



City of
Peterborough

To: **Members of the General Committee**

From: **Sandra Clancy, CAO and Acting Commissioner of Community Services**

Meeting Date: **September 9, 2019**

Subject: **Report CSD19-014
Farmers' Market Survey Findings and Next Steps for Morrow
Park Farmers' Market Operator Request for Proposal**

Purpose

A report to update Council on the results of the Farmers' Market surveys conducted during the last week of June and the month of July and to provide details on the Request for Proposal process for an Operator for a Year-Round Farmers' Market at Morrow Park.

Recommendation

That Council approve the recommendation outlined in Report CSD19-014, dated September 9, 2019, of the Chief Administrative Officer and Acting Commissioner of Community Services, as follows:

That Report CSD19-014 Farmers' Market Survey Findings and Next Steps for Morrow Park Farmers' Market Operator Request for Proposal be received for information.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no additional budget or financial implications associated with receiving this report.

Background

Report CSD19-014 is being provided as a result of the recommendations in the following reports:

1. CSAD18-006 Peterborough and District Farmers' Market Association dated December 3, 2018:

That staff report back to Council during the February 2019 cycle of meetings on options for an RFP process, public consultation, implementation and associated time lines for a farmers' market.

2. CSD19-002 Peterborough and District Farmers' Market Update dated February 11, 2019:

- a) That staff be directed to proceed with public consultation as outlined in Report CSD19-002;
- b) That staff be directed to report back to Council in the spring of 2019 with the results of research of other farmers' markets and proposed survey questions and then report back in the fall of 2019 with the results of the public consultation and options moving forward;
- c) That Council approve an extension to the current license agreement with the Peterborough and District Farmers' Market which will expire May 1, 2019 for one year until May 1, 2020;
- d) That RFP be awarded no later than January 2020 and should there be a delay, staff report to Council as soon as possible.

3. CSD19-008 Peterborough and District Farmers' Market – Research to Date and Proposed Surveys dated June 20, 2019

That Report CSD19-008 Peterborough and District Farmers' Market research to date and proposed surveys be received for information.

Survey Development

Further to the details included in Report CSD19-008 dated June 20, 2019 that provided detail on research of other farmers' markets across Ontario, staff developed two separate surveys including a Vendor Survey and a Community Survey for the local consultation process. The survey questions were developed based on feedback from the 70 plus markets consulted from around Ontario. This information was key to a more expanded exploration of important topics and to reveal potential misconceptions.

The Vendor Survey consisted of 23 questions and the Community Survey consisted of 22. A copy of the surveys is attached as Appendix A - Community Survey and Appendix B - Vendor Survey.

Survey Distribution

The Community and Vendor Surveys opened on June 25, 2019 and closed on July 31, 2019. Participants were able to complete the surveys online or in hard copy format.

Hard copies of the surveys were available at both City Hall Reception and the Peterborough Public Library Service Desk. Participants were able to drop off their completed surveys at either of these locations.

Survey Promotion

The Survey was promoted by an initial launch media release, updates to the City's Twitter and Facebook accounts, posters displayed at various City facilities and through contact with the existing local farmers' market operators. The three local farmers' market operators were advised of the Surveys and their assistance was requested to promote the surveys to their market vendors and visitors. In addition, staff attended each of the three local farmers' markets to interact with market vendors and visitors and promote participation in the surveys. Staff attended the Wednesday Downtown Market on July 10, 2019; the Farmers' Market at Morrow Park on July 13, 2019; and the Farmers' Market at the Citi Centre on July 20, 2019.

Responses to the Surveys

The City received 361 responses to the Community Farmers' Market Survey and 59 responses to the Vendor Farmers' Market Survey. Of the 361 Community Surveys submitted, 94% were completed online. Of the 59 Vendor surveys submitted, 95% were completed online. The average completion time for the Community Survey was 12 minutes and the Vendor Survey was 20 minutes.

Market Attendance by Visitors

When asked which of the three Peterborough farmers' markets the Community Survey respondents like to visit, over 65% indicated they like to visit two or more markets as outlined in the table below.

# of Local Markets That Respondents Like to Visit	# of Respondents	% of Total Respondents
Respondents who only visit 1 of the local Markets	112	31%
Respondents who visit 2 of the local Markets	187	52%
Respondents who visit all 3 local Markets	55	15%
Respondents who do not visit any of the local Markets	6	2%

Market Attendance by Vendors

When asked which of the three Peterborough farmers' markets vendors sell at, the majority indicated that they only sell at one local market. Only 27% indicated that they sell at two of the local markets, while 44% indicated that they sell at other markets outside of Peterborough.

