



**CARNEGIE COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT'S
2014 HOTEL SURVEY AND HOUSING REPORT**

ON THE BRINK: THE DTES HOUSING CRISIS

By Jean Swanson and Tamara Herman

Researched by Jim Cardinal, King-mong Chan, Clifford Cheena & Tracey Morrison

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Thank you to King-mong Chan for the Chinatown chart (pg. 12), Rory Sutherland for the support and Dianna Hurford for the list of Chinatown society buildings.

This report is dedicated to the memory of Bud Osborn, who loved the Downtown Eastside and hated gentrification, and Anthony Curtis Snakeskin, who helped CCAP do research for past hotel reports. This report is also dedicated to all the people who have lost their lives in SRO hotels, shelters, and on the streets because they have been systematically denied dignified, safe, affordable housing.

CCAP acknowledges that our neighbourhood lies on the Unceded Territories of the Coast Salish People: Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Squamish.



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CCAP is a project of the board of the Carnegie Community Centre Association, which has about 5,000 members, most of whom live in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) of Vancouver. CCAP works on housing, income, and land use issues in the DTES so that the area can remain a low income friendly community. CCAP works with DTES residents as they speak out for the changes they would like to see in their neighbourhood.



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If you find any inaccuracies in this report please contact Jean Swanson at jean.swanson@gmail.com

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Cover: Cranes begin construction on the Sequel Condo project, which will mean 79 condos and 18 social housing units, of which only half (9) will rent at welfare rates. Sequel is located directly across the street from Insite, a supervised consumption centre. BC Housing subsidized Sequel with a low-interest loan.

raise shit [an excerpt] downtown eastside poem of resistance by Bud Osborn

...and gentrification has become a central characteristic of what Neil Smith perceives as “a revengeful and reactionary viciousness against various populations accused of ‘stealing’ the city from the white upper classes” and this viciousness and violence brought to the downtown eastside by friendly predators such as builders planners architects landlords bankers and politicians...



INTRODUCTION & HIGHLIGHTS

For Downtown Eastside (DTES) low-income residents, the housing crisis sweeping the neighbourhood is old news. As CCAP has documented, rents in privately-owned hotels have risen steadily in the 6 years since we published our first study. In 2014, however, scarcely a month went by without news of the housing crisis in the headlines.

The year began with low-income, predominantly Chinese speaking seniors, at the Chau Luen Towers fighting – and winning – a move by the landlord to increase rents by up to 40%. The landlord used a section of the Residential Tenancy Act that allows them to raise rents to match other similar buildings in the neighbourhood to justify the increase. The case was chilling: Despite a victory this time, many expect the same reasoning to be used in other buildings in the future as rents continue escalating.

In March 2014, the Local Area Plan (LAP) for the DTES was passed amid controversy on all sides. For developers, some business owners and some home-owners, the zoning rule barring condos from the DTES Oppenheimer Sub-

District was viewed as a move to “ghettoize” the neighbourhood. For many low-income residents, the Oppenheimer Sub-District was but a small measure of protection against rising rents and affordable housing shortages in a neighbourhood that has seen property values rise by 300% over the past 12 years¹. With disappointing numbers of new social housing proposed, a definition that fails to ensure people on welfare can afford to live in social housing, and allowances for new market development throughout the neighbourhood, the LAP falls short of protecting the DTES as a low-income neighbourhood.

In April 2014, with municipal elections looming, the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Count results were released. Homelessness was in the news again. In the City of Vancouver, street homelessness had risen by 249% since the last regional count in 2011 and had almost doubled since the 2013 local count². The mayor cited

¹ City of Vancouver (2014). “Downtown Eastside Social Impact Assessment: Draft Report.” Available at <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/social-impact-assessment-2014-feb-26.pdf>

² 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count Preliminary Report (2014). Available at http://stophomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/Preliminary_release_report_final_April_23_14_to_be_posted.pdf

INTRODUCTION & HIGHLIGHTS



Police at Oppenheimer Park Tent City. CCAP photo

renovictions from SROs in the DTES as one of the reasons behind the dramatic increase. Then, in July, with homelessness at a tipping point, a tent city began in Oppenheimer Park. The homeless campers issued a statement asserting their unceded Aboriginal Title and denying the City's jurisdiction to evict them from the park. By October, the tent city had grown from 40 to 200 tents. Many tenters had absolutely no other housing options, and some said that living in a tent was a more humane option than living in an SRO.

With the City struggling to find a justification to issue an injunction and evict the tenters, it became clear that there simply was not enough housing to offer people. The City opened a shelter with 40 mats, which many tenters rejected as an unacceptable housing option. Finally, the City signed a lease on an old Quality Inn Hotel, which is slated for demolition in two years' time. There is now a 600 person waiting list for the building's 157 rooms. When the eviction order was issued in October, the tent city campers had succeeded in winning some of the only new – albeit temporary – affordable housing to open in 2014.

The rest of the fall was marked by a turbulent municipal election period, where Vision Vancouver's 2011 promise of "ending street homelessness in the city of Vancouver by

2015"³ was overshadowed with a muted priority of "affordable housing and support for the most vulnerable."⁴ At the same time, there was turbulence on the provincial front: BC Housing announced an asset transfer program, which would involve the sale of 350 parcels of leased land and nine buildings to non-profit housing operators. Although BC Housing has said that it will reinvest the \$500 million to be gained through the sales into social housing, it is unclear what the future of such housing projects will be and how much housing will be available to people on welfare in the DTES.

In the backdrop, and out of the news, loomed the development future of Chinatown. With 753 condos and upscale market rental units proposed – and only 11 social housing units at welfare rate – a tidal wave of gentrification is poised to strike the neighbourhood. The biggest concentration of remaining low income housing in the DTES is now in Chinatown.

