



Transcript: Community Meeting on Poverty Reduction

Richmond, BC
January 25, 2018

Introduction and Event Summary

On January 25, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Richmond, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with local residents. The event brought together approximately 80 to 90 participants including people with lived experience of poverty; poverty reduction front line workers and advocates; people from the non-profit and business sectors; and other community members from all walks of life.

The event began with a welcome from Elder Roberta Price, followed by opening remarks from Shane Simpson (Minister for Social Development and Poverty Reduction).

Participants then engaged in round table discussions in groups of 8 to 10 people per table. Each table had a dedicated facilitator from a local community group or from SPARC BC who helped to guide the conversations. Each table also had a dedicated note taker who helped to record the discussion.

There were two rounds of discussion which focused on the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Following the discussions, participants were invited to put a sticky dot beside the strategies or solutions that were most important to them. Each participant received four (4) sticky dots. Following the individual priority setting exercise, participants were asked to determine as a table the top three (3) priorities from the evening and to report these priorities back to the room.

The Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction shared some closing remarks.

Document Organization

This document contains the transcripts from the flip chart notes from those in attendance. The flip chart notes have been transcribed verbatim, correcting only for spelling and grammar as needed. The notes are organized according to the feedback received to the two questions beginning with:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Question 1: What are the issues facing you and people in poverty right now?

- Effects of poverty
 - o Stuck/ low mobility
 - o Hard to break out of the cycle of poverty
 - o Malnutrition
- Education
 - o Key to breaking the cycle - opportunity
- People need
 - o Housing
 - o Nutrition
 - o Food Security
 - o Day Care
 - o Unless the system is changed, poverty won't go away
- Challenges
 - o It can be tough on a single parent
 - o Family support can help
 - o We are an individualistic society
 - o Neighbourly support is not always there
 - o Must address the root causes
 - o Requires municipal support as well as all levels of government
 - o Poverty is the result of poor policies
 - o Greed keeps people poor
- Housing
 - o We need money to build more low rental housing
- Kids living in poverty
 - o We know the early years are important
 - o Parents can't afford childcare
 - o Many teachers are feeding hungry children at school –using their own resources
 - o “It used to be that I would bring a box of granola bars and give them out to kids that are hungry, now I am bring 3 boxes and it is not enough”
 - o Kids can't learn if they are hungry
 - o There is also a stigma that kids feel - “ I make extra sandwiches but I pretend that I made a mistake and made too many – ask kids to help me out”
- Pressures on families
 - o The pace of life has changed as well as the types of economic opportunities available to people – people are now working 2 to 3 jobs just to get ahead
 - o Some people are working seven day a week
 - o There are fewer sport opportunities for kids unless you have a lot of money –winter sports are very expensive
 - o Most income goes into housing, daycare and transportation – for many families there is very little left over

- Rules for income assistance
 - o People are cut off by the Ministry if you start earning more \$15,000 but at this income level you are still in poverty
 - o People need other supports – i.e. there should be transportation supports
 - o Disabilities should not be at poverty level
 - o Poverty affects people’s mental health
- Housing costs are high
 - o A 3 bedroom townhouse rents for \$2,300/ month not including utilities
 - o People need more affordable housing
 - o Childcare costs \$1,700 per month per child
 - o There has been no new social housing built in Richmond in the last 30 years
- Food security
 - o We need a lunch program in the schools like Scandinavian
 - o Some kids only get one (1) meal per day
 - o If there was a lunch program that was equally available for all kids it could be a socially positive experience- there would be no judgment or stigmatizing of poor kids
 - o It is do-able but we are too busy buying stealth bombers
- Community capacity
 - o Corporations are not pitching in
 - o Governments have a role to play
 - o Governments should not rely on charities to do it all
 - o Charities help but the help is not consistent – people get help at Christmas but poverty is all year round
 - o There are not enough social workers and the ones who are there are over worked- people cannot always make the best decisions because they are burnt out
- Incomes
 - o People need a fair or living wage
 - o Minimum wage at \$15 per hour could help but \$15 may still be too low
 - o There are not enough good full time jobs
 - o A lot of people have to go to different part-time jobs
 - o Employers like part-time jobs because they don’t have to pay benefits
 - o There need to be more union jobs with benefits
 - o If people lose their jobs they also lose their benefits
- Sense of responsibility
 - o We need to have a sense of responsibility to take care of everyone in the community – including people in poverty
 - o We often hear that “There is no poor people in Richmond”
 - o People at the top need to make a commitment – that’s part of the solution
 - o There is stigma around poverty
 - o It can mean that people don’t want to talk about it or are too ashamed to seek assistance
- Poverty denial
 - o Poverty is a taboo topic for some cultures

