

DATE OF MEETING October 18, 2023
AUTHORED BY CHRISTY WOOD, SOCIAL PLANNER
SUBJECT MEAL PROGRAM FUNDING OPTIONS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Finance and Audit Committee with an update on the City funded Breakfast Meal Program and funding options for establishing a permanent meal program.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council:

1. allocate \$60,000 to extend the existing Breakfast Meal Program contract to 2023-DEC-31, funded by \$52,880 from the Daytime Resource Centre project and \$7,120 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund; and,
2. direct Staff to bring forward a report to Council in December 2023 with the outcome of the Reaching Home Designated Funding Program and the responses received from the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Minister of Housing.

BACKGROUND

At the 2023-JUL-10 Regular Council meeting, Council received delegations from representatives of the 7-10 Club Society and the Salvation Army about the City funded distributed Breakfast Meal Program. After the delegation discussions, Council passed the following motion:

“It was moved and seconded that:

- *the existing Breakfast Program Contract be extended for 4 months with funding from the daytime resource carry forward;*
- *correspondence be sent to the Minister of Social development and Poverty Reduction and the Minister of Housing requesting ongoing funding support for a permanent meal program to assist Nanaimo’s unhoused population; and*
- *a Staff report on funding options for establishing a permanent meal program be provided for Council’s consideration as part of the 2024 budget discussions.”*

For many years, the 7-10 Club Society has operated a regular breakfast program in Nanaimo for vulnerable populations. However, since the closure of a City-owned location rented by the 7-10 Club Society in 2021 (to make way for permanent supportive housing), the organization has not re-established in another location. To bridge the gap in service until another alternative solution was identified, the City funded the Salvation Army to provide an indoor breakfast program between September and December 2021 from the previously allocated Daytime Resource Centre budget.

With Strengthening Communities' Services Program (SCSP) Round Two funds, a contract was issued to the Salvation Army between November 2022 and August 2023 to provide a breakfast meal program. With indoor dining service being no longer possible, the Salvation Army has been preparing meals in an off-site commercial kitchen, and the 7-10 Club Society distributes the breakfast meals seven days per week between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. at two locations in the city. The distributed model has increased staffing and operational costs. The SCSP funds for the Breakfast Meal Program ended in August 2023, with the Daytime Resource Centre budget carry forward providing funds until 2023-NOV-10.

Currently, there are nine organizations providing a variety of emergency meals for unsheltered or precariously housed individuals in Nanaimo (see Attachment A). There are limited indoor meal services open on a drop-in basis and only two options for a breakfast meal including the City funded Breakfast Meal Program. In addition, there are two organizations offering emergency-bagged lunch/dinner meals, through street outreach, seven days per week. |

DISCUSSION

Between 2022-NOV-22 and 2023-AUG-31, the Salvation Army prepared 26,589 breakfast meals, an average of 93 individual breakfast meals daily. The City provides \$730 daily to the Salvation Army to provide up to 100 meals, seven days per week. Monthly costs are approximately \$22,630 and are used to cover wages and food costs.

In May 2023, the Salvation Army moved meal preparations from their emergency food truck to a commercial kitchen at 130 Terminal Avenue. On 2023-MAY-08, the 7-10 Club Society started distributing breakfast meals prepared by the Salvation Army to two different locations; Caledonia Park at 110 Wall Street (Monday through Friday), and the Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) at 250 Albert Street (seven days per week). The City provides \$440.58 daily to the 7-10 Club Society to cover wages, vehicle costs including fuel and lease charges, and other supplies such as water, garbage bags, and hand sanitizer. Monthly costs for the 7-10 Club Society to distribute meals is approximately \$13,640.

Between 2022-NOV-22 and 2023-AUG-22, \$252,637 from the SCSP were used to fund the Breakfast Meal Program. As directed by Council, the program is currently being funded from the Daytime Resource Centre budget carry forward and an estimated \$146,000 will be used to provide services until the service agreements end on 2023-NOV-10. This will leave \$52,880 remaining in the Daytime Resource Centre carry forward.

To date, the Salvation Army and the 7-10 Club Society have not been able to secure other funding to extend the Breakfast Meal Program after 2023-NOV-10. Nor has an appropriate indoor location been identified that meets the operational requirements that would allow for the 7-10 Club Society or the Salvation Army to resume meal programs indoors. Approximately \$36,270 will be needed monthly in order to continue operating the existing distributed Breakfast Meal Program.

On 2023-SEP-27, the Reaching Home Designated Funding Program¹ for Nanaimo closed a call for proposals to address local homelessness needs for the upcoming Federal 2024/2025 funding

¹ The Nanaimo region receives funding through the Government of Canada's Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, which is a community-based program, funded by the Government of Canada. Reaching Home aims to prevent and reduce homelessness across Canada.

cycle. Nanaimo receives a total of \$851,266 from the Federal Government in designated Reaching Home community funds. New this year, the Reaching Home grant application recognized input from people with living/lived experience (PWLE) and they requested more options to access drop-in services in a variety of locations to access basic need services such as showers, laundry, meals, and warming/cooling services. Successful applicants will be notified between 2023-NOV-16 and 2023-NOV-30.

As directed by Council, a letter was sent on 2023-SEP-15 to the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Minister of Housing requesting ongoing funding support for a permanent meal program to assist Nanaimo's unhoused population (Attachment B).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Extension of the current distributed Breakfast Meal Program model to the end of the year will cost \$60,000. Providing an extension of the program will allow for the announcement of successful applicants with similar programs that may be funded through the Reaching Home Funding Program for 2024/2025. It is anticipated that funding for successful Reaching Home proposals will commence 2024-APR-01.

The Daytime Resource Centre project has \$52,880 in uncommitted funding available with the remaining required funding could be allocated from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund. The estimated 2024 closing balance in the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund based on the 2024 – 2028 Draft Financial Plan is \$1,844,131.]

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council:
 1. allocate \$60,000 to extend the existing Breakfast Meal Program contract to 2023-DEC-31, funded by \$52,880 from the Daytime Resource Centre project and \$7,120 from the Strategic Infrastructure Reserve Fund; and,
 2. direct Staff to bring forward a report to Council in December 2023 with the outcome of the Reaching Home Designated Funding Program and the responses received from the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Minister of Housing.
 - The advantages of this option: The Breakfast Meal Program will continue to address gaps in meal provisions and provide food security to unhoused or precariously housed individuals until 2023-DEC-31.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Staff time will be required to provide coordination supports and manage the service agreements.
 - Financial Implications: Extension of the program will fully utilize the remaining funding in the Daytime Resource Centre project.
2. That Council provide alternate direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The current Breakfast Meal Program is operated in partnership between the Salvation Army and the 7-10 Club Society. The meals are prepared by the Salvation Army and distributed by the 7-10 Club Society seven days per week between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. daily at two locations in Nanaimo.
- There are nine organizations providing a variety of emergency meals for unsheltered or precariously housed individuals in Nanaimo with limited drop-in, indoor meal options.
- The City has provided bridge funding for the Breakfast Meal Program since 2021 utilizing funds from the Daytime Resource Centre budget carry forward and the Strengthening Communities' Services Program, Round Two grant funds.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Meal Program Operators in Nanaimo (October 2023)

ATTACHMENT B: Letter for Funding Support for a Permanent Meal Program to Assist Nanaimo's Unhoused Population |

Submitted by:

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Concurrence by:

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