Markets that Vendors Sell At	# of Respondents	% of Total Respondents
Vendors who only sell at 1 local Market	43	73%
Vendors who sell at 2 local Markets	16	27%
Vendors who sell at all 3 local Markets	0	0%
Vendors who sell at Markets outside of Peterborough	26	44%

Key Findings

The two biggest reasons given by market consumers for going to farmers' markets were: i) to support local farmers (79% of Community Survey respondents); and ii) to buy local food that consumers know where it is coming from (71% of Community Survey respondents). A further 85% of Community Survey respondents selected 'yes' when asked if they talk to vendors about where their produce and products come from. When vendors were asked how important it is that the general public knows whether the goods and produce sold at the market are grown/produced locally or are brought in from elsewhere, 85% indicated that it is very important.

1) Within a 100km radius is the closest to a consensus on what constitutes local.

A key question asked in both the Community and Vendor Surveys was how survey respondents define 'local' in terms of the goods and produce sold at farmers' markets. The following table summarizes how respondents to the surveys believe 'local' should be defined for Peterborough farmers' markets.

How would you define 'local' for goods or produce sold at Peterborough farmers' markets?	Community Survey Responses	Vendor Survey Responses
Within the City	24%	15%
Within a 100 km radius	37%	31%
Within same geographic region	16%	15%
Within province of Ontario	16%	17%
Within Canada	0%	2%
Other	7%	20%

As shown above, there is not a common understanding or preference for how local should be defined across Community or Vendor respondents but the definition accepted by the highest percentage is within a 100 km radius. The table shows that, in general, respondents prefer a narrower boundary for what constitutes local.

The definition of local depends on several factors such as the particular location of products being sold, the availability of other similar products, the interest of local farmers to be a vendor at a local market, etc. For example, local in terms of corn is likely City/County, but local for peaches is the Niagara region.

2) While local is preferred, diversity of products is still important.

As shown in the table below, just over half of Vendor and Community respondents answered the question of whether only local goods should be sold at Peterborough farmers' markets with a resounding 'yes'.

Should only local goods be sold at farmers' markets in Peterborough?	Community Survey Responses	Vendor Survey Responses
Yes	61%	56%
No	18%	11%
Other	21%	33%

However, as the table shows, a relatively significant percentage of respondents from both surveys chose 'Other'. While these percentages are not high on their own, they are significant when connected to a 'yes' or 'no' question about whether farmers' market products should only be local. This suggests that the decision of whether products should be local is not a clear-cut issue.

Upon examination of the comments provided along with the selection of 'Other', the comments reveal that while local is important, product variety and availability is also important to both consumers and vendors. Below are a few comments extracted from each survey that are representative of the majority of comments provided:

Vendor Comments:

- "When it comes to things like peaches – then you need to extend the boundaries or not offer them at all – which would be detrimental to the market itself. So, I think you need to be pragmatic about these decisions, be honest and inform people where the product comes from."
- "Local growers/producers are chosen first over growers/producers from a greater distance. For variety, diversity of choice and not available locally, more distant vendors who grow what they sell can be considered."
- "I think it's fine for the market to include vendors from other growing zones to bring in a diversified produce line for the market; however, the vendor must be the producer. No reselling."
- "Signage should reflect where product is grown. Priority should be given to vendors growing produce closer to market venue."

Community Comments:

- "I just want to know where it's from and not be lied to. Preference to local growers."
- "No. Ontario is local. We would not have peaches, etc. or early vegetables otherwise might as well just go to grocery store otherwise."
- "I think local producers should be prioritized; however, I think with better transparency about the origins of foods, having a mix of very local vendors and foods from elsewhere in Ontario is preferable. This is particularly true during the winter months."
- "Need some flexibility to have items grown beyond the radius of the market but cannot be grown profitably here. Tender fruits in the fall is an example and smoked fish from Manitoulin. They have to identify where they come from."

3) Re-selling is acceptable under certain circumstances.

Re-selling means different things to different people. The most common understanding of re-selling, and the one that generates the strongest opposition, is that of a vendor buying produce from the Ontario Food Terminal and passing it off as their own. However, other forms of re-selling include selling produce from a

neighbouring farm, selling produce that is not available locally, or selling produce that is not yet available locally (e.g. out of season) etc.

The table below shows the responses to the different forms of re-selling.

Check the following statements on re-selling you agree with...	Community Survey	Vendor Survey
Re-selling should not be allowed under any circumstances	21%	26%
Re-selling should be allowed for items that are not yet available locally (e.g. out of season produce)	32%	33%
Re-selling should be allowed for items that aren't grown or produced locally (e.g. peaches)	48%	60%
Re-selling should be allowed for items that the vendor is selling from a local farmer or producer (e.g. a local artisan or neighbouring farmer)	56%	58%
Re-selling should be allowed as long as the items are direct from a farmer or producer even if they are not local	21%	18%
Re-selling should be allowed if the re-sold items are needed to draw people into the market and/or make the market viable	15%	25%
Re-selling should be allowed if the re-sold items are needed to provide a better variety of products to consumers	14%	28%
Re-selling should be allowed, with proper signage, and it should be left up to market consumers to decide whether they only want to buy local	51%	44%

As demonstrated above, only 21% of Community respondents and 26% of Vendor respondents indicated that re-selling should not be allowed under any circumstances. The table also demonstrates that re-selling is acceptable in some forms.