- Some people believe that families and individuals are in poverty because they didn't work hard enough
- "Poverty is in the mind" according to one
- There are examples of programs (i.e. New York) where people are given the opportunity to gain employment skills/ given access to education and help to get their feet on the ground
- These programs work because they help to address the root cause. However, it should also be noted that education and training might not be enough – structural changes to the economy (i.e. automation) has meant that there are fewer full-time jobs.
- Housing
 - Housing is a real issue in Richmond
 - There are too many new towers being built and the community is losing the older more affordable rental housing
 - There has been very little new affordable housing being built – need more co-op housing developments
 - People can't always own a house but they should still have a right to housing – rental housing
 - The issue is people in rental houses don't have stability – they need to move a lot – it puts pressure on families
 - There are too many empty houses – too many absentee landlords and foreign buyers
 - The new empty house tax might help to free up housing for higher income people but it won't help low income families and seniors who can't afford housing
 - For most households their wages are still too low to carry the cost of housing at the current price
 - Young people have more barriers
 - To have empty houses is a crime especially with all of the homelessness
- Food security
 - People need access to healthy, nutritious food
 - People with disabilities can't access food
 - There are not enough grocery stores in Richmond
 - The price of food is too high and it continues to go up
 - Wages cannot keep pace with the increase in the cost of food
 - More working people are falling behind
- Housing
 - Need to look at other countries
 - Need to have more social inclusion to solve housing issues
 - Need to see what other countries have done
 - There is not enough affordable/social housing to meet community needs
 - Government develops policy to empower non-profit housing providers to increase the number of social housing units available
 - Builders and developers make a lot of money on every residential unit
 - The City has an Affordable Housing Fund – what do they do with the funding?
 - It takes a long time for new housing

- The zoning process is too long, permitting process
- Need to add more density to make units more affordable
- Child care spaces
 - Need to have more buildings with childcare
 - Kids are left at home alone because there is not enough childcare
 - \$10 day for childcare is not really affordable
- Housing for seniors
 - Long term housing for seniors is a problem
- Income inequality
 - Guaranteed income is needed
 - Basic income and supports
- Transportation
 - Transit is not affordable
 - The compass card is expensive
 - Mobility affects your ability to get a job
 - Not affordable, not accessible, travel too far
 - People having to live far out and travel more
- Education
 - Should be free post-secondary education
 - Tuition fees are too high
 - Need to look at other countries
 - How to make education free at low cost for people who need it
- Other factors
 - Taxes are too high
 - Takes political will
 - Part of the same poverty circle
 - Poverty affects mental health and health in general
- Barriers to employment
 - People with disabilities can work but can't find jobs
 - There is discrimination for all minorities –recent immigrants, people with disabilities, refugees – many of these groups live in poverty because they can't access opportunities
 - Our country brings people to our province but is there really inclusion?
 - Are programs accessible to everyone?
 - Accessibility to diverse population, different gender, race, class, education, sexual orientation, people with diverse sizes
 - The market is so competitive even being overweight could be a reason to discriminate against someone
 - Discrimination or a lack of inclusion a big barriers to employment
 - Age can also be a factor - people have barriers because we are too old or too young
 - Single parents who can't find affordable childcare
 - Recent immigrants face barriers - hard to access employment
 - Childcare is key to removing barriers (1 Vote)

- Food security
 - o People need access to food and water
 - o More water fountains are needed
 - o Food at food bank is often past the expiry date – need access to fresh healthy food choices (2 Votes)
- Health supports
 - o Over counter needed medication not covered (1 Vote)
 - o People do not have access to a family doctor (1 Vote)
 - o So many medications are not covered by Pharmacare (1 Vote)
 - o There are gaps in medical coverage for new immigrants/no status
 - o The waiting period to access MSP is three (3) months – this is unfair, if people need to see the doctor during this period there are high user fees
 - o Dental and orthotics are not covered (1 Vote)
 - o There is a gap in the dental care coverage for kids
- Affordable housing (3 votes)
 - o There is a lack of choices in the rental housing market
 - o There should be restrictions on rental rates – how much landlords can charge or the types of rent increases allowed (1 Vote)
 - o Landlords keep raising rents every year (1 vote)
 - o Landlords see rentals as investments not necessarily as shelter (1 Vote)
 - o The shelter rates are too low relative to the rents = my full cheque (Including support is used for shelter) – it leave nothing else to live off – I have to depend on my family
 - o In addition to rent, other costs like hydro are increasing
 - o Rent supplements are not enough
 - o Rooming Housing / SRO housing are not real housing choices – the quality of the housing and living conditions are poor
 - o The choices are not straight forward
 - o Moving is stressful and expensive
- Income support
 - o The minimum wage is too low
 - o The income assistance rates are too low (1 Vote)
- Low income families
 - o There are too many fees that low income parents cannot afford –i.e. school fees, the cost of field trips – the money is not available without support
- Income assistance
 - o All talk, no action
 - o People get tired of the fight
 - o Should be called the Ministry of Loneliness
 - o Why is the PWD application form so long
 - o Housing – Landlords keep raising rents every year (1 vote)
 - o Landlords see rentals as investments not necessary shelter (1 Vote)

