

## **Background**

The Province of Ontario, the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council and the Municipal work being done under advisement of the Official Plan align with efforts by the Social Services Division to ensure that the local Emergency Food Bank system continues to provide access to services across the City of Greater Sudbury (City). This report identifies the work being done at the Food Security Network level that will help inform best practices, the emerging need to better understand the local emergency food system in its current context, as well as how the Division intends to engage across the sector identifying what opportunities are available that will strengthen local response through the development of a strategic plan.

## **Food Security Network**

### Provincial

“According to some estimates, Ontario is home to more than 595,000 food insecure households.<sup>i</sup> These individuals and families lack more than access to the food they need. They lack access to housing, adequate food marts, transportation, food and nutrition knowledge, time for food preparation, and adequate income. Ontarians with lower incomes are more negatively impacted by the cost of food and spend a higher percentage of their income on it.”<sup>ii</sup>

From April 19<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> 2017, the Province of Ontario announced a process for citizens to provide input on a food security strategy. This engagement focused on four themes: Empowered communities with custom-made solutions; integrated food initiatives that use knowledge to drive collective impact; food security is about more than food and driving innovation.

The outcome of the consultation is expected to be announced in the fall of 2017.

### Local

Similarly aligned with the direction of the City of Greater Sudbury Official Plan around local food production, the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council, which is made up of a network of local organizations, identified the need to develop a Sudbury Food Strategy to move the City of Greater Sudbury Food Charter forward.

In March 2017, the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council identified the need to develop a food strategy. Recently a survey of citizens occurred that will help inform the action plan. The Social Service Division has taken an active role in participating on the Greater Sudbury Food Council with a focus on the Emergency Food System and to participate in the actions around the strengthening of advocacy to reduce the incidence of individual and household food insecurity.

## **Local Emergency Food Systems**

The Social Services Division conducted a preliminary review of the local emergency food system to identify what other historical supports are being provided by the Municipality within the emergency food system.

### Historical Supports (Emergency Food Bank Locations in City Facilities)

In reviewing the Emergency Food Bank locations across the City, several historical usage agreements were identified in addition to the Hanmer Food Bank (HFB). The three (3) locations are as follows:

- Lorne Brady Field House located at 600 O'Neil Drive West in Garson;
- The Onaping Recreation Centre located at 2 Hillside Avenue in Onaping;
- The Sixth Avenue Field House located at 213 Sixth Avenue in Lively.

The organizations providing Emergency Food Bank services at these locations, do not pay rent, and two of the three locations have zoning issues. Therefore, Council approval is being sought to temporarily waive the user fees as per the User Fee By-Law. Based on Council approval, a zoning change will be requested to seek permission for Emergency Food Bank usage. A Facility Usage Agreement will also be sought with the organizations to formalize the services that are being provided at these sites.

### Hanmer Food Bank (HFB)

The HFB has successfully moved into a temporary location at the Lions Den located at 4611 Joseph Street in Hanmer. The facility is municipally owned and currently occupied by the Lions Club, who have agreed to allow the HFB to use the detached garage as a storage site, along with usage of the Lions Den Field House for distribution days as required on a monthly basis.

## **Strengthening the local response: Development of a Strategic Plan for the Emergency Food System in the City of Greater Sudbury**

In 2004 the City of Greater Sudbury and the Sudbury & District Health Unit endorsed the City Greater Sudbury Food Charter. The Food Charter outlines how Sudbury will work towards community food security through research, policies and programs that endorse:

- 1) Population Health and Wellness,
- 2) Community Development,
- 3) Investment in Regional Food Systems; and
- 4) The Development of a sustainable food system.

To ensure that there is a sustainable food system, it has become necessary to review the current local food system, in particular, emergency food access and distribution.

Monthly, in the City of Greater Sudbury there is a network of many volunteer run agencies and organizations that ensure citizens are able to access emergency food. These organizations are busy stocking shelves and supporting those in need. They have a specific mandate and achieve this through tremendous effort.

To support the Emergency Food Bank System, Social Services will facilitate and support strategic planning to address current and emerging need from a sustainability perspective.

#### Development Stages for the Strategic Plan

Along with the key stakeholders within the emergency food system (Sudbury Food Bank, the individual Food Banks, and the citizens who use the services), the Social Services Division will actively facilitate a process that will ensure the system is able to leverage opportunities that are arising for the current consultations taking place across the Province and within the City.

##### Stage 1:

- 1) Engage with the emergency food system in the City of Greater Sudbury through: focused dialogue with citizens, local Food Banks, and the Food Bank distribution system; surveys; and face to face engagement to determine current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and trends at the local level;
- 2) Consult with the authors of the pending provincial report around areas identified in the Provincial strategy that will inform and shape services that are delivered by the Municipality; and
- 3) Consult with the authors of the pending local report around the recommendations from the Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council that align with and support those municipal priorities for emergency food system support.

##### Stage 2:

- 1) Conduct an environmental scan of what is happening across the Province, Canada, and around the world 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

- 2) Provide recommendations to improve and advance the emergency food system and its sustainability across the City of Greater Sudbury.

## **Next Steps**

Pending Council Approval, recommendations will be brought back in the third quarter of 2018 that will be used as the foundation for an Emergency Food System Strategic Plan.

The Social Services Division will also work with the Real Estate Division to seek the necessary re-zoning applications for the Food Bank locations that are currently operating in Municipal facilities. In addition, the practice of providing rent free usage without a lease subject to the requirement of providing an insurance certificate will continue.

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## **References**

Sudbury Food Policy; <https://sudburyfoodpolicy.com/>

<sup>i</sup> Tarasuk, Mitchell, Dachner (2016). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2014. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (proof).

<sup>ii</sup> Building Ontario's First Food Security Strategy, Discussion paper.  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-ontarios-first-food-security-strategy?ga=2.16271926.1607744388.1494355081-824493764.1481826112> ; May 9, 2017