

## Background

This report responds to the October 23, 2018 Report on the Review of Food Bank System to Community Services Committee, which authorized Social Services to bring back a report in the third quarter of 2018 reporting on the sustainability of the local Food Bank System.

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=1154&itemid=13321>)

The Social Services Division (Division) was asked to review three areas:

1. Conduct a review with the service delivery system for Emergency Food Banks across the City of Greater Sudbury (City) by engaging with the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council and those working on a Provincial strategy;
2. Conduct an environmental scan to identify if there are any innovative approaches to help reduce the growing need for Emergency Food Banks in the community that align with other municipal strategies to address poverty reduction; and,
3. Provide recommendations to improve and advance the emergency food system and its sustainability across the City of Greater Sudbury.

The report focuses on the emergency food bank system that includes the following service delivery members: Walden, Hanmer, Onaping and Garson, Coniston, Capreol, Holy Redeemer, Grace Church, Chelmsford, Inner City (Elm Street and Dollard location), Salvation Army Notre Dame, and St Vincent d'Paul, and how this system is currently functioning, the challenges these emergency food banks are facing, and opportunities to engage in a system approach to strengthen the great work currently being done.

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, Transit, meals at the emergency shelter, and ad-hoc funding.

Several municipalities provide a mix of direct and indirect supports for food banks and nutritional programs. For example, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board focuses on Reducing Child Poverty through nutrition grants to meal programs and food banks.

<http://www.tbdssab.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2018/01/RPT-2017-90-CLS-2018-CSRP-Allocations.pdf>

During 2015/2016, the Region of Peel invested \$1.4 million in the delivery of emergency food services across its jurisdiction. The majority of the funding came from a Community Investment Program, and a portion from the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=15972> and the ability for flexibility to

address food as homelessness prevention activities allowed the City of Hamilton to use CHPI funds (\$45,000) for food hampers at Christmas.

## **History**

Up until the late 1970's, the City had an informal network of church food pantries that would ensure parishioners in need of food would be supported through the congregation.

The early 1980's saw layoffs within the mining industry and in response, the Catholic Soup Kitchen (Blue Door Café) was established (1982). To further meet the need Father Don MacMillan established the Inner City Home (1986), which in addition to being a meeting place to provide fellowship saw the emergence of the first community food bank.

Over the course of the years as greater needs became apparent and there were increased fundraising efforts taking place, the concept of a way to ensure consistent funding resulted in the emergence of the Banque d'aliments Sudbury Food Bank (BDSFB), along with many other community emergency food banks across the City.

The City of Greater Sudbury has a mixed model of service access sites:

- Emergency Food Banks In Municipal Buildings - Walden, Hanmer, Onaping and Garson;
- Emergency Food Banks in buildings that are also Churches - Coniston, Capreol, St. Alphonsus, Grace Church, New Hope Lutheran Church, Chelmsford; and,
- Emergency Food Banks within an agency - Inner City (Elm Street and Dollard location), Salvation Army Notre Dame, and St Vincent d'Paul.

There are also emergency food banks that target specific populations (students – secondary and post secondary and infants). There are food banks that only provide non-perishable food items that are not viewed by the system as full emergency food bank service providers.

The individual emergency food banks receive some funding to purchase food along with an allocation of donated food from the main fundraising and distribution centre known as Banque d'aliments Sudbury Food Bank (BDSFB). Each food bank has arrangements for additional donations from partners and funding mechanisms that support the individual provider and not the system. Each emergency food bank must also raise funds to cover the costs associated with its independent operation, i.e., insurance, garbage disposal, internet access, freezers/fridges. Some of the food banks are integrated into services offered through allied services while others are housed in buildings owned by the municipality or by a religious order.

## **Role of the Banque d'aliments Sudbury Food Bank (BDSFB)**

In 2000 with the purchase of the McKee-Wong Centre, the role of the BDSFB was to support the wider system by becoming the collection, distribution and coordination point for emergency food in the City of Greater Sudbury.

<http://www.thesudburystar.com/2009/10/07/what-is-banque-daliments-sudbury-food-bank>

In 2005, the City of Greater Sudbury provided \$25,000 to support the purchase of a larger space to ensure that the BDSFB could have adequate access to opportunities that included larger donations of perishable food items.

## **Research Methodology**

The Division focused on face-to-face interviews with those who are identified as delivery providers, allies, and other municipalities that are either currently undertaking, or have also completed a system review.

Overall, there are many intrinsic reasons that the emergency food bank system remains in place beyond providing a small amount of emergency relief for those accessing the food bank. The volunteers are dedicated, energetic, and welcoming to share in fellowship and providing a connection to people who might not otherwise see anyone else throughout the month. The system would not be sustainable without these volunteers.

Additionally, a community survey was taken over a two-week period to obtain a snapshot of thoughts around knowledge, access, and use of the emergency food system within the past 12 months. The themes that emerged from the survey included difficulties with transportation to and from sites, access based on hours of operation and location, and the fear of being recognized.

Each Emergency Food Bank verbally provided an outline of what they determined was the territory that they covered. Access to the closest emergency food bank to ones address is permitted every 30 days as long as documentation is provided to the Emergency Food Bank and the individual is not listed on the Link2Feed data base.

The BDSFB developed a community map to allocate resources. The core of Sudbury has been divided among four groups while the outlying communities cover areas similar to those that were available through a parish model. Attached is a diagram roughly outlining the areas covered based on interviews and data collected from service providers. Appendix A – Food Banks – Catchment Areas. While the BDSFB provides an allocation of food donations and funding, in order to meet demand for food, each membership agency also fundraises and accepts donated food supplies.