- Low shelter rates = full cheque (Including support is used for shelter and leaves nothing to live off (have to depend on a family)
- Access to health supports
 - Lack of proper and personalized health care
- Recent immigrants
 - Very difficult to transfer education/ degrees for immigrants
 - Lots of red tape and fees and strict timelines (2 Votes)
 - Means difficult to access opportunities to use your training
- Systemic barriers
 - Income supports
 - There are too many constraints that means you are unable to improve your situation
 - Legislated poverty
 - Education helps to improve self-esteem but it is still had to look for work when you are homeless on the streets
 - Public attitudes – have to break them down through advertising, promotions, public meetings
 - Need to show support for people on the street/ on welfare
- Addictions
 - People struggling to pay rent - easier to take drugs
 - Not being able to find a place to sleep – turned to drugs
 - People are vulnerable when you are on the streets
 - People feel alone
 - Drugs are cheap and easy to find –they are always there
- Homelessness
 - The cost of housing is an issue
 - High rents mean that people are unable to find a place to live
 - Have to find a place with other people who abuse drugs (2 Votes)
 - Struggle with working, drugs and finding a place to live (1 Vote)
 - Constant circle – finding a place to live and being evicted (1 Vote)
 - People don't want recovery houses in their backyard
 - It is a struggle being on the streets
 - Poverty results in extreme homelessness
- Transportation
 - Cost
 - Unable to get to appointments/programs
 - UGM able to provide bus passes sometimes
- Cost of poverty
 - People are digging themselves into a hole –it is often too difficult to get out
 - Not enough
- Housing
 - Rent is high
 - Not much is leftover once the rent is paid

- Can't buy quality food, can't get enough
- Rent is so high
- People are renting out uninhabitable places
- The housing is infested with cockroaches, bedbugs etc.
- Homelessness
 - Being homeless is a full time job
 - Extremely difficult
 - Need help meeting basic needs
 - Even help with getting ID is an issue
 - So many barriers and rules – there needs to be a more streamlined process
- Services
 - Need one central place with the different agencies in the same building
 - Need to have relationship between agencies - i.e. income assistance, health services
 - Strong relationships between organizations/agencies
- Stigma
 - There is a stigma to being poor
 - People feel depressed/frustrated with their situation
 - There is the pressure of everything facing them
 - Trying to look for money leads someone to do something illegal
 - Make enough right now but no security for the future- no time for planning
 - Mindset of being poor, facing negative impressions from the society
 - People make assumptions and hold prejudices that are unfair (1 Vote)
- Addiction
 - People are trying to escape, trying to fit in
- Housing prices
 - Losing a place to live for homeless people
 - Can't afford to live in BC
 - Poor quality of life
 - Poor living conditions
 - People are being forced out, more homelessness
 - New buildings are being built but are not helping all of the people who need help
 - Need more housing choices, more places to live
 - Without an address cannot address other issues –i.e. missing out on appointments
 - People need access to basic essentials like food and shelter (1 Vote)
- Hopelessness/Compounding Problems
 - Loss of hope
 - Can't afford to go to school and work
 - Fail at school and problems add up (1 Vote)
 - Have to work multiple jobs
 - Not enough hours (jobs), all part time, not enough full time jobs (1 Vote)
 - Job hours cut, incurs debt, catch up but fall back again (3 Votes)

- Income and supports
 - o Minimum wage is too low
 - o Even if you work full time at minimum wage the rent is too high (3 Votes)
 - o No savings, living pay cheque to paycheque (3 Votes)
 - o Ability to make more and spend less (1 Vote)
 - o The difficulty to transfer credentials over from immigrants (5 votes)
 - o The situation of the parents passes onto kids (2 Votes)
 - o If you can't afford to pay for extracurricular activities –i.e. pets, clubs, sports then it means that kids are not able to participate – have less opportunities to learn
- Housing
 - o Lack of housing
 - o There are expenses (buying and renting)
 - o Cost of living is greater than income
 - o People moving out of their communities because of affordability
 - o Stores closing in the community
 - o Families moving to Surrey due to affordability
 - o Cost of living/affordability is an issue
 - o Everywhere, but why is it a big issue here?
 - o People selling houses just because prices are increasing then they rent also at a high price
- Income
 - o Minimum wage is too low
 - o Incomes are not increasing enough to keep pace with rising costs
 - o There is growing social disparity/inequality – rich versus poor
 - o People need a living wage – people are working 2 jobs but not able to make ends meet
 - o When income increases so does cost of bills
 - o Cannot keep the same standard of living as they cannot afford it any more
- Employment for people with disabilities
 - o Employment for people with disabilities is an issue
 - o Income affects social life, self-esteem, and opportunities
 - o Without employment - no support to get back, loss of friend etc.
 - o Not enough employers with experience employing PWD (excuses: liabilities)
 - o Job creation for PWD with no experience
 - o Challenges for PWD to obtain experience and find employment
- Health Care
 - o Health coverage is limited and many of the services that are needed are expensive –i.e. physio and other therapies
 - o MSP Coverage is too low for these services
 - o Need to be aware of the needs of people receiving PWD assistance – many costs are not covered –i.e. some medication and prescription costs
 - o Over the counter medications are too expensive
 - o People who cannot afford to cover the costs themselves might opt not to take it – can create more harm and more costs over the longer term.

