

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JUNE 14, 2011

WOODBIDGE VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET

Recommendation

The Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Director of Recreation of Culture, Director of Policy Planning, Manager of Environmental Sustainability, and Senior Environmental Planner recommends:

1. THAT this report be received;
2. THAT as municipal support of a Farmers' Market has been previously identified as a strategic action in the 2010 Economic Development Strategy, Green Directions Vaughan, and the New Official Plan that permission be granted to the Woodbridge Village Farmers Market to operate a Farmers' market at no cost for its initial season of operation, June 9 – October 6, 2011 on the City's property (Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena Parking Lot) on Thursday's from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.;
3. THAT the Farmer's Market supply their own storage unit with associated insurance at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena parking lot to a mutually agreed upon location;
4. THAT the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market supply their own electricity by using a generator;
5. THAT staff work with the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market and other associated stakeholders to promote, when feasible, the Woodbridge Village Farmers Market through the City's website, social media accounts and other relevant publications and mediums.
6. THAT the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market provide to the City on an as needed basis a booth space at no cost to promote City activities and initiatives.
7. THAT this agreement only be in affect for the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market initial season of operation at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena's Parking Lot from June 9, to October 6, 2011; and
8. THAT the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market meet with Economic Development Staff during the operation of the market and at the conclusion of the initial season of operation and report back to Council at a future Committee of the Whole in 2011 the outcomes of operating the Farmer's Market.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with *Green Directions Vaughan: Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan*;

Goal 4: To create a vibrant community where citizens, businesses and visitors thrive.

Objective 4.3: To encourage the establishment of green businesses and sustainable business practices

Action 4.3.3. Investigate opportunities for farmers' markets at civic facilities to establish support for urban and near urban agriculture.

Goal 5: To be leaders in advocacy and education on sustainability issues.

Objective 5.1: To share sustainable best practices and ideas between and among municipal staff and the community.

Action 5.1.7. Develop an environmental education strategy for business and citizens. This strategy will highlight the steps that citizens and businesses can take to create a more sustainable Vaughan.

Economic Impact

Staff reviewed the City's rates for public permits and special events. The City has a Parking Lot permit fee (for 3 to 5 hours) of \$96.45 (plus HST) for locally based community activities. The Woodbridge Farmer's Market Organization is purposing to use the parking lot at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena each Thursday from 3:30-7:30 p.m. for a period of 18 weeks. If Council adopts recommendation (2) of this report, it would equate to lost revenue totaling approximately \$1,736.

Communications Plan

If approved, a meeting will be established between City Staff and the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market organizers to identify the advertising message(s) to be used during the 18 week schedule. Once an advertising plan has been mutually agreed upon, staff will work, when feasible, to promote the Farmer's Market on the City's website, through social media, relevant publications and other mediums that could have a positive impact on the long-term viability of the Farmer's Market.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide staff recommendations to Council regarding the proposal (deputation) by the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market at Committee of the Whole on May 31, 2011.

Background – Analysis and Options

To maximize the benefits provided from urban agriculture (urban agriculture can be understood as the production, processing, and distribution of food within Vaughan and nearby towns) for improved quality of life, economic growth, and environmental management, Vaughan has an opportunity to promote and support local food production through various outlets such as the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market.

Statistics Canada in 2006 reported that the \$85-billion Agri-Food industry is the second largest sector in Ontario's economy next to the automotive industry, employing 700,000 people in the province. Agricultural land in Vaughan ranks higher than nearly all municipalities other than the Niagara region for its productivity, and has doubled its productivity from 2001-2006.

In addition, Statistics Canada also reported that the production profile of farming operations in the City of Vaughan are dominated by high value, small acreage production. Greenhouse products, cattle, and vegetable farms have the highest values. The average size of a farming operation in Vaughan is 138 acres which is the smallest average in York Region.

The City of Vaughan Official Plan, adopted by Council in September 2010, includes several policies regarding farmers markets to promote tourism and support local food and agricultural practices in the City. These policies are excerpted below.

