

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: Durham Region Farmers' Market Association 2024 – 2027 Lease Agreement

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: April 8, 2024

Report Number: CAO 08-24

Department(s) Responsible:

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Submitted by:

Sarah Klein, Director Strategic Initiatives

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell,
Chief Administrative Officer**

For additional information, contact:

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1. Recommendation:

1. That Report CAO 08-24 be received for information;
2. That staff be authorized to prepare a Lease Agreement between the Durham Region Farmers' Market Association and the Town of Whitby, in accordance with the recommendations contained in Report CAO 08-24 for the use of Parking Lot 9 in Brooklin and Celebration Square at the Whitby Public Library effective May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2027; and,
3. That the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Lease Agreement upon terms substantially in accordance with Attachment 1 of the Report and in a form satisfactory to the Commissioner of Legal and Enforcement Services/Town Solicitor or designate.

2. Highlights:

- The purpose of this Report is to seek Council's authorization to execute a three-year lease agreement between the Town of Whitby and the Durham

Region Farmers' Market Association known locally as the Whitby Farmers' Market and herein after referred to as the Market.

- The Durham Region Farmers' Market Association provides a retail opportunity for local farmers, growers, producers, artists and crafters and an enhancement to both Downtown Whitby and Downtown Brooklin.
- The only significant change to the current lease agreement compared to the previous one is the addition of free parking for market vendors on Wednesdays during their season.

3. Background:

The Durham Region Farmers' Market Association (Market) is a not-for-profit organization that has been in operation since 1997. The Town has partnered with the Market since its launch, working together to improve their location and establish their presence in the downtown. The Market started in Municipal Parking Lot 5 on Green Street, then re-located to the old Fire Hall site in 2007. In 2017 it moved to Celebration Square at the Whitby Public Library. In June 2021, the Market opened its second location in Downtown Brooklin in Municipal Parking Lot 9.

The work of the Market aligns with Whitby's Culture Plan Direction 1, Goal 1, Action D to recognize, collaborate and enhance Whitby's food scene and Direction 1, Goal 4, Action A to support the development of new agri-culinary experiences within Whitby.

The Town of Whitby is committed to collaborating with community partners to host safe and enjoyable events while supporting downtown businesses. Patrons and vendors appreciate the collaboration to bring local food growers and producers together in the community. Each Market location currently has over 30 vendors and includes many local agriculture businesses, growers, producers, bakers, crafters, and artisans. The Market also partners with the Town and attends events such as Brooklin Harvest Festival and Whitby Lights the Night.

4. Discussion:

The Town of Whitby's current lease agreement with the Market was effective from May 1, 2021 and ended on October 31, 2023. Since this lease agreement is expired, staff are seeking Council's approval to enter into a new lease agreement effective from May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2027 which reflects the current terms plus the addition of free parking for market vendors on Wednesdays.

Wednesday Market - Celebration Square

The Market operates at Celebration Square in front of the Whitby Public Library Central Branch on Wednesdays from May to October between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Celebration Square continues to provide a connection between

the outdoor square and the library in addition to offering Downtown Whitby patrons, business owners and residents an active community space.

The Market can support up to 35 vendor booths at this location and on a weekly basis provides local performers and musicians an opportunity to showcase their talent, creating a lively atmosphere.

Parking in Downtown Whitby on Market Days

In 2023, the Town worked with private property owners to provide support on Market days to assist with directing patrons of the Market to nearby public parking lots.

The Town secured parking enforcement to monitor the area surrounding the Whitby Public Library during peak hours and provided signage to local businesses to assist with parking concerns. The Town also supported the Market with directional 'Green P' parking signs that were placed strategically around the Whitby Public Library block to help further direct patrons to appropriate public parking.

To support the businesses affected during the 2023 Market season, the Town shared communications with patrons regarding the private parking lots and available parking options within the vicinity of the library.

In addition, in 2023, the Town sought a partnership with 360 Insights to utilize the north portion of their parking lot for Famers' Market vendors seeking free parking.

The four (4) parking spaces along King Street are available for Market vendors to load-in/out on market days only.

In 2024, the Town will further support the Market by providing their vendors with free parking in municipal parking lots on Wednesdays during their season.

Saturday Market - Brooklin Parking Lot #9

The Saturday Market operates June to October from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This will be the fourth year for the Market at this location. The Market helps to enhance Downtown Brooklin and provides a walkable convenient location and a second day on a weekend for residents to shop and support local market vendors.

To support the Market in Brooklin, the Town coordinates a portable washroom with hand washing facilities available on market days and provides customized Market banners on the light poles within Municipal Lot 9 as well as Curbex signage directing patrons to their location.

5. Financial Considerations:

The Town's annual operating budget includes \$6,500 to support the Market. This budget includes costs for signage, marketing and promotions and portable washroom rental for the Brooklin location. As part of the 2024 budget process, it was identified that the cost of providing free parking in municipal parking lots for Market vendors is an additional \$5,000 per year. Council provided direction to

proceed with the free parking but not to include it in the budget. Accordingly, the \$5,000 will be offset by other operating budget savings in 2024 and future years.

The Market collects membership fees from their vendors to help pay for their own operating costs.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

Both Communications and Creative Services and the Creative Communities teams continue to support the Market by providing design and coordination of Curbex signage, parking and directional signs, event marketing, advertisements and promotional support through the Town's website, social media channels and access to hang their large banner on the library's external wall.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

Delivery of the Market relies on continued collaboration among municipal departments and the Whitby Public Library. This report has been prepared in collaboration with Legal Services.

8. Strategic Priorities:

The Market aligns with Whitby's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2023 – 2026, as identified in:

- Strategic Pillar 1: Whitby's Neighbourhoods, Action 1.2.2 Enhance Whitby's culinary and live music sectors through collaborative partnerships.
- Strategic Pillar 3: Whitby's Economy, Action 3.1.4 Supports the green economy, agriculture, and agri-business.
- Strategic Pillar 3: Whitby's Economy, Action 3.2.5 Implement initiatives that support our downtowns as thriving destinations.

The Market ensures both accessibility and sustainable practices and principles are incorporated throughout the set-up and market day by ensuring they are resilient, pedestrian friendly, for all abilities and continue to take into consideration various types of abilities and barriers. As an example, the Brooklin location has the accessible parking available steps from access to the Market. The Market provides opportunity to bring local farmers into the community to deliver fresh, local food to a growing number of shoppers that enjoy food that is not only healthy, but environmentally friendly and sustainable.

9. Attachments:

Attachment 1 – 2024-2027 Durham Region Farmers' Market Association Lease Agreement