

Executive Summary

This report responds to the Food System Strategy presentation and report to Community Services Committee on July 9, 2018, which directed Social Services to engage with community stakeholders for consultation and develop an action plan for improved access across the City of Greater Sudbury (CGS) and sustainability of the emergency food system in the second quarter of 2019.

Upon completion of the consultation, the following issues have been identified as requiring further attention:

1. Improved access
2. Sustainability of the Emergency Food System

The City has no mandated role in the emergency food bank system but has provided several supports directly and indirectly to the system. The City does provide funding for, and works in partnership with, the emergency food system through different means including HCI, bus passes, meals at the emergency shelter, one time funding to the distribution hub for transportation and ad-hoc funding.

Analysis

On July 8, 2019, the Food System Strategy report was presented at Community Services Committee. The report provided an overview of research that was conducted on the emergency food bank system in Greater Sudbury as well as local opportunities and challenges. Included in the research was an analysis that identified neighbourhoods where there was a high prevalence of low-income earners with a high or possible gap in service access. Throughout the fall of 2018 and into the spring of 2019, meetings were scheduled with Community Action Networks and stakeholder groups in these identified neighbourhoods and the following short-term and capacity building actions were identified.

Neighbourhood	Prevalence of Low Income (%)ⁱ	GAP	Short Term Relief Options (Food Banks, Soup Kitchens)	Capacity Building Actions (Community Gardens, Community Kitchens, Food Buying Clubs, Food Rescue)
Copper Cliff	9.1%	High	Food Bank: Inner City Site on Elm Street. There was talk of opening a food bank but there were no viable locations to support the initiative. There are several	Community Gardens – there are two run out of VALE property and one at Copper Cliff Public School would like to have more Access to the Good Food Box

			community meals that have a nominal cost – No One Eats Alone, Messy Church, and many spaghetti suppers	
Kingsmount-Downtown-Bell Park ⁱⁱ	19.1%	High	Services from Samaritan Centre Meal programs through out of the cold	Community Gardens are in some businesses Access to the Good Food Box
Minnow Lake	13.5%	Possible	Food Bank: Holy Redeemer within Minnow Lake	Several Community Gardens Collective kitchens – Our Children Our Future Looking to establish an urban farm
South End	8.6%	Possible	Food Bank: the Salvation Army on Notre Dame. There was talk of reopening a food bank within 1960 Paris Street block, however, a location was not available.	Several Community Gardens South end Housing - have a freezer/fridge; space linked to food rescue need help with transportation Access to Good Food Box Programs for Collective Kitchens Our Children Our Future Fair food market established by NOAH Community Hub has brought fresh food at a reasonable price to those in social housing and is seeking to expand
West End	20.3%	High	Food Bank: Inner City Site on Elm Street	Two Community Gardens with over 175 members Fruit Forest

				Access to Good Food Box
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Next Steps

Issue 1: Improved Access

Each location recognized that short-term relief options (emergency food banks and meals) will always have barriers such as access to transportation or hours of operation. The logistics in establishing food banks (location, volunteers, funding etc.) were just as significant.

Through dialogue, it is apparent that most of the neighborhoods have spent their time focused on capacity building actions, with all of them having a focus on community gardens and some having knowledge about the Good Food Box Program. A significant number recognized the role of the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council as helping to inform and guide capacity building, and discussed the challenges of having a volunteer group leading ideas without dedicated staff to assist in the navigation work.

At each meeting, materials about food rescue were handed out and for some, this was new information. The most progress was found in the South End where actions include a food buying club approach through a Fair Food Market and the establishment of a food pantry that will leverage the food rescue system.

The following capacity building opportunities were identified as preferred rather than development of a short-term relief option, i.e. emergency food bank or soup kitchen model:

A. Continued Support to increase the number of Community Gardens on City Property

Through the work of FoodShed Project (<https://foodshedproject.ca/>) the City of Greater Sudbury has over 30 community gardens that rely on the dedication of volunteers who work to increase opportunities and access to community gardens across the City. The continued support for the development of community gardens on City property is seen as one of the critical ingredients for this capacity building action.

