlined in the pull-out box below.

The case studies section will outline a definition of each category (i.e., emergency/crisis shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, and a continuum of housing), a discussion of best practices for each model from the literature and other housing studies, as well as from our profiled case studies, followed by a description of the individual case studies profiled within each category.

The following categories are presented: emergency/crisis shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, and continuum housing.

Through online materials, published reports and interview I was able to compile a complete profile of these case studies looking at the following comparable categories (adapted from Mochrie, 2009):

- Background Information - Name of Organization, Years in Operation, Location, Vision/Mission Statement
- Target Population – Ages, Ethnicities, Street involved Group, Restrictions
- Type of Housing Provided - Description of building, Number of Youth, Type of Program, Length of Stay, Referral Process, Cost of Stay
- Additional Services/Supports Provided
- Staff - Type and extent of Staffing
- Managed/Operated By- Annual Budget, Funders
- Lessons Learned/Promising or Best Practices
- Key Challenges (and how they have been overcome)

## Emergency/ Crisis Shelters

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Youth emergency or crisis shelters provide age appropriate accommodations for youth in crisis. This is often an important point of initial contact to supports and services for those youth experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness (e.g., an unsafe home environment). The goal of emergency shelters is to provide a safe place, usually a “last resort” for those with nowhere else to go. Intended for short-term stays, generally from 7 to 30 days, they provide the essentials such as food, shelter and safety, as well as amenities such as showers, laundry, or perhaps a kitchen. While shelters are not a housing solution, they do serve as a site for special programs, community supports and interventions. They are often connected physically, or under the same umbrella organization, to drop-in centres. However, the amount of services and support varies from shelter to shelter. Many provide only a dry place to stay, but will connect youth to services available elsewhere in the community. It is crucial, as a point of initial contact, that shelters are flexible, low-barrier and capable of handling youth with a variety of challenges (Mochrie, 2009 and Kraus et al, 2007).

# Key Success Factors

General key success factors were discussed earlier (see seven key success factors on page 9). Upon review of the literature, other housing studies, and the specific case studies covered in this report, the following list of promising and best practices for emergency/crisis shelters was collected:

From Mochrie (2009):

- 24-hour staff that is non-judgmental, compassionate and able to connect youth to services and opportunities
- Respect for individual privacy
- Informal training in life skills
- Linkages to longer term housing support programs
- Strong connections with other community supports and services
- Clean and comfortable space

From youth interviewed for the Vancouver Youth Housing Options Study (2007):

- Have 24/7 staffing with workers who can relate to the youth and show that they care about them
- Offer support to help connect youth to job and education opportunities and teach a variety of life skills
- Be safe
- Not have so many rules – or modernize rules to fit today's youth

From the case studies:

- A volunteer component can really shape a program by bringing individual passion to a shelter, which can have a huge impact on youth (e.g. Out of the Rain Youth Shelter), because volunteer dedication demonstrates to youth that no matter what their circumstances are, someone out there cares for them
- A shelter can provide a range of functions from a basic shelter and food (e.g. Out of the Rain Youth Shelter), to a program geared at finding youth a more permanent housing situation (e.g., Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter), to a program providing on-site counselling, supports and an in-house transitional housing program (e.g. Covenant House), however, the important element is having a clear mission and goals, and to clearly express this to the youth up front
- Shelters need to make youth feel safe and welcomed.
- Shelters should be able to connect youth to other services (e.g. counselling, housing solutions) in the community, even if they are not available directly on-site
- Strategizing a case-plan, or work plan, with clear goals for the duration of a youth's stay has proven successful for many shelters (e.g. KEYS, Covenant House and Larkin Street Youth Services shelters)

## Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (Victoria, BC)

**Ages: 13 to 18**

**Number of Youth: 10 beds are provided  
by this facility**

**Location:  
Victoria, BC**

**Length of Stay:  
Limited to 7 days**



**Cost of Stay: No Cost**



The Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter (KEYS) is an emergency/crisis shelter that provides services to youth between the ages of 13 and 18, who are in crisis and have no safe place to stay. KEYS provides a safe and supportive environment and responds to a wide range of crises, including, but not limited to, parent/teen conflict, mental health and addictions issues and homelessness. Run by the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES), the shelter is located in downtown Victoria, BC. The official vision of KEYS is to provide a safe, supportive environment and access to community resources for youth who are in transition due to crisis. KEYS promotes youth and community wellness by supporting youth to participate in building on individual, family and community strengths. (Personal Communication, YES, March 9, 2012). A key goal of this program is connecting youth to a better housing situation.

The Kiwanis Emergency Youth shelter is located in a residential home consisting of three levels. The top floor is a dorm style setting with 6 beds for male youth along with their own bathroom. On the main floor consists of two dorm style bedrooms for female youth each with 3 beds along with their own washroom facilities. The main floor also houses the common areas such as the living room and kitchen. In the basement level of the home are counselling offices along with laundry facilities and a clothing/storage area for the youth. The total square footage of the home is roughly 3500-4000. There is no cost to youth and their families to access services.

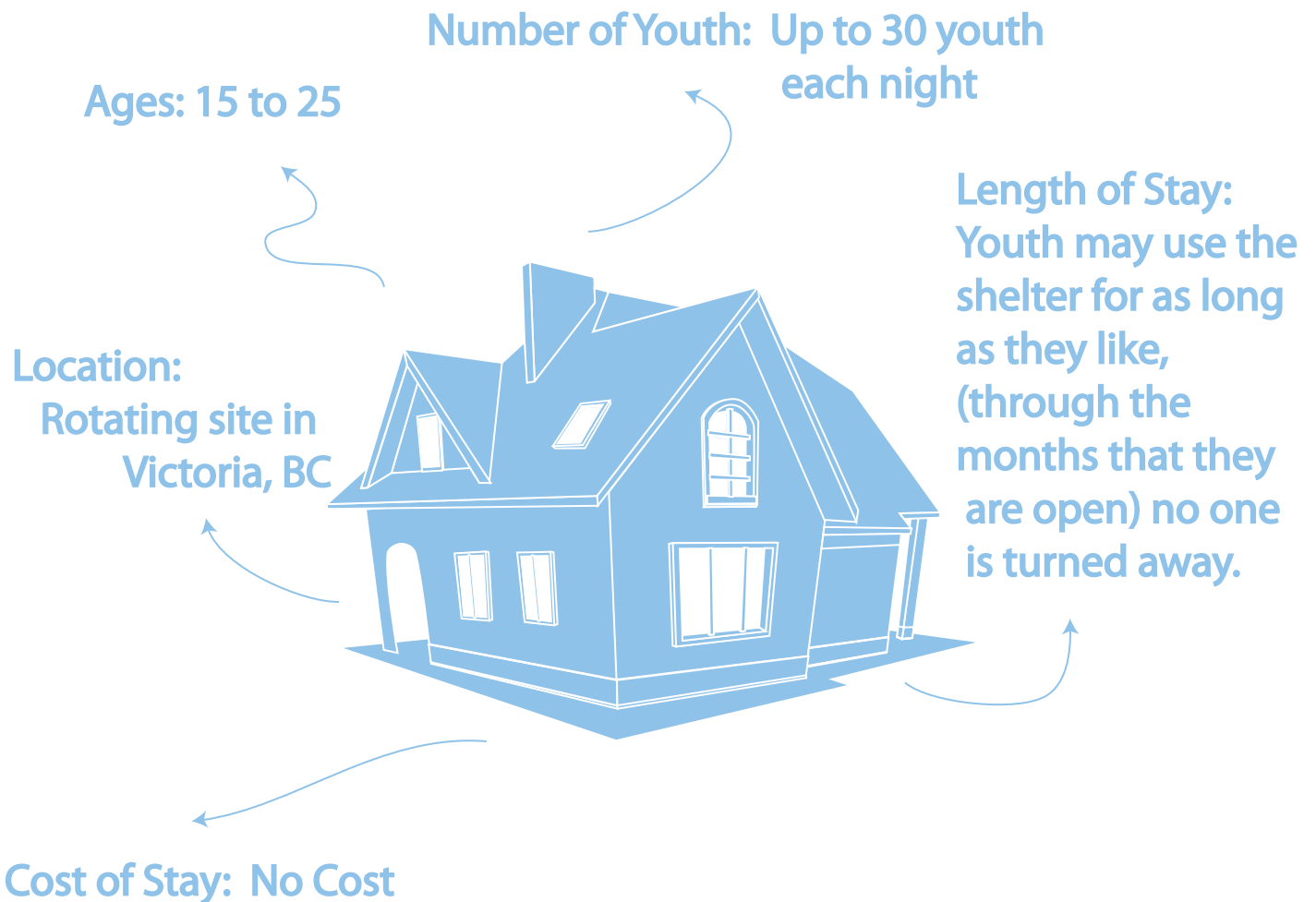
KEYS counsellors assist to ensure that the short-term physical and psychological needs of the youth are met, and provide crisis counselling to youth and their families through effective screening and assessment, case management and appropriate referrals. The program offers assistance 24 hours a day 7 days a week which ensures that youth have access to support at any time of the day, and referrals to the shelter can be made by anyone in the community on a 24-hour a day basis. However, consent of a legal guardian (e.g., a parent, the Ministry of Children and Family Development) must be obtained for a youth to stay. Youth are able to stay at the Shelter for up to seven nights and during this time KEYS

Counsellors assist youth with developing and working on their own individual plan. The time limit on youth stays is linked to the fact that KEYS is a program, not a housing option. Some youth are able to reconnect with their families through KEYS support, while some youth who have been couch surfing or without a stable home for a longer period of time do need a few visits before they are ready or able to successfully work on a plan.

