

Attachment #1

*Covid 19 Task Forces: Update*

*December 8, 2021 to January 25, 2022*

## COVID-19 Task Forces: Update – December 8, 2021 to January 25, 2022

### Vulnerable and At Risk Populations

#### Enhanced Homeless Outreach, Referral and Advocacy Services

The City is in the process of allocating an additional \$90,000 for enhanced homeless outreach, referral and advocacy services, which will enable these services to operate until December 31, 2022. Lookout Housing and Health Society was awarded the original contract for \$90,000, and will be approached with regard to its interest and capacity to continue to provide these services. The contract is for two outreach workers who are available to respond to City staff requests for assistance, and also work in the community. The workers will be available seven days a week, with one worker available from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Sunday through Thursday, and the other worker available from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday.

#### 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, which will be accessible off of Front Street. The shelter, which is activated during extreme weather and offers up to 50 cots, commenced operations on December 30, 2021 and will be activated during extreme weather events until March 31, 2022. The City and Purpose Society are advocating for the shelter to be reclassified to a winter shelter in the short-term, which means it would be operational on a nightly basis until March 31, 2022. Ideally, the City and Purpose Society are advocating for shelter to operate 24/7 and other support services for the next 14 to 18 months, or until new supportive housing is in place at 60 to 68 Sixth Street.

Lookout Housing and Health Society also operationalized up to 15 extreme weather cots at the Russell Housing Centre, which will be activated during extreme weather events until March 31, 2022. As such, there are now a total of 65 extreme weather cots in New Westminster.

Additionally, the City and Purpose Society activated a Warming Centre at 40 Begbie Street, which was operational from December 26 to 29, 2021.

## Seniors and Persons Living with Disabilities

### **Friendly Caller Program- Ongoing**

At the onset of COVID, the Task Force created the Friendly Caller Program for seniors forced to live in isolation the opportunity to socialize. Since that time, many of the programs and services that were initially cancelled in our community have resumed, which has once again opened the door for seniors to experience socialization in their daily lives. In early June the program called 19 callers per week. Over the last five months, the program has averaged just five calls per week. As a result, the Task Force is currently evaluating the future of this program and exploring ways to ensure those seniors currently participating continue to receive the socialization they seek through existing programs and services.

Funding remains in place for the Seniors Services Society to continue managing this program until February 28th. Should the Task Force decide to continue the Friendly Caller Program beyond that date, additional funding to pay the Senior Services Society or moving the program administration back to Century House or the Century House Association will be required.

The number of people called during this time period are as follows:

Number Registered: 20

Volunteers: 9

Avg. Age: 78

Total calls: 23

Total Min.: 314

Average length of call: 14 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.

## Childcare

This Task Force continued to meet bi weekly to identify gaps and challenges related to supporting families during the pandemic. When issues came up related to the updates to the PHO's and how it impacted child care was a top of mind discussion in all our meetings. Topics included how the impact of opening the school one week later at Christmas Break effected families and the continued challenges with staff that have been off due to COVID. This committee has been committed and engaged since the onset of COVID and values this networking opportunity in order to address the challenges they are faced with within their perspective professions.