

DATE: January 13, 2025

REPORT NO: CS-01-2025

SUBJECT: **Music, Market and Park It Event Assessment**

CONTACT: Wendy Beaty, Coordinator of Recreation Services
Mike DiPaola, Director of Operations

OVERVIEW:

- The purpose of this Report is to provide Committee with an assessment of the 2024 Music, Market and Park It event series.
- Based on the vendor applications received, the Market portion of the Music, Market and Park It events was presented as an open market format because a registered Farmers' Market would not have been a viable option for the 2024 season, due to low participate of farm vendors.
- Based on input from event participants and visitors and the assessment provided in this Report, Administration considers the Music, Market and Park It event series a successful endeavour.
- This Report along with the data and analysis provides insight for future event planning, and Administration will continue to deliver this event in a similar structure in 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Information Report CS-01-2025, titled "Music, Market and Park It Event Assessment", dated January 13, 2025, be received for information.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme #1

- **BUILD** – a safe, connected, caring and active community.

Theme #3

- **ENRICH** – our strong agricultural legacy.

BACKGROUND:

In 2021, the Township received a grant through the Rural Economic Development (RED) program in the amount of \$71,800 with an end date of March 2023. The grant was to create a Farmers' Market in West Lincoln through funding that supported operational costs and the hiring of a Market Coordinator until March 2023. The Market Coordinator hours were equivalent to approximately 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). Due to a late start in 2021, an extension to the time period of the grant was approved, extending the grant funding period until September 2023.

The 2021 and 2022 Farmers' Markets were implemented through the office of the CAO. The markets in 2021 ran from July 23 to October 8 on Fridays from 3:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and there was a Winter Market held in November. In 2022, there was an Easter Market held in April and the regular season markets ran from May 27 to September 30 on Fridays from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. There was also a Winter Market held in November of 2022. The average number of vendors who participated in the 2021 and 2022 seasons ranged from 12 to 14 with a peak of 24 vendors.

In 2023, the Market Coordinator portfolio was transferred to the Public Works and Recreation Department. Two, pre-season, plant markets were held on May 16 and 23. The regular season markets ran from June 13 to October 3 on Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and there was a Winter Market held in November. The number of vendors who participated in 2023 averaged 12 to 15.

Planning for the 2024 Farmers' Market began in September of 2023 as financial support through the Rural Economic Development (RED) grant came to an end and the Market Coordinator position was no longer funded. In September 2023 the following recommendations were approved and ratified by Council to support future planning of events in an effort to prepare for the 2024 year.

1. That, Recommendation Report REC-05-2023, re: West Lincoln Santa Claus Parade Event, dated September 18, 2023 be received; and,
2. That, Council approve the extension of the Recreation and Wellness Programmer contract from January 1, 2024 to March 1, 2024 funded through a transfer from the Contingency Reserve in the amount of \$14,000.

Administration completed the following Farmers' Market related tasks during the months of January, February and March of 2024.

- Consulted Farmers' Markets Ontario (FMO) to discuss
 - The Market Vendor Member Program
 - Requirements for registration as a Farmers' Market with FMO
 - Insurance coverage options
 - Farm vendor eligibility
- Consulted with Niagara Region Public Health Department to discuss
 - Public Health Requirements and documentation

- Food safety at Farmers' Markets
- Farmers' Market eligibility
- Process of registering as a Farmers' Market with the Niagara Region
- Contacted the following businesses, organizations and individuals to gather information
 - Niagara Region Farmers' Market Managers in other municipalities
 - Potential market vendors (farms, farm businesses)
 - Potential car show clubs
 - Chamber of Commerce
- Development of application forms
- Coordination with internal staffing to develop operational event logistics

Administration was not able to finalize and promote details at this time as the 2024 Budget had not been approved yet. Administration proposed a service level request of 1.0 FTE (Full Time equivalent) for an Events Planner position to administer a full season Farmers' Market and to assist in the conversion of the Santa Claus Parade event to a Township operated event.

Through the 2024 Budget deliberations, a new event series was approved by Council for the 2024 season, marrying the West Lincoln Farmers' Market with the Music in the Park concert series and adding a car show.