Through an integrated approach, youth who access the program gain a continuum of services through direct access to YES programs including: Specialized Youth Detox (SYD), the Alliance Club, the Youth Services Outreach Team (YSOT), the Life Skills Day Program, the Supported Independent Living Program (SIL), the Mental Health Liaison Counsellor, the Summer Opportunities Program (SOP), YES Office (day time drop in), and the Downtown Youth Clinic.

Serving over 400 youth annually, the Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter is a much-needed service for youth in Victoria. However, considering youth input from the focus group, guardian consent seems to feel like a barrier to youth feeling comfortable accessing shelter services. Another struggle with the KEYS set up revolves around individual privacy in a shared living space, however this can be somewhat addressed through a established set of dorm room safety rules that all youth must obey.

## Out of the Rain Youth Shelter (Victoria, BC)



Established in 1998 by a group of downtown outreach workers who were frustrated with the gap in shelter services specialized for youth in the City of Victoria, Out of the Rain Youth Shelter has been providing barrier free services to youth for 14 years. Since 2006, Beacon Community Services has been acting as the lead agency for Out of the Rain, which is made possible in partnership with a coalition of Victoria's faith-based community and social service agencies. Beacon Community Services is a community-based, not-for-profit, social, employment, health, recreational, housing and volunteer services agency, offering a wide range of programs and services to thousands of clients in the Capital Regional District (Beacon Community Services, 2012).

The goal of Out of the Rain is simple: reduce the risks faced by homeless or street involved youth by providing a warm, safe place to sleep throughout the coldest months of the year (officially from October 15 to April 15th). This is achieved through a rotating site system, a different location for every day of the week, which helps effectively distribute community resources.

Youth are provided a hot meal at night and a mat to sleep on. Breakfast is served in the morning as well, and then youth go on to school, employment, or whatever occupies their days. Two trained staff and a few volunteers are always on site, and they provide comfort and support (the meals are cooked, set up and served by volunteers), however Out of the Rain does not offer any specialized support services, though they will refer youth to community services as needed. The shelter is free, and no youth between the ages of 15 and 25 is turned away.

Funded primarily through the United Way, BC Housing and Beacon Services, this program depends heavily on volunteers. "The volunteer component really shapes this program through their individual passion, which brings meaning and purpose to the program. Volunteer passion also has a huge impact for the kids, no matter what their circumstances they know that someone out there cares for them," (personal communication, March 9, 2012).

While Out of the Rain effectively disperses limited community resources, the challenges with this model involves making youth aware of where they can access this service, since there is no set location. While engaging the community in a really meaningful way, the dependency on volunteer services is also a challenge, especially if that volunteer base were to change for any reason. In the past, Out of the Rain struggled as a loose coalition of faith-based communities and service providers, and it was not until Beacon Community Services took over as "head agency" that the program was strengthened.

## Transitional Housing Models

Transitional housing can be implemented through a variety of different models (e.g. shared homes, supervised, semi-independent), physical forms (e.g., single family detached house, clustered apartments, scattered site apartments) and ownership scenarios (e.g. single organization, lease agreement with private landowners). Under the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI), transitional housing is defined as

*Temporary or interim accommodation (in the form of multi-unit apartments, single room occupancies, scattered site apartments, etc.) for homeless or at risk of homelessness individuals and/or families that is combined with case managed support services, aimed at helping these individuals to transition to long-term and permanent housing, self-sufficiency and independence.*

-Transitions for Youth, 2007

housing can be very effective for youth due to the mobile and transitional phase of life that they are in (Mochrie, 2009). Additionally, many programs have used more creative approaches such as lease transfers (see Larkin Street Youth Services under Continuum Housing Models) that can address this issue.

Transitional housing tends to be longer term, possibly with more services, which leads to transitional housing to be classified as the next step in most “continuum” of housing and supports. In reality, the support component can vary with each model. The real distinguishing feature from an emergency/crisis shelter, then, becomes time. Transitional housing works to move youth to a more stable, independent living situation, developing skills and responsibility over time; as opposed to emergency shelters, where the goal is more oriented towards addressing an immediate crisis situation, and the transition to another housing scenario can generally be quite quick (Mochrie, 2009, and Transitions for Youth, 2007).

Even though transitional housing has a longer time frame than emergency/crisis shelters, there is still often an enforced time limit, which can be problematic because not every youth will reach stability at the same pace. It is also a bit of a conflicting notion to move youth as a reward for reaching stability. That being said, transitional

## Key Success Factors

Upon review of the literature, other housing studies, and the specific case studies covered in this report, the following list of promising and best practices for transitional housing was collected:

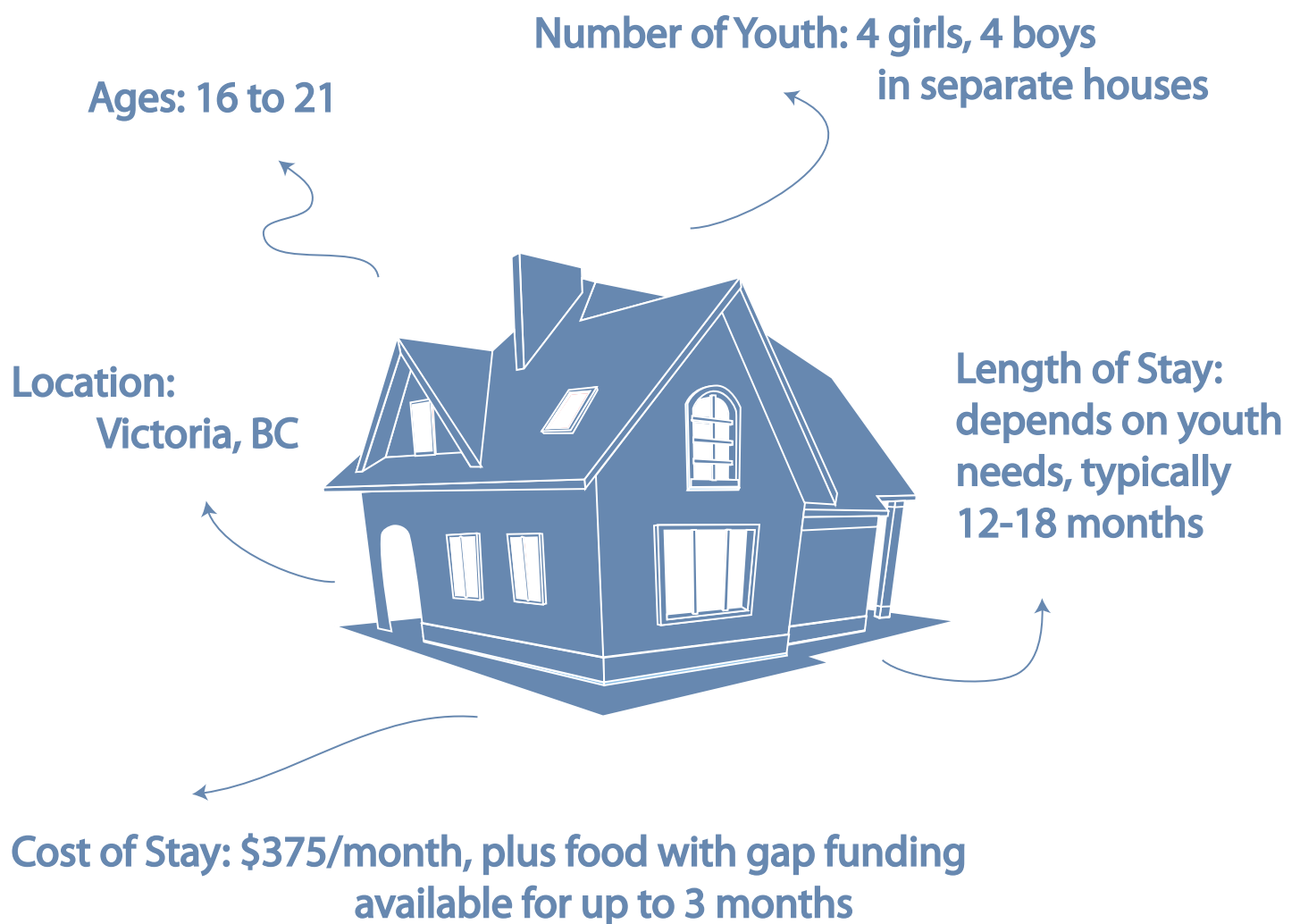
From Transitions for Youth (2007):