- Childcare
 - o Look at Sweden for a model for childcare
 - o Here the cost of childcare is too high
 - o Income from work – goes to child care
 - o One parent has to give up work for childcare
 - o It should be a right for everyone who want to work and have children
 - o Just want the basic needs to be met
- Education
 - o Post-Secondary education is not affordable
- Transit
 - o Public transit is expensive
- Systemic Challenges
 - o The way the system is set up is hard –some people can't access (i.e. many women face difficulties accessing the system)
 - o You are not able to speak to someone
 - o Sometimes the problem is not sorted out for weeks
 - o The amount of money that people receive is too low
- Income Pressures
 - o Minimum wage too low
 - o Refugees have difficulty upgrade their education
 - o Face food bank/housing issues
 - o Hard to access housing
 - o Impossible to find housing
 - o Single mothers not able to find childcare and can't work
 - o Lots of women in poverty
 - o Women are forced to stay in violent relationships because too expensive to leave
 - o People face difficult choices – harsh environment - much harder more difficult
 - o Hard to cope with the high cost of living
 - o People struggling with addictions because it's hard
- Poverty Reduction
 - o Social Development and Poverty Reduction is a good name
 - o Should not just focus on employment -some people cannot enter the work force because of barriers
 - o People are so desperate due to cost of living
 - o Have to work 2 minimum wage jobs to make ends meet
- Access to services
 - o People have long waiting times to see a doctor
 - o There are waiting lists for programs
 - o There are not enough supports services –i.e. women are trapped in violent relationships but have nowhere to go
 - o Women who are homeless are invisible and many face horrible stressful situations
 - o It can become a vicious cycle

- If you would give her \$1000 this would work attending MCFO appointments
- Know a woman (Grandma) who is taking care of grandkids because the funding was scaled back
- People need help meeting basic needs
- Income
 - Ontario pilot looks good
 - Gives you much more power – you don't have to prove it – you are entitled to it
 - Gives more freedom/more control over decisions
 - More help should be given to those who are on the borderline of poverty – they are doing everything to advance their life – a bit of help would change so much
 - It is difficult for single mothers who are going to school
- Cost of Housing
 - Rent is a minimum of \$1000 per month
 - There is a mismatch between income and cost of living
 - Means people have not control over their situation
 - Need to have better rent controls -regulations for amount of rent that can be charged
 - A 1000 sq ft unit on Commercial Drive was renting for \$3,000.
 - People can't afford to live in BC
 - Landlords can behave poorly – i.e. raise the rents due to the housing market
 - Issues are intertwined
 - There is no security for families – too expensive
 - Stability of people's lives – living in poverty – barriers
- Recent immigrants
 - A lot of middle eastern refugees – families like to settle in areas close to each other
 - Large families that need childcare
 - English language learning outback – ESL classes that grade your learning
- Barriers to Housing
 - Landlords are afraid to rent to people with mental health.
 - Discrimination against people receiving disability assistance (1 vote)
 - No access to housing for people who are addicted
 - Need money for affordable housing
 - We need way more affordable housing being built
 - Where do people go to live
 - It takes too long to build housing and shelter
 - Rental housing is too expensive – people are forced to rent rooms and pay board
 - People on disability are so normalized with their circumstances
- Access to social and recreational opportunities
 - Access to recreational and leisure activities costs money
 - Physical activities helps prevent alienation
- Social isolation
 - Isolation/vulnerability makes people a target for crime

- Homeless senior with dementia are vulnerable to theft –i.e. cashing cheque at money mart – people watch - it makes the senior a target for crime
- Income Assistance
 - Housing should be a right for everyone
 - People on assistance only receive shelter if they have housing
 - No security deposit if owner the owner lives there
 - Slow turnaround time to receive shelter cheques for people on assistance
 - SDPR – people all over province dealing with clients
 - Very bad medication coverage – many medications are not covered
 - No one knows what’s happening in SDPR
 - There are no straight answers –sometimes it can take weeks for a response
 - The system is very broken
 - Low income seniors cannot afford their medication
 - No dental care, no free clinics, no proper nutrition
- Health supports
 - Health supports are lacking for low income people
 - Senior homes are not healthy places
- Impacts of poverty
 - Your environment can affect your overall being and shortening one’s life
 - When you are poor you life is consumed by surviving
 - You feel isolation and alienation
- Income Assistance
 - People live in fear of being cut off of assistance
 - Everyday people are afraid today of what’s happening –what would happen if they were to lose their medical assistance?
 - Fear that they will not get assistance because somehow the Ministry thinks that you are not telling the truth - looking for fraud
 - There are so many barriers like the requirement for monthly stubs
 - Having security in the office is intimidating – concern that the office is unsafe
 - The service model is problematic - 1-887 number does not work
 - There are no workers to talk to
 - You call the number and the Ministry staff treat people like they are not human
 - You feel that there is no respect or dignity
 - It feels like a revolving door
 - Sometimes you can call the 1-877 number and you have to wait as long as two hours
 - Sometimes you have to call back next day
 - People need access to an advocate
 - You live in fear that you will say something wrong because you don’t know the rules
 - It also feels like the rules are constantly changing
- Stigma and Helplessness
 - The general population does not realize how close people are to poverty
 - In some ways it could happen to anyone

