

The City of Virginia Beach's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

2007 - 2017

**Developed by
The Virginia Beach Department of Housing and Neighborhood
Preservation
In Partnership With
The Virginia Beach Homeless Advocacy and Resource Partnership**

June, 2007



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1. OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

This plan describes a plan to end homelessness in Virginia Beach. It provides the overall strategies for the ten years beginning July 1, 2007, and includes action plans for the City of Virginia Beach and non-profits and regional partners to undertake during the period July 1, 2007 through July 1, 2009. It describes the reasons we have a plan, provides information about homelessness in Virginia Beach, and the current system of programs and services.

The plan calls for gradual transition of current services to focus more on three main areas of activity: homeless prevention, creation of affordable housing opportunities, and preservation of existing affordable housing. In addition, it calls for the use of broad partnerships, including continuation of existing regional efforts where appropriate. It calls for focusing city funding on the support of non-Federally eligible, high-value activities; which helps to make Federal funding available for the creation of housing and housing opportunities. And it calls for the use of low-cost policy and program initiatives that do not presume the availability of major new funding sources.

The plan lays out specific programs and policy activities for the first two years of the plan, while describing long-term strategies that will be applied to all program and policy choices beyond that period. It calls for a major public involvement effort to be taken in 2007-2008 in order to develop and enhance the plan, as well as additional involvement in future years.

The plan is necessary in order to have a widely-supported, effective and appropriate community-wide approach to ending homelessness rather than managing it. National policy guidance and best practices identify significant economic benefits to ending homelessness, especially chronic homelessness, through the utilization of many of the programs and policies described in this plan.

Why Do a Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness?

The following are reasons for the City of Virginia Beach and its partners to develop and implement a ten-year plan to end homelessness:

1. Federal funding awards that provide as much as a million dollars annually to homeless-serving non-profits will be negatively affected if the city does not have a ten-year plan in place.
2. We are engaged with our regional neighbors in active regional planning to end homelessness. We need our own long-term plan as a guide to determine how and when we fit into the regional planning efforts.

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3. The City has been involved in helping the homeless for 23 years, since 1984 or before. Since 1994 we have been coordinating a community process to produce an annual plan for the use of Federal funds for homelessness. A long term plan that is based on best practices, uses measurement and feedback and is based on and integrated with overall city strategies is much more likely to help us produce positive results and provide value to our taxpayers than continuing without one. In addition, national policy guidance and best practices identify significant economic benefits to ending homelessness, especially chronic homelessness, through the utilization of many of the programs and policies described in this plan
4. According to the 2005 Virginia Beach survey of citizens, only 62% of citizens felt satisfied with the services provided to needy and homeless families. Therefore, there may be citizen support for additional efforts.

Therefore, we believe that it is appropriate and necessary to develop and adopt a plan. This plan was developed and is a plan of the City of Virginia Beach and the Virginia Beach Homeless Advocacy and Resource Partnership (VBHARP), the coalition of city agencies and homeless-serving non-profit organizations that together develop our annual plan and deliver services to the community. Over time, we want this plan to be a community plan, adopted in addition by all the community partners who are necessary to implement it. A significant portion of the plan will be the ongoing outreach to and involvement of these stakeholders so that this can occur.

The Context of our Plan

Our plan was developed and will be executed in the context of our overall city goals and plans, as well as our plans for housing, and the needs of homeless persons and those at risk of becoming homeless in our community.

The City plans include City Council Priorities, the Comprehensive Plan, and the City's Strategy. The Comprehensive Plan provides and should continue to provide the land-use context that insures a healthy and growing housing market, which is critical to a growing supply of housing at all price ranges. The housing plans that are part of our context include:

The Housing and Neighborhood Plan – Chapter 10 of the Comprehensive Plan. This defines city goals, including the desire for housing options that serve people at all income levels and all life stages.

The HUD Consolidated Plan, which identifies priorities, funding and programs to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income persons

The Homeless Continuum of Care, which defines our current system of services for the homeless and provides significant funding for them.

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The regional "Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS" plan, adopted in order to guide the use of Federal HOPWA funds.

The Workforce Housing Program, currently under development for consideration by City Council.

Federal housing funding and regulation, which play a key role in defining our plan, what resources are available to implement, and what can be achieved.

Our regional context, consisting of the residents, governments and housing and homeless-serving agencies of our neighboring cities in the south Hampton Roads region, is a key factor in how we solve the problem, because we have a regional housing market, we have organizations that work throughout the region; because people seeking housing don't care about city boundaries; and because through regional cooperation we can solve problems by sharing resources and costs and thereby reduce the costs to individual localities.

