

## **Update on Neighbourhood Food Hub Model at 1470 Gerrard Street East**

**Date:** December 18, 2019

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee

**From:** Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

**Wards:** 14

### **SUMMARY**

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This report responds to Council direction to provide an update on the development and implementation of a community food hub model in the Glen Rhodes Church, located at 1470 Gerrard Street East. This report also identifies the funding required to sustain the community food hub on an ongoing basis at this location (EC7.14).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to invite Applegrove Community Complex to apply to the Community Service Partnerships grant program to promote access to food and support broader community initiatives and, subject to approval of the application and the 2020 operating budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration, award Applegrove a prorated amount on an annual allocation of \$120,000 for the remainder of the 2020 grant cycle and include Applegrove in allocation recommendations for subsequent grant cycles.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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Funding of \$120,000 gross and net for the Community Service Partnership grant program is included in the 2020 Base Operating Budget Submission for Social Development, Finance & Administration and is subject to the 2020 budget process. Funding will secure space at Glen Rhodes Church to ensure that the food hub remains available to the community, support the development of additional initiatives to address local food insecurity, preserve community space, and secure needed space for the Applegrove Community Complex.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been provided with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On September 5, 2019, the Economic and Community Development Committee of City Council requested an update on the development and implementation of a Neighbourhood Food Hub model at the Glen Rhodes Church.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC7.14>

On May 22, 2018, City Council authorized the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to allocate, issue and enter into an agreement for a Community Food Hub Feasibility Project to explore community food hub models in the Gerrard Street and Coxwell Avenue area that promote access to food and support broader community initiatives. The project also explored a governance structure and developed a sustainable business model to support the hub.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CD28.3>

On January 17, 2018, Economic and Community Development Committee of City Council requested the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A to assist in the exploration of increasing food access in east Toronto through the development of a potential food hub at Glen Rhodes Church or another suitable location to meet the deep needs of the community through establishing a working group in consultation with the local Councillor.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.CD25.9>

On November 8, 2016, City Council directed the General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to include in the Red Door's 2017 operating agreement funds to support a partnership with Glen Rhodes United Church to access the food bank and programming space to support the shelter program.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.CD15.9>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Update on the development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Food Hub model**

In May 2018, City Council authorized the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to enter into an agreement for a Community Food Hub Feasibility Project to explore community food hub models in the Gerrard Street and Coxwell Avenue area that promote access to food and support broader community initiatives. As a result, staff from Social Development Finance and Administration, Toronto Public Health, and Solid Waste Management have been working with the Ward Councillor and community service providers to create a neighbourhood food hub model in the Glen Rhodes Church.

In November 2018, the City allocated \$70,000 to FoodShare Toronto to facilitate the neighbourhood food hub development and two staff were hired to begin this work. Staff from Applegrove also provide leadership to the project. The Community Food Hub Feasibility Project was launched in January 2019 with an initial focus on planning and partnership development, and programming began in June 2019. The Food Hub project operates out of the Glen Rhodes Church, with a one year lease that expires on May 1, 2020. The lease allows for use of the entire Church space at a cost of \$91,000 per year.

#### *Food Insecurity in the Greenwood-Coxwell Neighbourhood*

Seniors have been identified as a key demographic experiencing food insecurity in the Greenwood-Coxwell neighbourhood.

- 2016 Census data shows that seniors in Greenwood-Coxwell are more likely to live alone than those across the city (32.9% vs 26.7%) and to experience poverty (30% vs 17% using Low Income Measure).
- The 2019 Daily Bread Food Bank report 'Who's Hungry?' identifies seniors as disproportionately impacted by food insecurity, with the share of senior food bank clients rising from 3% in 2008 to 8% in 2018.

The Food Hub is also focused on engaging with low-income families. The '2018 Toronto Child & Family Poverty Report: Municipal Election Edition' uses census tract data to show hidden poverty within City wards. While the overall child poverty rate in Ward 14 Toronto-Danforth Ward is 17.9%, within the immediate vicinity of the Food Hub two census tracts show child poverty rates of 35% and 29.5%.

