

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Brian Geerts; Director, Community Services bgeerts@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	April 11, 2023		
Report No.:	Community Services-169-23		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Farmer's Market Event Update and Parking Request

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council commends the Cobourg Farmer's Market on their 184 years of operation in the downtown; and

FURTHER THAT Council commends the Cobourg Farmer's Market on their creative approach to problem solving, and encourages them to continue; and

FURTHER THAT Council endorse the approach of issuing forty (40) special event parking passes valid at the Albert Street parking lot for the scheduled dates and times of their event for 2023, and

FURTHER THAT at such time as the Municipal Grants Policy is reviewed, that this and other grants be reviewed by staff to ensure financial transparency and consistency with the overall municipal grants process.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

Corporate: N/A

Cultural Master Plan: Festivals and Events Section

Festivals and events contribute to the animation of public and natural spaces by

bringing entertainment, new experiences, and economic impacts on the community.

Assets Include: holiday celebrations, seasonal celebrations, cultural events, **farmers market**, film events, multicultural events, music festivals, street events, and visual arts event.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This report was drafted in response to a public delegation from the Cobourg Farmer's Market regarding a proposal for alternative vendor parking permits, as received at the Committee of the Whole meeting of April 3, 2023 (attached).

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Give context to the request from the Farmer's Market for parking permits as received on April 3, 2023,
- Highlight the purpose of farmer's markets as local small-business economic development, and
- Frame the municipality's support of the farmer's market in the context of the Special Events Policy and the municipal grants system.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

Special Event Policy
Parking Bylaw
Grants Policy

5. BACKGROUND

The Cobourg Farmer's Market has been serving the community since 1839. The market is committed to supporting locally produced and locally grown goods. The Market is 100% producer-run, governed by a volunteer board of directors which meets throughout the year.

Over the decades, the market has operated in several different configurations in the areas between Victoria Hall and the harbour. The purpose of the market is to:

- Maintain a farmer's market to market local farm and craft products,
- Stimulate public interest in agriculture and crafts, and
- Increase the presence of local products to the consumer.

The objectives of the market are to:

- Display and market high quality vegetables, fruits, meat, baked goods, and arts/crafts,
- Create a unique market opportunity,
- Build a community where knowledge and research may be shared,
- Work together in a co-operative spirit with producers and customers.

6. ANALYSIS

Farmer's markets are one of the oldest forms of commerce connected to human settlements and still form important parts of local economic development and community building. The Cobourg Farmer's Market is currently hosted in an excellent location at the fountain/rink area in Rotary Harbourfront Park.

What is local economic development in the context of the Farmer's Market as a special event?

Local Economic Development (LED) is a process of promoting economic growth and creating employment opportunities within a particular geographic area, typically at the local or regional level. The objective of LED is to improve the economic well-being of the local community by increasing the number of jobs, reducing unemployment, and enhancing the overall quality of life. LED strategies typically involve the collaboration of various stakeholders, including local governments, businesses, non-profit organizations, and community groups. These stakeholders work together to identify the unique economic strengths and challenges of the local area, and then develop and implement targeted economic development initiatives to address those challenges. Examples of LED initiatives may include attracting new businesses to the area, supporting the growth of existing businesses, improving infrastructure and transportation systems, providing job training and education programs, and promoting tourism and cultural events. Overall, LED is an important tool for promoting sustainable economic growth and improving the standard of living in local communities.

Why are Farmer's Markets important in a community?

Farmer's markets are important for several reasons:

1. Supporting Local Agriculture: Farmers markets provide a platform for small-scale, local farmers and artisans to sell their produce directly to consumers. This supports the local agricultural community, promotes food security, and encourages the growth of sustainable farming practices.
2. Access to Fresh, Nutritious Food: Farmers markets offer fresh, locally grown produce, which is often picked at the peak of ripeness, making it more nutritious and flavorful. Additionally, by buying local, you reduce the environmental impact of transporting food and products long distances.
3. Community Building: Farmers markets are often gathering places where people can come together, socialize, and learn about local agriculture and craft industry. They can serve as a hub for community events, educational programs, and food-related activities.
4. Economic Development: By purchasing directly from local farmers and artisans, farmers markets help to support the local economy. They also create jobs and contribute to the development of small businesses.
5. Food Diversity: Farmers markets often offer a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and other locally produced food products that may not be

available at traditional grocery stores. This can encourage people to try new foods and broaden their culinary horizons.

What is the purpose of Community Grants or other Municipal financial assistance?

Municipal community grants are provided by local governments to support community projects and initiatives that benefit their residents. The primary purpose of these grants is to enhance the quality of life in the community by promoting social, cultural, and recreational opportunities.

The grants can be used to fund a wide range of initiatives such as:

1. Supporting local community groups and organizations
2. Providing financial assistance for community events and festivals
3. Enhancing public facilities and infrastructure such as parks, playgrounds, and community centers
4. Promoting economic development by supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs
5. Addressing social issues such as homelessness and poverty

Overall, the purpose of municipal community grants is to foster a sense of community, promote civic engagement, and enhance the well-being of residents by providing financial support for initiatives that make a positive impact on the community.

**Analysis section was written with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence and edited and improved by staff.*

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

As Cobourg is primarily an urban centre, vendors at the Farmer's Market are typically located outside the municipal boundary. As per the current parking practice and considering the Farmer's Market event plan for 2023, only the Albert St lot is required to support the event. As per the current parking system, there are no resident seasonal passes available for those residing outside the municipal boundary.

From Victoria Day to Thanksgiving, between 9am to 8pm Monday to Sunday (including holidays), Waterfront Parking rates are in effect for the Albert St parking lot:

- Hourly: \$5.00
- Daily Pass: \$40.00

The Farmer's Market vendors need access to the Albert St parking lot for loading and unloading, only on market days from 7am-1:30pm, May to December.

The Farmer's Market reports that the number of vendor vehicles using the lot weekly would range from 20 on a low day to 50 on a high day (Artisan Market days).

As the vendors change through the season and the Artisan days are only once per month, the exact financial impacts of a parking grant are difficult to calculate. The following table provides an example summary using general figures:

If the Farmer’s Market averages 40 vendors (using 40 vehicles), for 32 weeks from May to December, from 7am-1:30pm, that is an approximate permit value of:

- Hourly (\$5/hr): \$900.00 per weekly event
- Daily Pass (\$40/day): \$1600 per weekly event

While this amount of revenue would be very beneficial for the Town to reinvest in parking infrastructure, the Farmer’s Market reports that it is cost prohibitive for many of the vendors to recoup these parking fees through sales. If the vendors cannot at least break-even, the market cannot attract vendors. By granting the vendors relief from fees and incentivizing the maximum amount of vendors, the Farmer’s Market will be able to attract more patrons. All patrons using the parking lot will contribute to parking revenue through resident, hourly, or daily parking passes as applicable. As the Town attracts more patrons to the downtown, there are secondary sales at other downtown businesses.

8. CONCLUSION

The Farmer’s Market is a valuable event that has provided an important community service since 1839. Allowing parking relief for the vendors incentivizes vendor attendance at the market, allowing it to be a major attraction to citizens and visitors in the downtown. When the municipal grants policy is reviewed, this parking permit relief should be reviewed in the context of the municipal grants process for consistency and transparency within the grants framework.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Farmers Market Event Update and Parking Request - Community Services-169-23.docx
Attachments:	- FarmersMarketDelegationApr32023.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 6, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Apr 6, 2023 - 9:16 AM