A Short History of Work to Address Homelessness in Virginia Beach

The history of funding and programs that serve the homeless, as well as the current system of existing funding, programs and services are also key parts of the context for this plan. The City and homeless-serving agencies have been planning for and delivering services to the homeless since before 1984. Many major planning and implementation efforts have successfully enhanced what existed over 23 years ago to create what we have today. There are multiple major milestones that have been achieved by all involved agencies. The development of this ten year plan is intended to build on and improve what has been created to date. Some of the key dates and milestones include:

- 1984: First receipt of Federal Emergency Shelter Grant funding –used for the Winter Shelter program
- 1984: Samaritan House Formed
- 1985: Mother Seton House, now called Seton Youth Shelters, is formed
- 1985: Virginia Beach Community Development Corporation (VBCDC) formed
- 1986: Fire Escape on 17th & Pacific opens; later becomes Judeo-Christian Outreach
- 1988: Community Alternatives, a non-profit to serve the housing needs of mentally ill and substance abuse persons, including the homeless, is formed
- 1987: City donates property to VBCDC for use as transitional housing
- 1989: Council approves proposed single room occupancy and shelter at Bridge Commerce Center
- 1994: City coordinates first continuum of Care
- 1996: Lighthouse Center completed
- 1999: Regional SRO Task Force starts work/looks for sites
- 2004: Site for first Project located in Norfolk
- 2005: Regional Task Force chartered by Southside Mayors and Chairs

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2006: Site for Cloverleaf (2nd regional SRO located)

2007: Gosnold Opens; Cloverleaf Land Use approved; Site selection for Portsmouth starts

2007: Ten Year Plan adopted by City Council and submitted to HUD

2. Understanding Approaches to Homelessness

National Best Practices

The creation of our local plan should rely heavily on what has been learned at the national level and what national guidelines have been developed for ten year plans. A significant effort over the past few years has helped identify and create material that can assist us. The following summarizes national guidance from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

THE TEN ESSENTIALS

What Your Community Needs To Do To End Homelessness

The *National Alliance to End Homelessness* has created the following checklist as a guide to help communities identify the minimum requirements for an effective permanent solution to prevent and end homelessness. The essentials are based on the Alliance's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, which draws from over twenty years of research and experience with communities around the country. No essential is more important than another. All require participation from every sector of the community.

PLAN

Your community has a set of strategies focused on ending homelessness. A wide range of players (government programs, elected officials, homeless providers, etc.) has made funding and implementation commitments to these strategies.

DATA

Your community has a homelessness management information system that can be analyzed to assess how long people are homeless, what their needs are, what the causes of homelessness are, how people interact with mainstream systems of care, the effectiveness of interventions, and the number of homeless people.

EMERGENCY PREVENTION

Your community has in place an emergency homelessness prevention program that includes rent/mortgage/utility assistance, case management, landlord/lender intervention, and other strategies to prevent eviction and homelessness.

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SYSTEMS PREVENTION

- I. Mainstream programs (mental health, substance abuse, TANF, child welfare, etc.) that provide care and services to low-income people consistently assess and respond to their housing needs.
- II. There is placement in stable housing for all people being released from public institutions.

OUTREACH

Your community has an outreach and engagement system designed to reduce barriers and encourage homeless people so that they enter appropriate housing (including safe havens) linked with appropriate services.

SHORTEN HOMELESSNESS

The shelter and transitional housing system in your community is organized to reduce or minimize the length of time people remain homeless, and the number of times they become homeless. Outcome measures will be key to this effort.

RAPID RE-HOUSING

Your community has skilled housing search and housing placement services available to rapidly re-house all people losing their housing or who are homeless and who want permanent housing.

SERVICES

When households are re-housed, they have rapid access to funded services, and mainstream programs provide the bulk of these services.

PERMANENT HOUSING

- I. Your community has a sufficient supply of permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of all chronically homeless people.
- II. Your community is implementing a plan to fully address the permanent housing needs of extremely low-income people.

INCOME

When it is necessary in order to obtain housing, your community assists homeless people to secure enough income to afford rent, by rapidly linking them with employment and/or benefits. It also connects them to opportunities for increasing their incomes after housing placement (opportunities provided primarily by mainstream programs).