Community consultation conducted for the Feasibility Project to date has engaged over 150 individuals and groups in the direct neighbourhood and confirms the need for food access and assistance. It also identifies a strong community desire for programs that increase access to fresh and affordable food, support the development of food knowledge and skills, advance sustainable food systems and communities, and bring people together to build community and celebrate through food. A community survey to assess levels of food security knowledge and skills is currently being done by the Food Hub.

The Food Hub Model includes the following elements:

1. A governance structure consisting of the following components:
  - A core team comprised of two project managers and a community lead (Applegrove Community Complex). This group meets weekly to manage food hub operations, programs, partnerships and development.
  - A working group consisting of the representatives from the Ward Councillor's office and Social Development, Finance and Administration, in addition to the members of the core team. This group meets bi-monthly to discuss project progress, business model development and reporting.
  - A partners table with 16 stakeholders including City Divisions, the Ward Councillor and community agencies to provide guidance and support for planning, outreach and programming for the Food Hub. Subgroups of partners work together on specific

programs or initiatives as needed, contributing to the collective nature of the work and impact of the food hub. A list of members has been attached as Appendix A.

2. The development of a sustainable business model that will eventually support revenue generating activities at the Food Hub. Initial work has focused on critical updates to the space necessary to operate both current Food Hub activities and future revenue generating activities that include a local food/farmer's market, a food business incubator, community kitchen rentals, events, and fee-paying programs such as chef demonstrations and food workshops. Significant time has been invested in seeking out funds to move forward with these necessary upgrades.

3. Ongoing engagement of marginalized residents that experience barriers to fresh, nutritious and culturally appropriate food. The Food Hub is cultivating a growing network of neighbourhood and food leaders, providers and advocates and has already recruited 20 program volunteers and 8 Local Community Food Champions.

4. Programming is aligned with city priorities and includes: emergency food provision and assistance (e.g. food bank, community dinners), activities to educate, build skills and social connection (e.g. community kitchen and canning), special events (e.g. community planting party, swap events and repair cafes), increased access to sustainable food (e.g. local good food market) and community engagement.

Staffed by volunteers, the Glen Rhodes Food Bank distributes food donated by Daily Bread Food Bank via 25,000 visits per year, including clients of the Red Door Family Shelter. The food bank also addresses social isolation by providing a free monthly community dinner for up to 100 people.

The Neighbourhood Food Hub has seen over 550 participants since June 2019, including 220 participants in programs teaching urban gardening, intergenerational cooking, culinary skills, canning and preserving, minimizing food waste to extend food budget, and more; more than 300 shoppers at the Good Food Market (August - October pilot, and November/December); 20 engaged local volunteers supporting programs, and 8 Local Community Food Champions.

### **Sustaining the Neighbourhood Food Hub**

The establishment of the community food hub at Glen Rhodes United Church presents the city with a unique opportunity to maximize community space while meeting community needs. Like many faith-based organizations, Glen Rhodes is increasingly challenged to sustain its facility as operating costs increase while its congregation decreases. At the same time, Applegrove Community Complex, a multi-service agency with a mandate to work in partnership with the community, has a growing need for additional space. Currently located in the Duke of Connaught Public School, Applegrove also offers some programming at Glen Rhodes Church. Due to a changing school operating environment and increased local development that will increase school space needs in the near future, Applegrove is experiencing facility pressures and is in need of new facility options for the delivery of current and future services.

In order to sustain the city's investment in coordinating costs at Glen Rhodes, this report recommends that Applegrove Community Complex be invited to apply for Community

Service Partnerships funding and pending review of their suitability, that an on-going investment of \$120,000 be approved and administered. The Community Service Partnerships funding stream provides on-going, core funding to not-for-profit organizations in the City of Toronto. This funding would commence in 2020 and would be included in allocation recommendations for the remainder of the funding cycle.

Funds required to rent church space are being requested via Applegrove's annual budget. These costs are still being validated and staff are working with Facilities and Real Estate to confirm these details in early 2020.

By continuing to secure space at Glen Rhodes, the city can ensure that this very important and cost-effective food hub remains available to the community while supporting the development of additional initiatives to address local food insecurity, preserving community space, and securing needed space for Applegrove Community Complex.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Denise Andrea Campbell  
Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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APPENDIX A - Community Food Hub Partners Table Members