



REPORT

Council

Meeting Date: October 21, 2024

FROM: Recreation and Culture

DATE: October 8, 2024

SUBJECT: Food For Life Program at Town Hall

LOCATION: Town Hall

WARD: Ward 6

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the use of Town Hall, at no cost, for Food For Life to operate the Food Bank Program on a weekly basis be approved.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- There is a significant need in the neighbourhood surrounding Town Hall, particularly among residents of Marlborough Court, who experience high levels of food insecurity.
- Food for Life operates a pop-up food bank once a week in the North Atrium of Town Hall since May 2023 as a pilot program.
- An average of 64 individuals attend the weekly program.
- Between July 2023 to March 2024, the Town Hall program received 35,000lbs of rescued food averaging of 924lbs per week.
- Participants reported an overall satisfaction rate of 96%.
- Town staff are working with Food for Life to formalize and continue the program indefinitely, subject to an annual review.
- There is no financial impact to the town.

BACKGROUND:

Through analysis of survey data, Food for Life identified the area around the Town Hall, specifically Marlborough Court residents, indicated a high level of food insecurity even after support was received. Oakville Town Hall was selected as a site to pilot an Intensify Impact Program providing food support and information on services to aid under-resourced households living in the Marlborough Court community.

Since May 2023, a pilot program has operated weekly, offering fresh food selections in a market-style setup. Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre compliments this by providing access to information about community programs and financial services. Recreation and Culture Community Development staff attended regularly onsite to help residents access the Recreation Connection subsidy program. An information memo was shared with Council in May 2023 which is included as Appendix A.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Since May 2023, there has been a steady increase in the number of individuals accessing the food bank at Town Hall. In 2024, the average number of clients attending the service weekly is 64. Many clients access food for their entire families, thereby extending the program's impact beyond just those in attendance.

Satisfaction and impact surveys were conducted by Food for Life between July 2023 and March 2024 indicating very high satisfaction levels with the program. On average, 66% of registered neighbours participated in the surveys and the average self-reported weekly food savings was \$50.60.

Over the course of the pilot, Oakville Town Hall neighbours showed overall improvements in food security status, most notably:

- Food security increased by 33% with neighbours experiencing fewer worries about food access,
- Marginal food insecurity increased by 10% as neighbours previously experiencing more severe forms of insecurity moved towards improvement,
- Moderate food insecurity decreased by 29%, reducing reliance on low-cost foods and skipping meals,
- Severe food insecurity decreased overall by 5%, alleviating extreme shortages and days without food.

Food For Life's program survey summary is included as Appendix B.

With a strong focus on healthy perishable food, Food For Life has distributed 35,000lbs of rescued food (a weekly average of 924lbs), through this initiative.

Food For Life has determined there is an ongoing need and plans to support local residents living in the area by continuing this program. This would provide residents with a safe and accessible location for weekly access to fresh food including produce, meat, and dairy, along with an integration with other services.

Recreation and Culture as well as Facility Services support the continuance of this program. Recreation and Culture will issue a no-charge facility rental contract for the continued use of the North Atrium to operate the program. Staff will review the permit dates and include any exceptions in the permit. If the space is required by the

town the food bank program will be temporarily relocated to a nearby meeting room, if space is available. Food for Life will add the Town of Oakville as an additional insured to their insurance policy for \$2,000,000 commercial general liability insurance and provide proof of insurance to the town.

Facility booking terms and conditions allow the town or Food For Life to cancel or amend bookings at anytime. Town Hall space will continue to be permitted to Food For Life, at no cost, as long as the demand for an accessible pop-up food bank warrants the continuation and the space is not required for other town activities.

Continuing the food bank program in Town Hall means that local residents will have a safe and accessible location to visit, along with integration of other municipal and community services onsite, thereby raising awareness of a valuable community resource that serves a significant public benefit.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC
N/A

(B) FINANCIAL
N/A

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS
The agreement and this report have been developed in consultation with the Legal Department and Facility Services.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
This report address Council's strategic priority Community Belonging and Environmental Sustainability.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION
Through Food For Life's food rescue program, this program supports environment sustainability in Oakville.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Memo May 5, 2023 - Pop-Up Food Bank – Pilot Program at Town Hall
Appendix B – Intensify Impact Program Report – Food for Life

Prepared by:
Chris Clapham
Community Development Specialist

Elizabeth Gordon
Community Development Specialist

Submitted by:
Julie Mitchell
Director, Recreation and Culture