## **GIS Mapping**

The Division worked with the GIS Section of Planning to identify service gaps from a perspective of community level access.

The GIS mapping provided information based on catchment areas from service providers.

<b>Food Bank</b>	<b>Prevalence of Low Income<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of Total Population Within Walking Distance 800M <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Furthest Distance to Travel</b>	<b>Transit Availability Full Transit (T) Limited Transit (LT) Trans Cab (TC)</b>
Coniston Food Bank	8%	44%	23.1 km	LT and TC
Falls Food Bank	9.4%	49%	19.2 km	None
Friendship House	8.8%	25%	13.1 km	LT and TC
Garson Community Food Bank	7.8%	30%	25 km	LT and TC
Inner City (Elm Street)	19.0%	22%	8.3 km	T
Inner City (New Sudbury)	13.2%	24%	3.6 km	T
Society of St-Vincent de Paul	6.2%	30%	10 km	LT and TC
St-Alphonsus Food Bank	13.5%	70%	4.7km	T
The Salvation Army Community and Family Services Food Bank	19.9%	23%	24 km	T and TC
Trinity United Church	10.4%	71%	80 km	LT
Valley East Good Neighbor Food Bank	6.2%	28%		LT and TC
Walden Food Bank	4.9%	28%	33.8 km	LT and TC

**Note** Grace Church food bank in the Donavon only reopened in late May and was not part of the data review as the jurisdiction has not been finalized

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<sup>1</sup> (based on LIM, after tax, 2016 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada)

<sup>2</sup> (based on Census dissemination areas)

Building on the concept of neighbourhoods, the GIS Section produced a table to determine possible gaps in service.

<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Prevalence of Low Income (%)</b>	<b>GAP</b>
Copper Cliff	9.1%	High
Kingsmount-Downtown-Bell Park	19.1%	High
Minnow Lake (has 1 already)	13.5%	Possible
South End	8.6%	Possible
West End	20.3%	High

## **Research**

### **Best Practices**

The Division undertook a review of the Greater Sudbury Food Council strategic plan, the emerging provincial strategy, and best practices across Ontario, Canada and the world, in order to identify areas of opportunities for innovation and evolution.

### **Innovative Opportunities**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase knowledge about food system supports</li> <li>2. Increase availability of community garden sites on City owned property</li> <li>3. Increase options around where to purchase food</li> <li>4. Explore mobile food solution</li> <li>5. Increase use of the Earth Care food access map</li> <li>6. Increase opportunity for clients to select items they will use and frequency</li> <li>7. Increase opportunity for knowledge sharing about food safety</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Increase connectivity of the emergency food banks service sites with main stream services</li> <li>9. Consider linking with Fair Food Market and the Ontario Food Terminal to leverage individual purchase of perishables</li> <li>10. Explore the viability of the grocery card model</li> <li>11. Harness the expertise of the volunteers to generate a local how to run a food bank manual</li> <li>12. Explore the possibilities of group insurance; shared vehicles for transporting food</li> <li>13. Explore social innovation</li> </ol>
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## **Opportunities from Interviews and Best Practice Reviews**

1. Educating citizens on food bank drive strategies (what to give, what to look for when donating, best before dates)
2. Food banks could share information, brainstorm, and network with other food banks on a regular basis (i.e. quarterly) to share best practices, valuable insights and tips to improve service delivery, accessibility, and sustainability
3. Revisit policies and practices which have stayed static since the 1990's and have not evolved in servicing clientele with more complex needs, i.e., diet, social, anxiety
4. Create a hub environment for those with capacity to offer wrap around service (i.e. healthy food choices, breaking barriers, overcoming challenges)
5. Create consistency for those in municipal buildings by providing an assigned staff from Community Development
6. Increase awareness of other food system options for citizens
7. Explore and close the gap between what the service providers view as needed and the general public perceive as needed
8. Explore a senior's model to support food security
9. Explore how food selection options could be provided
10. Explore ways to understand why many people are continually using a service, and explore those needs beyond emergency food and if they are being met; can they can be transitioned to upstream supports
11. Explore how to align with the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council a Strategic Plan with reducing citizens dependency on emergency food systems by navigating and supporting the coordination of activities that increase citizen self sufficiency regardless of socio-economic background
12. Explore how to create an interactive map to show where food bank territories are located to support customers and assist service providers accessing the correct food bank
13. Explore how to support the BDSFB in accessing data that will help in determining when and where to support a food bank
14. Explore innovation and modernization for the system in supporting areas identified as underserved by the system

## **Summary**

There are key concerns around the stability and sustainability of the emergency food bank system as it relies on corporate and community members for donations (monetary and food);

- Volunteers who are willing to provide significant personal dedication including transporting of goods; and
- Availability of space within systems that are changing, i.e., churches.

At the time of writing, the Social Services Division has reached out to the Executive Director and members of the Board of BDSFB to present key findings from the research to assist with strengthening and sustaining the emergency food bank system.

## **Next Steps**

It is recommended that the Social Service Division continue to engage with the community to develop options on how to support underserved areas of the City and look at mobile solutions and transportation options to improve access to the emergency food system.

On the issue of emergency food banks that are located in municipal facilities, it is recommended that a staff member within the Community Development Department be assigned to be the main point of contact for the emergency food banks housed within municipal infrastructure to support them with their requirements. It is also recommended that the practice of providing rent-free facilities for the emergency food banks that operate in municipal facilities continue based on an analysis of the geographical areas and the vital service that they provide.