Policy 5.2.7.6. To promote Vaughan's cultural heritage, natural heritage and agricultural base through tourism and cultural opportunities that capitalize on these resources, including:

- a) Supporting agri-tourism and agricultural fairs, farmers markets and events;
- b) Promoting hiking, mountain biking, bird watching and other active and passive recreational activities in natural areas, as appropriate; and,
- c) Promoting cultural heritage buildings and districts, museums and other cultural heritage resources.

Policy 5.2.8.2. To support a wide variety of retail opportunities to bring local food and farm products to market by allowing and encouraging:

- a) Farmers market opportunities in urban areas;

- b) Farm-gate sales;
- c) Community-supported agriculture and agricultural cooperatives; and,
- d) Other retail and marketing opportunities that maintain the character and function of agricultural lands and are consistent with the policies of this Plan.

Policy 7.4.1.3. That farmers' markets are encouraged to locate in accessible locations throughout the City of Vaughan and especially in areas where access to locally grown food and healthy food products may be limited.

Local Market Operations

Farmers' markets are generally operated independently in individual communities. The markets are funded almost entirely by farmers' fees. They are community grassroot organizations that operate on very limited budgets with little in the way of resources for customer research, strategic planning, or the other practices that businesses and organizations access in order to assure their longevity. Farmers' market organizers, customers, small farmers, and local food system/security advocates and practitioners in Vaughan are concerned about the long term viability of farmers' markets and are interested in enhancing this important market channel and hub for the City.

Sources of Revenue

Market administrative revenue (stall/vendor fees) is the top source of revenue and has an impact on the ability of market organizers to contract labor to perform functions that help grow and sustain markets. The type of labor used (paid or volunteer) is directly connected to the ability of the market to generate future administrative revenue. However, once a market has established itself and grown in size, the market not only takes in more administrative revenue based on their size (number of vendors), but they also charge higher stall fees than smaller markets do when just starting operation. This adds significantly to the market's resources.

Smaller markets often experience a circular condition in which they cannot attract sufficient customers because they do not have sufficient vendors, but cannot attract sufficient vendors because they do not have sufficient customers to do so. These markets are challenged to garner the resources needed to support a paid market manager, a potential key function that recruits vendors and customers and handles other important operational aspects of the market.

Roadside Fruit Stands

At the Committee of the Whole meeting of May 31, 2011, questions were raised regarding fruit stands located at Pioneer Lane and Islington, and at Martin Grove and Highway #27. Enforcement Staff attended these locations on June 2, 2011 and confirmed that there are fruit stands in operation at these locations. Roadside Sales By-law 125-98 prohibits the retail sale of items on any highway or on a vacant lot adjacent to a highway, except for dairy products being sold from a non-motorized vehicle or foodstuffs being sold from a refreshment vehicle. Zoning By-law 1-88 allows fruit stands on agriculturally zoned land, provided the produce being sold is the product of the farm on which the fruit stand is located. Enforcement Staff will continue to investigate this matter and take appropriate action.

Future Potential of a Farmers' Market

In 2009, Farmers' Markets Ontario, contracted with The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to undertake a study on the state of farmers' markets in Ontario. The completed study titled *Farmers' Markets Ontario Impact Study 2009 Report* (Attachment 1) found that:

- Markets offer a vast array of food and non-food items but clearly the largest demand is for fresh fruits, vegetables and baked goods;
- Customers feel a strong sense of community and local pride in attending farmers' markets. Most customers attend markets regularly and are strong supporters of the farmers' market industry. They are highly motivated to purchase fresh, in-season produce in clean, simple surroundings; and
- The market customer is uniquely sensitive to the need to support local primary

producers. In fact, 67% said it was extremely important to buy produce from the farmer that grew it rather than buying it from a person who buys it from a food terminal or another farmer and resells it at the market.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the Vaughan Vision 2020 Goal 1: Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Vitality.

Regional Implications

Not applicable

Conclusion

In Ontario, the interest in local food and food security has resulted in a revival of farmers' markets, especially in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In 2008, there were approximately 70 farmers' markets in the Greenbelt and neighbouring urban areas. According to the Farmers' Market Ontario Association more than 150 markets are successfully being operated throughout the Province.