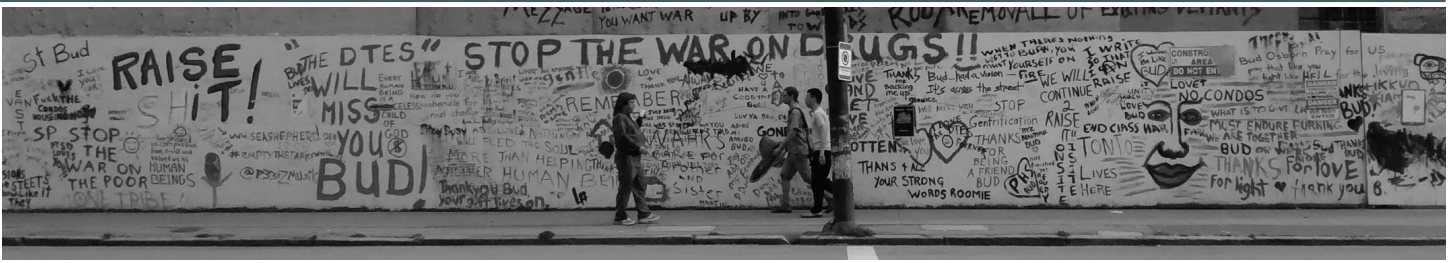
The history of the DTES teaches us that these buildings will not be sheltered from the rising property values and property taxes that come with a massive number of market housing. CCAP

3 Mayor of Vancouver (2011). "Mayor Gregor Robertson's Inaugural Address." Available at <http://www.mayorofvancouver.ca/mayor-gregor-robertsons-inaugural-address>
4 Vote Vision (2014). "More Affordable Housing and Support for the Most Vulnerable." Available at http://www.votevision.ca/affordable_housing



Chinatown Vancouver. Photo under CC License by Flickr/Chrystian Guy

INTRODUCTION & HIGHLIGHTS



Bud Osborn memorial wall at the site of Sequel 138. Photo under CC License by wikipedia/ Eviatar Bach

documented the “Woodwards Effect” on housing in our 2012 report, “We’re trying to get rid of the welfare people.” Essentially, all the hotels – except one – that surround the new Woodward development increased their rents beyond what people on welfare can afford.

At the end of a year when the housing crisis has become impossible to ignore, CCAP conducted its annual study of rents in privately-owned single room occupancy hotels (SROs) in the DTES. With over 14,000 people on the BC Housing waiting list, SROs are widely considered to be the last stop before homelessness for the city’s most vulnerable and marginalized residents.

CCAP’s annual Hotel Survey and Housing Report



Woodwards. CCAP photo

is a measure of whether low-income people can afford to remain in a neighbourhood they have built, contributed to and brought to life.

Above all else, the cost of housing determines who can live in a neighbourhood and who faces either homelessness or displacement. For many DTES low-income residents surviving on income assistance, the welfare shelter allowance of \$375 per month is a benchmark of whether housing is affordable and accessible. This year, we found:

- Between 2009 and 2014, the average lowest rents in hotels surveyed by CCAP increased from \$398 to \$485;
- 81% of all hotels rooms we obtained information from are in hotels where rents begin at \$425;
- Residents surviving on social assistance and paying the average rent of \$485 in DTES hotels have \$125 per month left to cover food, transit, basic necessities and other expenses;
- Four of the 12 hotels with rooms renting at \$375 or less are in Chinatown or Strathcona;
- The largest reserve of affordable housing, renting at \$425 or less, is in Chinatown or Strathcona, where 753 market housing units were either built in 2014, approved or in the development or rezoning proposal phase;
- \$500 is the lowest rent in 23 hotels and \$700 is the lowest rent in 9 hotels (with 445 rooms);
- The rate of change of proposed and approved residential buildings for 2013 to 2014 is 1471 units above welfare rate and 314 at welfare rate or a ratio of 4.7 to 1.

RENTS

SAMPLE INFORMATION	2013	2014
Number of hotels checked	81	79
Number of hotels that provided rent information	64	68
Number of rooms in hotels that provided rent information	3071	3004
Percentage of rooms in hotels that provided rent information	93%	96%