The 2024 Approved Budget included a temporary 0.5 FTE to administer the new Music, Market and Park It event along with the Santa Claus Parade event under the portfolio of the Events Planner.

Music, Market and Park It was planned to include a total of 6 events plus 2 special markets (Canada Day & Parade Day-Holiday Market) in 2024. Those events were as follows:

1. Canada Day – Market at the Canada Day event – July 1
2. Music, Market and Park It – July 16
3. Music, Market and Park It – July 23
4. Music, Market and Park It – July 30
5. Music, Market and Park It – August 6
6. Music, Market and Park It – August 13
7. Music, Market and Park It – August 20
8. Parade Day – Holiday Market – November 30

The Parade Day - Holiday Market was recently presented to the community on November 30 on the morning of the Santa Claus Parade event. There were approximately 40 vendors that participated in the Holiday Market. This event and its related details, including the financial information, are excluded from this report.

During the 2024 Budget approval process, Council requested that the Administration report back with an update on the event format. This update was provided in April 2024.

CURRENT SITUATION:

At the April 15, 2024 Public Works Committee meeting, the following resolutions were adopted.

1. That report REC-01-2024 titled “Music, Market and Park It Update”, dated April 15, 2024, be received for information; and
2. That staff be directed to report back to a Public Works Committee meeting at the conclusion of the 2024 “Music, Market and Park It” event to provide for an assessment of the event, including a full assessment of the cost, to assist in planning future events.

Administration has prepared this Report to provide an assessment of the Music, Market and Park It events that took place from July 16 to August 20. The assessment process included the collection of data and feedback through observation and surveys with vendors, musicians, car show participants and visitors. The results are provided in this Report.

In order to complete a full assessment of the event and the cost, this Report is divided into two parts. Part One of the Report discusses the **Planning Phase and Event Details**. Part Two of the Report is focused on **Results, Outcomes and Budget**.

Part 1 - Planning Phase and Event Details

After the approval of the 2024 Budget, a Music, Market and Park It promotion and recruitment plan was developed and implemented through collaboration with the Communication Specialist. The promotion and recruitment plan included promotion of the new event format, recruitment of vendors for the market, recruitment of car show participants and recruitment of musical performers.

Promotion

Promotion of Music, Market and Park It began immediately after the approval of the 2024 Budget. On March 14, 2024 a media release was published and a new webpage was created. On March 21, 2024 a recruitment plan was initiated calling for vendors to contact the Township. A survey was conducted with potential vendors, which garnered 24 responses. Early promotional efforts were geared towards evaluating interest and data to finalize the event format for 2024.

A full breakdown of Administration’s promotion efforts is attached as Schedule A – 2024 Promotion Efforts for Music, Market and Park It.

Recruitment

The new webpage on the Township’s website was updated as the event format was finalized with the Report to Council in April. The webpage shared information about the

event format, how to apply to be a vendor, how to apply to be a musical performer and how to become a participant in the car show. A series of preliminary social media posts also provided event and application information. Recruitment of market vendors continued throughout the summer.

The following information summarizes Administration's recruitment efforts, broken down by category.

Music

- 65 emails were sent to potential musicians
- 70 applications were received by the end of the application period
- 6 applicants were selected for musical performances at six (6) events were made based on budget, genre and talent.

Market

- 271 emails were sent to potential market vendors, mostly farm vendors
- 32 applications were received by the end of the application period
- 3 applicants were farm vendors
- In order to register as a Farmers' Market, the market must have at least 51% farm vendors. With 3 farm vendors, this would result in a total of 5 vendors if the market were to register as a Farmers' Market.
- The decision was made to continue with an open market rather than registering the market with Farmers' Markets Ontario (FMO). Registration with FMO would have imposed limitations that would not allow for a viable market based on the applications that were received.
- Moving forward with an open market supported the 3 farm vendors by allowing all vendors to participate.
- Promotion and recruitment of market vendors continued and vendors were accepted throughout the entire event season.
- 5 new vendors also applied part way through the season
- Because of the decision to move forward with an open market, it was also decided that the cost of insurance for vendors would be covered under the Market Operating Budget. This could be done by utilizing the Township's User Group Insurance Program which did not impact the operating budget negatively.

