

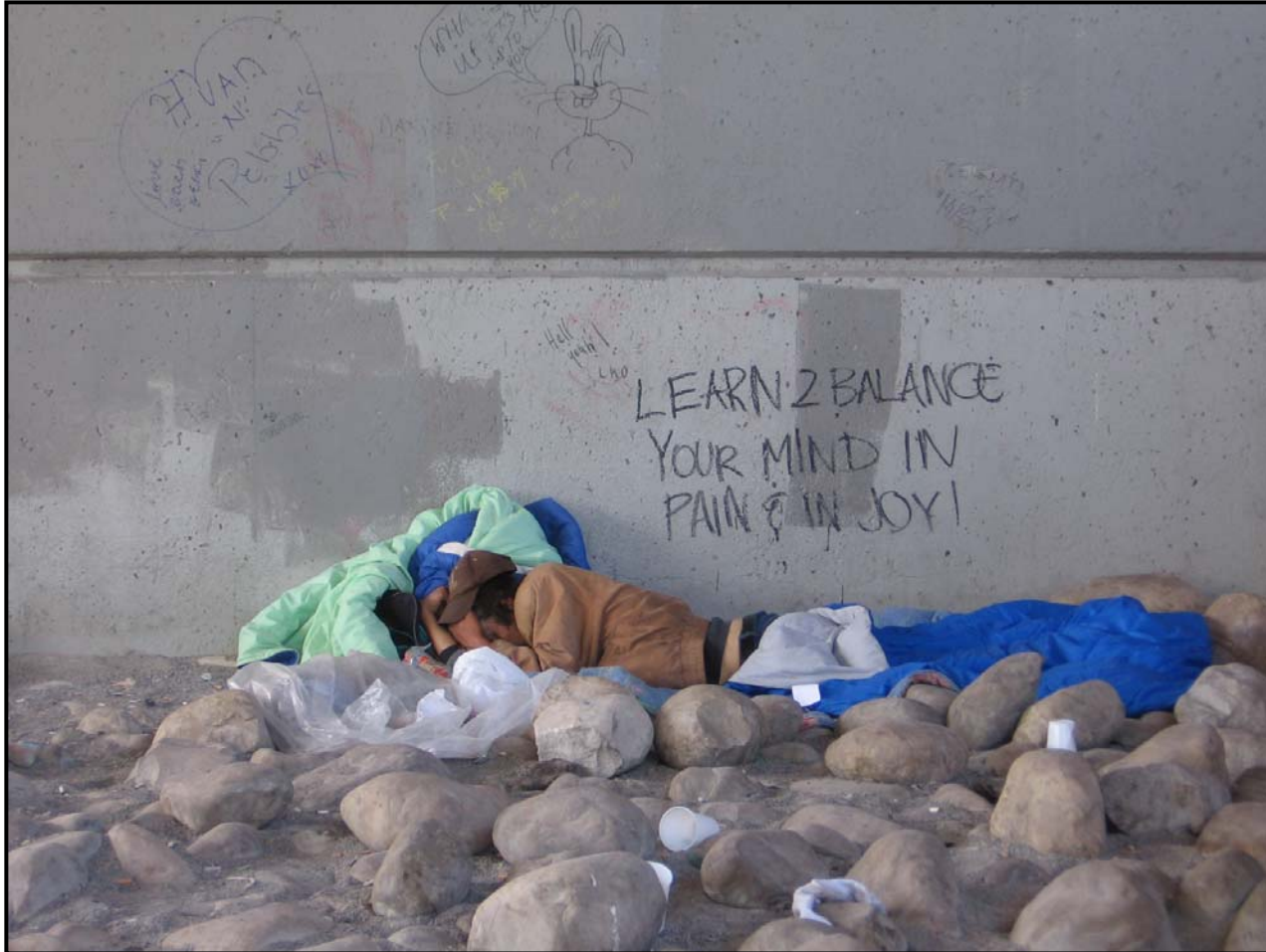
# Homelessness: What Do We Know?

**Sharon M. Stroick, Ph.D., MCIP**  
**Community and Neighbourhood Services**  
**The City of Calgary**

Prepared for the COMMUNITY SUMMIT  
on Calgary's 10-Year Plan  
to End Homelessness

**Calgary, AB – 2007 April 23**

# Homeless in Calgary...



– City of Calgary, Roads (2005)

# Biennial Count of Homeless Persons

- Debate over numbers in late 80s / early 90s
- Definitions were part of the problem
- Members of Council asked for “harder” numbers that were easy to understand and replicable
- Street Liaison Committee advised on timing, methods and logistics
- Biennial “Point in Time” Census chosen

# 'Homelessness' – Defined by The City

- ***Homeless persons are considered to be “those who do not have a permanent residence to which they can return whenever they so choose”***
- This is the formal definition that has been used by The City of Calgary for every Count of absolutely homeless persons conducted since 1992



# No Permanent Residence...



– *City of Calgary, Roads (2006)*

# U.N. Definitions of Homelessness

- ***Absolute Homelessness*** – “Individuals living in the street with no physical shelter of their own, including those who spend their nights in emergency shelters”
  - *The City of Calgary counts only the absolutely homeless*
- ***Relative Homelessness*** – “People living in spaces that do not meet the basic health and safety standards” including protection from the elements; access to safe water and sanitation; security of tenure and personal safety; affordability; access to employment, education and health care; and the provision of minimum space to avoid overcrowding
  - *Housing needs research identifies part of this at-risk group*

# The Absolutely Homeless...



– *The Many Faces of Poverty and Homelessness*,  
Calgary Board of Education Website, 2007



# How We Count the Homeless

## ***The Count has two components:***

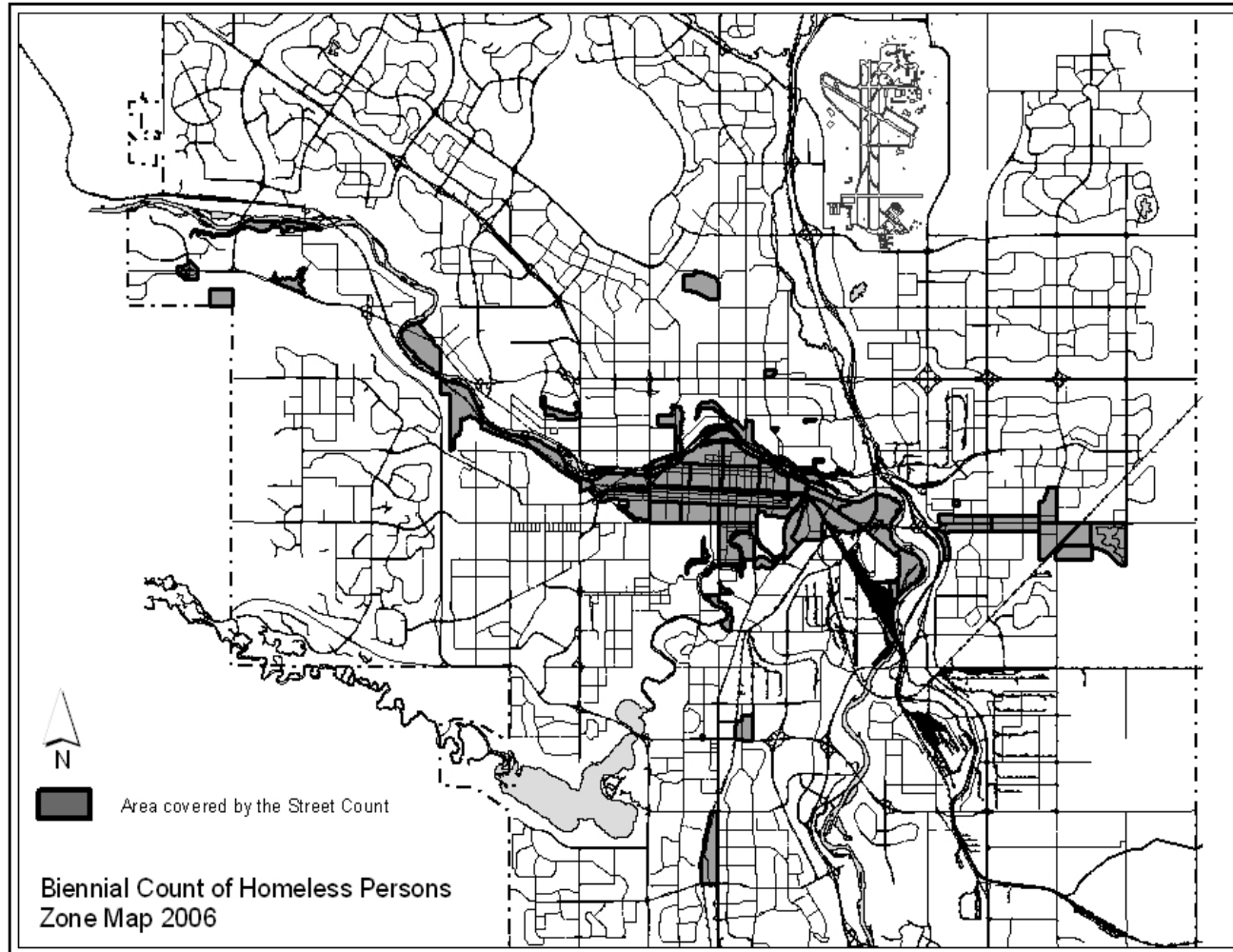
1. A survey of shelter facilities and service agencies
2. A street count

## ***The 2006 Count involved the participation of:***

- **51 facilities** providing emergency and/or transitional shelter for the homeless
- **9 service agencies** (all four hospital emergency departments, city jail, the Calgary Remand Centre, regional social services, and Calgary Transit)
- **157 volunteer street enumerators** who canvassed 54 geographic zones across Calgary