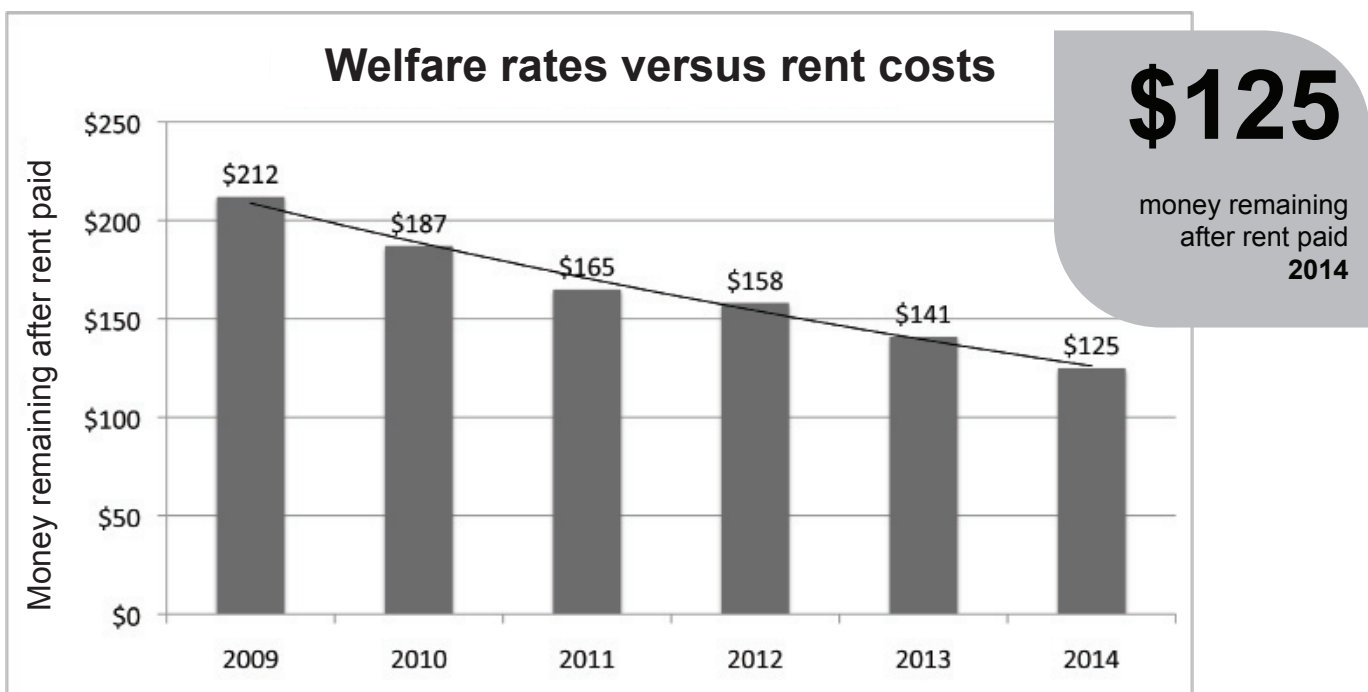
Rents are the first indicator in determining whether a room is available for a low-income tenant. Most hotels have rooms that rent at different rates. Because CCAP does not have access to the hotel owners' books, our surveyors ask managers and desk clerks what the rent range is in each hotel.

For all our reports we have conservatively grouped hotels by the lowest rent in the rent range. This means that hundreds of people actually pay higher rents than it appears by looking at our data. For example, in some cases CCAP has classified a hotel as having rents that begin at \$425 even though some rooms in the building rent for \$550 or more.

This year's results look deceptively optimistic. CCAP found more rooms that rent for \$375

than we did last year. A breakdown of the hotels renting rooms at \$375 shows that this is not because there are more affordable rooms. For the first time, CCAP had a Cantonese-speaking surveyor who was able to get information from more buildings where the manager or desk clerks spoke only Cantonese. This allowed us to access information for four more hotels, two of which are owned by Chinese societies. All four hotels have rents in the \$375 or lower range⁵. Thus, of the 12 hotels where the lowest rent is \$375 or less, four are buildings in Chinatown or Strathcona that were not included in last year's report. In total, 81% of all hotel rooms we obtained information from are in hotels where rents begin at \$425.

5 Lung Jen Benevolent (\$300), Tsung Tsin Benevolent (\$240), Keefer Cabins (\$375), Lucky Rooms (\$380)



SIX YEARS OF HOTEL SURVEY FINDINGS						
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Percentage of hotel rooms where all rooms rent for \$375 or less	29%	12%	7%	5%	4%	9%
Number of rooms in hotels where all rooms rent for \$375 or less	777	365	235	159	126	283
Vacant hotel rooms renting for \$375 or less	4	2	2	1	0	2
Number of rooms in hotels where lowest rent is \$425 or more	1416	1689	1567	2042	2278	2444

Between 2009 and 2014, the average lowest rents in hotels surveyed by CCAP increased from \$398 to \$485. If we omit the four affordable buildings in Chinatown and Strathcona we accessed this year in order to better compare with previous years, the average lowest rent for 2014 is \$495. As shown in the chart below, inflation only accounts for \$34 of this \$87 increase⁶.

Every year, CCAP tracks the number of rooms in hotels where the lowest rent is more than \$425 a month, or 70% of a monthly welfare cheque and \$50 over the welfare shelter allowance. This year, researchers found 166 more rooms where the lowest rents are \$425 or higher. The lowest

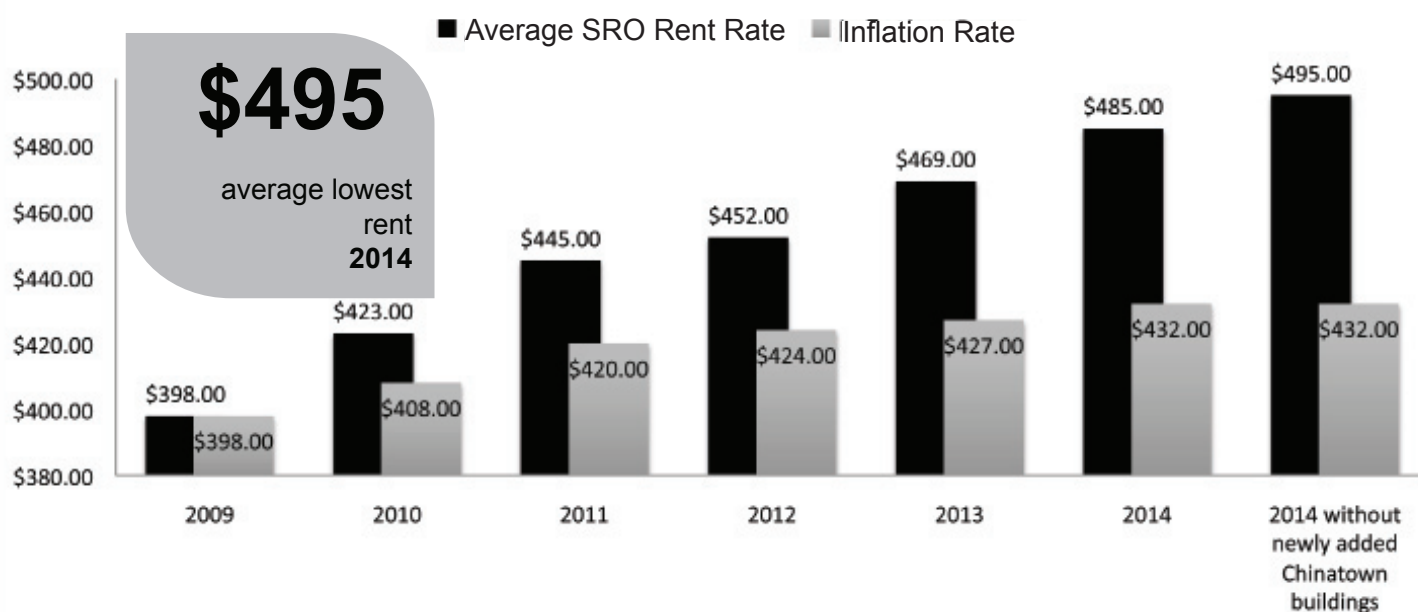
rents in a total of 46 of the 64 hotels CCAP surveyed are \$425 or more.