4) Transparency and honesty are key priorities for Vendors and Consumers as is consumer choice

While both respondent groups acknowledge the importance of product variety and some forms of re-selling, as demonstrated under Key Findings 2 and 3, the concepts of transparency, honesty, and consumer choice were also identified as top priorities. These concepts were woven throughout most of the comment sections for both sets of Survey responses. While customers prefer to buy local, they ultimately want to know what it is they are buying and who they are buying it from, and then be left with

the choice of whether they only want to buy local. Appendix C – Recurring Comments Related to Transparency, Integrity and Consumer Choice provides a summary of many of the comments received that illustrate the importance of this to survey respondents.

A couple of mechanisms that the survey addressed for providing transparency and ensuring integrity are signage and verification. Throughout the survey responses there was widespread support for signage to help inform and educate market consumers and to help ensure transparency.

On the question related to formal third-party verification, many respondents were supportive of the need for verification, as illustrated by the table below, but a relatively significant percentage indicated that they were either unsure, that it was not important, or they chose 'Other'.

Importance of third-party verification program to verify that farmers are selling only what they grow or produce on their farms	Community Survey	Vendor Survey
Not important – I don't believe that third-party verification is needed	15%	10%
Unsure – I am not sure what to think	20%	15%
Important – I believe that third-party verification is needed	56%	63%
Other (please explain)	9%	12%

While most seemed to agree that verification processes were important, many expressed reservations on whether it needed to be an external body conducting the verification processes. Some respondents expressed concern about added costs to farmers; some expressed concern about the value or integrity of such external verification processes; and others felt that this is something that can and should be added through effective market management and governance.

Overall, the general consensus across survey respondents was that both signage and verification are important and necessary, but there was discrepancy on whether verification needs to be through an external third-party process.

A further topic raised by survey respondents related to signage is the importance of consumer choice. Within the local Vendor Survey, the Community Survey, and the earlier Survey of Ontario market operators, there were many respondents who identified that consumer choice is an important consideration and that ultimately the decision of whether to buy local or re-sold items should be left up to the consumer contingent through transparent and honest marketing and selling processes.

5) People consistently indicated that the City should play at most, only a limited role in market governance or management, if any at all

On the question of what role the City should play in the governance or management of farmers' markets located on City property, only an average of 6% of community respondents and 4.5% of vendor respondents indicated that the City should be involved as either the direct or indirect operator of such markets. Almost 70% of both community and vendor respondents indicated that the City's role should be limited to that of a landlord, regulatory, or no involvement at all.

In terms of the makeup of farmers' markets Board of Directors, the numbers were relatively consistent between Vendor and Community respondents as set out below:

- i. Market vendors included on Board of Directors:
 - 85% of Vendor respondents agree
 - 87% of Community respondents agree
- ii. Market customers included on Board of Directors:
 - 63% of Vendor respondents agree
 - 79% of Community respondents agree
- iii. Community members at large included on Board of Directors:
 - 53% of Vendor respondents agree
 - 54% of Community respondents agree

In terms of the other options presented to include on a Board of Directors (e.g. elected officials, City staff, other), less than 30% of respondents to either survey selected these options.

Next Steps – Issuing of the Request for Proposal

As directed by Council, staff will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an Operator for a Year-Round Saturday Farmers' Market at Morrow Park in September with the final award taking place in December and a new agreement start date of May 1, 2020. From the information gathered from the surveys, the RFP will highlight the following as consistent points raised by the community from the survey submissions:

- Preference for a Farmers' Market with a wide variety of goods and produce that are produced and sold directly by local and regional farmers;
- Rules in place and some restrictions surrounding vendors "re-selling" of products;
- Transparent and honest marketing and selling processes of vendors and the requirement to use signs to identify where their goods or produce are grown and produced.

The RFP will include the following requests:

- Proposals from incorporated entities are to describe the governance structure of their proposed Saturday Farmers' Market, including regional and/or provincial affiliations as well as their operating plan and how they will ensure their vendors comply with rules and regulations;
- Operations must be conducted in accordance with applicable laws in Ontario;
- It is the successful Proponent's responsibility to carry adequate general liability insurance for the Farmers' Market operation and to ensure all Market vendors meet municipal Public Health inspection requirements and are covered by general liability insurance as requested by the City;
- Operating details must include the vendor selection process and the complaint resolution process.

The successful proponent will enter into a License Agreement with the City. The license agreement will include key language to ensure compliance by the successful Proponent of the requested terms and conditions as set out by the City.

Summary

A Vendor Survey and a Community Survey were conducted through a local consultation process.

The responses received highlight the issues of importance to our community regarding the operation of a farmers' market. This information will be beneficial to prepare the RFP and evaluate the farmers' market operator submissions ensuring the best fit for our community.

Submitted by,

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Attachments

Appendix A: Community Survey

Appendix B: Vendor Survey

Appendix C: Recurring Comments Related to Transparency, Integrity and Consumer Choice