



November 2015 Newsletter

Peninsula Homeless to Housing Task Force

Our Mission is to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on the South Surrey White Rock Peninsula to live in safe and appropriate housing

**NEXT MEETING: Friday, November 6th at 9:45am
White Rock Baptist Church, 1657-140th St. Surrey.**
Please circulate to contacts.

All-Candidates October 6th Forum on Housing and Homelessness

We had a full house of both candidates and audience for our federal all-candidates forum. We want to congratulate Dianne Watts as the newly elected representative of South Surrey/White Rock for the next four years. We look forward to working with her to ensure that housing and homeless issues have an important place in Ottawa. And we would like to thank all of the candidates Larry Colero (Green Party), Pixie Hobby (NDP), Judy Higginbotham (Liberal Party), Brian Marlatt (Progressive Canadian Party) and Dianne Watts (Conservative Party) for attending. We had a large crowd of more than 100 people who came to hear their answers to our questions. Thank you to Grace Point Community Church for your assistance with providing a space for this event.

Liberal Party of Canada Housing Commitments

Over the last two months we have provided information on what policies the four national parties were putting forth on housing and homelessness as well as information from a selection of consumer, industry groups, journalists and community experts. This month we will focus on three of the housing commitments made by the Liberal Party of Canada. Web link here:

<http://www.liberal.ca/realchange/affordable-housing/>

First, a significant change in focus within the Liberal Party platform, from previous federal program initiatives, is the use of loan guarantees for the funding of affordable housing programs. The commitment is to “*direct the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the new Canada Infrastructure Bank to provide financing to support the construction of new, affordable rental housing for middle- and low-income Canadians.*” How this will work and to what groups financing will be made available/targeted is at this time not stated.

Second, there is a commitment to “*conduct an inventory of all available federal lands and buildings that could be repurposed, and make **some** of these lands available at low cost for affordable housing in communities where there is a pressing need.*” We will have to see what lands are in South Surrey/White Rock and if it will be available for housing.

The [Rental Housing Index](#) released on September 10, 2015 could provide current information on community needs. The Index breaks down rental housing statistics by riding and highlights the situation renters face, especially in urban areas. For example, more than 22 per cent of renter households in the Toronto pay more than 50 per cent of their income on rent; in Greater Vancouver, it's 24 per cent.

Third, there is a commitment to wave the GST on new rental housing construction. This is an “encouragement” commitment and if it is fully taken up by the development industry a total of “\$125 million per year in tax incentives” would be available.

When the full extent of the current housing situation in Canada is considered – as stated on the Liberal Party of Canada website “*today, one in four Canadian households is paying more than it can afford for housing, and one in eight cannot find affordable housing that is safe, suitable, and well maintained*” – the need for large scale immediate action is obvious. .

In the News

B.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson ruled that homeless people in Abbotsford are allowed to erect temporary shelters in parkland between 7 p.m. and 9 a.m. because of a lack of accessible shelter space in the city.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/homeless-in-abbotsford-bc-win-right-to-camp-outside/article26906948/>

Additional shelter space will open for the winter this month. For a list of available resources please see the BC Housing web link here:

http://www.bchousing.org/Options/Emergency_Housing/ES_P

Support Challenge for PH2H – A local congregation has extended a challenge to the community to make a donation to PH2H for its modest operating budget of \$5,000. Donations will be matched up to \$2,500 for up to 4 years. Cheques would be made out to Sources (fund manager) for PH2H.

If you have information to share we will update and post on our website at www.ph2htaskforce.org

Please circulate our newsletter to your congregations and members. Send feedback/news items to: ph2htaskforce@gmail.com