Linked with the increase in the number of community gardens is also the need to continue to highlight and share the Food Access Map: [\(https://www.greatersudbury.ca/live/environment-and-sustainability1/earthcare-sudbury/food-access-map/\)](https://www.greatersudbury.ca/live/environment-and-sustainability1/earthcare-sudbury/food-access-map/)

B. Continued Support for the Good Food Box for Ontario Works Recipients

Starting in 2010, the Social Services Division (Social Services) provided 50 authorizations for good food boxes (GFB) to singles and families on Ontario Works in the City of Greater Sudbury. The cost of this program per year is \$11,400 and is provincially funded.

In late 2018, a survey with a random sample of clients found that overall people were satisfied with the good food box experience and provided the following comments as to what they enjoyed the most:

- The fresh stuff
- Was happy when I was receiving it – really helped out
- Use new ingredients that I probably wouldn't buy
- It changed how I feed my family
- Food was very good
- Very happy with location and parking available
- Always something new

The least enjoyed parts were around process, pickup location, and not knowing what to do with some of the items. A few clients indicated that help with transportation would be beneficial.

An internal review of the program found that approximately 24% of the good food boxes are not picked up (these boxes were donated to the Salvation Army for their meal programs). These challenges can be overcome with modernization of the internal process - from eligibility criteria to ensuring flexibility in pick up location. The Social Services Division will input policy changes with regards to the Good Food Box Program by the fall of 2019.

C. Support for the Expansion of the Fair Food Market

The Fair Food Market is a volunteer run non-profit project sponsored by the Social Planning Council/NOAH Community Hub in partnership with the 1960 Paris Street Positive Connections Tenant Group and the Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation that brings affordable produce to families and individuals who have limited accessible options. The project is just over a year old and is continuing to expand across the community with the assistance of outside funding sources.

D. Support System Coordination for the Delivery/Transportation for those Groups who are Members of the Food Rescue Program within the Social Housing Cluster

In March 2018, Food Rescue (<https://betterbeginningssudbury.ca/food-rescue/>) was launched in Sudbury and introduced a match-making site of business with food to not-for-profits who can use the food. This web-based program allows for food diversion from landfill and has helped to bridge a gap for many of the organizations that have come on board. Through capacity building options,

along with some out of the box strategic thinking, the South End rationalizes this as a way to mitigate not having a food bank within that neighbourhood.

Issue 2: Sustainability of the Emergency Food System

The City has no mandated role in the emergency food bank system but has provided several supports directly and indirectly to the system. The City does provide funding for, and works in partnership with, the emergency food system through different means including HCI, bus passes, meals at the emergency shelter, and ad-hoc funding.

The four emergency food banks that were established prior to amalgamation that reside within municipally owned facilities are run by volunteers who are confident in the depth of the rank and file to maintain the current flow of members who will step up to continue the good work. Sustainability of location and transportation of donations from the Lorne Street distribution site (Banque d'aliments Sudbury Food Bank) have been identified as challenges. To address these challenges, the following actions will be undertaken:

A. Ensure Dedicated Space Agreements Are in Place

In the late summer of 2018, direction was given by Council to ensure that the four sites would be granted continuation of dedicated space agreements. Dedicated space agreements have been issued through Leisure Services facility booking system.

Leisure Services will support these agencies as required and will address any matters related to dedicated space such as maintenance issues, garbage collection and/or facility partnership issues.

B. Financial Support toward Establishing a Delivery System

In the fall of 2018, a Business Case was submitted to provide a grant to the Banque d'aliments Sudbury Food Bank (BDSFB) to assist in costs associated with the collection and delivery of donated food. The Business Case was approved through the 2019 budget process and BDSFB received a one-time grant of \$100,000 to assist in costs associated with the collection and delivery of donated food. The deliverables include a report describing the accomplishments of the project during the payment period, including particulars of: formation of new partnerships, integration of the project with food rescue technology, increased utilization of donated food, and increased numbers of people serviced by the member organizations. It is expected that through this grant, better system coordination will take place and a model for delivery will be created with future funding opportunities from an additional source other than CGS.

The final agreement for the \$100,000 one-time grant was finalized in May 2019, therefore, a final report on the project will be brought to the Community Services Committee in the third quarter of 2020.

Resources Cited

Report, City of Greater Sudbury Community Services Committee, July 9, 2018. Food System Strategy

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=1264&itemid=14598>

ⁱ (based on LIM, after tax, 2016 Census of Canada, Statics Canada)

ⁱⁱ Kingsmount Downtown- Bell Park area does not have a Community Action Network