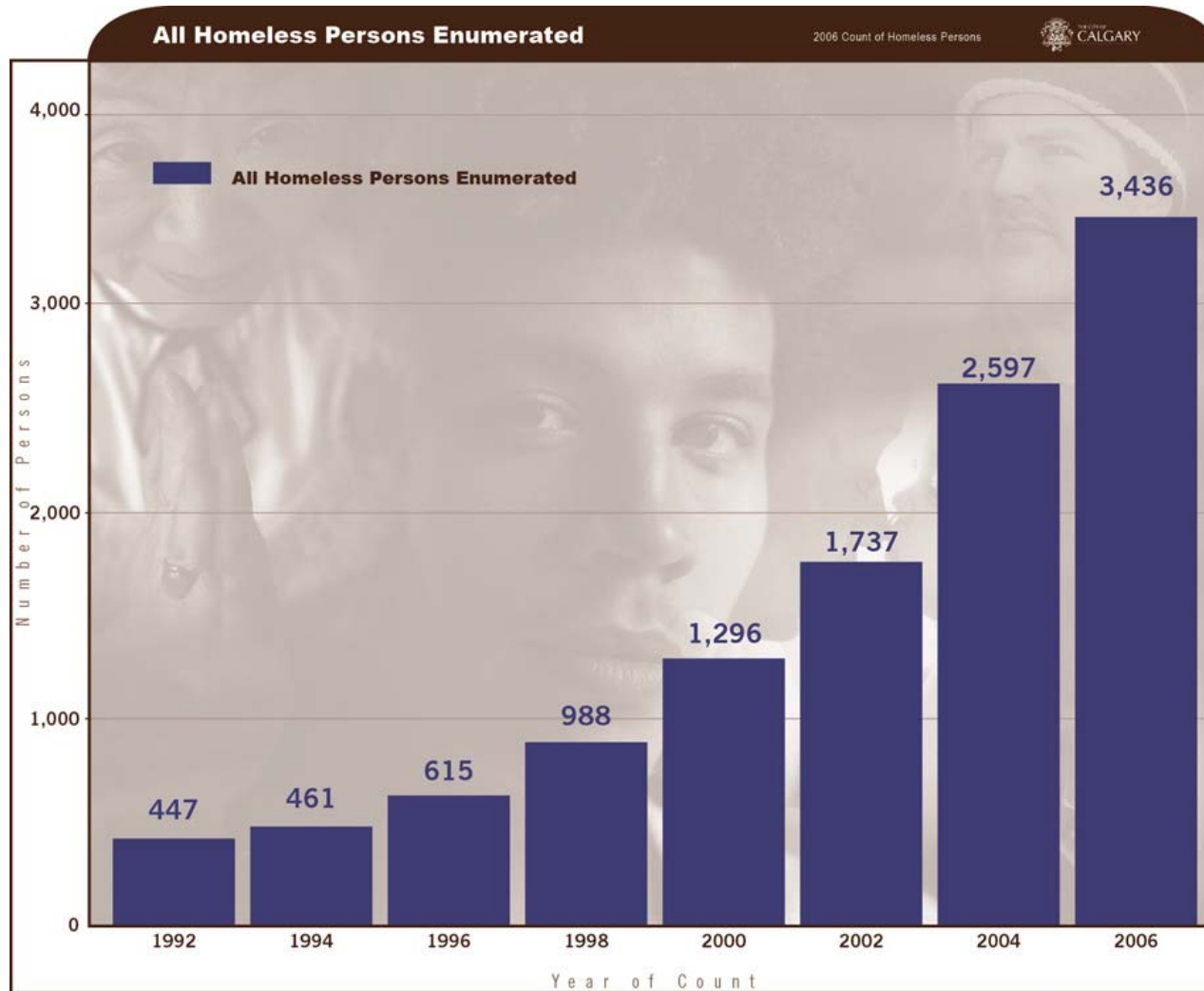
# 2006 Street Count Map



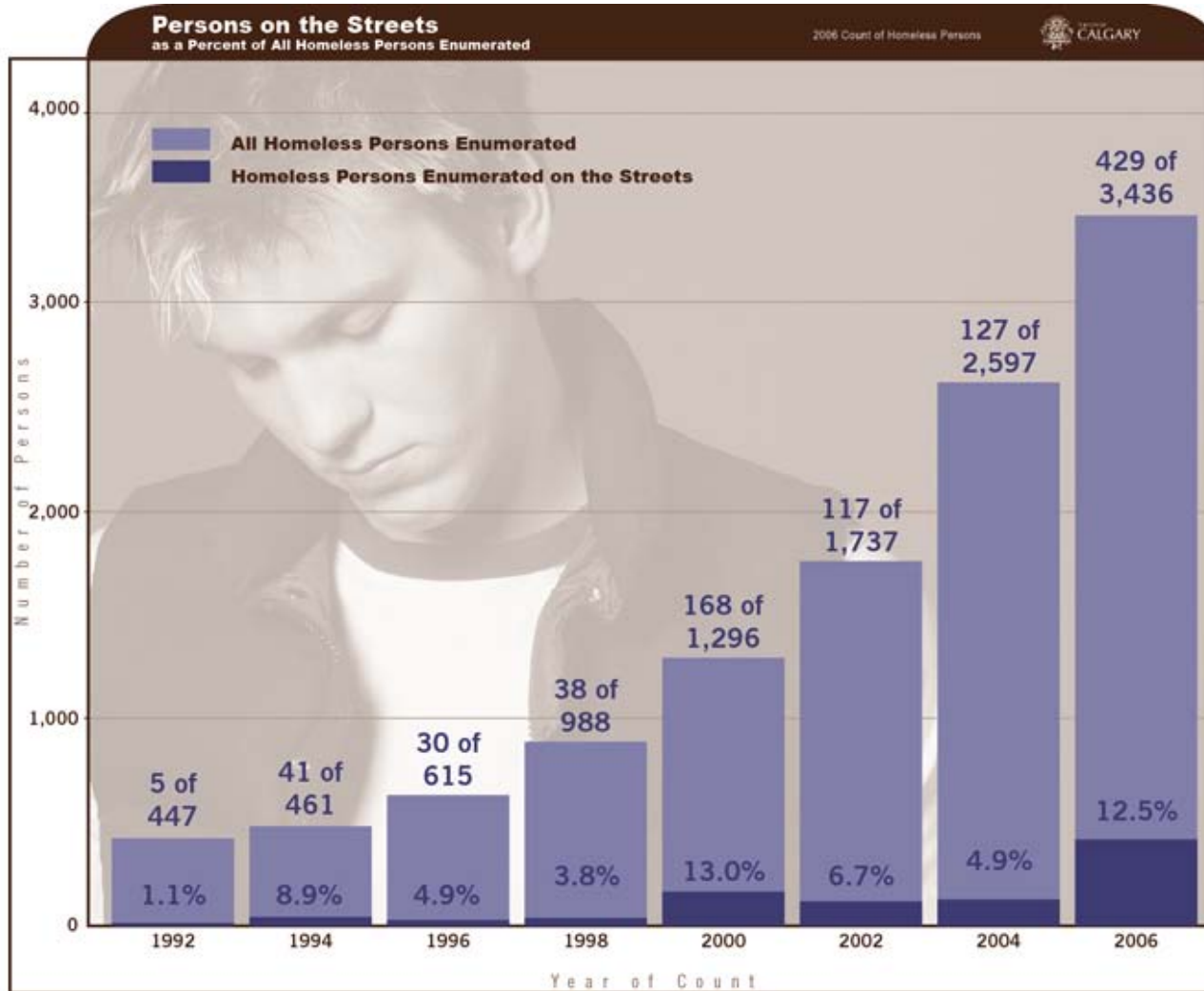
# 2006 Count – Key Findings

- **3,436 homeless persons** were enumerated on the night of May 10, 2006
  - **2,823 in shelters** (82.2%)
    - 1,383 assigned to emergency beds
    - 1,440 assigned to transitional beds
  - **184 by service agencies** (5.4%)
  - **429 on the streets** (12.5%)

# Growth in Homelessness, 1992-2006



# Growth of Street Homelessness



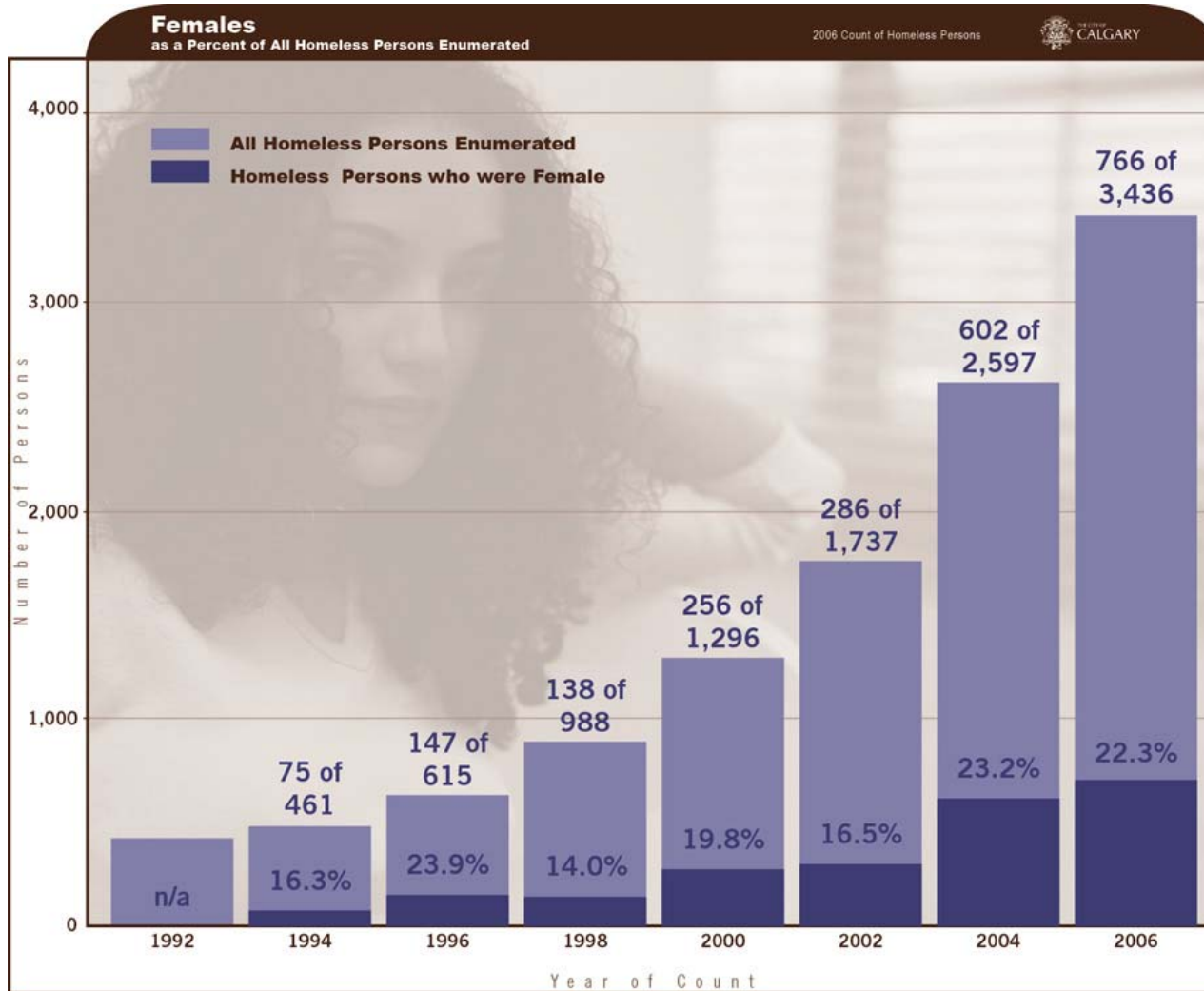
# Sleeping Rough in Calgary...