- A lot of people can be one pay cheque away from poverty and homelessness
- There is a stigma placed on people living in poverty
- Some people don't ask for help because of this stigma
- People feel this stigma and live with the constant trauma
- Many people do not have a choice
- A story was offered of a grandmother who was receiving PWD – she was raising her grandson and was trying to find work to pay for his prom tickets. She knew that he couldn't go to the prom because she could not pay the school fees
- RCMP, paramedics, and service people are affected as well – they are traumatized because they see the effects of poverty everyday and feel helpless to create change
- Food insecurity
 - Food security is lacking
 - Most poor people do not have access to healthy nutritious food
 - Their diets do not include fresh food
 - Often they have to ration the food
 - Lack of food can affect people's ability to learn –especially children in school
 - Lack of access to healthy food also has long term consequences for one's health
- The poverty trap
 - Social assistance can trap people in poverty
 - The basic income assistance rates are too low
 - It leave no money left over for food or transportation
 - Without a bus pass it is not possible to get to a job
 - People can't even get ID
 - Rates have stayed low for a long time –they have not kept up with the cost of living
 - The rates don't reflect the fact that BC has a high cost of living.
- Mental Health and Other Supports
 - People are normalized - they don't even know that they have a mental health problem
 - They don't understand their situation; they are so used to living in poverty
 - People are afraid to speak up – it is hard to ask for assistance
 - Sometimes It is hard for people with mental health issues to get assistance if they are not on income assistance already
 - The lack of services pushes people into poverty
 - Need affordable housing
 - Hard for someone earning minimum wage to cover everything
 - Homeless people feel isolated
 - It is difficult for those who have a mental health issues – can get worse
 - There are no centralized resources to turn to
 - It is hard to get to services without transportation
 - There is a need to recognize homelessness and the vulnerability of people with mental health challenges
 - There should be education to help deal with the stigma of homelessness
 - All levels of government should pay more attention to people who are homeless

- Richmond gave more money to animal shelter than to working to address homelessness
- People struggle to keep roof over their heads
- Once you are homeless it affects you health – you have less access to nutritious food
- Government should be proactive rather than reactive
- Richmond City Council is not doing enough to prevent poverty – there needs to be a more proactive response to address poverty
- Need a middle ground to manage – create a stepping stone that can help people out of poverty
- Need to recognize differences across different cultures and be more sensitive
- Need more programs in school
- Start with children, provide breakfast or lunch program for all kids
- Lack of education about drug/addiction and related issues
- Education should start with children at a young age
- Education about mental health needs to start early as well
- There are not enough facilities to help and house people with mental health issues

Question 2: What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?

- Food security
 - There should be a nutritious food program in every school in BC (2 Votes)
 - The program should not just be bread or soup and a bun
 - It should be available to everyone and just be part of lunch
 - If it is available to everyone it would help to reduce the stigma
- Business
 - Get businesses involved
 - Instead of throwing food out maybe there is a way to make it available
 - There are lost of rules and regulations that could make this difficult but it could make a difference
 - Maybe it is possible to create a school salad bar similar to the types of initiatives that are part of the Farm to Cafeteria program
 - Maybe there could be green houses built on school property and the different aspects of growing and harvesting good could be part of the school curriculum
 - Cooking class can could help to produce food for the salad bars while the school could also enter into partnerships with local farmer
- Employment
 - People need full time jobs with benefits (i.e. sick leave protection) (1 Vote)
- Affordable childcare (1 Vote)
- Affordable housing (2 Votes)
 - All 3 levels of government have to commit to work together
 - Housing decisions are influenced by developers through political donation

- Ensure that the housing meets the needs of those who live in the community (3 Votes)
- Education
 - People need job training and access to free education (1 Vote)
- Health services
 - Need to consider the needs of socially isolated adults especially in minority communities – (i.e. the Chinese) – need to find a way to get them support
- Housing Markets
 - Eliminate speculation in housing (3 Votes)
 - Eliminate the commodification of housing (2 Votes)
 - 40-50% of market pre-sales are done over seas
 - In Richmond there is a lot of speculation –people are purchasing and flipping houses and condos
 - The housing market is not correcting – price just keep going up
- Employment
 - Ensure that people have access to employment and skill training (1 Vote)
- Youth
 - Young people are couch surfing/living with roommates
 - They are having to go to food banks to pay their student loans
- Day Care
 - Provide subsidized daycare that includes a hot meal to fuel kids (4 Votes)
 - Day care costs are too expensive especially for parents who have part time jobs (it is cheaper to stay at home some days to care for children)
 - There are not enough day care spaces - some parents have to go to multiple day cares to fill the gaps.
 - Need day cares that are available on weekends and evenings (2 Votes)
 - Day care should be linked to school locations (2 Votes)
- Minimum Income
 - People should be given a minimum income that is adequate(4 Votes)
 - Income should be based on a fair wage or living wage
 - People need a guaranteed livable income (3 Votes)
 - There should be no means test
- Affordable Housing
 - There should be rent controls – not only on existing rental units but should remove the ability to re-price the unit when someone moves (2 Votes)
- Income
 - People should be entitled to a liveable, dignified, thriving income
- Child care
 - There should be a universal child care policy – affordable (2 Votes)
 - MSP rates should be eliminated
- Transportation
 - Transit passes should cover more than a single fare should cover more zones