Equally disconcerting is the fact that rents are escalating beyond \$425 to \$500 and more. Last year, CCAP found 14 hotels with 614 rooms that rent for \$500 or more. This year CCAP, found 23 hotels where \$500 is the lowest rent. In total, these hotels contained 907 rooms. This year, CCAP also found 9 hotels with 445 rooms where the lowest rent is \$700 or more.

Social assistance rates have not been raised above \$610 since 2007. In 2014, a person on social assistance spending the average SRO rent of \$485 would be spending 80% of their income on housing.

⁶ Inflation rate calculated using Bank of Canada inflation calculator. Available at <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

Average lowest rents for hotels surveyed by CCAP from 2009 - 2014



VACANCIES

Vacancy numbers give us a glimpse of what options are available for people who are looking for housing. This year, CCAP obtained vacancy information from 61 hotels, of which 22 had vacancies. Of the 22, CCAP collected rent information from 18 hotels. There was only one room available at a rent of \$375 and it measured 6 by 8 feet.

DOUBLE BUNKING

Some hotels allow two people to share one small room and collect double rent from them. Cramming two people into one tiny room is a recipe for conflict. It is also especially bad for women who may experience violence from their partner. In some cases, however, double bunking is an alternative to homelessness. In this year's report, CCAP obtained information on double bunking from 48 hotels. Of those, 13 admitted that they allowed two people to share one room and nine provided us with rent information. Although one hotel does not charge for an extra tenant and another charges a \$25 fee, seven charge between \$600 and \$1120 when two people share a room.

DAILY/WEEKLY RENTALS

CCAP tracks daily and weekly rentals because they can erode the stock of permanent housing. Temporary tenants usually pay higher rents than monthly tenants. Besides, except for a handful of SROs that are legally allowed to rent on a daily weekly basis, the practice is illegal in most hotels. For this year's report, CCAP's researchers got information on daily-weekly rental from 46 hotels. Informants at four hotels said they rent on a daily or weekly basis. One was the Ivanhoe, which has an exemption from the city that allows it to rent some rooms on this basis.



The Clifton Hotel. CCAP photo

GENTRIFICATION

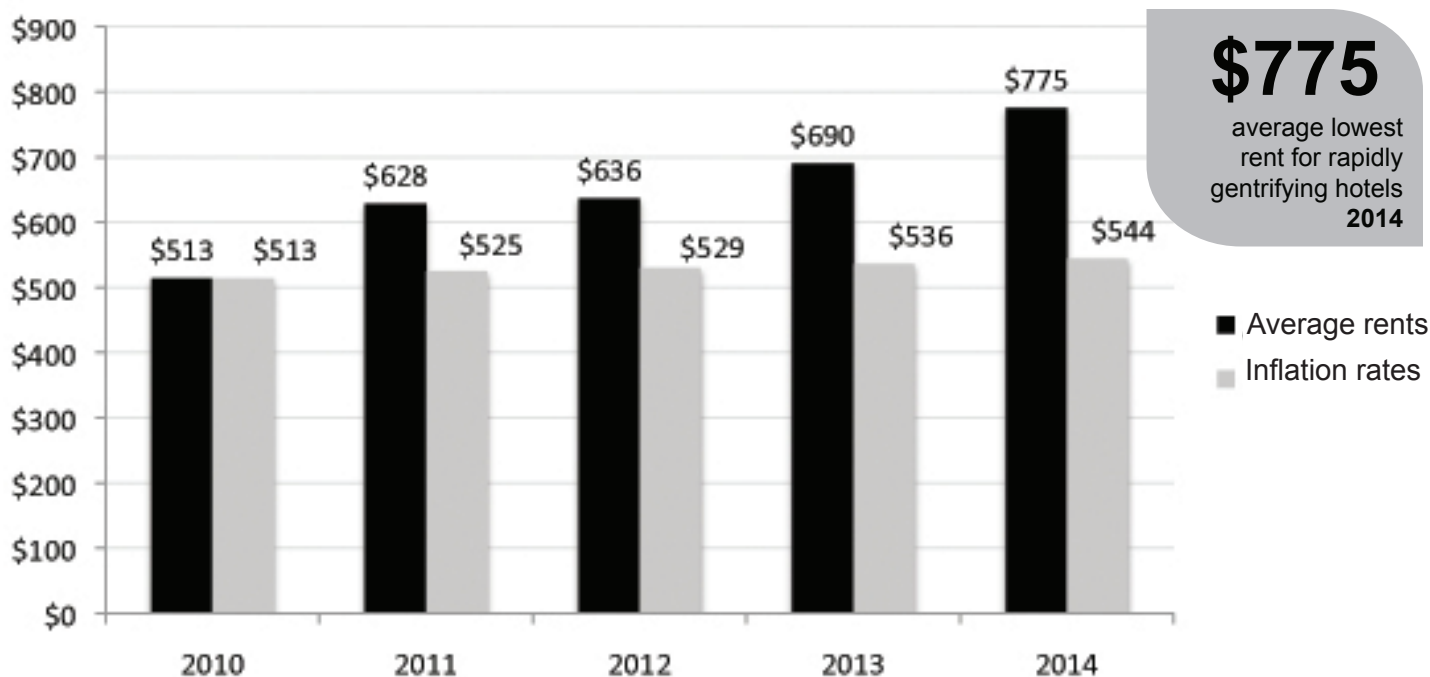
Gentrification is continuing at a rapid pace in the DTES. Since CCAP's last report, Steven Lippman, the DTES's most notorious gentrifier, bought two more hotels: The Station and Thornton Park. In 2014, the lowest rent at the Station increased by \$190 and the lowest rent at Thornton Park increased by \$125. Many low income tenants were evicted or bought out, and with lowest rents at \$600 and \$525 respectively, low income DTES residents cannot hope to move in. Eight hotels, including The Station and Thornton Park, increased their rents by over \$100.

