

DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER  
750 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER BC V7V 3T3

14.1.

## COUNCIL REPORT

Date:	May 11, 2022
From:	Jill Lawlor, Senior Manager of Community Services
Subject:	Feed the Need Update
File:	3070-01

### RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled Feed the Need Update, dated May 11, 2022, be received for information.

#### 1.0 Purpose

To provide Council with an update on the seniors' food security program called Feed the Need.

#### 2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy

Strategies in the Blueprint for Social Responsibility & Change (2017) help support the District of West Vancouver (District) to anticipate and meet community needs as demographic changes occur; respond to and identify new directions and challenges through a social services delivery model that is both innovative and flexible; and proactively address social challenges by taking actions that ensure equal treatment of all citizens.

#### 3.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan

##### Council Strategic Plan

The Feed the Need food security program meets Council's Strategic Objective 6.6 to enhance the social well-being of our community through improving food security, storage and supply in West Vancouver.

##### Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan action items support demographic and cultural diversity; promote an engaged community; and enhance community health through the following policies:

- 2.8.1 Anticipate and meet community needs as demographic changes occur, through short and long-term strategies for the delivery of services.
- 2.8.3 Improve access to services and resources for youth, seniors and persons with disabilities, including considerations for improved walking, cycling and transit connections and shuttle services.

- 2.8.4 Provide services, programs and facilities that are inclusive of and encourage seniors and people with disabilities to function and belong in a barrier-free environment, with consideration for physical and mental disabilities and cognitive challenges.
- 2.8.8 Collaborate with North Shore municipalities, Vancouver Coastal Health, key seniors' service organizations, and other community partners to develop tailored plans, programs and services for aging adults with dementia and other cognitive challenges.
- 2.8.18 Provide meaningful volunteer engagement opportunities to support civic programs and services.
- 2.9.11 Explore opportunities with community partners including Vancouver Coastal Health, senior levels of government, schools, community organizations, and non-profit service providers to provide a full continuum of support services to address needs related to physical, mental and social health, addictions, health services, emergency response, housing, homelessness, employment and food security.
- 2.9.12 Support the development of an integrated food system for the District and North Shore with programs that provide access to safe and nutritious food choices, including urban agriculture, community gardens, farmers' markets, and other related initiatives.
- 2.9.13 Support measures to increase community resiliency during emergencies, disasters and extreme weather events and mitigate impacts for vulnerable areas and populations (e.g., children, seniors, homeless and people with disabilities).

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

Feed the Need is currently serving three meals per week to 120 residents at a cost of \$6.50 per meal and an annual cost of \$121,680. Funding is in place to cover the current and projected cost of the Feed the Need program until fall 2024. A long-term funding model was developed that involves reducing dependence on donations and grants over time and establishing an intergenerational market as the primary funding source. It is planned that Feed the Need will only continue to operate if external funds can be secured to support the program; however, if those funds cannot be secured in the future, then a request for funding may come forward to Council.

#### **5.0 Background**

In 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Seniors' Activity Centre (SAC) started to make wellness checks by phone to seniors affiliated with the District's Community Services Department to ensure they had access to food, support, and resources. Staff completed 6,761 calls in spring 2020 and discovered a group of residents living in a subsidized housing building who were in need of food. In partnership with

the SAC Advisory Board and the West Vancouver Foundation (WVF), staff secured funding to provide a short-term (eight week) meal program that started on March 31, 2020, delivering meals directly to 21 people in need, three days a week. The District provided the staff and kitchen at the SAC for meal preparation, and SAC vehicles, staff, and volunteers for the deliveries. The SAC Advisory Board and WVF provided the funding for food and material costs.

After the initial meal program launched, West Vancouver Police, Vancouver Coastal Health, and BC Housing identified four more buildings in West Vancouver with residents in need. As a result, the program expanded exponentially in April and May to serve approximately 50% of the 664 residents living in subsidized housing and below market rental buildings with meals delivered three days a week to their doors. Grant funding was secured in eight week increments from the WVF COVID-19 Relief Fund and the Emergency Community Support Fund offered by the Government of Canada and distributed through WVF.