Small farmers are using farmers' markets to create a new entrepreneurial agriculture that operates independently of traditional wholesale commodity market channels and provides a gateway into farming for those with limited resources. Farmers' markets are also a crucial marketing channel for small farmers. In addition, farmers' markets play a key role in local food economies, green house gas emission reductions and the social life of communities.

It has been well-documented that shoppers appreciate and patronize farmers' markets because they can buy top-quality farm-fresh products directly from the person who produced them—and can often find products they won't find anywhere else.

From a City perspective, having an established farmers' market in Woodbridge has the potential to bring people together and can turn an under utilized space (parking lot) into a hive of activity, attracting extra business for stores and restaurants nearby. In addition, assisting the Woodbridge Village Farmer's Market organizers during the initial year of operation is an opportune time to give staff a better understanding of the economic, social and environmental impacts of a local farmers' market.

Attachments

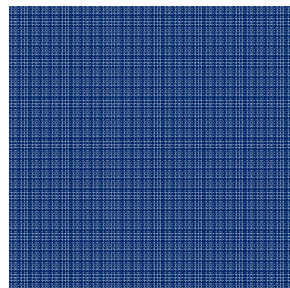
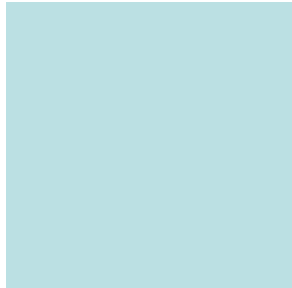
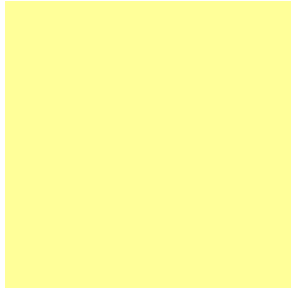
Farmers' Markets Ontario Impact Study 2009 Report

Report prepared by:

Tim Simmonds, Director of Economic Development

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Simmonds
Director of Economic Development



Farmers' Markets Ontario Impact Study 2009 Report

January 2009

Acknowledgment of Funding Support from OMAFRA



Farmers' Markets Ontario, as the organization which contracted for this study, commends the vision of the government of Ontario in allocating \$4 million in the 2008 Ontario Budget for the Ontario Farmers' Markets Strategy over four years.

This study was undertaken with Ontario government funding provided to FMO under this Strategy. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is the arm of the Ontario government that has provided this vital financial contribution. Staff at the Ministry have been helpful in providing their support throughout the course of this project.

The findings reported and opinions expressed are the sole responsibility of the consulting firm, Experience Renewal Solutions. Neither the Government of Ontario nor Farmers' Markets Ontario assumes responsibility for the accuracy of the results nor for any opinions expressed.

Ontario Budget Commitment 2008

\$56 million over four years for the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy and the Ontario Farmers' Markets Initiative, which will help encourage Ontarians to buy locally

Ontario Budget 2008, p. 10

The State of Farmers' Markets in Ontario

- Executive Summary



- Farmers' markets are a great success story for Ontario, with strong consumer and vendor support as evidenced by the growth in attendance and number of markets. Success is built upon many factors including a desire to return to healthier, fresher, locally produced products and a strong belief in the integrity of shopping in the community
- The diversity of market types across the 154 Ontario markets provides consumers with a large number of alternatives when seeking community shopping experiences and local products
- Markets offer a vast array of food and non-food items but clearly the largest demand is for fresh fruits, vegetables and baked goods

- Customers feel a strong sense of community and local pride in attending farmers' markets. Most customers attend markets regularly and are strong supporters of the farmers' market industry. They are highly motivated to purchase fresh, in-season produce in clean, simple surroundings
- The market customer is uniquely sensitive to the need to support local primary producers. In fact, 67% said it was extremely important to buy produce from the farmer that grew it rather than buying it from a person who buys it from a food terminal or another farmer and resells it at the market
- Current customers will increasingly look for more product selection and convenience in locations, payment options and lifestyle amenities to ensure their loyalty