- Transit passes should be cheaper
- There should be more transit accessibility for people in low income
- Housing
 - Build more subsidized housing (1 Vote)
 - Move away from relying on private housing developers
 - Be more strict rent control
 - Consider a tax on speculation
 - Stop building for investment market (2 Votes)
 - Bring sanity to housing prices
 - Encourage municipalities to adopt different approaches to their zoning
 - Adopt stricter rules and requirements on vacation rentals and short term rentals as well as around AirBnB
 - Return to a housing market that is designed to meet the needs of the people who live there – i.e. rental market for locals
 - Encourage more long term rental housing supply and protect the housing stock that is available
- Food Security
 - Food programs for schools, every day in every school -nutritious food (1 Vote)
 - More education around food and how to cook nutritious food at a low cost (1 Vote)
 - More community gardens
 - More food – urban gardens in Richmond
 - Programs to recover food in grocery stores that are going to waste
 - Make it easier for this food to go to charity while the food is still edible (1 Vote)
 - More flexibility around food that is close to or at the expiry date
 - Put controls on food waste
 - Find ways to reduce the amount of food that is wasted (1 Vote)
 - Store owners should have to pay a penalty for any food that they are wasting
 - Zurich is a good model to look at – they have found ways to use food before it is wasted
 - Provide education on how to preserve food –i.e. making jam or other food products
- Support with Income Assistance
 - Make more social workers available for those who want/need one
 - More community navigators
 - Service and supports all in one place
 - Create a resource hub/ centre
 - Information should be available in printed format in plain language
 - There should be one place that you can go to get all of the information that you need
 - Stop strict criteria to get help (1 Vote)
 - There should be coverage for medicine that is prescribed over the counter for things like allergies, lice, pain, gastro problems
 - Make help readily available so that you don't have to fight for it

- There should be more government supports delivered by people who care about the issues instead of through IT and technology – this should be for all areas of the public service –health, income supports, social assistance (1 Vote)
 - Raise income assistance rates (3 Votes)
 - Continue to work to reduce barriers (1 Vote)
- Support for recent immigrants and refugees (1 Vote)
 - Make it easier and cheaper for recent immigrants to transfer their skills and training
 - Provide better supports to refugees
 - Help provide navigation and support for ESL
 - Drop the hard to understand jargon/language (1 Vote)
 - Work to build community
- Service Delivery
 - Government needs to shift away from technology
 - This means creating a whole new way of thinking/focus
 - The focus should be on people not on technology
 - People have to think ahead about preventative solutions– Invest now for a better/cheaper tomorrow
 - There should be better access to services faster. i.e. Methadone treatment.
 - More and better access to harm reduction treatments
- Supports for Families
 - More family support workers (3 Votes)
- Transportation
 - Bus passes should be available to anyone who lives in poverty (3 Votes)
 - Transportation is key
- Other supports
 - There should be public water fountains and cooling stations (Like Vancouver)
- Housing
 - There should be more rent Control
 - Landlords have to stop raising rents every year = people need stable housing
- Public Awareness
 - There is value in getting the concerns/issues out there
 - Making the issues more public and building public awareness and support
 - Videos and news articles help to put a public face to the story
 - Helps to build better understanding with more exposure (1 Vote)
 - Need to educate society to help to break down the myths –remove misconceptions
- Access to Services
 - People need access to counselling – a support system
 - People need someone to help with homelessness
 - People need access to better social housing – longer term
 - Access to stable, affordable housing will allow people to focus on their lives
 - People need security of tenure in their housing (3 Votes)
 - People need counselling/assistance with budgeting etc. (1 Vote)

- Need a resource centres that provides a range of services and that has more hours/availability, more staff that are trained, more follow through (1 Vote)
- Need to ensure that people are getting the help they need
- Could be one resource centre with different organizations/representatives
- Better rehabilitation programs – instead of sending to prison – offer better or more rehabilitation services (1 Vote)
- Minimum Wage
 - There is the need for higher minimum wage
- Training and Skills Development
 - People need to be equipped with skills like resume writing, typing, internet and job, search skills including support in developing these skills
 - More people should be able to take courses, go to school,
 - More encouragement, inspire people to go to school
 - More balance, being able to go to school, being of assistance, same with work (1 Vote)
- Income Assistance
 - Income assistance rates and supplements need to increase (2 Votes)
 - There should be a basic income for everyone (guaranteed income) (1 Vote)
 - Residential tenancy branch – improvements re moving out timelines
- Ministry:
 - Staff need to show empathy
 - Need more staff/more resources
 - More investments in the social services
 - More outreach
 - Build trust
 - Offer more counselling outside of methadone
 - More long term solutions (1 Vote)
- Housing and Supports
 - There should be more integration between housing, employment
 - Housing and supports should be treated more as a package instead of passing person around from one resource to another (2 Votes)
 - We need more shelters, food for the homeless (4 Votes)
- Inequality
 - More privileged people should pay more taxes (13 Votes)
 - Better education, affordable, make education more accessible (4 Votes)
 - Education for lifestyle choices – more choice (2 Votes)
 - For people to know they could do it, to have motivation (1 Vote)
 - Increase affordability, purchase power(1 Vote)
 - Promote more income equity
 - Support small and local businesses (2 Vote)
 - Fair taxation
- Healthy childhood development
 - Create programs for kids that are struggling to reduce stigma (1 Vote)