### Chronic Food Insecurity Discovered

Through conversations with residents, health nurses, and community partners, staff discovered that many residents were struggling with food insecurity for years and many felt malnourished. Staff and community partners learned that food insecurity for seniors was not just a pandemic-related issue, it was a chronic problem.

The seniors' food security program, later named Feed the Need, identified vulnerable seniors in the community. Some participants reported that they were purchasing their primary groceries at the dollar store; eating only boxed macaroni and cheese, beans or tea and toast; and were unable to afford protein for years. The average participant in the program is 90 years old and lives with limited support from family and friends. Some low-income seniors shared that they often suffer in silence because of their pride and the perceived stigma associated with asking for help.

Community health nurses reported a positive change in the physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being of residents who were taking part in

the program. Seniors shared comments about having a reason to get up and something to look forward to, and that they enjoyed the positive interactions with volunteers and the chance to meet their neighbours. These were especially meaningful because during the pandemic, many seniors were isolated from all social contact. Youth and community volunteers created compassion cards, crafts, and gifts for special occasions that were delivered with meals to let seniors know they were cared for. Intergenerational connections had a profound impact on reducing isolation and creating a sense of belonging.



## 5.1 Previous Decisions

At the January 11, 2021 regular Council meeting, staff provided a presentation that included information on the newly created Feed the Need meal program for 2020 and the work plan for 2021.

At the January 10, 2022 regular Council meeting, staff provided a presentation that included an update on the activities of the Feed the Need program for 2021 and the work plan for 2022.

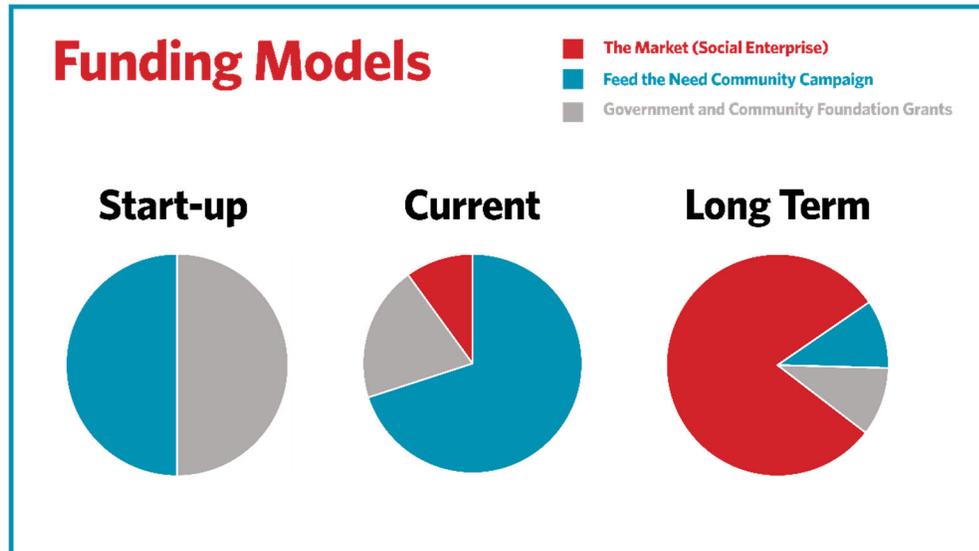
## 6.0 Analysis

### 6.1 Discussion

In fall 2020, the SAC Advisory Board and WVF took on the incredible task of securing \$250,000 in funding for Feed the Need to address chronic food insecurity for seniors. The funding would provide meals for over 250 seniors for a year. Working together, they launched a community campaign to raise funds. Through WVF, Ian and Rosemary Mottershead supported the campaign by donating up to \$100,000 in matching funds. The campaign ran from October to December 2020 and raised \$407,291 from 481 donors.

### Long-term Plan

With support from community residents and leadership from both the SAC Advisory Board and WVF, staff initiated a long-term plan for sustainability of Feed the Need.



The plan that was developed includes three components:

- the Market, a newly created intergenerational social enterprise that would sell hand crafted items, fresh garden preserves, and artisan items
- Feed the Need community campaign, an annual campaign in partnership with WVF
- government and community foundation grants

Over time, the majority of funding will shift from donations and grants to the Market.

