

Attachment #1

Covid-19 Task Forces Update

September 22 to November 9, 2021

COVID-19 Task Forces: Update – September 22 to November 9, 2021

Vulnerable and At Risk Populations

Enhanced Homeless Outreach Referral and Advocacy Services

Lookout Housing and Health Society, which was the successful proponent of a request for proposals for enhanced outreach, has retained a second outreach worker. The two outreach workers are responding to City staff requests for assistance, with one of the workers available 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, and the other worker available 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday.

Enhanced Emergency Shelter Capacity

The Lower Mainland Purpose Society has applied for a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) to allow for an emergency shelter on the lower floor of the former Army and Navy Department, which would be accessible off of Front Street. The emergency shelter could be either an extreme weather response program shelter, which would be operational from November 1 and March 31 and activated during extreme weather events, or an emergency response centre shelter, which would be operational for 18 months or until new supportive housing is developed and would operate 24/7 and possibly offer support services. The TUP, if approved by Council, would permit up to 50 mats or beds and meet the needs of unsheltered adults. BC Housing would fund the emergency shelter.

Health Contact Centre

The Health Contact Centre, which includes an overdose prevention site and other harm reduction services, has been operational for about seven months. As of September 2021, it had recorded over 700 visits and there were no overdose deaths. The centre operates from 3:30 to 10:00 p.m. and offers witnessed consumption, community referrals, drug testing, and peer support. There is increasing evidence that illicit drug use and overdoses are happening early in the day and when the centre is not operational. The City is preparing a case for support for expanded operating hours for the centre, including during the morning and early-afternoon, and when complete, will hold discussions with Fraser Health.

Personal Identification Services

City staff have circulated a request for proposals for a non-profit organization to offer personal identification services to those who are unsheltered or who are precariously housed. Of note, not having personal identification limits an individual's ability to access government benefits and services, including related to COVID-19. Based on the request for proposals, the City received two submissions, and after an evaluation, it will select a non-profit provider.

Seniors and Persons Living with Disabilities

Friendly Caller Program- Ongoing

Many seniors live in isolation and COVID-19 has only enhanced the social challenges that impact them. The Friendly Caller Program continues to operate through the Seniors Services Society reaching out to seniors in our community that are seeking social interaction. The number of people called during this time period are as follows:

Number Registered: 20

Volunteers: 9

Avg. Age: 78

Total calls: 36

Total Min.: 705

Average length of call: 19 minutes

Food Securement

The Century House Food Program has been relocated to Legion Manner allowing for meals to better reach the vulnerable seniors population. This has resulted in an increased distribution of 30 meals per week for a total of 50 meals every Tuesday and Thursday.

Business and Local Economy

- Continued bi-weekly distribution of the *InvestNewWest* newsletter (850 current business subscribers).
- Business and Local Economy Task Force meeting bi-weekly for the remainder of 2021.
- The fourth quarter of the collaborative marketing campaign, ReDiscover New West, features strategic media buys in neighbouring communities to encourage nearby local visitors to rediscover what New Westminster has to offer and is complemented by a new video and coordinating assets, and runs until the end of 2021. The 2022 ReDiscover New West campaign will feature “superfans” to amplify and personalize messaging around supporting local business.
- VENN# 6 (Virtual Education and Networking Night) was held on September 22nd with a focus on social media. VENN# 7 is scheduled for November 17th on the topic of board recruitment. All VENN recordings are available: <https://www.newwestcity.ca/business-and-economy/arts-culture-and-non-profit-culture-sector#virtual-education-and-networking-nights>
- Info sheets and coordinated signage have been developed and distributed for businesses regarding mask wearing and enforcement.