HOTELS WITH RENT INCREASES OVER \$100 IN 12 MONTHS

Hotel	Lowest rent 2013	Lowest rent 2014	Increase
Alexander Court	\$500.00	\$700.00	\$200.00
American Hotel	\$500.00	\$700.00	\$200.00
Burns Block	\$900.00	\$1,000.00	\$100.00
Golden Crown	\$700.00	\$800.00	\$100.00
Grand Trunk	\$550.00	\$750.00	\$200.00
New Columbia	\$570.00	\$800.00	\$230.00
The Station	\$410.00	\$600.00	\$190.00
Thornton Park	\$400.00	\$525.00	\$125.00

For this year's report, CCAP looked again at rents in five hotels that gentrified rapidly, beginning in 2010. In just four years, average lowest rents increased by 51% in these hotels to \$775, which exceeds welfare shelter rate allowances by \$400. Inflation only accounts for \$31 of this increase. The rapidly gentrifying hotels are another marker of how rents in the neighbourhood skyrocket without

Average lowest rents for 5 hotels that gentrified very rapidly between 2010 - 2014



GENTRIFICATION

While high rents are the most forceful forms of discrimination against low income tenants, gentrifying hotels continue to use outright discrimination against people on welfare. As described in our 2013 report, online advertising, requesting LinkedIn profiles for applicants, installing security cameras and using keyless entry cards that are expensive to replace discourage and prevent low income people from renting rooms.

Two of our surveyors are low income Indigenous residents. They reported feeling that discrimination based on race and income came into play when asking about rents and vacancies in several hotels. For example, the surveyors told CCAP that desk staff at the Alexander Court were rude and the New Columbia clerk said that the hotel does not rent to people on social assistance or disability. The clerk at Keefer Rooms said there were no vacancies at first, but when the surveyor talked about how clean and quiet she was, an empty room appeared.



RATE OF CHANGE: 2013 to 2014

The rate of market housing development compared to social housing development is called the “rate of change.” CCAP monitors the rate of change because the city’s 2005 Housing Plan, adopted by City Council, called for the rate of change in the Downtown Eastside to be 1:1⁷. In other words, for every one unit of market housing, one unit of social housing should be built. This is because if the rate of change is too fast, and market housing dominates, low-income people can be forced out of their neighbourhood. For the people who remain, the neighbourhood can become unsafe and unwelcoming. Lately it has become apparent that the city is not trying to keep the rate of change at 1:1, as the rate of approved condo and market development units is soaring.

7 City of Vancouver (2005). Housing Plan for the DTES. Available at <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/housing-plan-for-the-downtown-eastside-2005.pdf>

8 City of Vancouver (2014). “Downtown Eastside/Openheimer Official Development Plan.” Available at <http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/odp/deod.pdf>

9 City of Vancouver (2013). “Regular Council Meeting Minutes: December 3, 2013.” Available at <http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20131203/documents/re-gu20131203min.pdf>

In 2005, low income people were not excluded from “social housing” just because their incomes were too low. However, recently, with the passing of the DTES Local Area Plan, the City’s definition of “social housing” in the DTES means only one third of “social housing” units will be rented at no higher than income assistance rates; but there are no maximum rents for the remaining two thirds of “social housing” units⁸. They could be as high as \$1,443 a month for a studio unit, which City Council defines as “affordable rental housing.”⁹ CCAP refuses to accept that social housing can rent over \$1400 a month as this amounts to over \$800 a month more than what a person on welfare receives for their entire income. That is why we distinguish between social housing that people on welfare can afford and what the City defines as social housing when we report on rate of change. The city-wide definition of “social housing” is even worse with no units required to rent at or below income assistance rates.

In 2013, the rate of change for new units approved and proposed was 2.7 market units for every one welfare and pension rate social

housing unit. The rate of change for the number of units that actually opened in 2014 is 28 market units at 219 E. Georgia St. to 139 social housing units at 590 Alexander St. However, the Alexander St. project is among the few remaining sites yet to be completed out of the 14 sites owned by the City for which the Province announced funding back in 2007. There have been no such announcements from the Province for new projects since then.

