

Attachment #1

Covid-19 Task Forces: Update

November 10 to December 7, 2021

COVID-19 Task Forces: Update – November 10 to December 7, 2021

Vulnerable and At Risk Populations

Enhanced Homeless Outreach, Referral and Advocacy Services

The City allocated \$90,000 for enhanced homeless outreach, referral and advocacy services, and circulated a request for proposals. Lookout Housing and Health Society, who was the successful proponent, has retained two outreach workers. The workers are responding to City staff requests for assistance, and are also working in the community. Council has received a staff funding request in the amount of \$90,000 to extend these services to the end of 2022.

Enhanced Emergency Shelter Capacity

The Lower Mainland Purpose Society successfully applied for a Temporary Use Permit to allow for an emergency shelter on the lower floor of the former Army and Navy Department Store, which will be accessible off of Front Street. The emergency shelter will be either an extreme weather response program shelter, which will be activated during extreme weather events and operational between November 1 and March 31, or an emergency winter shelter, which will be open on a nightly basis and operational until March 31, 2022. The permit will allow up to 50 mats or beds and meet the needs of unsheltered adults. BC Housing will fund the emergency shelter.

Purpose Society is currently in the recruitment phase, which given the need for a pool of about 12 experienced workers to be on call, is taking longer than anticipated. As such, the emergency shelter should be operational within the next two weeks. City staff continue to advocate for an emergency response centre shelter, which would operate 24/7 and be in place for up to 18 months or until new supportive housing is ready for occupancy.

Health Contact Centre

The Health Contact Centre, which includes an overdose prevention site and other harm reduction services, has been operational since April 2021. As of November 24, 2021, it had recorded 1,069 visits, reversed 57 overdoses (47 inside and 10 outside), and had no overdose deaths. The centre operates from 3:30 to 10:30 p.m. and offers witnessed consumption, community referrals, drug testing, and peer support. Fraser Health funds the centre.

City staff are preparing a case for support for expanded operating hours and enhanced staffing, including during the morning and early-afternoon, and when complete, the City will hold discussions with Fraser Health.

New Integrated Response Team

The Fraser Health Integrated Response Team will support sheltered and unsheltered vulnerable persons with mental health issues in New Westminster and the Tri-Cities. A new manager is being hired to operate the service, which will be comprised of a mix of nursing, allied health professionals, and clinical and peer support workers. The service will operate between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., seven days per week. Fraser Health funds the team.

Personal Identification Services

The City, through redirected funds and a federal grant, has allocated \$20,000 for enhanced personal identification services, which have become even more important during the pandemic, particularly in accessing financial assistance and government benefits. City staff has circulated a request for proposals for a non-profit operator, and based on an evaluation process, has selected an operator. The contract is in the process of being signed, and it is hoped that the service could be operational as soon as December 13, 2021.

Seniors and Persons Living with Disabilities

Friendly Caller Program- Ongoing

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: 28

Total Min.: 503

Average length of call: 16 minutes

Food Securement

The Food Program continues at the Legion Manner allowing to better reach the vulnerable seniors population with 50 meals being distributed every Tuesday and Thursday. This includes those community members that were being served when the program took place at Century House.

Business and Local Economy

The COVID-19 Business & Local Economy working group has paused. Members will reconvene in 2022 dependent on pandemic and recovery conditions.