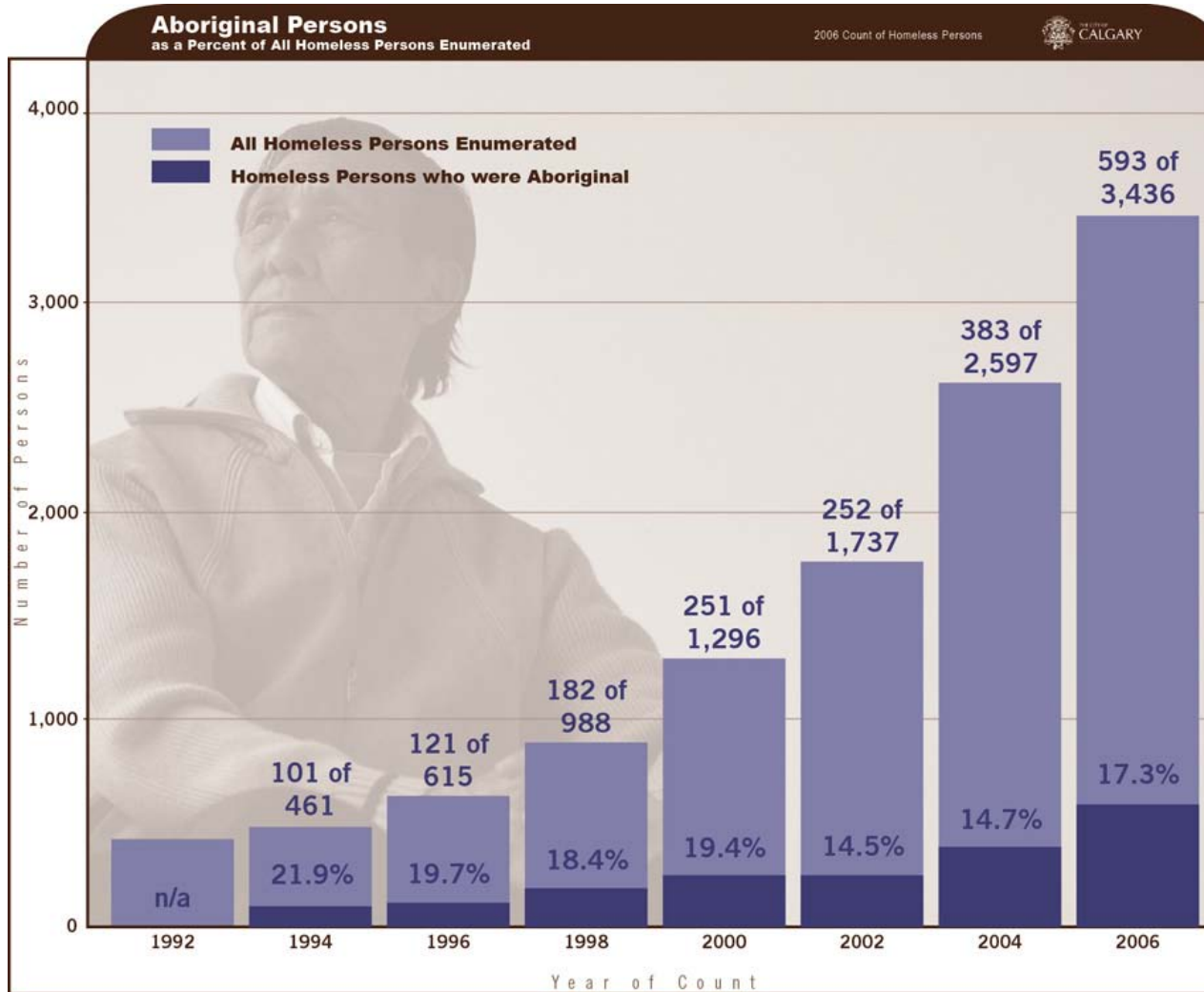
– *City of Calgary, Roads (2007)*



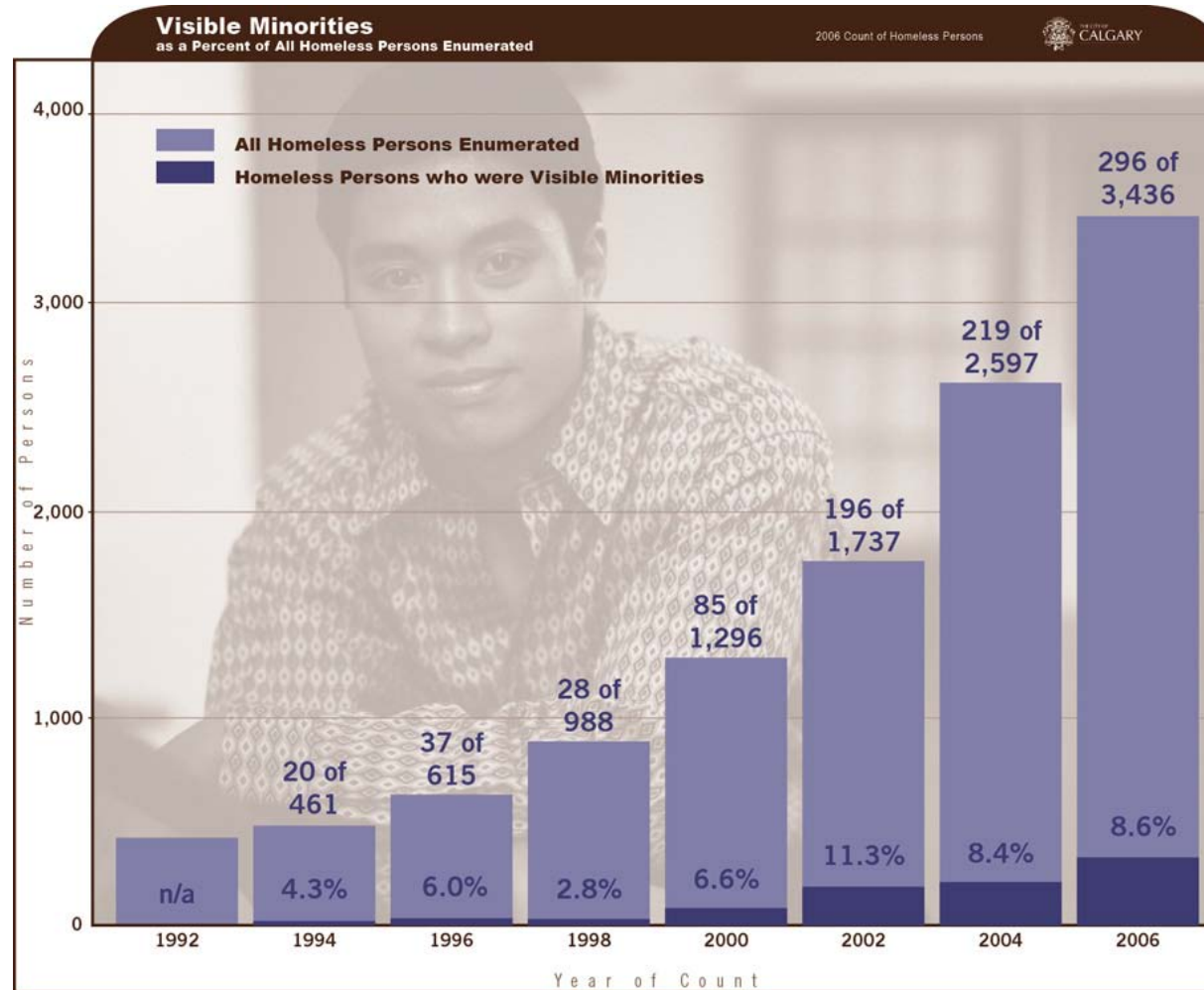
# Homeless Females



# Homeless Aboriginal People



# Homeless Visible Minorities



# Homeless Families

Families are defined as:

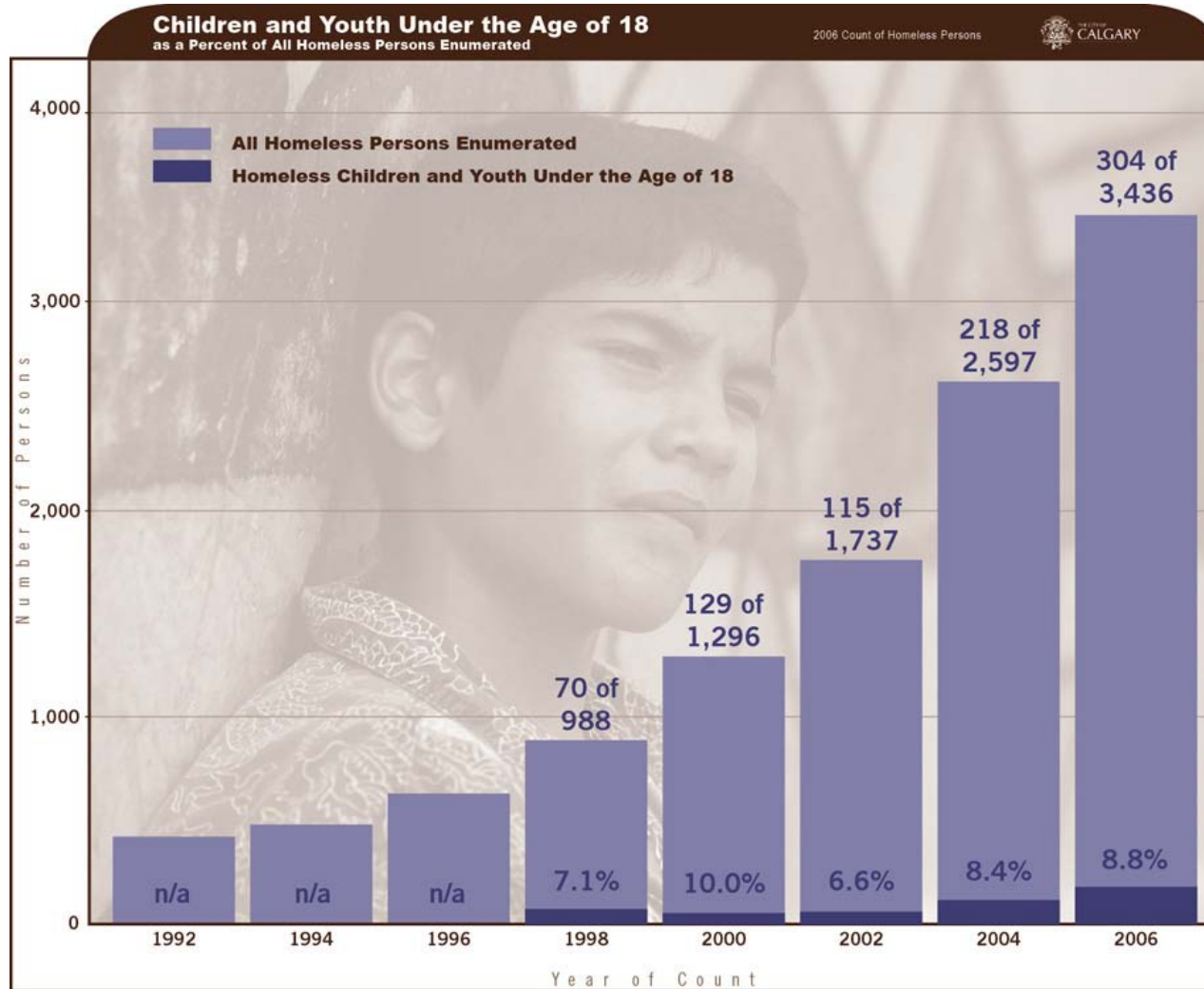
*a couple,*

*a couple with one or more children, or*

*a lone adult with one or more children*



# Homeless Children and Youth





# Children and Youth, 2006

## ***A total of 304 homeless people < 18 years old:***

- 125 – aged 5 or younger (41%)
- 78 – aged 6-12 (26%)
- 101 – aged 13-17 (33%)
  