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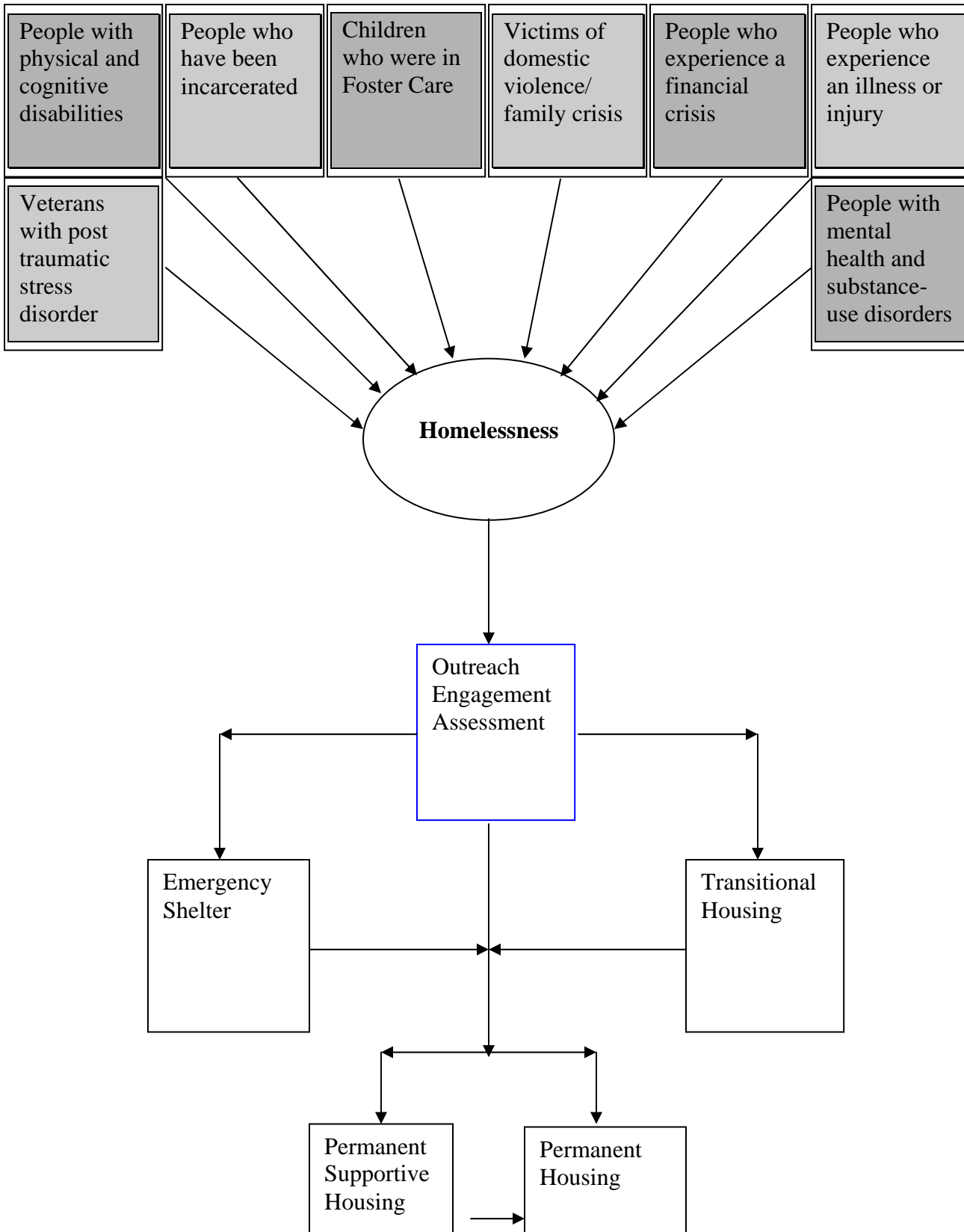
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Causes and Solutions

The term homelessness obscures more than it illuminates the situation of any one group of people. There are multiple causes of homelessness, and therefore there are multiple solutions. Families that become homeless due to an economic cause or divorce have significantly different issues and therefore different needs than a single person who is also a substance abuser. The chart and discussion that follows attempts to portray the multiple causes of homelessness as well as some of the solutions.

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Causes of and Solutions to Homelessness



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It is important to note that we lack sufficient capacity to meet the current need for Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing. Many who lack housing are placed on waiting lists for all of these options. Emerging data from programs throughout the country that have been identified as “best practices” for housing suggest that rapid placement for individuals and families who are homeless into permanent supportive housing is the most promising approach when outcomes measuring long term stability are considered.