- “Best” programs have an in-depth understanding of the needs in their community, are visionary and creative and can maximize the use of local resources, and can build networks of support and work collaboratively with others
- A physical location that is accessible and safe
- Youth involvement, ownership and choice in the process
- A holistic approach to meeting needs
- Developing community partnerships with a variety of stakeholders (private, public, and voluntary sectors) in service delivery
- Developing relationships between people and communities

From the case studies:

- Transitional housing programs need to be consistent and fair about expectation, which should be clearly communicated to youth before they enter the program
- Ensure energy is focused on youth when they are first placed, and enter the program. A thorough intake process will ensure youth are ready for the program, and building a trusting and meaningful relationship with youth from the start is essential to future success. Clear expectations and follow-through on the part of the support staff are also important elements of this relationship
- Provide life-skills programming
- Gradually increase youth responsibilities over time; build confidence and self-esteem
- Have gap funding and other back up plans for youth who may not always get it right the first time

## Threshold Youth Housing (Victoria, BC)





The Threshold Housing Society began in 1992 with a vision “to offer safe, supportive, transitional housing for at-risk youth and to facilitate opportunities for residents to enhance skills, develop self-sufficiency, contribute to their community, and to prevent homelessness” (Threshold Housing Society, 2012). In August of 2010, the Board of the Threshold Housing Society developed a new Mission Statement to support “youth achieving independence through safe, supportive housing solutions” (Threshold Housing Society, 2012).

This service provider is the only one in the area with a semi-independent living program that is specifically tailored to street involved and homeless youth ages 16-21. The Threshold Housing Society consists of two buildings - Holly House for girls and Mitchell House for boys - that offer a total of eight beds. Since the Threshold Housing Society began, it has served approximately 400 youth with between 100-125 finishing a stable housing experience .

Similar to other transitional youth housing models, Threshold Youth Housing Society places a high degree of focus on ensuring that youth have a “certain level of independence while having the benefit of a live-in supervisor who offers encouragement and mentoring when necessary” (Threshold Youth Housing Society, 2012). In many ways, this model establishes a certain atmosphere that is similar to that of a typical home environment.

There are some restrictions for a youth within this program and they are as follows. The youth must: attend school, be employed, or part of an accredited training program. They are also expected to pay a modestly priced rent and participate in household life. The maximum length of stay varies according to the youth but the typical stay is generally not longer than 12-18 months.

### Key Lessons Learned:

1. Provide a life-skills program that is experiential and gets at the root of the problem
2. Have an intense intake assessment to ensure youths are ready for semi-independent living. Staff should be user-friendly for youth while providing an adult role model and building a relationship of trust.
3. Have a gap funding program in place
4. Be well connected to community resources
5. Ensure staff take vacations and sufficient time off

### Key Challenges:

1. Community is not educated to make a distinction between street involved youth and the adult homeless population
2. Lack of consistent funding for expansion, operations and programs

- Mark Muldoon, personal communication, 2012

## Pandora Youth Apartments (Victoria, BC)

**Number of Youth: 8 transitional units**

**Ages: 15 to 19**

**Location:  
Victoria, BC**

**Length of Stay:  
Up to 18 months**



**Cost of Stay: \$375 per month for rent,  
\$20 per month for cable and internet (required),  
and a \$250 damage deposit.**

The Pandora Youth Apartments is a transitional housing program that serves youth 15 to 19 who are dealing with isolation, homelessness, substance use, mental health, trauma, or issues accessing nutrition and healthcare. Run by the YMCA/YWCA of Greater Victoria, the goals of this program include:

- To provide safe and affordable housing to participants
- To foster participants' skill development
- To help participants achieve independence and assist their transition into long term, independent housing
- To provide support services for participants through counselling, life skills, youth-led workshops and advocacy
- To build a sense of community within Y Pandora Youth Apartments so that participants feel safe, valued and respected

- YMCA/YWCA of Greater Victoria, 2012

After a thorough referral and intake process, each youth accepted in the program has their own self-contained bachelor unit, with supports to assist their transition into independent housing. This happens through a counselor who helps youth develop a plan to enhance their independence, self-esteem and quality of life. There is also a focus in developing good tenancy habits. Once youth are ready to transition, the program is set up to assist youth with that search process.

YMCA-YWCA of Greater Victoria is able to run this program in partnership with the Victoria Cool Aid Society who owns the building and acts as a landlord, managing and maintaining the building, assisting with security issues, and providing access to Cool Aid kitchen facilities and recreational activities (personal communication, March 7, 2012). They are funded by the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, and have received grants from a variety of sources including the United Way of Greater Victoria and Coast Capital Savings in order to maintain their level of service.

The Pandora Youth Apartments program has helped over 100 of youth since opening its doors in 1997, however, as noted above in the discussion of transitional housing, there *is* a limit to how long a youth may stay. At PYA the limit of stay is 18 months, and while the youth may be ready to live on their own, there are often no affordable housing options in the Victoria area (personal communication, March 7, 2012). This highlights the need for a continuum of services, and a more permanent, affordable, and independent housing option for youth in areas with a high cost of housing, and low vacancy-rates (such as Victoria and the WestShore area - see the following Supportive Housing discussion).

## Supportive Housing Models ---

Similar to transitional housing, supportive housing can be implemented through a variety of different models, physical forms and ownership scenarios. Again, support varies depending on the model. Some forms of supportive housing are geared towards youth that require support on a longer-term basis due to mental illness, addictions, HIV/AIDs, among others. Supportive housing can also involve a lease agreement with rent support from an organization (e.g., LEASE program through Larkin Street Youth Services in San Francisco), which provides an opportunity for youth to experience more independence, and can, in many cases, allow youth to influence the level of support they need (Mochrie, 2009). The main distinction here, again, is linked to time. Supportive Housing does not have a defined duration or limit on the length of stay.

## Key Success Factors

Upon review of the literature, other housing studies, and the specific case studies covered in this report, the following list of promising and best practices for emergency/crisis shelters was collected:

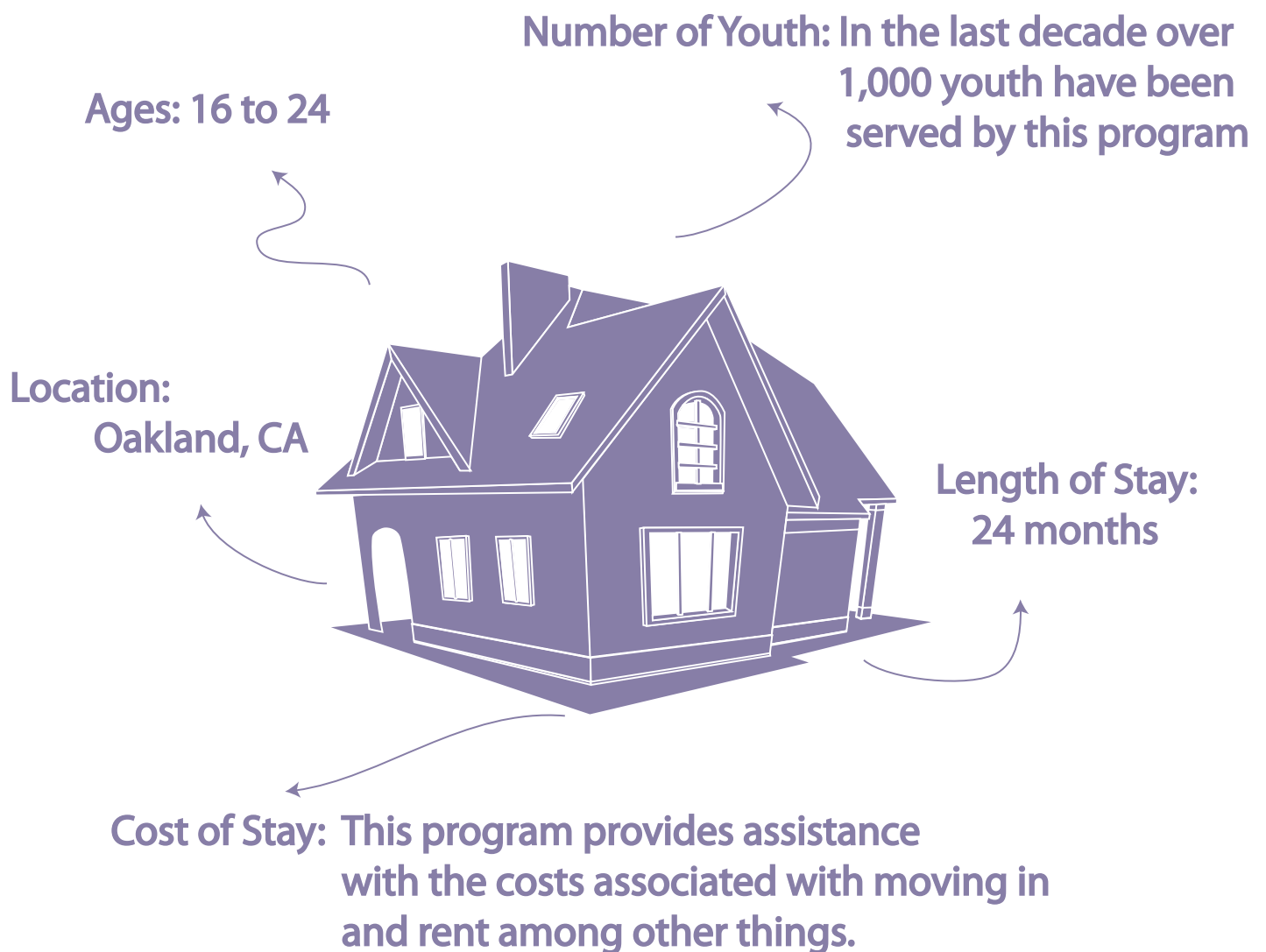
From Kraus et al, 2007:

This is a relatively new model for youth, especially in Canada, therefore there are only a few examples of dedicated supportive housing for youth, or youth with special needs (Kraus et al, 2007). Many of the key success factors of supportive housing revolve around gaining life skills while being independent. This gives youth a chance to experience independence without completely taking away their safety net. This is especially important in areas where there is a lack of affordable housing options for youth, such as the WestShore or Victoria.

From the case studies:

- The program needs to work towards a foundation of self-esteem and self-reliance
- Youth should develop and work through their own unique set of employment and education goals (e.g. at Seventh Landing, youth are involved in every aspect of their residency)
- Provide guidance and stability to the most street involved youth
- Connect youth to the community
- Establish a mentoring structure where former residents work with current residents
- Establish plans with youth that set clear and consistent objectives with contingency plans and consequences for breaking this agreement

## First Place Fund for Youth (Oakland, CA)





The First Place for Youth was founded in 1998 as the first organization in Northern California to provide affordable housing and supports tailored specifically for former foster youth. This program is considered a national model for providing permanent housing for street involved youth. This organization uses a housing program, an employment and academic program, counselling, and youth community centre, in partnership with other community agencies, to provide youth with the services they require to make a safe transition out of foster care. The First Place for Youth helps individuals to gain the skills they need to live independently and succeed on their own.

The housing and support services are designed for those youth ages 16-24 who are either preparing to age beyond the foster care system, or are struggling to settle into a life beyond state-run care. All too often, once youth are discharged from care there are limited resources available for these young adults. Instead of receiving support and guidance during this critical transition, former foster youth are without housing, a source of income, adult encouragement, or community support. This is the specific gap this program seeks to fill.

The First Place for Youth has developed a number of programs that proactively challenge the current trends among former foster youth. This is done by building a foundation of self-esteem and self-reliance, and working on forging the skills needed to meet employment goals, maintain healthy relationships, foster effective communication and develop a sense of community. To achieve this, the youth develop and work toward their own unique set of educational goals.

The First Place for Youth provides for housing stability, economic stability, educational attainment, improved health, and connection to community all offered through four distinct programs, three of which are:

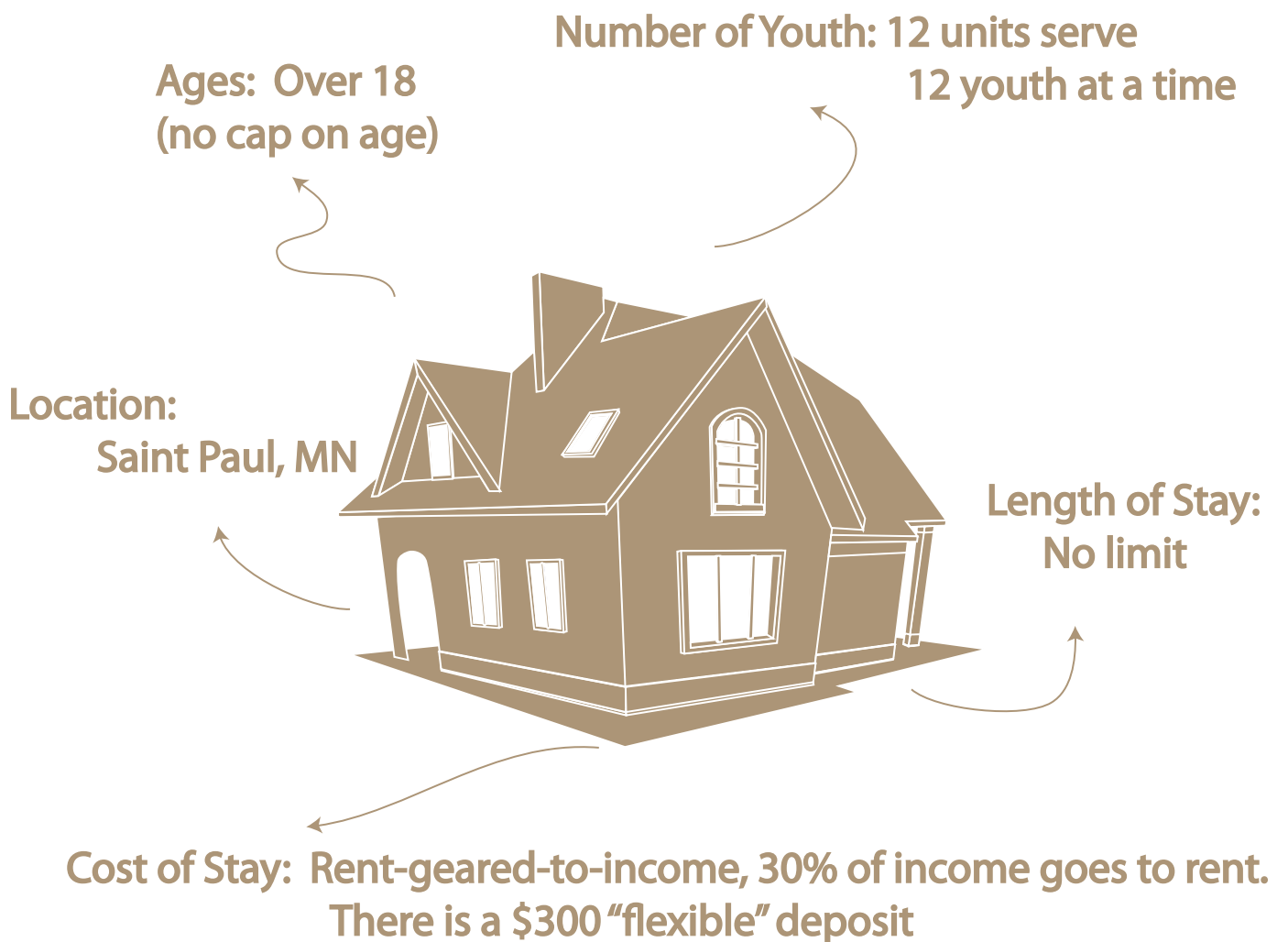
My First Place, a 24-month housing support program, allows former foster youth ages 18 to 24 the opportunity to develop a sense of permanency for the first time in their lives. Staff work intensely with each participant to

set goals for work, school, relationships and long-term, stable housing. Youth live in one- and two-bedroom apartments, and receive support with move-in costs, rent, food, essential furnishing, house wares, health and mental health needs, self-reliance planning, and access to employment and education services.

Steps to Success, First Place's Education and Employment program, meets the unique needs of all youth who are focused on advancing their careers. The goal of the program is to dually support a youth's educational and employment pursuits as critical components of increasing earning potential, building confidence, and taking positive strides in becoming self sufficient.

First Steps is a program unique to Bay Area youth that provides workshops, educational and employment support, housing referrals and community resources to current and former Bay Area foster youth who are either preparing to age out of care or have already done so recently.