- 282 – counted in facilities (93%)
- 5 – counted by service agencies (< 2%)
- 17 – counted on the streets (6%)

# Other Measures of Homelessness

## Growth Rate

- Full-year shelter utilization for 5 shelter operators (9 facilities)
- **11,000** *different persons* served in 2000
- **14,181** persons in 2002
- Growth rate – **29%** (vs. 5% for Calgary as a whole)
- **6,000** served in 2000 were sheltered in 2002 as well – chronic, complex problems

## Prevalence Rate

- Full-year shelter utilization for 2000 and 2002
- Compare numbers to resident population in city
- Rate in 2000 = **1.3%**
- Rate in 2002 = **1.6%**
- Compares to Toronto (1.3% in 1998), New York, and Philadelphia

# The Many Faces of the Homeless...



– *The Many Faces of Poverty and Homelessness,*  
Calgary Board of Education Website, 2007

# Characteristics of the Homeless

- **26%** of all homeless individuals surveyed had a ***mental health problem*** (vs. 25% reported in the literature)
- **69%** of all homeless individuals surveyed had a ***history of substance abuse*** (vs. 50% reported in the literature)
- **32%** of the absolutely homeless population surveyed were ***homeless for > 1 year but < 5 years***, and
- **8%** of the absolutely homeless population surveyed were ***homeless for > 5 years*** and considered by the study team to be ***chronically homeless***.

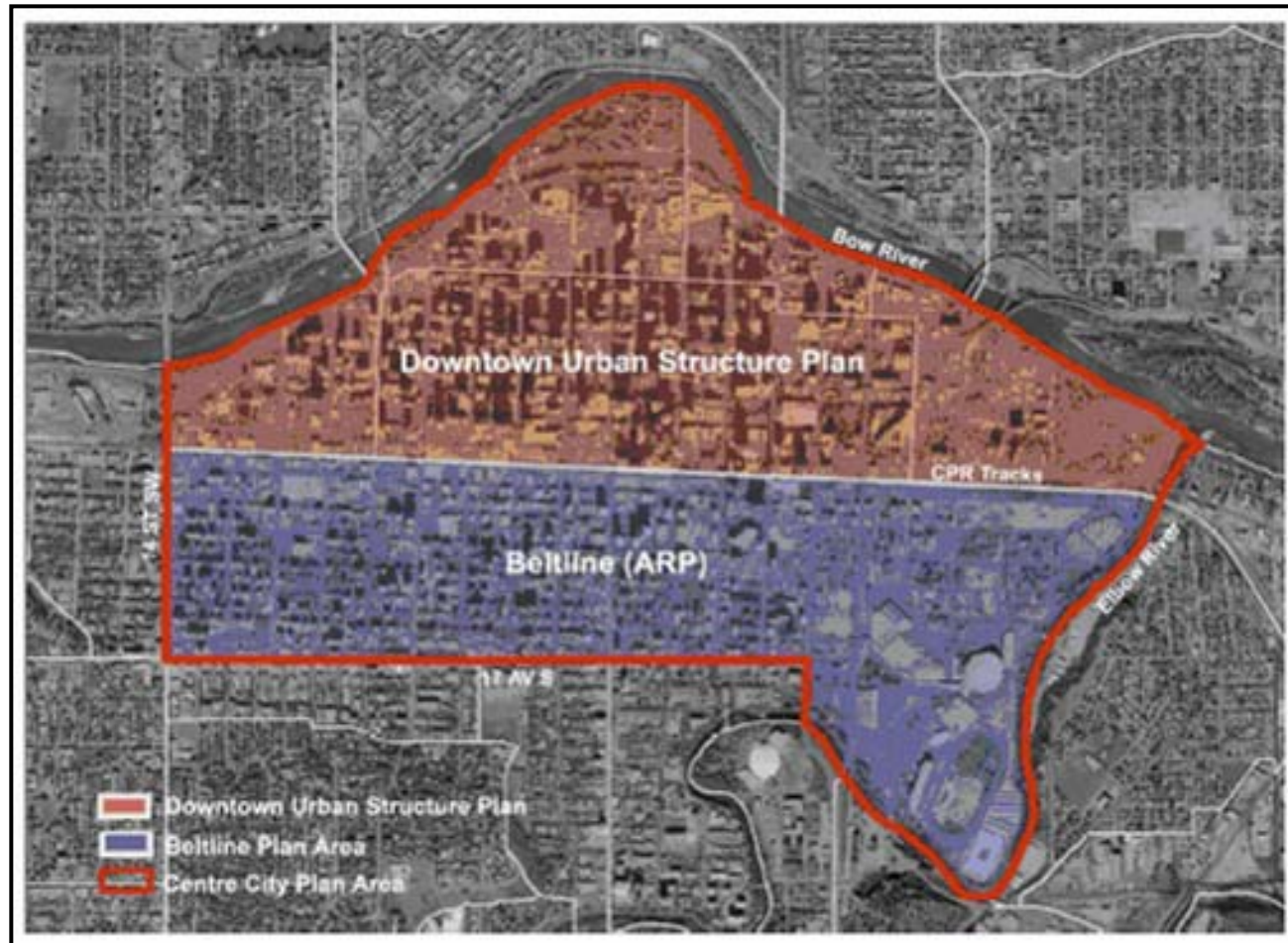
– 2002 Calgary Homeless Study (Gardiner and Cairns)

# Routes In – Systemic Issues

- **Low Income**
- **Federal and provincial withdrawal from non-market (social or subsidized) housing initiatives (mid-1980s – late 1990s)**
- **Provincial deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients (early 1990s)**
- **High cost of housing +/- low vacancy rates**



# Concentrated Visible Homelessness



# Low-Income Summary

## ***Centre City***

- 47% of households in 1995 had low income
- 32% of households in 2000 had low income
- March 2005 – 10% of residents received AISH; 4% got Income Supports
- 60% of seniors received GIS for very low income

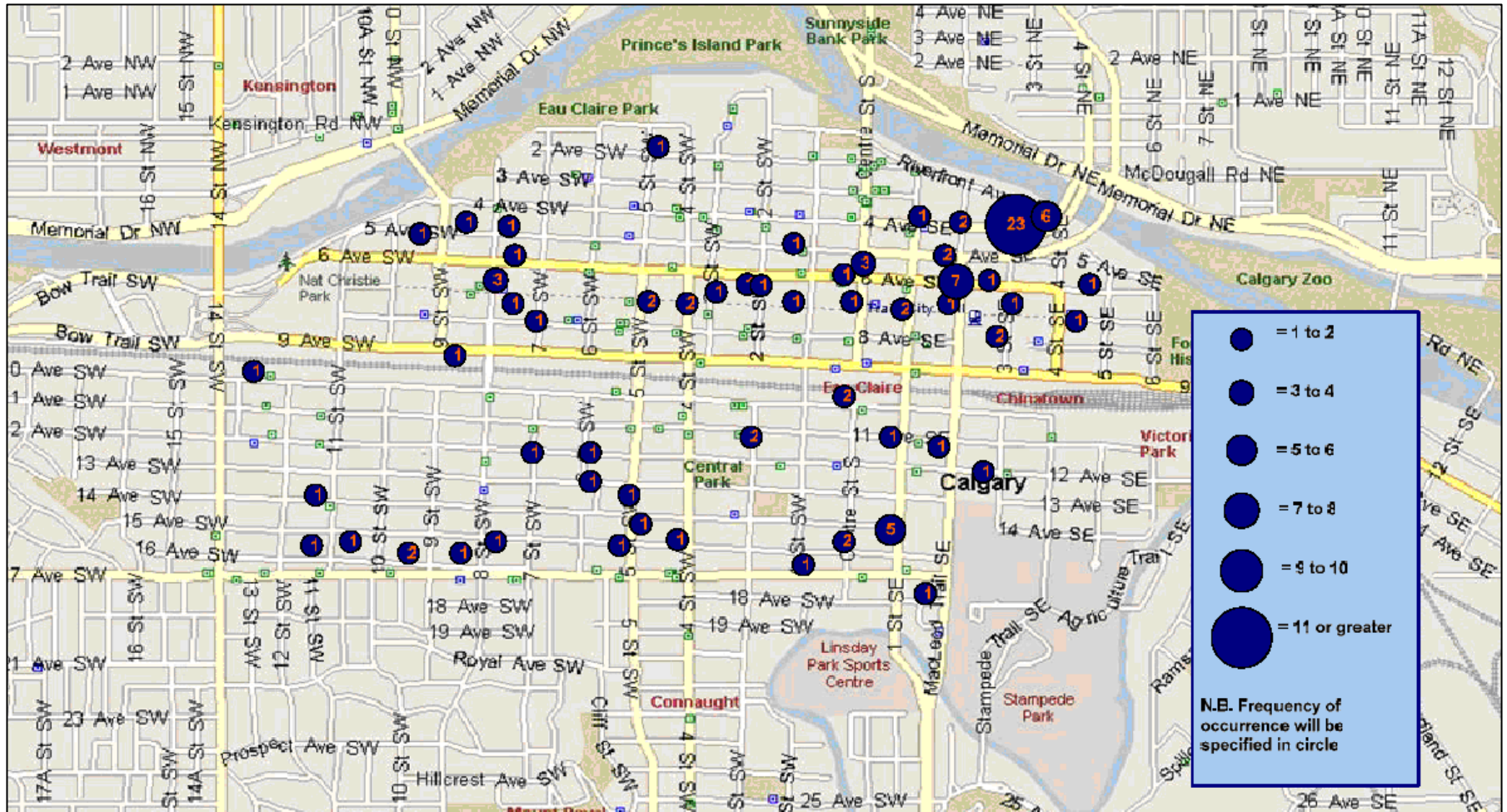
## ***Calgary***

- 21% of households in 1995 had low income
- 15% of households in 2000 had low income
- March 2005 – 1% of residents received AISH; 1% got Income Supports
- 32% of seniors received GIS for very low income