3. Homelessness in Virginia Beach

Scope of the Problem

To effectively address homelessness, solid information regarding the numbers of homeless persons in different situations and the causes of homelessness, is critical. On any given day or night, according to the latest homeless census taken in January 2007, there were 453 people in Virginia Beach who met the HUD definition of homelessness: Even though many individuals and families do not meet the HUD definition, they do experience what many would consider to be homelessness and what in fact requires the same remedy as homelessness. In 2007, there were 340 additional people who were in this situation, as well as 84 more who are inmates incarcerated in the Virginia Beach Correctional Center who identified themselves as not having a permanent address. The total of the three categories equals 877 people.

The Cost of Homelessness

Homelessness can be very costly to those who are homeless, to our local government and to the overall economy of the city and region. Multiple studies have shown that people who are homeless use services in the public and private sectors in ineffective and expensive ways. The following are some examples of this:

- People who were homeless and become housed have fewer visits to the Emergency Room and, when they need to be admitted to a hospital, spend less time there than those who remain homeless.
- Seton Youth Shelters spent \$1,026,771 in 2007 to house 186 homeless youth providing 4,601 bed days of shelter in our city who have been turned out of their homes or who have run away in addition to their emergency hotline and street outreach programs.
- Studies of the cost of homeless estimate that chronically homeless substance abusers use upwards of \$30,000 per year in health and public safety services.
- In 2006, 116 homeless persons were treated at the Virginia Beach Detox Center. Their average stay was from 5 to 7 days at a cost of \$400.00 per day. This represents a cost of over \$278,000 to the city. Research has proven that once housed formerly

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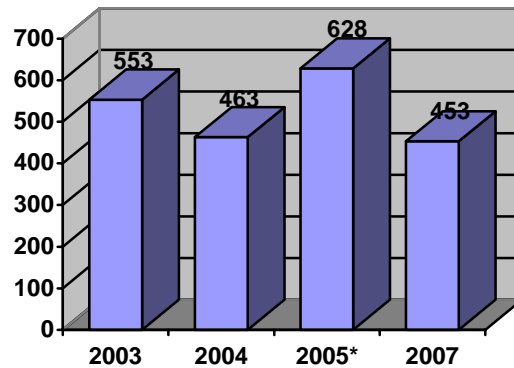
homeless persons have fewer visits to detox centers or emergency rooms and spend less time in the hospital for other medical reasons.

- People who were homeless and become housed are less likely to be incarcerated for crimes such as trespassing, loitering, etc. The cost for keeping a prisoner at the Virginia Beach Correctional Center (VBCC) is approximately \$54 per day. On the day of the 2007 Point in Time Count there were 84 inmates in the VBCC identified as homeless. If this is a representative daily count, it is costing the City of Virginia Beach \$4,536 per day to incarcerate persons who were homeless.
- People with mental illnesses who were homeless and become housed are more likely to remain stable than those who are homeless. The cost for psychiatric hospitalization is approximately \$500 per day.

The following charts summarize available information regarding who is homeless in Virginia Beach.

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Total Persons Meeting the HUD Definition of Homelessness in Virginia Beach, 2003-2007



Homeless Persons in Virginia Beach
Homeless Census – Point in Time Count
Comparisons 2004 – 2007 (with adjustments)

Year	Sheltered					Unsheltered					Totals			
	04	05	06	07		04	05	06	07		04	05	06	07
# of families w/children	75	56	56	62		11	21	21**	1		86	77	77**	63
# of persons in families w/children	245	181	181	272		32	66	66**	4		277	247	247**	276
# of individuals	125	154	154	139		61	227	227**	38		186	381	381**	177
Totals	370	335	335	411		93	293	293**	42		463	628	628**	453
# in motels		208		416										
w/ 3 rd party asst				76										
# surveyed on street								9	1					

**2006 numbers reported are based on the 2005 Point in Time count.

Characteristics of homeless individuals in Virginia Beach

The following are based on the 2007 homeless Point in Time Count

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- 14% are veterans
- 15% have severe and persistent mental illness
- 38% have chronic substance abuse and addiction
- 27% are chronically homeless

Characteristics of homeless families in Virginia Beach

- Individuals in families (including children) make up almost 40% of the homeless population
- 22% of all homeless families have a chronic substance abuser as part of the family
- 17% of those who are homeless in families are homeless because of domestic violence

Characteristics of homelessness (across both populations) in Virginia Beach

- 46% are employed (full and part-time jobs)
- 49% have a high school degree or better

Many more individuals and families experience episodes of homelessness throughout the year. During the 2005-2006 school year the Virginia Beach Public Schools identified 526 children meeting the criteria for being homeless. During the off-season for tourism, the hotels at the oceanfront offer a temporary, affordable solution for some homeless families and individuals. Once the tourists return, these rooms are no longer available at the rates that enabled people to pay for this transitory housing. Subsequently, these people return to the streets, camp in the woods, double up with others, or sleep in their cars.