## Seventh Landing (Saint Paul, MN)



Seventh Landing offers 12 units of supportive housing designed for homeless youth that are managed and operated by RS Eden with support from the Corporation for Supportive Housing, based in Minneapolis, MN. RS Eden owns, manages, and provides supports for eight supportive housing programs that serve over 300 youth.

Within Seventh Landing, all units are designated for tenants that are experiencing homelessness, and are affected by a permanent disability such as mental illness. There is a selection priority that gives preference to those youth that may not have lived independently in the past. It is these youth that are the most in need as they may lack some of the basic life skills, which places them at a higher level of risk than their counterparts. RS Eden reports that, “many of the young adults enter with an extensive history of out of home placement in foster care, juvenile corrections, or residential facilities” (RS Eden, 2012).

For the youth supported by Seventh Landing, all of the services are voluntary but all tenants are required to sign a lease agreement that commits the youth to maintain 25 hours per week of productive activity. These activities include school, work, treatment, volunteering and supporting an alcohol and drug free environment by remaining clean and sober. There are not time restrictions on occupancy provided the tenant meets the lease obligations.

Seventh Landing list four key features and innovations that have been developed through this specific project:

- A youth engagement outreach and consultation initiative took place through out the initial conception, and various stages of the project. Youth from other housing developments were invited to share their thoughts with the developers and architects.

- On-site services are designed to assist tenants in strengthening the skills required to live independently. These services have a focus on individual case management that serves as the bridge between youth and education, mental health, employment or counselling services.
- Program staff work with tenants to establish strong connections to community through community building opportunities that promote positive relationships.
- On-site employment and job training opportunities are provided through a coffee shop program.

In a conversation with housing manager at Seventh Landing, she mentioned that the single largest lesson learned and most critical aspect of service provision is that there are supports available to help residents find self sufficiency. She mentioned that for many of these individuals, the experience has been that care givers have often done things to help the individuals, but did not always involve those individuals in the process. Also, it is key to establish contingency plans such as an incidental support plan, a crisis plan, and a six month plan to establish a path for the resident towards self sufficiency (personal communication, March 9, 2012).

## Continuum Housing Models ---

A continuum/range of housing offers a range of housing options that are designed to meet the diverse needs of a youth population (Larkin Street Youth Services, 2009). Within this model there is typically a drop-in center, emergency, transitional and supportive housing options that are all connected. Most often the continuum is organized under one single umbrella organization, however it is also possible for youth to access a continuum of care organized through a coalition or partnership of service providers.

## Key Success Factors

Upon review of the literature, other housing studies, and the specific case studies covered in this report, the following list of promising and best practices for providing a continuum of housing supports and services was collected:

From the case studies:

- Strong communication between different elements within the continuum framework
- Access to a full range of housing options and supports by allowing youth to move between different levels of care depending on their needs
- Work with youth to determine which type of housing and supports is most suitable for their current needs
- Ensure a degree of structure and expectations for youth in the housing that both reward behavior and keep youth accountable for their actions
- An extremely personal approach to service provision throughout the continuum

## Covenant House Vancouver (Vancouver, BC)

**Ages: 16 – 22 (up to 23rd birthday),  
and up to 24 for drop-in services  
and transitional housing program**

**Number of Youth: Over 1,400  
served by Covenant House in 2011**

**Location:  
Vancouver, BC**

**Length of Stay:  
For shelter it is flexible, for  
transitional housing there  
is a maximum  
of 2 years**

**Cost of Stay: No cost for shelter, \$300/month or 60% of income  
(with refund based on performance) for transitional housing**



Covenant House is an international social service organization that opened its doors in Vancouver in 1997. This first shelter was a 12 bed facility that has since expanded to 54 beds. There is also a 25 bed transitional living program. In total, Covenant House Vancouver was able to help 1,404 youth last year.

Covenant House Vancouver exists for those young people for whom there is often no one else. The program targets ages 16 to 24 who have fled physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, those who have been forced from their homes, or those who have aged out of foster care.

Covenant House Vancouver provides a continuum of services in order to best serve the diverse needs of the street involved youth population. Over the years of serving youth in downtown Vancouver, Covenant House Vancouver has carefully tracked results and measured program outcomes, which has led to several key findings. Some of the lessons learned/promising practices that come from the Covenant House Vancouver model include:

- The importance of a strength-based, youth-centered approach
- The need to have staff trained in motivational interviewing, stages of change, attachment theory, etc.
- For all staff to “on the same page” - fair, consistent and focused on the needs and goals of youth
- The need to spend lots of time initially to relationship build with the youth
- Provide staff with clear, concise guidelines with authority to adapt and make decisions “in the moment”
- The goal of working with youth to move toward independent living and the gradual process of increasing responsibility and accountability, especially in the Rights of Passage (transitional living) program
- Covenanting approach (creating a plan/agreements)

- The importance of a continuum of care
- Integrated mental health and addictions services, (impact of psychiatrists, addictions treatment and mental health program)
- The five covenant principles: Immediacy, Sanctuary, Value Communication, Structure, and Choice
- The importance of measuring key performance outcomes (and naming what they are) so that they know the impact of services on youth outcomes
- An HR that supports staff promotion, transition and feedback, and also minimizes staff turnover through appropriate compensation and management
- A funding model that is highly diversified and is reliant as little as possible on government funding (organization is resilient during economic and political change)

Through a conversation with an employee at Covenant House Vancouver it was identified that there are also several key challenges. Similar to the challenges faced by youth moving out of Pandora Youth Apartments, available affordable housing options for youth, once they are ready to transition out of Covenant House Vancouver transitional housing, is always a challenge. Establishing a trusting relationship with adults can be a challenge as well, but it is a key component of making a positive change.

## Larkin Street Youth Services (San Francisco, CA)

**Ages: 12 to 24**

**Provides a continuum of services to over 3,400 youth annually**

**Location:  
San Francisco, CA**



**Cost of Stay: Depends on the program. No cost for the shelter and a small cost for other housing**

Larkin Street Youth Services was founded in 1984 by a group of local business owners, church members, and neighbours that were concerned about an increase in the number of street youth engaging in risky behaviors throughout San Francisco.

The mission of Larkin Street Youth Services is to create a continuum of services that inspires youth to move beyond the street. They seek to nurture potential, promote dignity, and support bold steps by all. Larkin Street Youth Services offers 11 housing options designed specifically to provide a continuum of services and supports that are tailored to engage the diverse needs of homeless youth ages 12-24. The core support services provided for residential program participants are case management, life skills, mental health, substance use, HIV prevention, employment, education, art, and medical care.

These services are offered through four distinct streams of housing initiatives including: a drop in centre, three emergency shelters, four transitional housing facilities, and four supportive housing services.

The variety of housing types aim to offer varying levels of support and independence to the youth. They also ensure that housing at a level that is aligned to the youth's readiness to transition from the streets. It is important that the youth are not required to "progress" from more restrictive to less restrictive housing models, but are able to enter any housing program within the housing continuum that the youth and the service provider determine to be the most appropriate.

This array of housing options are necessary to meet the needs of the homeless youth population. Larkin Street Youth Services suggests that for youth housing to be successful, "housing should be developmentally appropriate and provide a range of supports to help youth" (Larkin Street Youth Services, 2009). Housing of this type should also be low barrier and have individual case management approaches to youth interaction, which will further ensure that youth are able to utilize the various levels of services that are offered to them through the continuum housing programs. Like a typical home

situation, these housing models within the continuum offer a degree of structure and offer individuals the foundation upon which, they can mature, develop skills, and attain long-term stability and self-sufficiency.

Larkin Street Youth Services reports that youth served through transitional housing programs typically have better outcomes than those youth who are only able to access emergency housing options. This success is due to the higher intensity of services that are offered and the personal approach to service provisions that enable the youth to attain a higher degree of independence at a gradual rate that ensures a smooth transition towards greater independence. For example, in the 2009-2010 year, Larkin Street Youth Services published that 76% of youths that completed one of the comprehensive programs offered were able to transition into stable, independent housing. This was all achieved with a balanced budget, clean audit, and contributing 86 cents of every dollar directly toward programming (Larkin Street Youth Services, 2009).

### Victoria Human Exchange Society (Victoria, BC)

**Ages: 19 and up**

**Length of Stay: 3 Months –  
Longer with board approval**

**Location:  
Victoria, Sydney,  
Nanaimo &  
Saltspring Island, BC**



**Cost of Stay: Individuals: \$15.00 per night, \$375.00 per month  
Couples: \$25.00 per night, \$570.00 per month**

The Victoria Human Exchange Society is unique among the other housing models already profiled. The housing services offered by the Society do not adhere to either shelter, transitional, or supportive housing models. This housing model is based on the 20 years of experience the Society has in the Victoria, Nanaimo, and Gulf Island regions of Vancouver Island.