# Routes In – Individual Circumstances

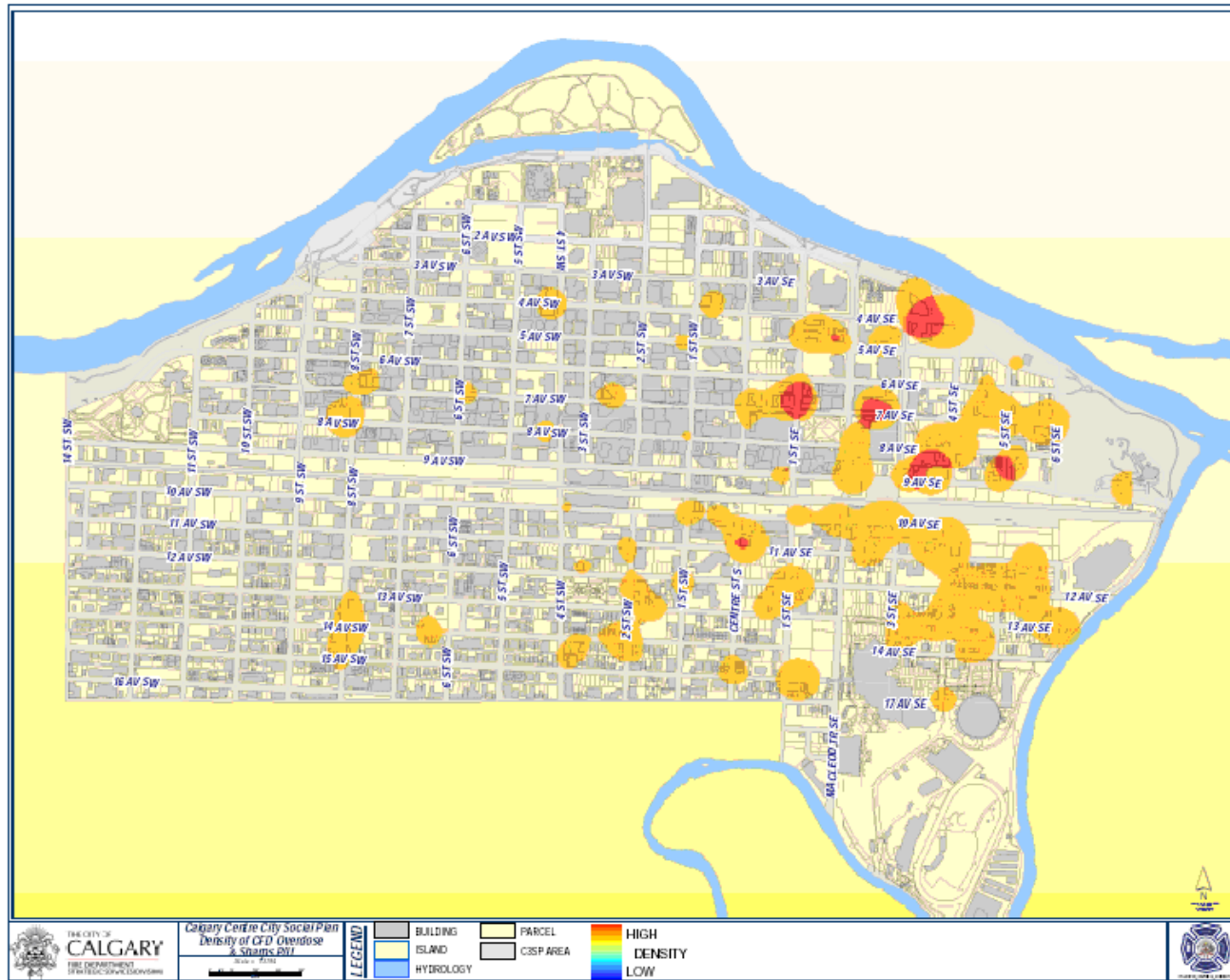
- **Poverty**
- **Mental illness**
- **Addictions**
- **Dual diagnosis – mental illness + addictions**
- **Fleeing violence**
- **Relocating to seek employment**
- **Population group**

# EMS Responses to Narcotics Overdoses





# Volume of Overdoses & Needle Pick-Ups





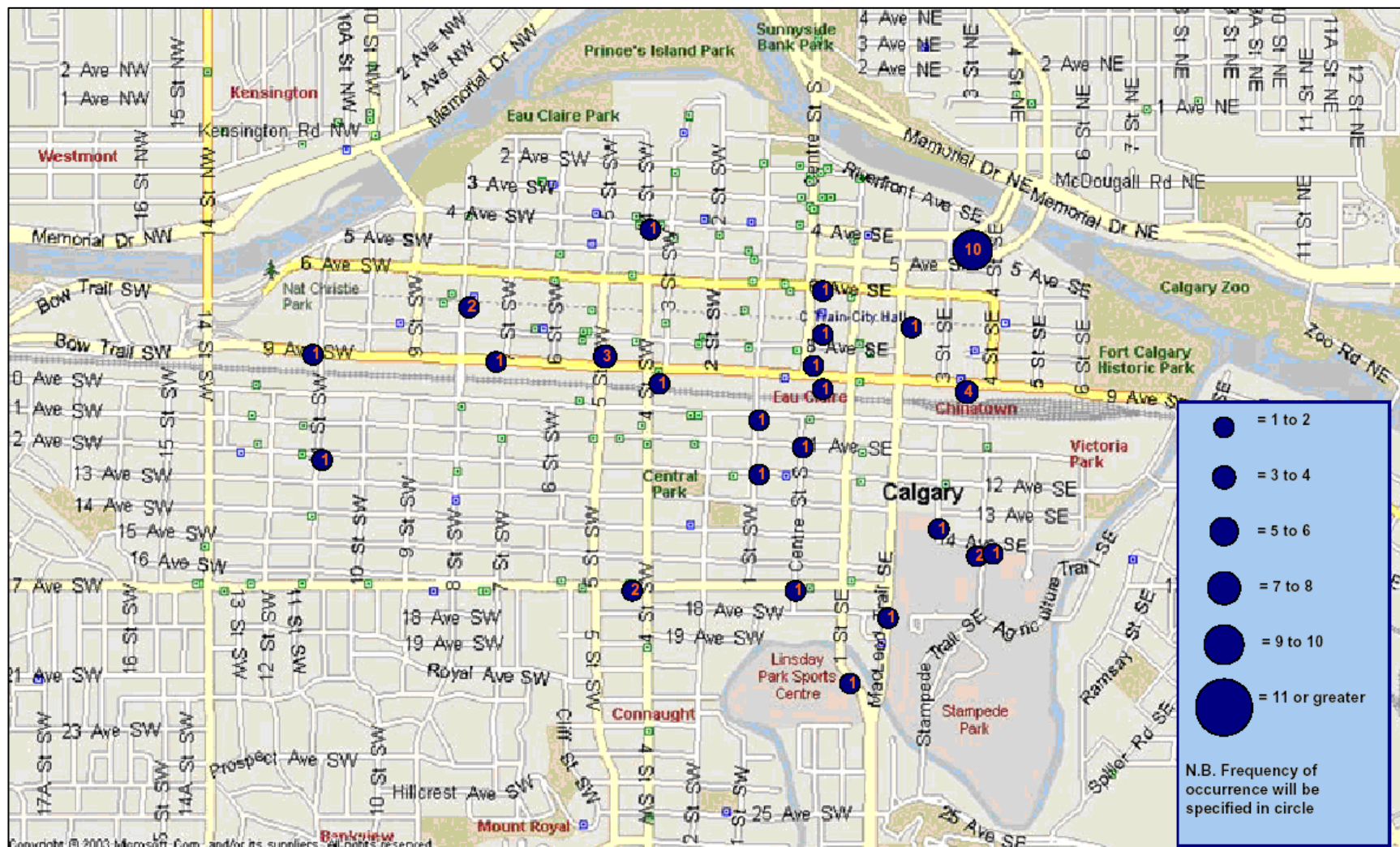
# Biohazards in the Centre City...



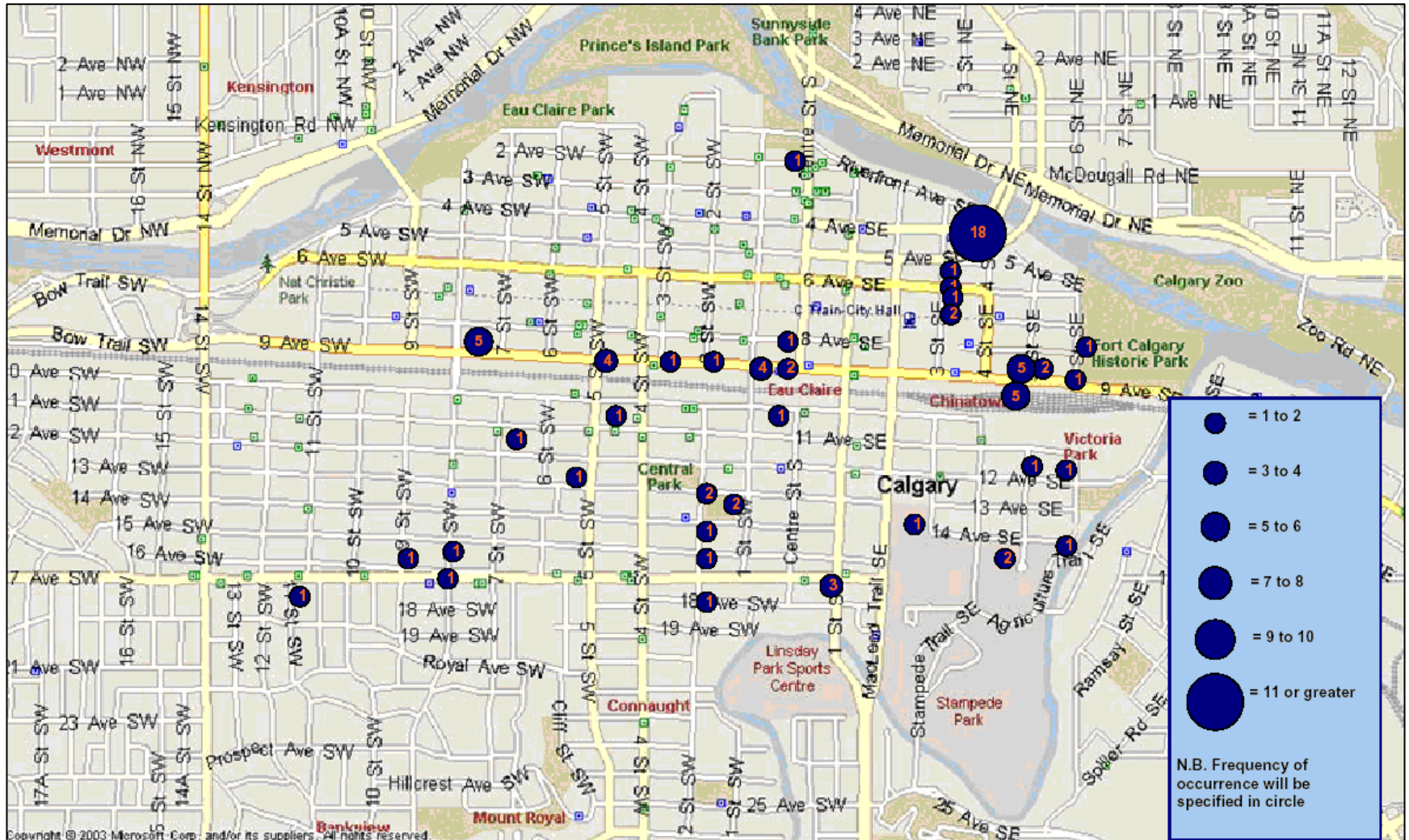
– City of Calgary, Roads (2006)