The State of Farmers' Markets in Ontario

- Executive Summary



- Farmers' market vendors are typically primary producers (77%) who achieve a significant portion of their income from participation in the markets; they also find a great deal of local support at markets and are attracted by the social and communal nature of the market experience
- Market vendors are challenged to provide the selection of fresh products required as primary producers while dealing with issues of labour shortages and rising costs of production inputs
- In some markets there is a growing concern about the role of reseller vendors who are threatening the economic viability of the primary producer vendor
- Vendors are looking for more support in marketing of their locations through signage, advertising and website information and would like to attract new vendors in desired local product categories to increase customer traffic

- Market managers are seeking to develop farmers' markets business growth by attracting and promoting more primary producers and increasing the attractiveness and convenience of the market facilities
- Management and Association opportunities should focus on improving marketing efforts and making the physical market presence an attractive and more accessible venue
- Increasing pressures will occur from Health and Safety requirements, parking needs for vendors and customers and balancing of primary producer capabilities and customer demands for year-round product selection



The State of Farmers' Markets in Ontario

- Executive Summary



- The majority of Ontario grocery shoppers are not using farmers' markets. Non-users are a target growth sector; they express a willingness to become patrons and are not visiting primarily because of convenience and lack of awareness issues. Future growth in the sector will require engaging non-users through increased awareness of benefits, locations and product selection. Trial usage among non-users will be dependent on making local market hours and locations more accessible to time-challenged, health-conscious consumers

- The future for farmers' markets in Ontario is promising with consumer demand and interest closely aligned with support for local production and fresh, healthy food choices
- Ontario farmers' markets are an important contributor to the Ontario economy with impacts ranging from \$641 million to \$1.9 billion annually



Project Objectives

- This Ontario Farmers' Market study is the fourth in a series of studies for Farmers' Markets Ontario (FMO) that build an understanding of the growth, changes and opportunities for the farmers' markets movement over the last decade and into the future. Three previous studies were undertaken by FMO in 1998, 2002, and 2005.
- This 2008 study leverages the "National Farmers' Market Impact Study" that was conducted in the same 2008 field period (July through October) by over-sampling the Ontario market and asking additional core and specific questions of interest to market leaders and specific local markets.

The goals of this study were four-fold:

1. To develop a **Market Census** of farmers' markets in Ontario that will serve as a benchmark in successive years (planned over 4 years) to detail a range of measurable attributes.
 2. To calculate the economic impact of Ontario farmers' markets.
 3. To understand the barriers faced by non-users and the opportunities to serve new demographic groups at Ontario farmers' markets.
 4. To provide a detailed provincial profile of farmers' markets from 6 perspectives:
 - Current Market Shoppers* through a face-to-face interview during a market experience
 - Current Market Non-Shoppers* through an on-line interview
 - Market vendors* through a personal in-market interview and an on-site audit
 - Market managers* through a personal telephone Interview
 - Economic Impact Analysis* using research inputs
 - Specific market reports* focusing on local questions
- This 2009 report will contribute to the ongoing benchmarking of the industry in Ontario, and provide new insights to fuel the resurgence and growth of markets across the province.

Fact Sheet

Farmers' Markets Ontario Insights

HIGHLIGHTS

- Farmers' markets remain strong contributors both to the economy and to the fabric of communities in Ontario
- Over 15 million shopper-visits were made to farmers' markets in Ontario in 2008
- Farmers' markets continue to show growth on an annual basis. Between 1998 and 2008, the estimated compound annual growth in direct sales at farmers' markets was 7.3%
- Farmers' markets play a key role in the marketing of Ontario agricultural products; they play a significant role in generating farm incomes
- More aggressive marketing and promotion of markets; encouraging additional vendors and vendor capabilities; improved access to labour; and the development of more and improved facilities are all identified opportunities for growth for Ontario farmers' markets