- Let the kids fit in even if they are on assistance
- Housing Affordability
 - Decrease rent (2 Vote)
- Access to education and opportunities
 - Provide education for all
 - Decrease barriers for students
 - Fair system for people entering the market (Jobs, housing, transport) (10 Votes)
 - Make it more bearable for people trying to get out poverty so they can make it (2 Votes)
 - Make sure immigrants can get proper training in English (4 Votes)
- Income Assistance
 - People on PWD should not be financially penalized for being in a relationship
- Housing
 - Need real housing alternatives
 - How can we change things so that people feel more secure in their housing even if the cost of their housing is going up
- Empathy
 - Decision makers should be people in the field (doctors etc. are not bureaucrats)
 - Decision makers should be more connected to people receiving PWD.
 - Give PWD more decision power or at least allow their opinion to be heard
- Service Delivery
 - Shifting from a medical deficit model to prevention (3 Votes)
 - More funding for prevention and choice
 - Think of community instead of individuals
 - Need a system that looks at the long run rather than a short run solution
 - Basic needs of life should be covered. Universal benefits (6 Votes)
 - The income/assets test for PWD application is degrading
- Transit
 - Different color compass card is not needed if public transit is free – it just makes people stand out
 - The cost of transit would be lower is there were no gates etc. (lower environmental impact)
 - What is the incentive for taking public transit?
- Childcare
 - Universal Childcare
- Health Care
 - Flexible healthcare/ medications
 - Give people credits and let them focus their credits on the medications/ therapies that they each need
 - Transferrable medical coverage
- Building Community
 - Promote a shift to a sharing culture (2 votes)
 - Support tax increases for the greater good of the community (1 Vote)

- Open minded about job creation/ opportunities for PWDs.
- Supports in the Community
 - Mental Health Pathways
 - Assisted living for 18 – 60
 - Make it that people can make their own medical decision (1 vote)
 - Free public transit (3 Votes)
 - Universal childcare (1 vote)
 - Support a guaranteed income – should be universal not means tested
 - Need to support the dignity of the individual
 - Create conditions for people to thrive
- Affordable Housing
 - Rent controls should apply to units
 - \$1700 a month for a 500 sq. ft. place is too much
 - There is not enough publicly funded housing
- Medical Services
 - MSP rates should not to be charged on a monthly basis – pay in taxes
- Transit
 - Reduce transit fares – they are too high – it costs \$180 per month for a 3 Zone
 - Single fares are too high– barrier to get around
 - Subsidized transit – have to live in Surrey but work in Vancouver – expensive
 - There should not be different prices for transit - no more zones – 1 Zone
 - \$9 a day is too much for a transit pass
 - Many of the transit busses are not accessible
 - Buses takes too long to come - too long a wait
- Influence of the Development Industry on Housing Costs
 - Province and city to move away from private developers
 - Issue is cost of housing
 - Empty units – tax – speculation driving up prices
 - Start building – for people not investors
 - Vacancy rate is less than 1%
 - Short controls on vacation rentals – no air b and b’s outside of home
 - Long term rental housing
 - Need to find a way to go from 1% to 3% vacancy
- Food Security
 - Cost of Food
 - Should have breakfast program in schools each day
 - Access to healthy, nutritious food should be part of basic education.
 - Provide nutritious food to kids at low cost
 - Educational price – food and education
 - Community gardens can help families
 - Help supermarkets donate food that is close to the expiry date to charities
 - There should be more flexibility on expiry dates on food