# EMS Responses to Blunt Injuries/Assaults

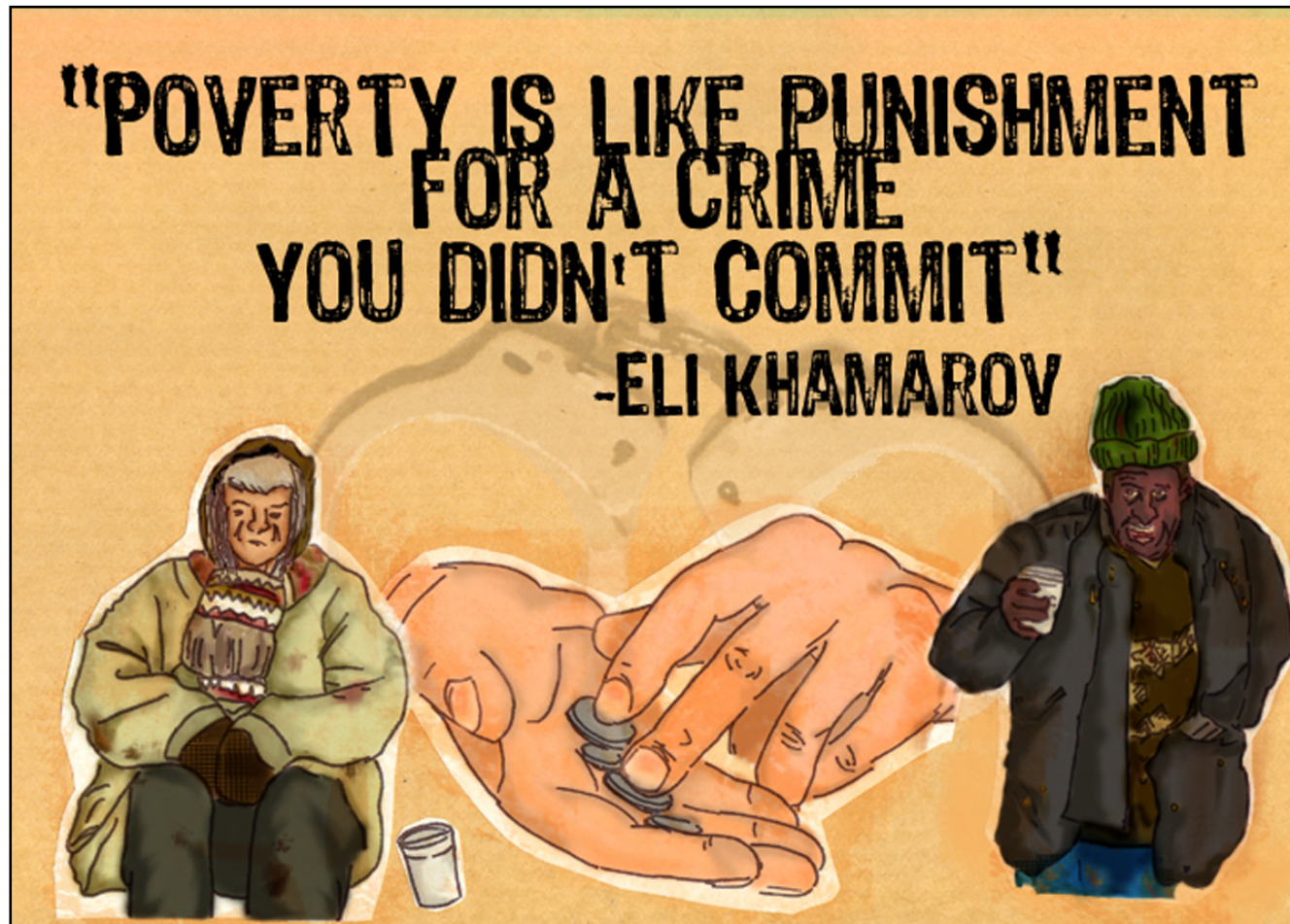


# EMS Responses to Shootings/Stabbings





# Poverty and Housing...



– *The Many Faces of Poverty and Homelessness*  
Calgary Board of Education Website, 2007

# Low Income + High Rent = Trouble

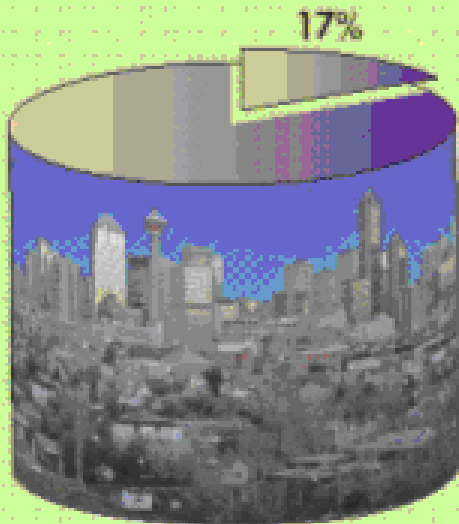
At **\$7.00** per hour, **2.1 full-time workers** could afford to rent a 1-bedroom apartment.

In 2006, the *hourly minimum wage* needed to rent an apartment in Calgary was:

- **\$11.87** – Bachelor Apartment
- **\$15.00** – 1 Bedroom Apartment
- **\$18.46** – 2 Bedroom Apartment
- **\$17.00** – 3 + Bedroom Apartment

# The Tip of the Iceberg...

Households that are  
Overspending on  
Shelter, as a Per cent  
of All Households



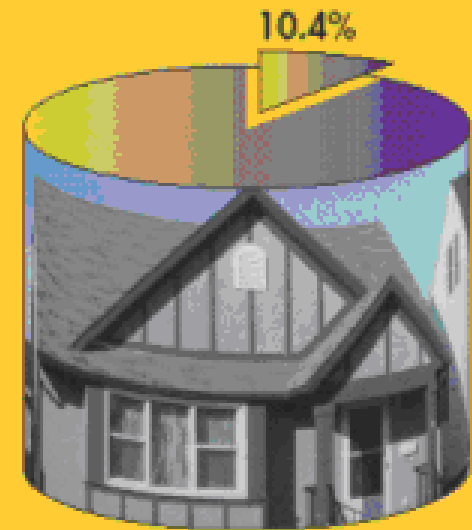
58,555 Households

Renter Households that  
are Overspending on  
Shelter, as a Per cent of  
All Renter Households



34,650 Households

Owner Households that  
are Overspending on  
Shelter, as a Per cent of  
All Owner Households



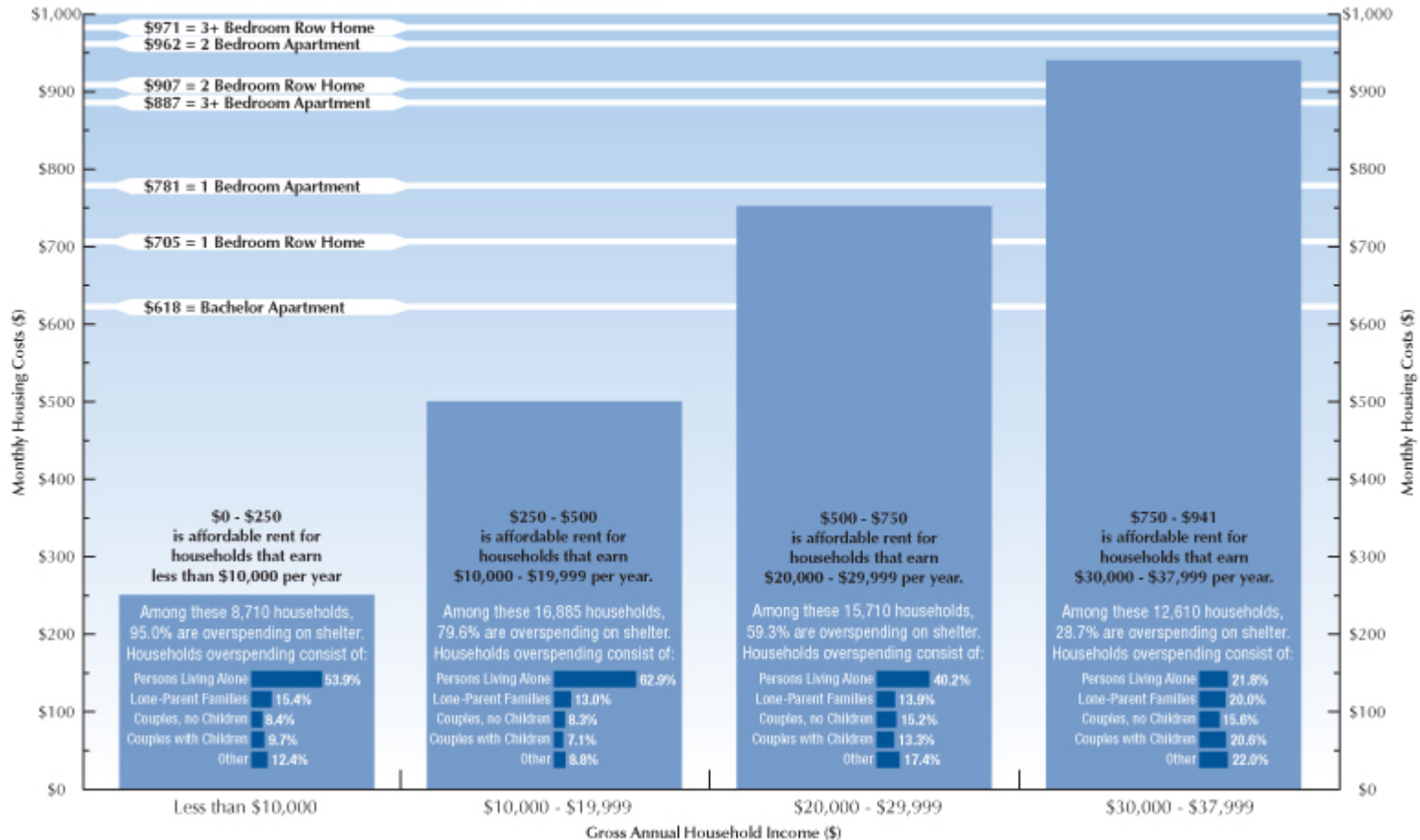
23,905 Households



# High Needs Renter Households

## The Cost of Market Rental Housing at a Glance, 2006

For Calgary City Council, "affordable housing" adequately suits the needs of low- and moderate-income households at costs below those generally found in the Calgary market. Non-market housing projects are targeted to households with 65 percent or less of the area median income, meaning those with a before-tax income of \$37,621 per year or less. The number of households shown for each income group in this chart is for renter households earning less than \$38,000 per year and spending more than 30% of income on market rental shelter, as reported by Statistics Canada for the 2001 Canada Census. Note: 2006 rental cost data are not available for bachelor row home units.