2008 Field Research Summary – Sample Sizes

- There are 154 identified farmers' markets in Ontario
- The 2008 Field Research profile:
 - 36 farmers' markets were visited (14% sample)
 - 1824 shoppers were interviewed on-site
 - 634 non-users were surveyed online (people who have not visited a farmers' market)
 - 318 vendors were interviewed on-site
 - 84 market managers were interviewed by telephone or emailed survey
 - Traffic counts and vendor audits were taken at surveyed markets

Economic Impact in Ontario 2008

- Total farmers' market direct sales in Ontario in 2008 are estimated to be in the range of \$427 million to \$ 641 million
- The economic impact of farmers' markets in Ontario is calculated to be in the range of \$641 million to \$ 1.9 billion based on a multiplier range of 1.5 to 3.0.
- Average in-market spending by principal shoppers in Ontario is \$27.67 per visit; ranging from \$21.99 at small markets to \$33.94 at large markets

Fact Sheet

Farmers' Markets Ontario Insights

Farmers' Markets Ontario Shopper Profile

Demographic Highlights

The results showed that, on average:

- 72 % of market shoppers are female and 28% are male, over a 2.5:1 ratio
- 71 % of the principal shoppers are 40 and older; 29% of customers are 18-39
- 96 % of shoppers are Canadian born (82%) or have lived in Canada 20 years or more (14%)

Shopping Patterns

- 57 % state that fresh produce is their number one reason for visiting Ontario markets
- 60 % of Ontario shoppers use their own car to reach the market; 40 % walk, bike or take the transit
- 71 % of Ontario shoppers take less than 15 minutes to get to the market from home
- 51 % of Ontario shoppers visit the market regularly (almost once a week)
- 63 % of Ontario market shoppers visit the market alone; 37% visit in groups
- 67% of Ontario shoppers state that buying directly from a local farmer is extremely important
- 22 % of shoppers are new or infrequent users, representing a growth opportunity

Shopper Satisfaction

- 96 % of shoppers find that their market experience meets or exceeds their expectations
- 16 % of shoppers identify the need for **more variety** of products through **more vendors**
- 83% of Ontario shoppers believe that food safety practices are better (48%) or about the same (35%) as grocery stores
- Market shoppers are generally pleased with the products they buy at their farmers' markets, but would appreciate more vendors providing fresh, in-season produce

Non-User Opportunities

- Non-users identify that location, convenience and variety will attract them to farmers' markets

Fact Sheet

Farmers' Markets Ontario Insights

Market Profile from Market Manager Reports

- 65 % of markets are open Saturdays; 19% Fridays; 13% Thursdays
- 45 % of markets are open more than 26 days per year; 46% of markets are open between 16 and 25 days
- August is the peak sales month
- 68 % of markets are outdoor; 8% indoor; 24% both indoor and outdoor
- 38 % of markets serve municipalities with populations below 10,000
- Market managers classify 71% of their vendors as "primary producers"
- 82% of market managers report that the number of "primary producer" vendors has increased (35%) or stayed the same (48%)
- 85 % of market managers report that the number of shoppers has increased (62%) or stayed the same (23%)
- 86% of market managers report that the number of vendors at their markets have increased (43%) or stayed the same (43%)
- 95% of markets are funded by vendor/booth rentals
- 60% of market managers report no financial support from governments or associations in the past 5 years
- 85% of markets have not had an economic impact assessment
- At markets reporting insurance policies, the average market premium is \$636 annually; 93% of markets have no claim history

Ontario Vendor Profile

- 60 % of vendors sell fresh fruit and/or vegetables
- 77 % of vendors identify themselves as "primary producers"
- 49 % of vendors sell at only one market
- 47% of Ontario vendors report greater than 50% of total farm income is generated through farmers' market sales
- 81 % of vendors report their business has grown bigger (46%) or stayed the same (35%)
- 67 % of vendors travel less than 50 km to reach the market
- 50 % of vendors report the creation of up to 5 jobs as a result of market participation
- 45 % of vendors serve 100 and more customers on each market day
- 28 % of vendors sell over \$1000 on a market day
- Cost of fuel and cost of inputs are major negative factors impacting vendors
- Community and social aspects of the farmers' markets are a major attraction for vendors
- Physical facilities and parking are primary concerns for vendors