Park It

- 62 emails were sent to potential car show participants which included car clubs, and individuals.
- Township social media posts were shared to various car club social media groups.
- Flyers were provided for a volunteer to distribute at upcoming car shows.

Event Details

- Location - West Lincoln Community Centre
 - Outdoors (band shell and south-west parking lot)
 - Indoors (arena floor and main lobby)

- Market and car show began at 4:00 p.m.
- Musical Performers (7:00pm to 8:45pm)
 - July 16 – Wicked Truth
 - July 23 – Doppelganger
 - July 30 – Fiddlestix
 - Aug. 6 – Marty Allen Band
 - Aug. 13 – The Rock “N” Ray Michaels Retro Rockers
 - Aug. 20 – Kelsi Mayne
- Music was (first set) 7:00 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. & (second set) 8:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.
- 6 events were held
 - 4 events were held outdoors (1 event ended early at 7:30 p.m. due to rain)
 - 2 events were held indoors

During the planning phase and throughout the events, it was noted that there is interest in the Music, Market and Park It event in the West Lincoln community; However, participation from farm vendors appeared to be low. There was a lot of interest from musical performers based on the number of applications that were received. Car show participants provided feedback encouraging continuation of the event, which may increase car show participation in future.

Part 2 – Results, Outcomes and Budget

Data and feedback were collected for both qualitative and quantitative outcomes. Information was collected during the planning phase and during and after the events.

Attendance and Participation

The following table summarizes the attendance and participation for each event of the Music, Market and Park It series.

			MUSIC	MARKET					PARK IT
	Indoor or Outdoor	Weather	Peak Concert Attendance	Food Vendors	Farm Vendors	Other Vendors	TOTAL Vendors	Peak Market Shopper Count	Car Show Participants
July 16	Outdoor	Rain	100	6	2	9	17	20	13
July 23	Outdoor	Clear	120	7	3	7	17	34	6
July 30	Indoor	Rain	176	5	4	10	19	64	1
August 6	Indoor	Rain	80	4	3	5	12	19	0
August 13	Outdoor	Clear	201	6	3	8	17	61	20
August 20	Outdoor	Clear	147	5	2	6	13	55	19
AVERAGES			137	6	3	8	16	42	10

Peak Concert Attendance - The number of attendees for the musical performance was counted for each event. The weather, and if the event was held indoors or outdoors, are factors that may contribute to attendance results, although a definitive correlation is difficult to conclude from this data. It would seem that the popularity of the performer and the desired genre of the performance may have been a higher influence on attendance.

Peak Market Shopper Count - Counts of the number of shoppers in the market area were done throughout each event. The chart below shows the highest number of shoppers counted. Generally, the highest shopper count was noted between 5:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. The weather and if the event was held indoors or outdoors are factors that may contribute to the market shopper counts, although a definitive correlation is difficult to conclude from this data.

Market Vendors - Vendors were able to register to participate in a single market, or multiple markets or the entire season (8 markets). This resulted in each market having a different selection of vendors. The charts below show the arrangement of vendors for each market based on product.

Car Show Participants - The chart above shows the total number of cars that participated in the car show portion of Music, Market and Park It each week. Car show participants arrived at various times beginning at 4:00 p.m. Weather greatly affected the number of participants in the car show portion.

Feedback

Feedback During Events - At each event, surveys were done randomly with visitors, vendors and car show participants. A summary of the survey questions and results is attached as Schedule B – Music, Market and Park It Events Surveys Summary. 68 surveys were completed.

Post-Event Survey Results - At the completion of the Music, Market and Park It summer events, a survey was sent to market vendors and musical performers and car show participants. The market vendors' survey was composed of different questions than the musical performances and car show participants survey. Both surveys were available via Survey Monkey and were open for responses for a period of two (2) weeks. 10 surveys (53% response) were completed by vendors and 16 surveys (62% response) were completed by musical performers and car show participants.

Results from the market vendor survey are attached as Schedule C – Market Vendor Survey Results.

Results from the musical performers and car show participants are attached as Schedule D – Entertainment Survey Results.

Budget

The Music, Market and Park It event was implemented through two areas of the approved 2024 Operating Budget. The two areas (Music in the Park operating budget and Farmers’ Market operating budget) are shown below and represent the approved budget and the actual budget figures. There was not a car show budget and it was not necessary due to very low financial requirements.