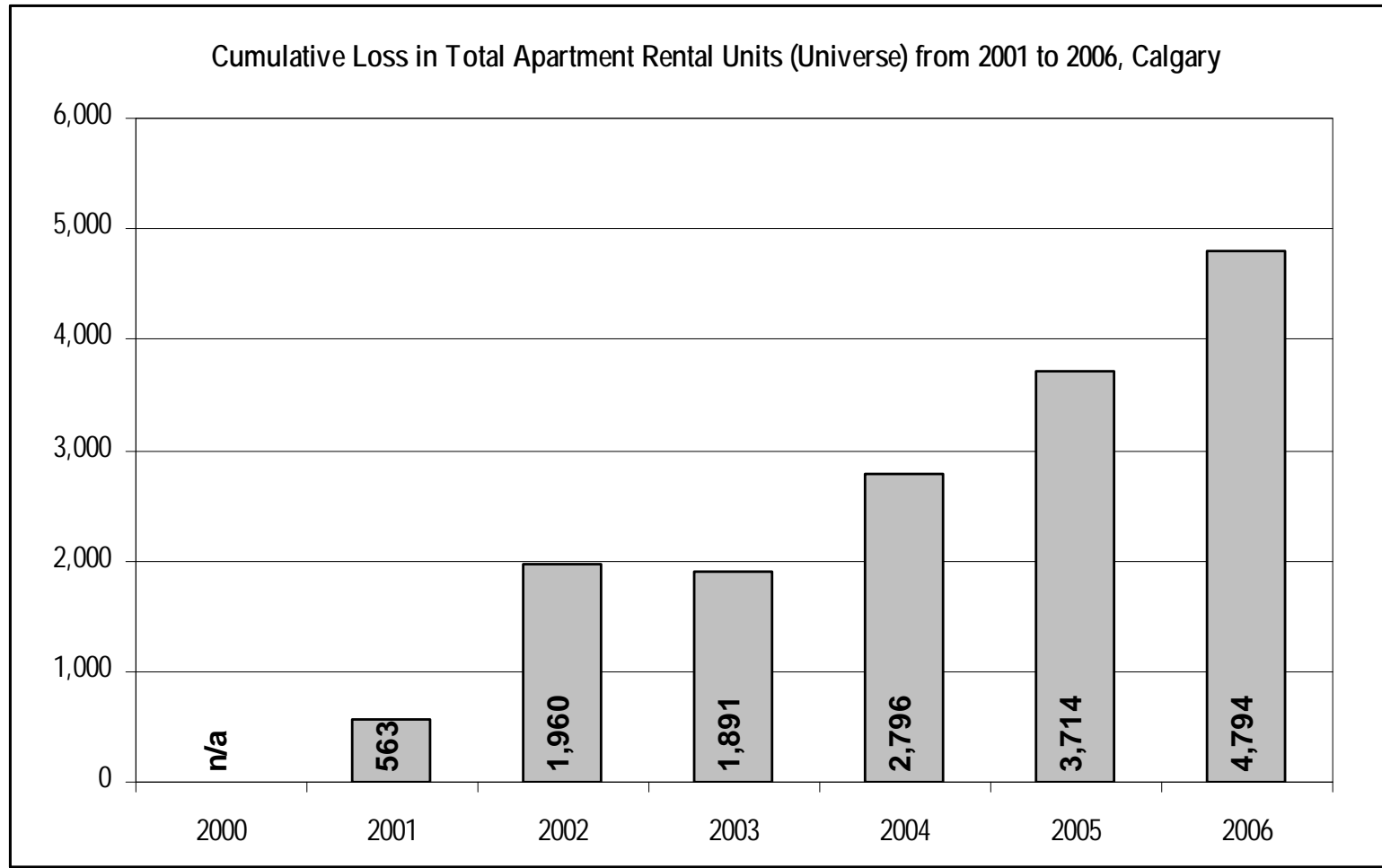


# Loss of Housing Stock...



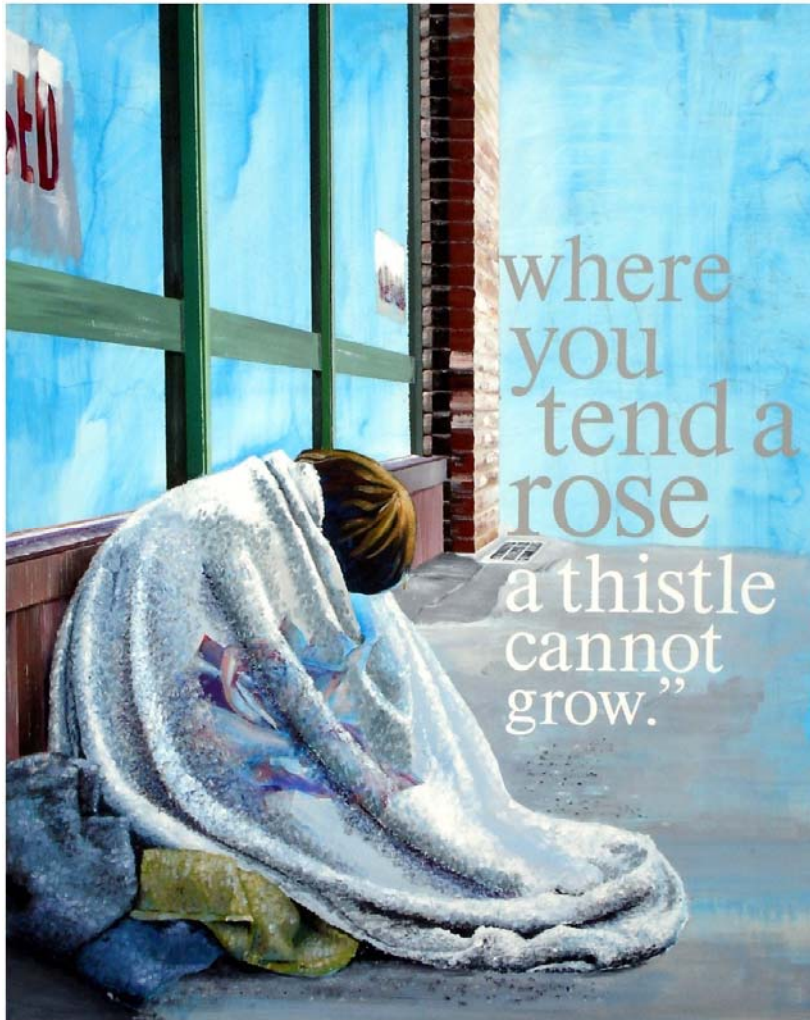
– *The Many Faces of Poverty and Homelessness,*  
Calgary Board of Education Website, 2007

# Cumulative Loss of Apartments, 2000-2006





# Human Costs of Homelessness...



– *The Many Faces of Poverty and Homelessness*,  
Calgary Board of Education Website, 2007

# Fiscal Costs of Homelessness

## Range of Average Costs for Different Responses to Homelessness – Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal & Halifax

(per person per year)

- **\$66,000 – \$120,000 – *Institutional Responses*** (prison, detention, and psychiatric hospitals)
- **\$13,000 – \$42,000 – *Emergency Shelters*** (facilities for men, women, families, youth, and victims of violence)
- **\$13,000 – \$18,000 – *Supportive & Transitional Housing***
- **\$5,000 – \$8,000 – *Affordable Housing, No Supports*** (singles, families)

– *The Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities (Pomeroy, 2005)*



# Emergency Homelessness Pilot Project

## Toronto's Annual Costs – Per Person

- 4,598 shelter beds (\$53.88/night) = **\$19,666**
- Average market rent for a 1-bedroom apartment (\$9,600/year) PLUS costs of necessary supports (\$2,031) = **\$11,631**
- **Annual Cost Savings** for “Housing + Supports” Option vs. Emergency Shelter Option = **\$8,035**

# Toronto's 2006 Budget for Homeless Shelters and Services

- \$159,000,000 = Annual Operating Costs  
(of this, provincial contribution is \$105 million)
- \$13,500,000 = Annual Capital Improvements

**Total Cost in 2006 = \$172,500,000**

# Hidden Costs – Ongoing Clean-Up

- **\$250,000** in 2006 in the Centre City (Roads only)
- **\$75,000** was attributed to homelessness
- **\$10,000** more for graffiti



– City of Calgary, Roads (2006)



# Dangerous and Costly...



C  
A  
M  
P  
S

**HEALTH  
HAZARDS  
POLLUTION  
BLIGHT**



– City of Calgary, Roads (2007)

# Paths Out of Homelessness

Four key “turning points” emerged as most influential in exiting homelessness:

- **Increased income**
- **Access to affordable housing**
- **Flexibility in damage deposit and rent payment**
- **Accessing services and support for addictions and mental health challenges.**

– *Ending Homelessness in the City of Red Deer (2006)*

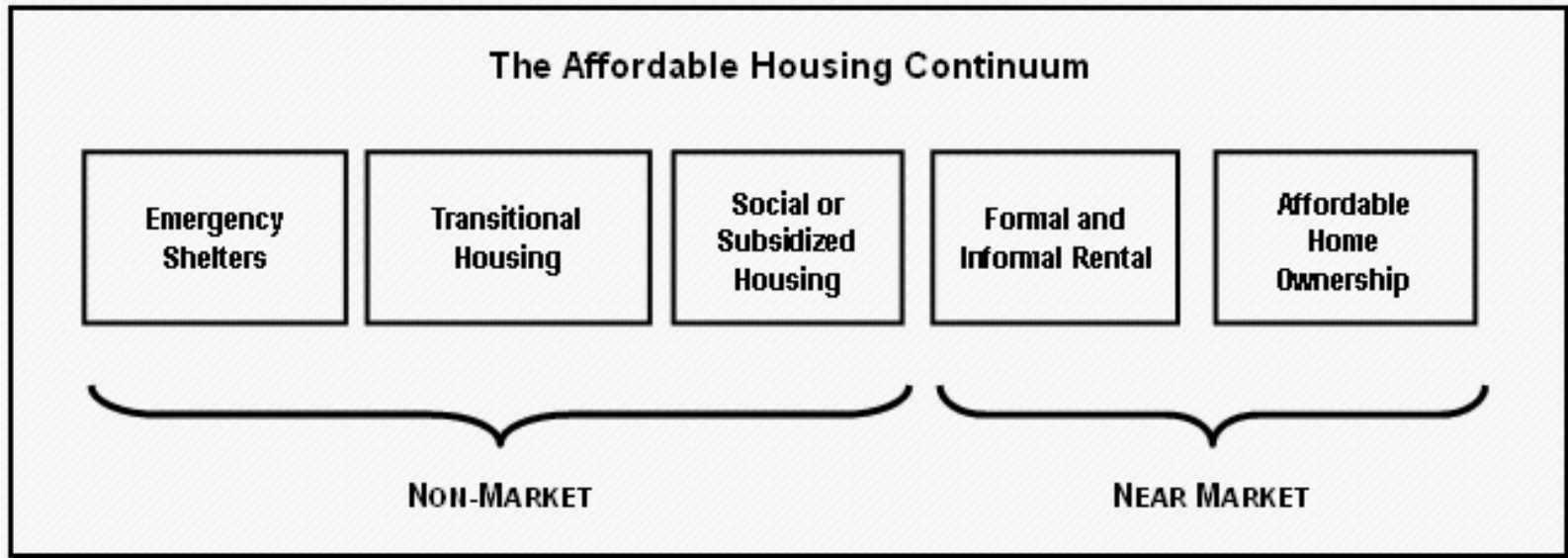
Create a comprehensive plan for Calgary that includes a range of approaches, as well as strategies aimed at a variety of subpopulations.