4. Virginia Beach's Plan: Strategies, Goals and Actions

A. Overall Goals

The four overarching goals listed here define the top priorities of our plan. All of our strategies, goals and action steps should contribute to achieving one of these four goals:

- To Prevent Homelessness Whenever and Wherever Possible and Appropriate.
- To Move People Who Become Homeless into Permanent Housing as Quickly as Possible and Appropriate.
- To Expand the Supply of Decent, Safe and Affordable Housing Opportunities so that the housing-related causes of Homelessness are reduced.
- To provide opportunities for housing consistent with the city housing and neighborhood goals.

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B. Strategies and Approaches

Strategies and approaches define the ways in which we approach achieving the goals of the plan. They help guide our choices between various options, help define our process, and how we address key goals. If used correctly, our choices of action should be able to be defended by reference to these strategies and approaches.

Taking a Phased Approach to Planning, Action and Input:

We envision multiple steps of community involvement, re-evaluation and revision over the ten-year period of the plan. This document provides overall strategies and goals for the ten years which define how we will approach our goals, and what those goals are. It also provides defined actions for the first two years, and leaves open additional actions for the future.

Defining Issues Accurately and Creating Shared Community Goals:

We need to change our paradigm from managing homelessness to ending it. We must believe ourselves that it can be reduced or ended, and act with that goal in mind. It is critical to understand that homelessness as a label masks very different sets of problems that, while related, need very different solutions. We must develop clear statements that relate to our local problems and that can be consistently communicated.

The understanding and support of community leadership (governmental decision-makers and key business and community leaders) will pave the way for the availability of resources and for a higher likelihood of public support for all aspects of the plan. This requires ongoing consultation, discussion and the development of understanding prior to the proposal of actual projects. In addition, public discussion and educational forums are needed.

Using Best Practices and Research Results:

This requires learning from the best practices of others around the country, including our regional neighbors; evaluating how those may work in Virginia Beach; and then re-evaluating current programs against those options.

Addressing Causes Rather than Catching Problems

A significant portion of our current system was correctly created to “catch” and manage homelessness rather than to address the causes. Much of this was an appropriate response to the crisis that still continues. However, studies now show that to solve homelessness, prevention and permanent housing are the key strategies.

Using Existing Private Sector Housing as a Key Resource for Permanent Housing Solutions:

The great majority of persons with housing needs will fill them by obtaining private sector housing. Helping people overcome barriers to entry; helping people afford private

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sector housing; and preventing people from losing housing will provide the largest number of housing opportunities for the homeless.

Preserving and Rehabilitating Existing Affordable Housing:

There are thousands of existing affordable housing opportunities that exist today and must be preserved if progress is to be made. Insuring that cost-effective preservation and rehabilitation is conducted will prevent us from going backward rather than forward.

Using Partnerships and Working in the Broadest, Most Effective Context with Every Possible Partner: This means:

- A. **Regional cooperation** between area cities and counties. The existing South Hampton Roads Regional Task Force on Ending Homelessness has demonstrated great success in creating effective programs that cost all localities less or that never would have been possible for one locality to undertake.
- B. Involvement of the **key regional players** in planning for and funding activities that support our goal: **the Planning Council; United Way of South Hampton Roads; the Virginia Beach Foundation, the Norfolk Foundation**, and other agencies and foundations. It is critical to seek alignment of the goals and the use of the funds available to all regional actors to maximize our ability to achieve success. This has already occurred with the regional SRO projects, but can be enhanced.
- C. **Inter-agency cooperation** involving Virginia Beach's homeless serving agencies cooperating to enhance service delivery and tap available expertise
- D. **Inter-disciplinary cooperation** (between housing, homeless, health, criminal justice and social service agencies) because they all have key roles to play and opportunities to contribute
- E. Pro-active contact and cooperation with **local, regional and national foundations**

Taking Maximum Advantage of Low-Cost Strategies and Untapped Funding Sources

We do not expect to significantly change the financial realities of government in the region, state or nation. Massively expensive proposals are not realistic. However, there are multiple low-cost strategies that will help expand housing opportunities and overcome barriers to both prevent people from becoming homeless and assist them in

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finding housing. While none of these are “free”, they are extremely cost effective and must be part of an overall strategy.

In addition, family support programs funded by the Federal government and administered by Social Service agencies may be able to provide significant housing assistance using Federal funding. This opportunity should be explored as a key part of assisting homeless families.