The Society is a “grass roots group providing support and advocacy to people working hard to solve their own problems. It is simply a partnership of human beings – all with gifts to be shared and exchanged with those in need – and by supporting one another, we grow towards a healthy community” (Victoria Human Exchange Society, 2012).

The organization serves a population that is over the age of 19 and is experiencing homelessness, or is street involved. Currently the organization has forty residents spread across eight housing units located in Victoria, Sydney, Saltspring Island, and Nanaimo. Typically the residents are referred to the Society through various other organizations and there is currently a waiting list. To address the constant need for shelter within the region, there is a three month limit on residential stays. This can be extended with the permission of the board, however. There is also a \$375 per month cost associated with residing within one of these residences

It is important to note that this housing is designed for individuals that have a certain capacity to live a semi-independent lifestyle. The semi-independent structure of this housing is where this program differs significantly from transitional youth housing. There is not the level of supports that other youth programs typically offer, such as health care, counselling services, education and job training, etc.

It is important to note however, that every home does have a resident facilitator that provides a strong connection between the organization and the individual residents. The facilitator is not formally trained, but is selected based on elements such as their past personal experiences. The facilitator can offer an ear to listen, help

manage housing chores and tasks, and make referrals to residents to trained support agencies in the community.

The people who use this service are struggling. The issues differ from one resident to another but the constant remains that they are in need of housing and the securities that it provides. To achieve this with a 95% success rate the Society has developed a model that differs from either shelter, transitional, or supportive housing. This model is based on an environment free from judgment, with limited structure, and ample individual freedoms. There are expectations on the residents to help with household chores and to be respectful of others, but there is little in the way of mandatory meeting attendance, curfews or other requirements. The residents are able to find stability and a sympathetic ear while they reestablish themselves and work towards reintegration into market housing.

# Best Practice Discussion

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All of the case studies discussed above illustrate numerous best practices for the prevention and reduction of youth homelessness. I have chosen to look at four key types of youth-focused housing typologies to draw out some of the practices used within each program, as well as some of the challenges and strengths specific to the particular service provision. These programs serve a broad spectrum of youth from those who may only need the support services offered at a drop-in centre, to those who may suffer from mental illness or addiction, and could be considered “street entrenched” youth. The intention is not to look only at the target population of each initiative, but also to look at the impacts on the youth resulting from that service and determine which initiatives could be put into place that stand to have the most significant positive impacts on WestShore youth.

Larkin Street Youth Services for example, has the advantage of being able to offer 11 different housing options that are tailored to youth with differing struggles. Their LGBT transitional housing option, Castro House, speaks to the need to be inclusive and open with youth who may be suffering from specific challenges related to their identity or sexual orientation. It also uses an incentive residential model to reward those youth that reach their self-ascribed goals. These best practices are not specific to the LGBT community, as they have a resonance with all subsets of the youth population. It is therefore critical to take the lessons learned and best/promising practices from each housing typology or category, in order to provide each individual youth with the absolute best assistance possible.

It is important to note that any programming and housing options need to be tailored to the unique needs of the local youth population. The idea here is to assess what resources are available, and create a Made in the WestShore Youth Housing and Support Model. This means that elements of programs need to address key issues identified by local youth and service providers

such as family reunification and counselling, developing independence and responsibility, and health.

All individuals interviewed through the WestShore also overwhelmingly confirmed the need for a youth shelter, which was echoed by the youth through the Youth Focus Group. Further, there was a call for both short and long-term housing options that would be suitable for all youth and would be service enriched.

Based on this feedback, the most suitable youth housing and service model is one that closely mirrors a continuum model. Many communities benefit the most from providing street involved youth with a continuum of housing and service options. This is not to say, however, that a continuum of services is the necessary first step. Larkin Street Youth Services, for example, began as a drop-in centre and over the years, with community support, grew into the expansive program it is today. Programs like Larkin or Covenant House Vancouver began with limited resources but have grown incrementally to fill the needs of the community. The WestShore seems particularly well suited to a similar type of incremental housing and service roll out program.

Through the research conducted for this report there have been five key themes that become apparent (discussed right).

Beyond these five common themes that have arisen through this research, there are many other best practices contained within this report that can be integrated and adapted into a uniquely WestShore Youth Housing initiative. The tailoring of the project to ensure its sustainability and successes for the youth population within the WestShore.

## Key Themes

Through a review of the literature and with input from youth and from various service providers and case studies, there were a number of key themes that came up repeatedly:

- The three critical aspects of youth housing are the integration of housing and services, the provision of culturally appropriate services, and the inclusion of health services that could be used by all youth.
- Any youth housing or service initiative must reflect the needs and priorities of local youth. This is essential for the programs to effectively impact the target population.
- Housing and programming flexibility is critical to ensure that the services are able to adapt and respond to the unique needs and challenges of the in-need or street involved individual. Every youth is an individual and as such, each program needs to be flexible.
- Community support is another important element of serving the youth in-need or street involved population. This allows for funding opportunities and creates awareness of the specific issues on the part of the community. At the same time, community support can help provide the necessary resources that may be required to re-engage youth as they work towards independence and stability.
- Finally, patience and understanding are key. Never give up on the youth that may be in-need or street involved. They may have significant challenges or struggles that result from abuses or neglect but they need a safe, understanding place to turn where there is nowhere else.



# Funding Sources

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Through the many case studies and interviews conducted as a part of this report, it became apparent that funding was a significant component for any youth-focused housing and service provision program. To enable a service provider with all of the resources necessary to best serve the target population there should be a diverse revenue base that combines one-time grants, multi-year funding programs, annual fundraisers and government support. By having a diverse revenue stream for the programs, it can be better assured that these programs remain resilient and well supported through times of shifting economic and social priorities.

Following is a chart of possible funding sources from differing levels of government, private programs, charities, public sources and corporations. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all available funding sources, but rather a rich example of a diversity of sources that can help the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force take the first steps towards realizing youth homelessness prevention and reduction initiatives within the community.

It is important to note, as well, that there may be potential funding opportunities available through the municipalities that comprise the WestShore. For example, Langford and Colwood have both established affordable housing reserve funds that are designed to help facilitate the creation of affordable housing throughout the municipalities. Also, a current collection of funding opportunities are listed on both the BC Non-Profit Association and the Victoria Foundation websites that are updated as additional funding sources become available.

| Source  | Program  | Description  | Contact   | Notes |
|---|--|--|---|-------|
| Human Resources and Social Development Canada | Homelessness Partnership Initiative<br><a href="http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/homellessness/index.shtml">http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/homellessness/index.shtml</a>             | A community-based program that relies on communities to determine their own needs and to develop appropriate projects. The HPS supports 61 designated communities and some small, rural, northern and Aboriginal communities to develop local solutions to homelessness. This program encourages a partnership approach between provinces and territories, communities, and the private and voluntary sectors to strengthen capacity and to ensure sustainability for projects and developments. | Mary Jane MadLennan<br>604-666-6008<br><a href="mailto:maryjane.madlennan@servicecanada.gc.ca">maryjane.madlennan@servicecanada.gc.ca</a> |       |
| BC Housing                                    | Community Partnership Initiatives<br><a href="http://www.bchousing.org/Partners/Opportunities/Current/CPI">http://www.bchousing.org/Partners/Opportunities/Current/CPI</a> | Provides advice, referrals to partnership opportunities and interim financing, and arranges for long-term financing for non-profit societies to create self-sustain, affordable housing developments.  | Danna Locke<br>Regional Development Director<br>604-439-4193<br><a href="mailto:dlocke@bchousing.org">dlocke@bchousing.org</a>            |       |
|   | Emergency Shelter Program<br><a href="http://www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Access/ESP">http://www.bchousing.org/Initiatives/Access/ESP</a>                                 | Provides funding to shelters and drop-in centers that help connect people who are homeless to housing and support services in addition to offering temporary shelter, food, and other support services.  | <a href="mailto:Homeless@bchousing.org">Homeless@bchousing.org</a>  |       |
|   | Women's Transition Housing and Supports<br><a href="http://www.bchousing.org/Options/Emergency_Housing/WTHSP">http://www.bchousing.org/Options/Emergency_Housing/WTHSP</a> | BC Housing provides funding for Transition Houses, Safe Homes and Second Stage Housing programs that support women (with or without dependent children) who have experienced violence or at risk of experiencing violence by providing temporary shelter/housing and support services.   | Danna Locke<br>Regional Development Director<br>604-439-4193<br><a href="mailto:dlocke@bchousing.org">dlocke@bchousing.org</a>            |       |