- Income Security
 - o There should be a minimum Income for all people
 - o It should be more than \$710 per month
 - o Use media, radio, and advertising to promote the benefits of a guaranteed minimum income – build awareness among the rich
 - o There needs to be a drastic increase in income assistance rates - more for shelter
- Service Delivery
 - o There should be cuts to the bureaucracy
 - o Medical and dental costs should be covered for everyone
 - o There should be more case workers
 - o People need to be able to call the 1-800 number and talk to someone right away
 - o Need more clarity on eligibility requirements for clients and advocates – applied consistently
 - o Services should be centralized -one place to go for help
- Seniors
 - o Seniors need access to a health care plan that covers medical and dental
 - o Seniors shouldn't have to worry about medication costs (1 vote)
 - o More access to seniors housing/ in home support (1 vote)
- Inclusion
 - o Community events that reach across all abilities/ classes/ races/ religions
 - o Mental health – people need support to help their physical well-being
 - o Free community centre programs for people with disabilities, low income (1 Vote)
 - o Communities need to be activated
 - o Expand participation, more eyes would be able to see the problem (4 Votes)
- Access to Services
 - o There should be access to treatment, wrap around services -no waiting
 - o There should be housing that is supportive and accessible
 - o Programs and supports should be geared to where a person is at
 - o Programs should not be isolating/alienating
 - o Need to increase shelter allowance from \$375 or provide housing for that level
- Income Equality
 - o Taxes should be higher for people with more money
 - o There are long-term savings by lifting everyone out of poverty
 - o Helping people out of poverty will save on services (4 Votes)
 - o There needs to be more social and economic inclusion
 - o We need to address the loss of industry = loss of community
 - o Find ways to replace the jobs that we lost from the loss of industry
 - o Retraining people = focus on jobs for the average person
- Housing
 - o Need to increase shelter allowance from \$375 or provide housing for that level
 - o People are renting a room for \$800 per month and have no locks on their door

- Perhaps there is a “billet program” that could be introduced – bring people together organizing and educating – make community a big family
- Each individual needs to take responsibility (1 Vote)
- Take much more presence in the press, more positive reports
- Richmond City Council should accept modular housing (4 Votes)
- There should be more facilities for treatment (3 Votes)
- Enhance current educational programs
- There are many good people in community who would be willing to participate in a billet programs, teamed with media and good positive stories
- School Food Programs
 - Have breakfast program for kids on their way to school to avoid stigma
 - Food allowance program
 - Utilize/ make community food gardens on public land
 - City operates gardens and provide free groceries (1 Vote)
 - Richmond should utilize land for public gardens instead of daffodils and tulips
- Families and Children
 - More funding for early childhood education (1 Vote)
 - CAP universal child bonus (1 Vote)
 - More programs for school on addiction and mental health
 - Free educational program for adults
 - Provide kids with access to education, daycare
 - Support healthy and nutritious access to food
 - Work to break the stigma of poverty
- Services
 - Easy access to treatment
 - Basic needs of life are covered – universal benefit
 - Activation of communities – expansion of programs
 - Make it so that fewer people are blind to poverty.
 - More facilities for treatments, especially in REMP treatment and crisis
 - Ensure that services are available when people decide to go to treatment
 - More programs for schools on addiction and mental health
 - Work to take stigma away from mental illness –break the stereotype
 - More social workers on staff to help people who need help
 - More advocacy
 - Create a resource centre/service hub
 - Shift the focus from the medical deficit model to prevention
 - More funding prevention
 - Show respect for people to make their own decisions
 - People should be encouraged and supported in making their own medical decisions
- Housing
 - Address foreign speculation

- Address the commodification of housing
- It is tough conversation but we have it –We need to ask the question of whether we are building homes and neighbourhoods
- To address the housing crisis we need the commitment of all levels of government
- There are good models like housing co-ops
- People need better access to social housing
- Provide incentives to landlords to reduce rent costs (e.g. tax credit for landlords)
- Addresses soaring rent costs
- Supports
 - People need more support obtaining ID and navigating the process
 - There should be a minimum income for everyone (more than \$710 per month)
 - People should not have to fear being cut off assistance – they should feel supported
 - The basic income assistance rates need to go up
 - There should be trauma-informed training to educate frontline service providers about the effects of trauma
- Community Education
 - Educate communities about homelessness to build buy in for supported housing
 - Build neighbourhood support for use of underutilized lands for temporary housing
- Income Security
 - Help people gain access to employment
 - Focus on greater pay equity
 - Create fair and living wages
 - Support full time employment with benefits
 - Support a guaranteed basic income
- Income Assistance
 - Fund Family Support Workers
 - Provide funding for support programs
 - Have the Ministry see itself as being in “the people business”
 - Raise PWD and income assistant rates
 - Simplify and streamline the process
 - Support people to access services, especially those with low computer literacy
- Transportation
 - Focus on transit accessibility
 - Work to support subsidized bus passes
 - More people should have access to discounted or free bus passes
- Income Support
 - Raise the rates
 - Higher minimum wage
 - Fair pay with benefits
 - There should be a \$15 minimum wage and affordable and available childcare
 - People should be able to have an affordable lifestyle –one that they want to live

- Partnerships
 - o Cities should be allowed to make their own decisions with adequate funding
 - o There should be partnerships across all levels of government
 - o Privatized services should be made public
- Strengthen the current system
 - o We need to strengthen the system (i.e. Income support, taxation, child tax benefit)
 - o So much of the assistance provided is not based on people's current circumstances – they system needs to be more flexible, make it fit, peoples circumstances, not vice versa
- Address the stigma
 - o The current system has stigma and prejudices
 - o There is a lack of quality and quantity of resources
 - o Need to find a way to expand the current resources and programs
- Housing
 - o Have to take steps to drive down housing values
 - o Have to prevent speculation