In spring 2021, the Parks Department donated timber to West Vancouver Secondary School and students milled the timber into lumber. The students then donated it to the SAC woodworkers who created 10 garden boxes located on the SAC patio to grow and harvest food that can be sold at the Market.

In December 2021, the Market launched with youth representatives participating from every high school in West Vancouver, both public and private. Some entrepreneur programs at the secondary school level that generated funds from their projects selected the Market and Feed the Need as recipients of those funds. The Market also partnered with SAC's on 21st, a gift shop at the SAC, to sell items to fund Feed the Need. This partnership uses an existing volunteer model and infrastructure, thereby not requiring further resources.

The Feed the Need 2021 fall campaign raised \$173,000 from 278 donors including \$10,000 from another matching donation from Ian and Rosemary Mottershead through the WVF's Give Where You Live campaign.

Starting in November 2021, to ensure that Feed the Need is serving only those in financial need, all participants living in below market value rental facilities were required to show their annual income falls below the Low Income Cut-Off, a financial threshold that is set by the Government of Canada. Those living in subsidized housing are not required to do so as they have already demonstrated their financial need as a requirement to enter subsidized housing. This new requirement decreased the number of people being served by half. Those who do not meet the Low Income Cut-Off are provided the opportunity to purchase their own meals at cost with volunteers continuing to deliver these meals. A number of residents chose this option and they are not included in Feed the Need program statistics.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Residents served	355	250	120	125	125
Meals delivered	26,635	35,746	19,500	19,500	19,500
Program cost	\$159,810	\$214,476	\$126,750	\$131,625	\$136,500
Cost of Meal	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.50	\$6.75*	\$7.00*

\*Anticipated cost of meals in the future

### Beyond Food Security

Many of the Feed the Need participants and their neighbours lack access to computers and emails, limiting their ability to communicate in an emergency. However, through Feed the Need deliveries, staff have been able to communicate with all residents living in West Vancouver subsidized housing. Staff can also provide emergency information such as Vancouver Coastal Health bulletins, notification of cooling stations, and other outreach supports. Feed the Need provides support that may also allow residents to remain in their homes longer which meets the principles of both an Age-friendly and Dementia-friendly community.

## 6.2 Sustainability

Funding for Feed the Need is shifting to a long-term model that involves reducing dependence on donations and grants over time and building the Market as the primary funding source in the future. The program uses existing staff resources for meal preparation and volunteers for food packaging and meal delivery.

### 6.3 Public Engagement and Outreach

Staff have worked with the SAC Advisory Board, WVF, and other community partners to promote Feed the Need, and worked with local media to bring awareness about seniors' food insecurity to the community.

In fall 2020 and 2021, the District delivered Feed the Need campaign postcards to all 21,859 homes in West Vancouver and WVF also sent postcards as part of their Give Where You Live campaign. Additionally, advertisements in the newspaper, promotion in the District's e-news, and a robust social media campaign were used to share information about Feed the Need with the community. Over the past two years, Feed the Need has received 759 donations.

In 2021, Feed the Need won the British Columbia Recreation Parks and Recreation Association (BCRPA) Program Excellence award for the collaborative, intergenerational work to address seniors' food insecurity. Staff were invited to present about Feed the Need at the BCRPA conference on May 4, 2022 to share the District's model and encourage other communities to explore and address food insecurity for seniors.

### 6.4 Other Communication, Consultation, and Research

Staff worked with local community partners, including WVF and Vancouver Coastal Health, to address seniors' food insecurity. West Vancouver – Sunshine Coast – Sea to Sky Country Member of Parliament Patrick Weiler spoke about Feed the Need at Parliament in 2020. West Vancouver – Capilano Member of Legislative Assembly Karin Kirkpatrick shared about Feed the Need at the Legislature in 2021.

## 7.0 Options

### 7.1 Recommended Option

THAT the report titled Feed the Need Update, dated May 11, 2022, be received for information.

### 7.2 Considered Options

Council may request further information or provide further direction.

## 8.0 Conclusion

This report is provided to Council to share the success of Feed the Need and provide an update on the future of the program. Feed the Need has made a positive impact addressing food insecurity for vulnerable seniors in West Vancouver by providing access to food and regular wellness visits.

Author:



---

Jill Lawlor, Senior Manager of Community Services

**This page intentionally left blank**

**This page intentionally left blank**