|   |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Sprott Foundation & Virgin Unite Canada | Eva's Initiatives' Awards for Ending Youth Homelessness<br><a href="http://awards.evainitiatives.com/">http://awards.evainitiatives.com/</a>                                   | Eva's Initiatives and the Sprott Foundation offer four awards of \$25,000 each for organizations working with homeless and at-risk youth. The goal of the award is to recognize community initiatives that are: Moving beyond responding to the most basic needs of homeless and at-risk youth; demonstrating significant impacts in the lives of vulnerable youth; and delivering programs or services aimed at preventing youth homelessness. Projects considered will focus on breaking the cycle of homelessness among youth by integrating supports such as: housing, education, employment, family connections, and interventions to address mental health concerns and/or addictions.   | Deborah Hierlihy<br>Awards Coordinator<br>(613) 471-1348<br><a href="mailto:awards@evas.ca">awards@evas.ca</a> |   |
| The Real Estate Foundation of BC        | Built Environment Grants Program<br><a href="http://www.realestatefoundation.com/grants">http://www.realestatefoundation.com/grants</a>  | The Real Estate Foundation of BC supports real estate and land use practices that contribute to resilient, healthy communities and natural systems. They provide grants and information to non-profit organizations working to enable transformational change in BC communities.   | Jen McCaffrey, Grants Manager (ext 108) jen (at) refbc.com   | Deadlines for 2012: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 25 (for September grants meeting)</li> <li>August 27 (for December grants meeting)</li> <li>November 16 (for March 2013 grants meeting)</li> </ul> |
| The Home Depot Foundation               | The Community Impact Grants Program<br><a href="http://www.homedepot.ca/foundation/what-we-do/grant-programs">http://www.homedepot.ca/foundation/what-we-do/grant-programs</a> | <p>The Home Depot Canada Foundation believes that good neighbours make great neighbourhoods. The Foundation is dedicated to sharing their time, knowledge and resources to support affordable housing and build strong communities for Canadians in need.</p> <p>They offer supports to Canadian registered charities who share their commitment to building strong communities through two grant programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Grants – for small-scale affordable housing initiatives and neighbourhood improvement projects that serve Canadians in need and encourage hands-on service through volunteer engagement.</li> <li>2. Affordable Housing Grants – for repairs, refurbishments and modifications to affordable housing dwellings that benefit Canadians in need</li> </ol> | <a href="mailto:canadafoundation@homedepot.com">canadafoundation@homedepot.com</a>                             |   |

|   |   |  |  |   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children | Community Grants Program<br><a href="http://www.queenalexandra.org/get-support/grants-community-organizations">http://www.queenalexandra.org/get-support/grants-community-organizations</a> | The Queen Alexandra Foundation (QAF) for children makes grants to agencies that support the physical, emotional and social well being of children, youth and families on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.  | frances.melville@vfiha.ca  |   |
| Air Canada                              | In the Community<br><a href="http://www.aircanada.com/en/about/community/">http://www.aircanada.com/en/about/community/</a>   | Air Canada has a lengthy history of supporting organizations that focus on improving the lives of Canadians.<br><br>Their In the Community program support is twofold:<br><br>1. They invest in your community's social fabric by supporting charitable organizations that help children and youth through our Air Canada Foundation;<br><br>2. They also sponsor local events or activities by non-profit organizations that contribute to your community's economic growth.                                | No specific contact available.<br><br>There is an online contact portal for inquiries. | This program would not be suitable for cash contributions but offers supports for fundraising efforts and activities. This includes such things as promotional materials and airfare. |
| The Steve Nash Foundation               | Growing Health in Kids<br><a href="https://stevenash.org/we-support/bc-grants">https://stevenash.org/we-support/bc-grants</a>   | The Steve Nash Foundation awards grants to child-focused non-profits that provide direct health and education services to underserved children throughout British Columbia, Canada. Funded projects improve outcomes for children by identifying and actuating solutions to community needs; with a focus on capital building and improvements, BC Grants is community investment at work.   | jenny@stevenash.org  | This program is offered annually.   |
| The T.L.C. Fund for Kids                | T.L.C. Fund for Kids<br><a href="http://tlcfund.ca/about-t-l-c">http://tlcfund.ca/about-t-l-c</a>   | The T.L.C. Fund for Kids raises funds to aid in the wellness and quality of life for all children in the Capital Regional District. They support everything from educational programs, to grief counseling, to special care. The T.L.C. Fund for Kids supports the needs of children in the Capital Region. Any not-for-profit organization dedicated to the health, happiness and betterment of life for children in Greater Victoria is eligible to benefit from funds raised by The T.L.C. Fund for Kids. | tlc@theq.fm<br><br>250-475-0100  |   |
| BC Hydro                                | Community Investment<br><a href="http://www.bchydro.com/community_investment/donations_sponsorships.html">http://www.bchydro.com/community_investment/donations_sponsorships.html</a>       | BC Hydro provides support to community-based, non-profit organizations and registered charities that are active in at least one of our key funding areas:<br><br>1. Environmental Sustainability<br>2. Youth and Lifestyle<br>3. Community Leadership  | communityinvestment@bchydro.com  |   |

|   |  |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| TELUS                                       | Community Board Funding Program<br><a href="http://about.telus.com/community/how_to_get_funded/victoria/guidelines/">http://about.telus.com/community/how_to_get_funded/victoria/guidelines/</a>   | TELUS seeks to help educate and empower youth in an effort to improve their quality of life. The program focuses on supporting projects that help youth fulfill their potential by providing access to either programming that demonstrates social innovation or technology.  | communityaffairs@telus.com                                    | Deadlines:<br>Victoria Community Board<br>• February 27<br>• May 28<br>• August 27 |
| Ministry of Children and Family Development | No Specific Programs<br><a href="http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/">http://www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/</a>  | The Ministry of Children and Family Development has a mission to support healthy child development and has a commitment to a collaborative professional practice and works towards partnerships that offer positive outcomes for children, youth and families. The Ministry offers numerous programs and supports for youth and families across BC. | Client Relations Victoria<br>250 387-7027                     |  |
| Victoria Foundation                         | Grant Program<br><a href="http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca/web/grantingprograms/overview">http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca/web/grantingprograms/overview</a>   | The Victoria program offers many streams of funding for charitable organizations within the Victoria Capital Regional District.   | Director of Community Initiatives and Grants<br>250-381-5532, | Deadline:<br>Before June 22, 2012  |
| BCLC  | BC Gaming Grants<br><a href="http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/gaming/grants/community-gaming.htm#one">http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/gaming/grants/community-gaming.htm#one</a>  | This funding stream offers funds to non-profit organizations providing programs or services of direct benefit to the broader community.   | Questions:<br>250 387-5311<br>Gaming.Grants@gov.bc.ca         |  |
| Coast Capital Savings Credit Union          | Community Investment Grants<br><a href="https://www.coastcapitalsavings.com/About_Coast_Capital_Savings/Helping_Communities/Funding_Programs/Community_Investment_Grants/">https://www.coastcapitalsavings.com/About_Coast_Capital_Savings/Helping_Communities/Funding_Programs/Community_Investment_Grants/</a> | Coast Capital Savings Credit Union Community Investment Grants are invested in projects that focus on<br>1. Education<br>2. Family and social connections<br>3. Financial well being<br>4. Health<br><br>The grants can be used for projects/initiatives that support youth as well as youth-focused organizational development programs.           | Email<br>communityinvestment.fund@coastcapitalsavings.com     |  |

|                                |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Capital Region Housing Trust   | Regional Housing Trust Fund<br><a href="http://www.crd.bc.ca/housingsecretariat/trustfund.htm">http://www.crd.bc.ca/housingsecretariat/trustfund.htm</a> | The Housing Trust Fund is a key implementation initiative of the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy. The CRD Board established the fund in 2005, in recognition that housing affordability is a regional priority and key issue in the Capital Region. The Fund provides capital grants for “bricks and mortar” in the acquisition, development and retention of housing that is affordable to households with low or moderate incomes in the Capital Region.   | Henry Kamphof RHTF Administrator Tel. 250.360.3081   |  |
| CMHC                           | No specific program<br><a href="http://www.cmhc.ca/en/inpr/afhocs/fias/index.cfm">http://www.cmhc.ca/en/inpr/afhocs/fias/index.cfm</a>                   | <p>CMHC aims to help increase access to quality, affordable homes for Canadians through a number of channels, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation, support and financial tools to help communities sponsor and develop their own affordable housing projects</li> <li>• Funding to create safe, affordable housing and support those individuals whose needs are not met through the marketplace and</li> <li>• Funding to supply and renovate housing for Aboriginal Canadians both on- and off-reserve.</li> </ul> <p>CMHC can also provide up to \$20,000 in seed funding, interest-free loans and assistance in the form of mortgage loan insurance and low rate mortgages.</p> | CMHC Affordable Housing Representative 1800.668.2642 |  |
| United Way of Greater Victoria | Community Impact Funding<br><a href="http://uwgv.ca/community-impact/funding/">http://uwgv.ca/community-impact/funding/</a>                              | The United Way of Greater Victoria provides support for agencies and services to engage and assist people to achieve long-term sustainable change that will help them become more self-reliant. To support this type of work United Way will our focus resources for maximum impact.   | General Inquiries 250 385 6708                       |  |

# Conclusion and Recommendations

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Keeping within the terms of reference which were: to provide professional services in connection with understanding and providing for emergency, interim, and long-term youth housing needs in the WestShore area of Vancouver Island through a case study approach, and with an exploration of possible funding sources in order to both outline the best housing/shelter typology and provide potential resources for development, I have identified a number of possible recommendations to help guide the Task Force's next steps towards addressing youth homelessness within the WestShore.