By addressing the **root causes of poverty** and creating **affordable housing**, we could ensure that those at risk would be diverted from homelessness, while those placed in housing would have the supports and opportunities needed to maintain it.

– *United Way, SPRI (2007)*



# The 'Affordable Housing Continuum'



Homelessness is not *only* a housing problem, but it is *always* a housing problem. The central observation about the diverse group of Canadians known as 'the homeless' is that they are people who once had housing but are now unhoused. Canada's housing system once had room for virtually everyone; now it does not.

– David Hulchanski, 2002

# New Emergency Shelters



Calgary Drop-In Centre



Salvation Army Centre of Hope

Kensington  
Temporary  
Shelter



**Background Information on Homelessness**

# Non-Market Rental Housing (Singles)



West End



Bob Ward Residence



# Non-Market Rental Housing (Families)



John E. Robson House



Cyprus Greens



# Manchester (Singles, Couples, Seniors)



Accessible

Solar Wall

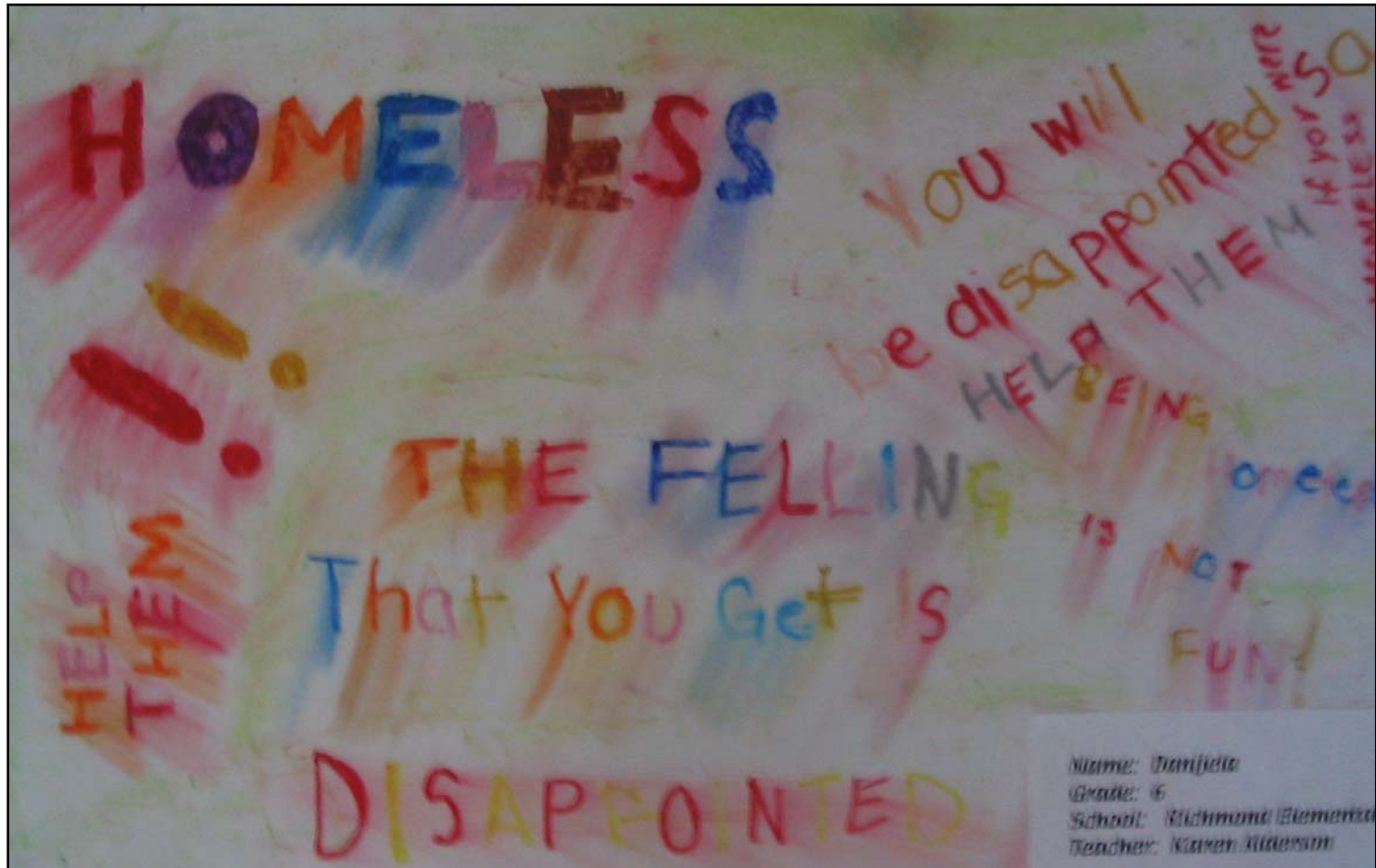


Shared Space





# Some Final Thoughts...



– *The Many Faces of Poverty and Homelessness*  
Calgary Board of Education Website, 2007

# Ideas for Other Research

- ***Housing Need for Recruited Workers***  
(linking economic development to housing for the workforce being recruited)
- ***Housing Need for Immigrant Newcomers***  
(different kinship patterns mean larger housing units are needed than typically in the market)
- ***Costs of Homelessness Data*** – only where essential to move planning forward  
(costly, time-consuming, and hard to find good data from multiple governments, agencies, and organizations)

# Integrated Data Management

## Homeless Management Information Systems

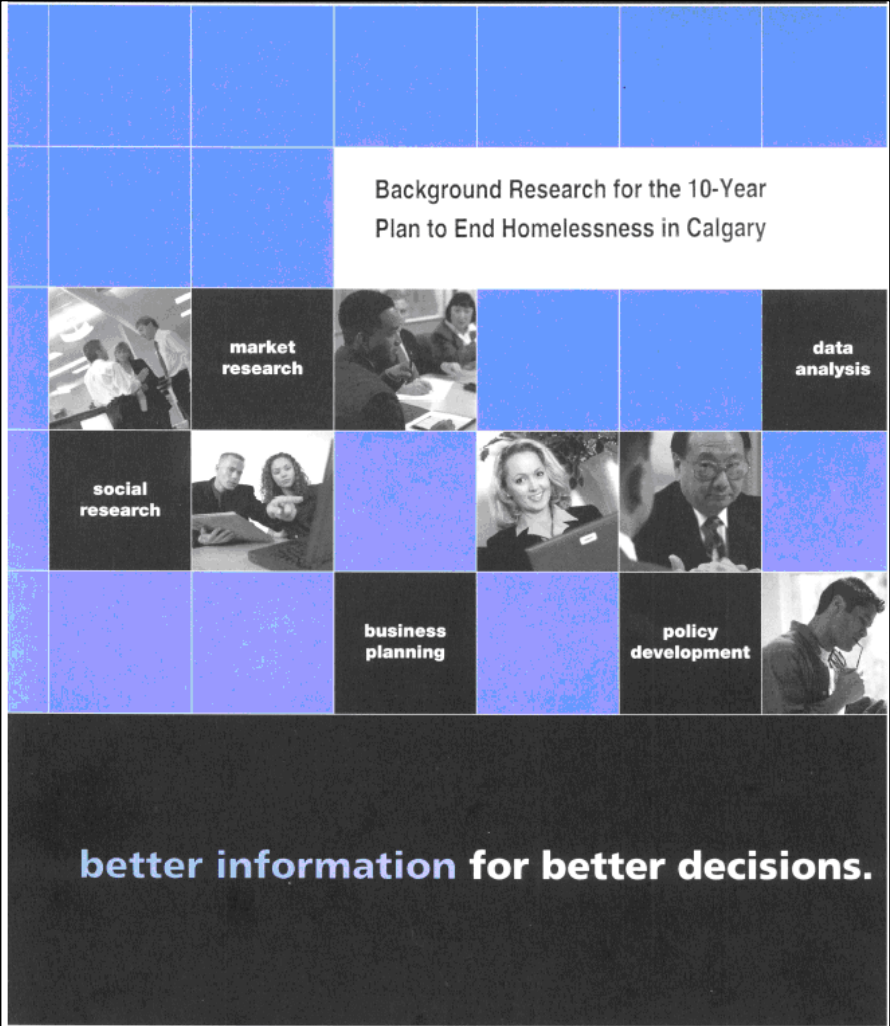
- **Use standardized intake forms**
- **Eliminate the need for “point in time” counts**
- **Register street homeless persons receiving non-shelter services**
- **Permit a detailed local understanding of the root causes of homelessness**
- **Permit integrated case management for clients, and**
- **Provide full-year shelter utilization data (critical).**

# Detailed Information

[www.calgary.ca/cns](http://www.calgary.ca/cns) →

Research on Affordable Housing  
and Homelessness →

Homelessness: From  
Prevention to Cure



Background Research for the 10-Year  
Plan to End Homelessness in Calgary

market  
research

data  
analysis

social  
research

business  
planning

policy  
development

**better information for better decisions.**

# City of Calgary Web Resources

- ***Biennial Count of Homeless Persons*** – 2006 report and past years
- ***Research Briefs*** – data from the 2001 Census on housing *affordability*, *adequacy* (the need for major repairs), and *suitability* (crowding).
- ***Research Summaries*** – short papers on key issues (market rent, etc.)
- ***Fast Facts*** and ***Feature Articles*** – periodic short reports
- ***Research Reports*** – detailed analysis on a variety of relevant topics

*Find these and other reports on our website:*

**[www.calgary.ca/cns](http://www.calgary.ca/cns) →**

**Research on Affordable Housing and Homelessness**