



To: COUNCIL
Meeting Date: 2/24/2026
Subject: Cambridge Food Bank Funding Agreement
Submitted By: Cheryl Zahnleiter, General Manager – Customer and Financial Services
Prepared By: Cheryl Zahnleiter, General Manager – Customer and Financial Services
Report No.: 26-008-CFS
Wards Affected: All Wards

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT staff be authorized to execute a funding agreement with the Cambridge Food Bank (CFB) to provide for a \$1.5 million contribution to its acquisition of a new property at 384 Franklin Boulevard;

AND THAT staff be directed to fund this contribution from the Core Area Transformation Reserve.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Through their respective services to the community, the City and the CFB share a common goal of ensuring resident well-being.
- The City currently supports the CFB by providing a building for its operations at 54 Ainslie Street, but the space is no longer suitable for the CFB to meet the growing demand for its services.
- This report seeks Council approval to enter into a funding agreement with the Cambridge Food Bank to support its expansion by providing a \$1.5 million contribution to the acquisition of a new property, and termination of the use of the current property by February 2027.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Strategic Action

Objective(s): WELLBEING - Connect people to services that support individual and community wellbeing

Strategic Action: Improve access to social supports

OR

Core Service

Program: Not Applicable

Core Service: Not Applicable

BACKGROUND:

The Cambridge Food Bank provides food, health and wellness services to residents and community groups, primarily from its location at 54 Ainslie Street in Galt, a building currently owned by the City. Additional food services are also provided through its Mobile Food Market and Community Food Lockers (located at Preston Heights Community Centre, the Allan Reuter Centre, and the W.G. Johnson Centre).

Food security is critical for the well-being of Cambridge residents. As the demand for Food Bank Services has grown, the Cambridge Food Bank requires additional space to expand its operations and to continue meeting the needs of the City.

To facilitate this expansion of space and services, the CFB has acquired a new building at 384 Franklin Boulevard, with plans to transition to the new space in 2027 after renovations have taken place.

ANALYSIS:

City & CFB Common Purpose – Resident Wellbeing

The Mission Statement of the CFB is “Building health and belonging through food, education, and advocacy”, with a Vision of “A compassionate, equitable community, where everyone is nourished.”

The CFB Mission and Vision for Cambridge residents aligns with the City’s 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, particularly the goal of People, which sets out the City’s commitment to fostering a community with heart, where everyone belongs and is cared for equitably, with a focus on Wellbeing, Belonging, Vibrant Neighborhoods, and Inclusion.

Through these objectives, both the City and CFB deliver their respective services to ensure the health and well-being of the Cambridge community.

CFB Location & Needs

This alignment and common goals between the City and CFB has been demonstrated over the past 25 years by the City’s support and provision of space for CFB operations

at 54 Ainslie Street. Through this relationship, Cambridge residents have been able to access the many services that the CFB provides, including:

- The Emergency Hamper Program
- Mobile Food Market
- Health & Wellness Programs
- Food Rescue
- Employment Support

The CFB has reached a point where the demand for its services has outgrown its home on Ainslie Street due to the constraints of the property. Through its strategic planning activities, and with capital contributions, it has successfully acquired a space more suitable to its current and future needs at 384 Franklin Boulevard. The CFB has shared that its vision for this new property is:

A space featuring a commercial kitchen that will serve the most vulnerable in the community, a space for children and families to learn about nutrition and eating healthy on a budget, a warehouse full of food ready to nourish those in need, and a greenhouse growing fresh fruits and vegetables to share throughout the community.

The benefits of the new location have also been identified by the CFB as:

- Proximity to public transit
- 31,000 square feet all on one floor
- 1 dock level dock with the ability to receive tractor-trailers
- Adequate space for proper waste, recycling and compost processing
- Large enough warehouse to allow for efficient and safe moving of the 1,700,000 pounds of food that flows through CFB annually via tow motor and pump truck
- No residential neighbors that would be disturbed by frequent truck traffic
- Sufficient parking for staff, volunteers, visitors, and for the six food bank vehicles

The CFB is expected to be operational at the new location in 2027, after renovations to the building are complete.

Cambridge Funding Contribution

Although the City has been proud to support the CFB operations in the City-owned building at Ainslie Street, staff understand the constraints of the building and location are no longer conducive to CFB growth.

With the CFB move to its new location, the City will no longer be providing support

through the use of a building, as the lease will be terminated. Once the CFB has moved out, use of that building will revert exclusively to the City.

To facilitate the City's commitment to resident well-being, and the CFB's expansion to continue to evolve its services to meet the community's needs, staff have negotiated a funding agreement to contribute to the acquisition of the new property. The key terms of the agreement are:

- City contribution of \$1.5 million to the CFB's acquisition of the new property; and
- Vacating the building at 54 Ainslie Street within one year, at which time the use of that building will revert exclusively to the City.

Staff have completed the required due diligence and have concluded that this funding agreement allows the CFB to grow and deliver enhanced community services, while also returning a City property back into the inventory for City use.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

There is no existing policy/by-law.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The funding for the City's contribution is recommended to be drawn from the Core Area Transformation Fund (CATF). This reserve fund was established to support a program and funding mechanism to stimulate transformative investment in city-building in the City's three core areas. With the Ainslie Street property reverting back to the City's exclusive use, staff will begin working on plans for further activation of this property and the area and return to Council when appropriate.

The CATF continues to demonstrate a strong financial position and the 10-year forecasted reserve fund balance totals \$8,862,316 excluding future interest earnings (Table 1). This financial position confirms that the CATF can support current and near-term strategic investments. While the reserve does not have a target balance, it is expected to remain positive. Potential future funding sources beyond simple investment income include assessment growth, hydro dividend revenue, internal borrowing from reserves, a property tax rate increase, and/or a special capital levy.

Table 1: CATF Financial Summary

Description	
Opening Balance (January 1, 2025)	\$13,622,635
Interest Earned	472,635
Net Expenditures	(728,982)
Current Fund Balance (December 31, 2025)	13,366,288
Future Projected Net Expenditures (2026-2035)	(4,503,972)
Forecasted Reserve Balance*	\$8,862,316

*Includes future interest earnings

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

Advisory Committees Consulted:

Not applicable

PUBLIC INPUT:

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

There was no internal/external consultation undertaken.

CONCLUSION:

In recognition of the community service provided by the Cambridge Food Bank (CFB), the City has historically provided space for CFB operations. As community needs evolve and the CFB plans to grow to meet those needs, the current City building housing its operations is no longer suitable. To further the common interest in resident well-being, staff recommend that the City enter into a funding agreement with the CFB to contribute \$1.5M to its acquisition of a new property that will meet current and future needs of the City.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

General Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

Not applicable.