The rate of change for new units approved and proposed but not built for 2014 is as follows:

Development (Address)	Name	Market housing units	Social housing units above welfare rate	Social housing units at welfare rate
138 E. Hastings	Sequel	79	9	9
211 Gore	Remand	70		25
188 Keefer (611 Main)	188 Keefer	134	11	11
955 E. Hastings	Wall	282	35	35
720 East Hastings	Library			21
189 Keefer	Keefer Block	81		
633 Main	Blue Sky Chinatown	192		
558 E. Cordova	Boffo	24		5
606 Powell	Drake			146
150 E. Cordova	INGastown	61		
179 Main		47	4	5
626 Alexander		24		5
41 E. Hastings		78	68	52
231 E. Pender	Framework	60		
137 Keefer		14		
105 Keefer		137		
450 Gore		61		
TOTALS		1344	127	314

The rate of change of proposed and approved residential buildings for 2013 to 2014 is 1471 units above welfare rate and 314 at welfare rate, or a ratio of 4:7 to 1.



CHINATOWN

The rate of change calculation hints at the most substantial threat to the future of the DTES as a low income neighbourhood: The gentrification of Chinatown. The three most recent development applications in the Downtown Eastside are all located in or near Chinatown, and none contain any social housing units. In total, in addition to 28 condo units completed in 2014, 427 condos and 298 market rental units are either approved or proposed in or near Chinatown. Only 11 social housing units at welfare rate and 6 BC Housing Income Limits (HILS) rate units are proposed (about \$850/month currently).

If numbers are any indication, the influx of condos and upscale market rentals into Chinatown will surpass the Woodward's development in terms of scope and impact. CCAP's hotel reports have painted a clear picture of rising rents in the radius surrounding Woodward's.

Yet the 536 market housing units, 125 single social housing units and 75 social housing family units at Woodward's paint a more optimistic picture in terms of rate of change than the development future of Chinatown, with a ratio of 759 unaffordable units to 11 affordable units or a rate of change of 69:1.

Chinatown holds some of the most affordable housing remaining in the DTES. Average rents, for example, in the 11 SRO buildings located in Chinatown are \$409, or \$76 below the average for all SROs.

Part of the reason rents are so low in Chinese family clan and benevolent society-owned buildings is because of the rich history and contributions of the Chinese community in Vancouver. Beginning over 100 years ago, Chinese family clan and benevolent societies



Change in Chinatown. Photo under CC License by Flickr/Ted McGrath

purchased buildings to support their community members who came to Canada in order to work and provide for their families at home. In delivering supports and services to their members, the societies played in an important role in bringing Chinatown to life.

Societies still own approximately 50 buildings in the DTES, of which 20 are in Chinatown¹⁰. Many of these buildings offer low-rent housing to low-income Chinese seniors, who are among the neighbourhood's most vulnerable residents. Many of the societies are struggling to pay expenses and maintain their buildings. Ming Sun, a building that rented rooms to seniors at \$150 to \$300 per month, was closed last year due to maintenance issues. The Ming Sun Benevolent Society has been unable to raise funds to repair and reopen the building as low income housing. With the escalating property values – and taxes – that come with a flood of market housing, CCAP is concerned that family clan and benevolent societies will no longer be able to offer low rents for seniors.

The Chau Luen Tower, managed by the Chau Luen Kon Sol Society, is another example of how rising rents jeopardize low income housing in Chinatown. When the buildings' predominantly elderly and Chinese-speaking residents were

given notice that their rents would increase by 30% to 40%, the tenants filed a case at the Residential Tenancy Board (RTB). The society argued that the rent hike was justified because the BC Residential Tenancy Act allows landlords to raise rents to match other rates in the area. One of the two buildings listed by the society was the Golden Crown, which rents at \$800 to \$1200. Although the RTB ruled in favour of the tenants and against the rent increase, the 298 new market rentals slated for Chinatown could give landlords a stronger case in the future.

Anyone familiar with Vancouver's Chinatown will have noticed a tremendous difference in local stores and shops over the past few years. Expensive cafes, designer furniture stores, brand-name clothing stores and fancy restaurants have opened and some have taken the place of a number of low cost stores and restaurants that served the Chinese community.

In the past year, changes along Pender and Keefer Streets have been impossible to ignore. The rising property values that come with condos also mean rising rents for retail. We can expect that more Chinese retail serving the low income community will be forced to close their doors in the future.



Millennium Gate. CCAP photo

Chinese seniors face multiple barriers due to their poverty, language and age. CCAP's work in Chinatown over the past years has taught us much about the importance of community and place in the lives of many low income seniors. Without rent protections or new social housing units, the future of the community is in jeopardy.

10 City of Vancouver (2014). "Administrative Report: Chinese Family Clan and Benevolent Societies in the Downtown Eastside: A New Grant Program and Strategic Support for Buildings with Heritage, Affordable Housing, or Cultural Assets." Available at <http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20140708/documents/a1.pdf>