Integrating the Goals of Ending Homelessness with the Allocation and Use of “Mainstream” Federal Housing Resources

Annually allocated Federal housing funds constitute a very large resource which can be made more available to create programs and housing opportunities that support the goals of ending homelessness. The Department of Housing already does some of this and plans to do more throughout the plan period.

Continuing City funding for DHNP operational costs, non-Federally eligible programs, and major regional projects.

The availability of a sufficient amount of Federal funding is made possible in great part by city support for a portion of the operational costs of the department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation. In addition, city funding for non-Federally eligible but critical homelessness programs, as well as for major regional projects such as Cloverleaf will be critical for continued success.

Actively Seeking to Influence Federal and State Policy and Resource Allocation Decisions

As noted above in the context section, Federal policies and resource decisions do and will play a key part in our ability to achieve the goals of the plan. City efforts, especially if aligned with and part of national efforts through the US Conference of Mayors, the

National League of Cities, and NAHRO, to insure that current resource allocations are maintained or increased could pay high dividends in the future.

While there is currently very little housing funding available from the Commonwealth of Virginia for cities or non-profits, there is wide support for efforts to address workforce and affordable housing. To the extent that State policy can be influenced to provide new resources for this effort, this may free-up existing resources and/or increase the overall availability of housing at all income levels.

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C. Key Goals, Programs and Policies

The following tables present more specific goals that are each critical to the achievement of the overall goals of this plan. For each goal, proposed actions, the rationale for them, and an approximate schedule for their achievement are provided. The Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation has the leadership role in the success of the plan. However, many of the proposed actions will be conducted by others, most notably the Department of Human Services and the member agencies of VBHARP, as well as our regional governmental, non-profit and foundation partners. The development and implementation of specific actions will be done in accordance with the strategy of utilizing the broadest possible stakeholder involvement.

Goal A
Insure the Preservation and Expansion of Affordable
Permanent Housing Resources

Proposed Action	Rationale	Schedule
Identify and plan for the preservation of existing affordable housing. Allocate appropriate funds and identify partners to help achieve this.	Without preservation of existing housing resources, opportunities for permanent housing will decrease.	Ongoing
Create new private sector housing opportunities through “ Master Lease ” or “ Housing Broker Programs ” – these involve developing agreements with landlords that allow otherwise ineligible households whose main obstacle to obtaining housing is not financial to obtain housing with certain guarantees from the city or agency.	The use of leveraged “risk reduction” to help people overcome barriers to permanent housing is the most cost effective way to house people who don’t need financial assistance	FY 07-08
Create new opportunities in the market by helping people overcome one-time barriers to obtaining housing through financial assistance – such as providing rental security deposits	Rental security deposit requirements often exceed \$2,500 and present a significant barrier to entry.	Ongoing annual allocations and review of program success
Creating additional Permanent Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless, Disabled and Special Needs Populations regionally in order to spread the costs.	Permanent supportive housing is a key to ending chronic homelessness	Gosnold in 2007 Cloverleaf in 2009 Third regional project in 2011
Use Section 8 Housing Vouchers to Support Permanent Supportive Housing	Section 8 vouchers are key to making supportive housing feasible	In fiscal year 2008-09: 42 units for Cloverleaf Apartments.
Use Section 8 Vouchers to Support Permanent Housing for Previously Homeless Families	Dedicating some Section 8 resources to homeless families and/or the disabled will increase opportunities for them.	For fiscal year 2007-2008, an allocation of 40 units to VBCDC has been made
Use HOME funds to support the acquisition of multi-family housing for the homeless and Tenant Based Rental Assistance	HOME funds can provide 2 years of rental subsidy for permanent housing.	In FY 07-08 DHNP has allocated \$400,000 for the acquisition of permanent housing.

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Goal B
Prevent Homelessness

Proposed Action	Rationale	Schedule
Expand Financial Assistance to Prevent Homelessness: Two programs that prevent homelessness already exist and are administered by the Department of Human Services: the Regional Homeless Intervention Program, and the City's Homeless Emergency Program (HEP). For 2007-2008, DHNP has budgeted an additional \$50,000 for HEP.	Preventing homelessness is the most cost effective way to address the problem	FY 2007-2008 and continuing
Establish an eviction prevention program that can intervene early and effectively to prevent homelessness.	Eviction prevention programs pro-actively communicate their existence and intervene when appropriate to prevent evictions that can be resolved.	Calendar year 2008
Improve Discharge Policies to Prevent Homelessness: The lack of appropriate resources and/or links between criminal justice and mental health facilities and housing resources contribute to homelessness by resulting in the discharge of persons from such facilities without an actual housing arrangement. Policies or programs that address this can effectively prevent homelessness.	The Regional Task Force is seeking to understand and seek to address them to reduce this cause of homelessness. DHNP will actively participate in this and work with all stakeholders to try to achieve improvements.	Calendar year 2007-2009