The charts below do not reflect staffing costs.

2024 Music in the Park Budget		
	Budget	Actual
Revenue		
sponsors	(\$ 2,500)	(\$ 1,500)
Expenses		
advertising	\$ 700	\$ 140
program supplies	\$ 2,500	\$ 30
outside services (performers, sound production)	<u>\$16,200</u>	<u>\$14,900</u>
	\$19,400	\$15,070
NET	\$16,900	\$13,570

Note – in-kind sponsorship was also received

2024 Farmers’ Market Budget		
	Budget	Actual
Revenue		
vendor fees	(\$ 7,200)	(\$ 2,755)
Expenses		
mileage	\$ 200	\$ 0
advertising	\$ 2,500	\$ 299
program supplies	\$ 2,000	\$ 50
outside services (entertainment, rentals, FMO membership, insurance)	<u>\$ 6,200</u>	<u>\$ 1,552</u>
	\$10,900	\$ 1,901
NET	\$ 3,700	(\$ 854)

Note – Holiday Market is Excluded

Based on input from event participants and visitors and the assessment provided in this Report, Administration considers the Music, Market and Park It event series a

successful endeavour. The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the 2024 and 2025 Music, Market and Park It event are briefly summarized below. Administration will continue to deliver this event in 2025 in a similar format and structure as the 2024 event.

Strengths

- value added to existing events through the combination of three features (music, market and car show)
- positive relationships were developed with vendors, musicians and car show enthusiasts
- positive feedback was received from vendors, participants and visitors

Weaknesses

- did not grow the Farmers' Market as outlined in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan
- low participation from farm vendors

Opportunities

- continue to build relationships with vendors, musicians and car show enthusiasts to increase participation, specifically focused on farm vendor participation
- familiarity and awareness in the community has potential to increase attendance and participation

Threats

- an open market format may be the result for future events, which does not fulfil the goal of growing the Farmer's Market specifically
- changes to future event format may slow progress for increasing participation
- separation of events in the future may not meet expectations of the community
- the Events Planner position, as a temporary/term position, may present a concern regarding proper resourcing of the event

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Music, Market and Park It events were completed within the approved 2024 operating budget in the areas of Music in the Park and Farmers' Market.

The net financial result for the 2024 Music in the Park budget area is \$13,570 which is \$3,330 less than the approved net budget of \$16,900. The net financial result for the 2024 Farmers' Market shows that the revenue exceeds the expenses by \$854, which does not include staffing costs.

The staffing allocation for the Farmer's Market Coordinator for the 2021, 2022, and 2023 Farmer Markets was approximately 700 hours per year, which cost was partially funded (50%) through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Grant. In 2024, the approved staffing allocation for the Event Planner position to run the Music, Market, & Park It Event and the Santa Claus Parade was 910 hours, with 455 hours dedicated to

each event.

The Music, Market and Park It events for 2025 will be managed within the existing Recreation Budget and will proceed with the Events Manager position funded by the levy.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

This Report was reviewed by the CAO, the Director of Finance and the Clerk's Department.

CONCLUSION:

The 2023-2026 Corporate Strategic Plan sets a goal to "Grow the Farmers' Market". Based on the market vendor applications that were received, the 2024 Music, Market and Park It event series was presented as an open market format, rather than a registered Farmers' Market due to the lack of farm vendors.

Based on input from event participants and visitors and the assessment provided in this Report, the Administration considers the Music, Market and Park It event series a successful endeavour. Results and Outcomes collected at the completion of the Music, Market and Park It events indicate a high level of satisfaction from participants and visitors to the event. The event as a whole was well received and results were positive.

Administration will continue to deliver this event in 2025 in a similar format and structure as the 2024 event.

Prepared & Submitted by:

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Mike DiPaola, P.Eng

Director of Operations

Approved by:

Truper McBride

Chief Administrative Officer

- Schedule A - 2024 Promotion of Music, Market & Park It
- Schedule B – Music, Market and Park It Event Surveys Summary
- Schedule C - Music, Market & Park It - Vendor Survey
- Schedule D - Music, Market & Park It - Entertainment Survey