在華埠的發展計劃 | DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN CHINATOWN

狀況 Status	大廈名字 (層數) Name of Building (Number of Stories)	地址 Address	發展商 Developer	住宅單位的數量 Number of Units			
				私人柏文 單位 (買) Condos	市價的 出租單 位 Market Rental	「廉價房屋」 (卑詩省房屋入 息限額: 月租 \$850) Affordable Hous- ing (BC Housing Income Limits: \$850/month)	社會房 屋 (福利 金額: 月 租\$375) Social housing (Welfare Rate: \$375/ month)
完成 (2014年) Completed (in 2014)	The Flats (9)	219 佐治東 街 E. Georgia St.	Panther	28	-	-	-
被市議會 批准 Approved	188 Keefer (17)	188 奇化街 Keefer St	Westbank	134	5	6	11
	Blue Sky Chinatown (15)	633 緬街 Main St.	Bosa Blue Sky Properties	-	192	-	-
	Keefer Block (10)	189 奇化街 Keefer St.	Solterra	81	-	-	-
	Framework (8)	231 片打東 街 E. Pender St.	Porte Dev.	61	-	-	-
	---- (9)	245 佐治東 街E Georgia St.	GMC Projects	-	40	-	-
	---- (6)	450 歌雅街 Gore Ave	GMC Projects	-	61	-	-
發展計 劃申請 Proposed (Develop- ment)	---- (9)	137 奇化街 Keefer St.	James Schouw and Associates	14	-	-	-
土地更改 申請 Proposed (Rezoning)	---- (13)	105 奇化街 Keefer St.	Beedie	137	-	-	-
總數 Total				455	298	6	11
總數 (超過福利金額的住屋) Total Non-Welfare Rate Housing				759			
總數 (按着福利金額的住屋) Total Welfare Rate Housing							11
不可負擔住屋同可負擔住屋的比例 Ratio of Unaffordable to Affordable Housing				69:1			

RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2014 the City of Vancouver counted the highest number of homeless people ever. The combination of low welfare rates, lack of new social housing and gentrification pushed more people onto the street and into shelters. To solve these problems, all levels of government must take action as follows:

CITY GOVERNMENT

- #1. Use City powers to impose non-profit management on hotels with outstanding Standards of Maintenance complaints, ensuring that tenants have the protection of the Residential Tenancy Act.
- #2. Lease SROs to non-profit organizations to keep them from being gentrified and ensure good management.
- #3. Designate enough land for 5000 units of social housing in the Downtown Eastside to show senior governments that the City is serious about solving the housing crisis.
- #4. Restore minimum unit size to 320 sq. ft so people have a home that is livable and feels permanent.
- #5. Do not provide incentive to profit or non profit SRO owners to upgrade their units unless rents are maintained at welfare/pension rate.
- #6. Amend the SRA bylaw to define SRO hotel “conversion” to mean raising rents above welfare and pension level shelter rates. Include zero-eviction conditions in all renovation and building permits.
- #7. Stop market housing development in the DTES to keep property values low and preserved for social housing until SRO hotels have been replaced with safe, secure, self-contained and resident-controlled low-income social housing and no one needs to sleep on the streets or in shelters.
- #8. Develop an SRO tenant organizer structure to educate, support and liaise between tenants and bylaw and Residential Tenancy enforcement bodies. Embrace a women-centred philosophy in hotels with policies and practices that ensure women’s access and safety in all spaces, especially for Aboriginal women and women of colour.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

- #1. Raise welfare, disability and minimum wage rates substantially.
- #2. Reform the Residential Tenancy Act to provide effective rent control by the rental unit rather than the tenant. This will stop giving landlords an incentive to evict low-income people and will end renovictions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

#3. Legislate the right of all tenants to organize tenant unions.

#4. Ensure that residents of all non profit social housing, including hotel rooms, supportive housing projects and emergency shelters, have full tenant rights under the Residential Tenancy Act.

#5. Provide funds to build 10,000 units a year of low income social housing throughout the province. Replace 1,000 SRO units with self-contained, resident controlled social housing every year for five years in the DTES.

#6. Amend the BC Human Rights Code and Residential Tenancy Act to make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of social condition including class, poverty and drug use.

#7. Ensure that immigration status is not a barrier to social housing.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Enact a national housing program immediately. Provide funds to build low income social housing in the DTES to replace 1,000 SRO units per year for the next five years.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Which hotels were surveyed?

CCAP started with the city's 2009 SRO list for the DTES. We deleted buildings run by non-profits because they are generally cleaner and cheaper. These include Kye7e, Sereena's Place, Cosmopolitan, Dodson, Hampton Hotel, Jubilee Rooms, Powell Rooms, Heatley Apartments, International Inn, The London, Holborn, Seaview, Colonial, Lion, and Princess Rooms. Even though we did not survey these buildings, CCAP recognizes that these buildings are not secure units of low income housing because their leases with non profits can expire. That left us with 79 open buildings that we visited. We accessed rent information from 68 buildings with 3004 rooms. Usually, the information was provided by a manager or desk clerk but sometimes we had to rely on a tenant because managers or desk clerks were not available after several tries.

APPENDIX 2

How did CCAP do the hotel survey?

For the hotel survey part of this study, CCAP went door to door to privately owned and run hotels within the DTES boundaries. CCAP researchers approached each hotel like a prospective tenant looking for a room. The CCAP researcher usually spoke to the desk clerk or manager and asked about vacancies, rent levels, daily/weekly rentals, and student only rentals. The researcher looked to see if there was a sign asking for guests to pay fees to visit residents and asked if there were any vacant rooms that were not being rented. Sometimes hotels were surveyed more than once by different people to test the data. CCAP does not have the resources or the authority, like the City does, to actually inspect buildings, so this survey does not include maintenance aspects of the hotels. This information is as good as what was told to CCAP researchers by desk clerks, managers, and in a few cases, tenants, as CCAP has no way of looking at hotel records. CCAP also analyzed city and provincial statistics about new housing being built and provincially owned hotels.

APPENDIX 3

Why is it important for rents to be lower than \$375 a month?

About 7000 DTES residents rely on welfare and disability income.ⁱ Since 2007, \$375 a month is all single people have to pay for their rent, utilities and phone. If people on income assistance have to pay more than \$375, this money must come out of their support allowance of \$235, leaving them with not enough money to eat and pay for other necessities. The DTES also has about 3000 seniors. Many of them rely on a basic pension of only about \$1300 a month. For these seniors, rents at or below \$390 a month (30% of their income) are considered affordable.

ⁱ Phone conversation between Jean Swanson and Dave Jagpal, Manager of Integration Services in the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, June 23, 2010.