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Goal C
Expand the Availability of Resources

Proposed Action	Rationale	Schedule
Expand Regional Resource Development: New resources from foundations, from private donors and may be available. A regionally coordinated effort to enhance resource development, based on best practices and cost-effective regional projects, has already been demonstrated in the Gosnold apartment project. Cloverleaf apartments and the planned Healing place will be additional regional efforts.	Regional funders are highly interested in regional efforts to end homelessness. This has been demonstrated by their support of Gosnold Apartments and the Regional Housing database. Expanding this effort may produce significant support. In addition, there is a need for non-Federal money for some key activities.	Key effort for Cloverleaf apartments in 2007-08 and the Healing Place.
Expand National Resource Development Efforts	Both locally for Virginia Beach agencies and on a regional level, the implementation of best practice programs and regional cooperation should allow access to additional funds	Ongoing
Maximize HUD funding to Virginia Beach's Continuum of Care. To achieve the maximum funding available, the programs proposed for Virginia Beach must reduce requested funding for services and increase it for permanent housing. This can be done through some program changes, the use of locally controlled funds, and changing the use of some facilities.	To better compete under Federal guidelines, the continuum must fund fewer services and more permanent housing. Substituting locally-controlled Federal funds for certain activities; transitioning away from services; as well as transitioning transitional housing to permanent housing, should all increase funding to Virginia Beach from this source over time	2007-2010
Expand interagency cooperation in the use of all available resources to prevent family homelessness.	Expanded cooperation of non-profits, DHNP programs and DHS programs can help reduce homelessness.	2007-2008
Maintain active ongoing relationship with VHDA to insure financing opportunities are available and utilized optimally	VHDA is the key source for financing affordable housing in the state. High quality projects with regional cooperation can obtain very affordable financing	Ongoing
Use City funds where available to support major regional projects	Often Federal funds are not sufficient for major projects; projects may not be Federally eligible; or local funds may leverage significant Federal funding.	Provided \$1.3 million for Cloverleaf in 2007. Future funding decisions should be based on city priorities, opportunities/projects, and funding availability
Actively Participate in Federal and State Policy-Making and Resource-Allocation Decisions	Federal policy and budgeting may change in 2007-2008. The US Conference of Mayors has called for major funding increases in key federal programs. This could dramatically impact our ability to implement this and other plans.	Ongoing; especially needed in calendar year 2007 for the development of the new Federal budget.

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Goal D
Maintain and Transition the Current Services System
and Funding to Align with this Plan and Regional Priorities

What is Proposed?	Rationale	Schedule
The current system of homeless serving agencies and programs must be maintained while new programs are developed and put in place. This will require careful planning and cooperation.	DHNP and C of C agencies will continue to plan to address this.	2007-2010
Develop regional priorities, convey them to all involved and implement coordinated approaches to achieving them over time	Implementing regional priorities aligned with national best practices will move the entire region over time into a coordinated system that best helps end homelessness	2009-2010
Develop and implement outcome-based funding requirements to direct funding to the most effective programs	Transitioning to outcome-based funding will help funders and agencies improve and make the case for needed changes.	
Insure that current facilities that will continue to be needed are well maintained and funded. This requires the allocation of locally-controlled funding on an ongoing basis.	It is critical to the homeless-serving system and to city goals that current facilities stay well-maintained and capable of achieving their goals	Ongoing annually.

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Goal E

Connect People to Services and Resources to Help them Succeed

Proposed Action	Rationale	When
<p>Provide the best information on regionally available housing. Expand the regional affordable housing database; provide additional housing counseling; improve communication about existing housing opportunities to the general public and to people at risk of becoming homeless.</p>	<p>Information is a key resource to providers and those who need housing. To enhance the availability of all types of information, especially on a centralized, regional basis will help connect people to housing more effectively. This not only helps all people seeking housing to obtain it; but it reduces inquiries to all providers and thereby reduces the total work needed to operate the system. The developing Affordable Housing Database operated by the Planning Council for our region is one part of this effort.</p>	<p>Beginning in Summer, 2007</p>
<p>Enhance Access to Services and Reduce Total system demand by creating a City Wide and Later a Regional Central Intake System</p>	<p>A regional “central intake” system that provides central access to all regional resources through one call would dramatically reduce the total call volume to agencies and the burden on the person seeking housing. However, obstacles to a regional system mean that a citywide system may be a good interim alternative. In addition, assuring that staffers are experts and have relationships with housing providers will expand the chances of obtaining available housing or shelter.</p>	
<p>Insure that Street Homeless are Connected to Available Services; insure continuation of street outreach programs that engage chronically homeless persons and provide information on new options as they become available.</p>		
<p>Connect People to Services Comprehensively: Implementing a regional-based series of activities involving connecting people to services, such as “Project Homeless Connect” provides a one-stop shop that has demonstrated its value by the attendance of homeless persons.</p>	<p>Federal guidelines are steering funding away from services. However, it is still necessary for people to obtain appropriate support services. Large regional events at which all services are available should expand access and reduce the time needed to access services.</p>	<p>2007 or 2008</p>