I have concluded through looking at both the statistical data and speaking with the local service providers makes it clear that there is a clear and immediate need to address housing issues for street involved youth within the WestShore. There is no question regarding the prevalence of homelessness, or the risk of homelessness amongst youth within the community. It is also clear that the consequences of housing instability are extensive and interconnected. The consequences could include health concerns, addiction issues, violence, high school success rates, and discrimination, to name only a few. The challenges for youth who are determined to be street involved are very real and will only increase with the ongoing "youth boom" and rising living costs.

Unfortunately, there is no single or simple solution, just like there is no easy measure to determine street involved, or the risk of homelessness. The solutions are found in cooperation amongst service providers and the various levels of government. In many ways the WestShore is at a critical time in terms of addressing youth need within the community. The growth rates are expected to continue to rise, and with that comes new opportunities and new challenges. If the appropriate policies are not developed, or if the appropriate services are not bolstered or created, the challenges could become much larger in scale.

The most effective strategy will be a comprehensive approach that develops short-term shelter services as

well as interim and long-term accommodation options. As many service providers have mentioned, the transition for youth from homeless or at risk to living independently in market rate housing is not always a linear process. It is for this reason that patience and communication are key to understanding the challenges, collectively coming together on solutions and generating support for the initiatives geared towards addressing youth homelessness within the WestShore.

Through the interviews and the research conducted for this report, there were a number of recommendations beyond the specific terms of reference but are still important to highlight as a way forward in addressing youth homelessness within the WestShore.

By creating the WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force, the community and the committed individuals who both reside and work within the WestShore have already taken the first step towards understanding and addressing the many issues that youth can face within the region. Listed below are a series of initial recommendations, accompanied by a very brief discussion, that could serve as the next steps.

Also illustrated through this report are a number of programs that all address youth homelessness and street involved in different ways. The real key to assisting those target populations within the WestShore is to ensure that the programs offered are effectively tailored to specific need. The need for a drop-in centre/youth emergency shelter is clear, as is the need for eventual development of additional youth housing options. For any youth-focused housing program and service there are a number of critical best/promising practices that have been documented in this report. Choosing which ones to implement depends on a variety of factors including physical space and location, community or organizational and government resources, and funding opportunities. The youth in-need in the WestShore are not necessarily street-entrenched, however they are still



in need of expanded services and housing supports that would allow them to remain in their home communities as they transition into a stable living situation. The focus should be on providing services that are flexible enough to accommodate the variation in youth needs in the WestShore.

These recommendations are not intended to represent a complete list of all possible opportunities, as that is beyond the specific scope of this document. Rather, these are ideas and suggestions that come from the many experienced and passionate individuals that were generous enough to contribute their time and expertise to the content of this report. These recommendations are presented in order in the order of short-term, medium-term and long-term.

It is expected that due to the extremely complicated nature of addressing youth homelessness, there is to be a degree of overlap with these recommendations. This is unavoidable as these recommendations are intended to provide clear, attainable steps for the service providers and government adjacencies active in the area and a many of these recommendations build or expand on one another.

## Short-Term

1 Continue WestShore Emergency Youth Housing Task Force initiatives, including temporary emergency shelter options for the WestShore. All service providers contacted regarding this study expressed the dire need for emergency shelter services within the WestShore and this is a critical step towards addressing youth homelessness, as well as assisting in the administering of supports to those youth who may be street involved.

2 Create a WestShore Homelessness Priority Action Plan. Published in 1999, the City of Toronto has a comprehensive Homelessness Action Plan that addresses homelessness across all groups within the community and with a specific focus on each. The advantage of this holistic approach to

homelessness is the understanding of community-wide issues while allowing for broad collaboration and resource sharing amongst the service providers.

3 Set a WestShore Youth Homelessness Goal similar to that of Calgary's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. The Calgary Homelessness Foundation aims that by January 29, 2018, an individual or family will stay in an emergency shelter or sleep outside for no longer than one week before moving into safe, decent, affordable housing with the support needed to sustain it (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2011).

4 Start a marketing campaign running parallel to youth street involved reduction initiatives. By investing in billboards or advertising, local investments into street involved reduction strategies the issues will be presented to the larger population, which could help generate additional public supports or resources that could be invested back into service provision. It will also demonstrate to the youth that there are options available to them and could help to reduce some of the discrimination that youth in need currently face.

5 Secure diverse funding streams and begin the process toward creating a business plan and feasibility study for a specific youth-focused housing and support service initiative. This should be detailed and focused on the immediate need and service provision plan, but also speak to the future potential incremental growth of services and supports, including additional housing options for youth, as funds become available.

## Medium-Term

6 Create partnerships between non-profits, or the Housing Task Force and municipal governments. Many municipalities, Langford, Colwood, and View Royal for example, within the WestShore have policies that support and encourage collaboration with non-profit organizations and service providers.

- 7 Partner with local service providers in order to dedicate or coordinate services for youth and housing supports. This is key for an efficient, holistic approach to youth housing and homelessness in the area. The partnership and communication would allow for an better distribution of resources.
  - 8 Employ a youth navigator to work within the WestShore. The Sooke Family Resource Society currently has a specialized youth navigator service that “provides youth experiencing significant life challenges, particularly with mental health and/or addiction concerns, an opportunity to meet with a specialized Youth Outreach Worker” (SFRS, 2010). Youth navigators fill a critical role in delivering services to youth because of the focus on youth as “a unique population, [and] accordingly, attempts to adapt to their needs towards building a meaningful connection” (SFRC, 2010).
  - 9 Raise awareness of any initiatives for youth within the community. It may be helpful to look at using local medial and other channels to vocalize the hard work the WestShore is doing for youth. This could help in two ways: it could generate interest on the part of community members which could result in some financial/political supports; and, this could also let youth know there are options available to them.
  - 10 Secure flexible space that could be suitable for a drop-in centre/emergency shelter with enough room for 8-10 beds that is optimally located near the WestShore Mall/Belmont Secondary School area along the main commercial artery.
  - 11 Obtain a commitment of specific support services from community organizations/providers (e.g., health, education, counseling, youth navigator, case workers) to begin to put together a service plan for youth in-need or street involved.
  - 12 Consider establishing a lead organization or a full-time position to manage a 24-hour service for youth. All youth housing options require some supports and this generally requires around-the-clock commitment.
  - 13 Continue to establish a volunteer base. This could be especially effective if partnered up with other existing organizations and would enable a reasonable division of labour as well as the sharing of experiences.
- ## Long-Term
- 14 Compile a comprehensive list of financing options for a long-term, integrated solutions to youth housing. This could include seeking municipal, provincial, and/or federal supports and funding opportunities.
  - 15 Work towards creating long-term agreements with the business community, service providers, and educational organizations to encourage investment and demonstrate a long-term, goal-oriented approach to addressing youth homelessness.
  - 16 Engage local governments to continue to support youth housing initiatives and support programs. This could also help municipalities update, expand or create new youth housing policies. Local service providers could work collaboratively with municipal staff and with politicians to provide them with all of the necessary information to make the most informed decisions possible to address the most pressing issues for youth.
  - 17 Continue to engage youth in a comprehensive manner though the process of developing homelessness reduction and prevention initiatives. The youth should be involved in the design and programming of any housing and support program to ensure a strong connection between the individual and the service and to continue working towards an open and trusting relationship.

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# Contacts

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| Mark Muldoon  | Threshold Housing Society                  | January 19, 2012  |
| Kevin Albers  | The M'akola Group of Societies             | January 17, 2012  |
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| Steven McHugh | WestShore Centre for Learning              | January 30, 2012  |
| Leanne Taylor | City of Langford (planning department)     | January 24, 2012  |

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