APPENDIX 4

Residential hotel rooms are not healthy or adequate accommodation

The City's DTES Housing Planⁱⁱ (p. 5) recognizes that the SROs are not good quality housing and calls for them to be replaced "with new self-contained social housing for singles," with supports for some residents. CCAP believes that DTES hotel rooms are not proper housing because they are tiny, usually measuring about 10 by 10 feet. Residents usually have to share bathrooms with everyone on their floor and people don't have kitchens. How can low-income people eat cheaply without the means to cook? In addition, the buildings are old and don't meet current earthquake standards. Many are poorly managed, filthy, and pest ridden. Although not all DTES residents have health issues, many have told CCAP that living in a decent self contained apartment is part of feeling respected and can be an important part of managing health issues. In addition, SRO hotels are fundamentally unsafe spaces for women. A woman resident of the Regent Hotel explained, "When women leave their rooms at night to take a leak in the common bathroom we wonder if there is a man behind our door. We wonder if there is a man in the bathroom. And when we come back we wonder if there is a man waiting for us in our rooms. We feel locked up in our own rooms."

APPENDIX 5

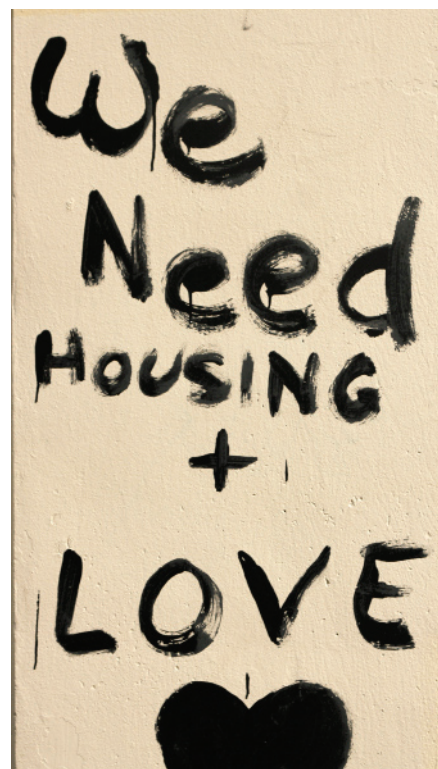
SROs must be retained as an affordable last resort

While hotels are not proper places to live, they are the housing of last resort for low-income people. Even though CCAP wants all the rooms replaced, it is crucial that they remain open and available at \$375 per month until replacement housing is available and until the homeless people in the DTES have homes. If the hotel rooms do not stay open and available to low-income residents, homelessness will increase. City statistics show street and sheltered homelessness has increased from 628 in 2002 to 1,798 in 2014.ⁱⁱⁱ

APPENDIX 6

What can current DTES residents afford to pay for rent?

The vast majority of current DTES residents are low income people according to the Statistics Canada definition of the Low Income Cut Off (2011) line where a single person is considered low income if they have less than \$23,298 a year.^{iv} Of course, many people who have less than \$23,298 a year really do have a lot less. A person on welfare receives only \$7320 a year; on disability, \$10,872; on old age security (OAS) and guaranteed income supplement (GIS), about \$15,000, on full-time minimum wage of \$10.25, about \$21,320 gross. Shelter costs are not supposed to take up more than 30% of income, according to federal and provincial governments.



ii City of Vancouver (2005). Housing Plan for the DTES. Available at <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/housing-plan-for-the-down-town-eastside-2005.pdf>

iii 2014 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count Preliminary Report (2014). Available at http://stophomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/Preliminary_release_report_final_April_23_14_to_be_posted.pdf

iv Statistics Canada (2012). "Low Income Cut-Offs (1992 Base) Before Tax." Available at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2012002/tbl/tbl02-eng.htm>

This means that the amounts people in these categories have for rent are as follows^v:

Income Source	Rent Low Income People Can Afford (30% of Net Income)
Welfare	\$375/month allocated by the province
Disability	\$375/month allocated by the province
Basic OAS and GIS	\$390/month
Minimum Wage (full-time)	\$533/month
Poverty line earnings	\$582/month
Average rent for 1BR apt in Vancouver	\$1,005/month

While not everyone in the DTES is on welfare or disability, people working at minimum wage and pensioners cannot afford average rents for even bachelor apartments. Even someone making \$10.25 an hour could only afford rent at \$533 a month, which hundreds of single DTES rooms are already renting for, with many more renting for more than that.

APPENDIX 7

Hotels where the lowest rent is \$700 or more (total: 9)

Alexander Court	Golden Crown	New Columbia
American Hotel*	Grand Trunk	Pender Lodge
Burns Block	Metropole	Lotus

*A handful of rooms at the American Hotel rent for under \$700 because of a Housing Agreement with the City.

Hotels where the lowest rent is between \$500 and \$700 (total: 14)

Argyle	Harbour Rooms	Thorton Park
Astoria	Laurel Apartments	Vet's Rooms
Danny's Inn	Persepolis	Woodbine
Georgia Manor	Shamrock	York Rooms
Glory	The Station	

Hotels where the lowest rent is between \$425 and \$500 (total: 22)

Arlington	Empress	Patrick Anthony
Arno	Hildon	Regent
Balmoral	Ivanhoe	Silver/Avalon
BC Rooms	Lion	Travelers
Brandiz	Low Young Court	United Rooms
Chelsea	Lucky Lodge	Wonder Rooms
Cobalt	Main Rooms	
Decker	Pacific Rooms	

^v For the Average Rent of 1BR Apartment in Vancouver: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2013). Rental Market Report. Available at http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64467/64467_2013_A01.pdf