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Goal F
Create and Enhance Community and Leadership
Understanding and Support

Proposed Action	Rationale	Schedule
Conduct Regular Public Discussions and Input Sessions in Virginia Beach Regarding this Plan		2008
Conduct Bi-Annual Regional Public Forums on Regional Efforts, national best practices and local programs	Regional task force with assistance from all stakeholders	2008 and bi-annually
Conduct Subject-Focused Regional Forums on Key Issues to Obtain Information and Generate Support – i.e. discharge planning.	Regional task force with assistance from all stakeholders	2008 – discharge planning
Assist and/or initiate Local, Regional and State Efforts to Promote a Positive Image of Workforce and Affordable Housing.		
Expand Ongoing communication and information efforts about all aspects of affordable housing	DHNP has allocated a staff position to do this starting in 2007-2008	
Continue to promote Fair Housing practices in all forums and in all aspects of work	DHNP and housing industry stakeholders	

5. Implementing and Managing the Plan

Actively seeking the implementation of this ambitious plan that involves multiple partnerships, multiple activities and policy and program initiatives will require a significant amount of staff time. DHNP’s pending reorganization recognizes this and identifies three new positions to work on this and related housing initiatives. The positions are part of the new Rental Housing Division of DHNP, which includes the Section 8 program, and has the assignment of increasing rental housing opportunities for low and moderate income households in Virginia Beach. It is our plan to utilize these positions, combined with the existing homeless resource coordinator position, to help manage and implement this plan.

In addition, the department will initiate a housing policy coordination team, with participation from other city agencies and community agencies, to continuously meet and develop and enhance program and policy initiatives that advance the ten year plan and expand housing opportunities.

The combination of assigned staff and a stakeholder policy body of key representatives, plus the ongoing regional homeless task force work, should all result in an energetic and successful achievement of the goals of this plan.

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6. Measuring and Evaluating Progress

An additional key component of the plan will be obtaining, analyzing and reporting on key statistics regarding progress. These measurements will have to be developed, defined and then collected on a regular basis. This aspect of the plan is critical to conveying its success and allowing for adjustment. The Department of Housing will allocate staff time for this purpose on an ongoing basis. Reports will be developed and distributed to all stakeholders for discussion and analysis.

7. Plan Schedule

This plan provides long term strategies and goals for guidance. It includes actions for the first two years. A major initiative to involve the community will be undertaken in 2008. Significant input from the community will be sought and utilized at multiple times beyond then. The schedule will be updated and aligned with city planning and budgeting, as well as regional planning and initiatives

Appendices:

1. Continuum of Care 2007: This document is in process and will be appended upon its completion by June 8, 2007
2. HUD Definition of Homelessness

Homeless Individual- an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. The term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of the Congress or a State law.

Chronic Homelessness is long-term or repeated homelessness accompanied by a disability. Many chronically homeless people have a serious mental illness like schizophrenia and/or alcohol or drug addiction. Most chronically homeless individuals have been in treatment programs, sometimes on dozens of occasions. This definition of chronic homelessness includes homeless individuals with a disabling condition (substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic

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physical illness or disability) who have been homeless either 1) continuously for one whole year, or 2) four or more times in the past three years. Research reveals that between 10 and 20 percent of homeless single adults are chronically homeless. (Note: a family cannot be defined as chronically homeless, even though they may experience repeated events of being homeless and if they have a disability.)

Other programs that address homeless have different definitions for homelessness. For services provided under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act the definition of homeless is much broader and includes persons living in hotels, motels, and campgrounds. It also includes individuals who are doubled up with relatives or friends, and those awaiting placement in foster-care. To determine homelessness the McKinney Vento programs considers the permanence and adequacy of the living situation, unlike the Continuum of Care programs. Our plan intends to address people without suitable housing conditions or who are at risk of being homeless.

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