

Item:



## Finance, Administration and Audit Committee Report

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**DATE:** Monday, April 01, 2019

**WARD(S):** 2

**TITLE: WOODBRIDGE VILLAGE FARMERS' MARKET (IN-KIND CITY SUPPORT)**

**FROM:**

Tim Simmonds, Interim City Manager

Mary Reali, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose**

This report seeks Council approval to continue to grant the Woodbridge Agricultural Society permission to operate the [Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market](#) on the City's property at no cost for the venue from 2019-22. The Market runs from June to early October on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Report Highlights**

- The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market is an important element of the community, having operated for ten years and drawing roughly 700 people and hosting 23 vendors per week in 2018.
- The Market contributes to York Region's Agri-Food Sector, which employs roughly 57,000 people region-wide.
- The Woodbridge Agricultural Society is requesting that they be allowed to continue operating the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market in the parking lot of the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena through 2022 at no cost.
- This represents roughly \$3,000 per year of in-kind support to the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market.

## **Recommendations**

1. THAT permission be granted to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society (WAS) to operate the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market on the City's property (Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena parking lot) at no cost for its ninth to twelfth seasons of operations – 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 – on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and that a storage unit be supplied to the Market, on site at no additional cost;
2. THAT staff continue to work with the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market and other associated stakeholders to promote, where feasible, the Market through the City's website, social media and other relevant publications and mediums, and;
3. THAT the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market provide to the City on an as-requested basis, booth space at no cost.

## **Background**

On February 13, 2019 the City received a formal letter of request from the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market, requesting that the City approve the continued use of the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena's Parking Lot, water, electricity, washrooms, and a storage container for the 2019-22 market seasons (see letter attached).

The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market is a seasonal event owned and managed by the Woodbridge Agricultural Society, a not-for-profit organization in the City of Vaughan. This annual event operates as a farmers' market with a guiding principle of showcasing farm vendors who grow or raise at least 51 percent of the produce sold at the stall. The mission of the Market is to support and promote local agriculture, locally produced goods and services; and healthy living. Fees collected by the Market are for the sole purpose of advertising, promotion and operation of the Market.

The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market has utilized the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena's parking lot as a base of operations for the past eight years. The Market's location provides good visibility, access and ambiance conducive for a farmers' market.

Since the last report, Item 2, Report No. 21 of the Committee of the Whole: Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market approved by Council on June 5, 2017, the WAS has reported that average weekly attendance has remained strong, ranging from 600-900 visitors per week. In 2018, the Market operated with 23 vendors and averaged 666 visitors per day. An Attendance Report on the Farmers' Market is attached (Attachment 2). The market is open to the public each Saturday between June and October of each year.

The Market was promoted through the following City channels: Events Calendar on the City's website, and City Update e-newsletter. Further, Economic and Cultural

Development promoted the Market to small business clients.

## **Previous Reports/Authority**

[Item 2, Report No. 21, of the Committee of the Whole: Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market, June 5, 2017](#)

[York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy](#)

## **Analysis and Options**

York Region is home to more than 700 working farms and more than 200 food and beverage processing and distribution companies. Primary agricultural production in York Region contributes \$250 million in GDP, while agri-food businesses employ 57,000 people Region-wide.

Assets like the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market play an important role supporting and growing this sector. Such initiatives contribute to the City of Vaughan's strategic priorities to attract investment and create jobs, and to the Region's agricultural priorities to meet demand for local food production and increase capacity for value-added agri-food processing and support services.

The Market supports the City's and the Region's goals by providing a venue or distribution channel for locally grown or raised foods. As such, it also provides opportunities for consumer education as well as promotes community building and placemaking.

*Recommended option: Proceed with approval of space for the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market*

This option will allow this important community event to continue. Furthermore, it demonstrates the City's support for this important sector.

With Council support, Staff will work, where feasible, to promote the Farmers' Market. This will help to support communities, agri-food businesses and entrepreneurs across Vaughan.

## **Financial Impact**

Staff reviewed the City's rates for public permits and special events. The City has a Parking Lot permit fee (3 to 5 hours) of \$115.25 (plus HST) for Community Service Organizations. The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market organization is proposing to use the parking lot at the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena each Saturday from 9

a.m. to 1 p.m. for a period of 18 weeks. This represents roughly \$2,200 of in-kind support

In addition, the City provides a storage container to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society during the 5-month period of operation for the Market. The value of this rental in 2019 is \$141.25 per month. This represents roughly \$800 of in-kind support.

If Council adopts Recommendation 2 of this report, it would equate to roughly \$3,000 of in-kind support to the Woodbridge Agricultural Society per year.

### **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

Supporting York Region's Agri-food strategy are [eleven farmer's markets](#). The Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market is one of only two markets West of Hwy 400 in the Region. The Woodbridge Market's attendance numbers demonstrate its value to the community in Vaughan and York Region.

Support for the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market would also demonstrate support for the Region's Agri-food sector.

### **Conclusion**

Farmers' markets form a vital part of the local food systems, allowing producers to connect directly with consumers. They provide an economic and social benefit to communities, contributing to placemaking. Beyond being the backbone of the local food movement, markets are gathering places for neighbours, supporting social interaction and community engagement; places for community activations and economic generators common to communities with a vibrant social and cultural fabric.

Support of the Woodbridge Village Farmers' Market with the rental fees allows the organizers to repurpose operational dollars towards marketing, programming and attracting quality local vendors necessary to sustaining the market.

**For more information**, please contact: Raphael Costa, Manager, Small Business and Entrepreneurship, ext. 8891

### **Attachments**

1. Report on the 2018 Market Season, Woodbridge Agricultural Society,
2. Attendance at the 2018 Market, Woodbridge Agricultural Society, October 14, 2018
3. Letter of Request From the Woodbridge Framers' Market Committee. February 13, 2019.

**Prepared by**

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