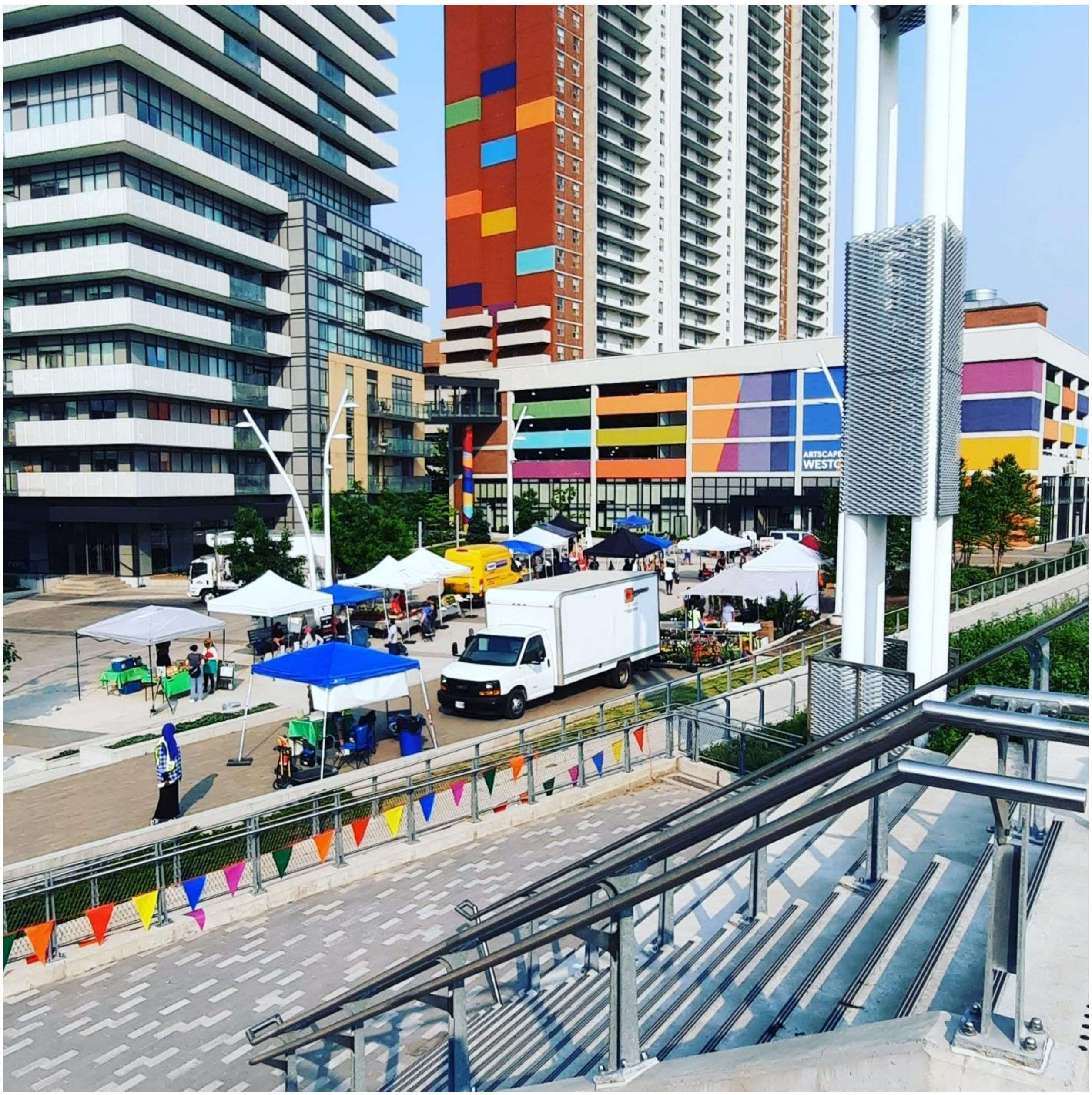
WESTON FARMERS' MARKET

Sponsored by the Weston Village BIA

2023 Report



Summary

In 2023, the market focused on implementing the great feedback that was received last year from guests and vendors. This was mainly accomplished through improved governance systems, whereas the expanded vendor guidebook provided a new structure for organizing and operating the market. Having clear guidelines and being strict to them allowed for fairness and transparency for the market. The biggest challenge this year in terms of organization was the staff-hours that went toward vendor follow up. More than 20 vendors applied that had no intention of actually joining. It is suspected that vendors will apply for multiple markets at once, and when approve will choose which one to actually join. We are attempting to mitigate this by introducing a non-refundable application fee in 2024, applied upon submission of application to weed out those who are not serious about building customers in Weston. This may also encourage more hyper-local vendors to be a part of the market.

We did collect three major data points each week of the market which were attendance, estimated sales, and infractions. Although we put less than half the advertising this year as last, the difference in attendance overall was 1,918 visitors. This can mean one of two things; either our advertising in 2022 was ineffective, or our previous advertising has led to increased word of mouth. There was little to no change in the way people entered the market or the time that people arrived from 2022.

Vendors were required to provide their estimated sales each week of the market. The total estimate was $138K for the season. Based on this, the average spend per person each week is $8 which could use improvement. A full time vendor can expect to make $3,467.20 per stall for the season, though of course this depends on the type of product being sold. Specifics can be shared upon request by vendor type. It is important to note that some vendors would not participate in reporting their earnings, or resisted doing so and this has been reported as an infraction as seen on the infraction type chart. Every $100 spent locally contributes to an additional $45 into the local economy; therefore it is estimated the Farmers' Market injected an additional $62,409.60 spent locally in Weston.

New this year, we created a new Instagram account strictly for the farmers market that automatically appeared on our website. There were on average 3 posts per week in addition to a weekly "who's coming" list. The account garnered 350 followers from May-Oct organically, and there was positive feedback that weekly updates were appreciated.

This year, the BIA did not offer to waive stall fees for new farmers as it did not have the ROI we would have liked, with only 2/5 farms returning on a part time basis in 2023. We are happy to report that these farms have started to gain a loyal customer base and plan to return in 2024. The addition of Campagna Farm was a great addition to the market.

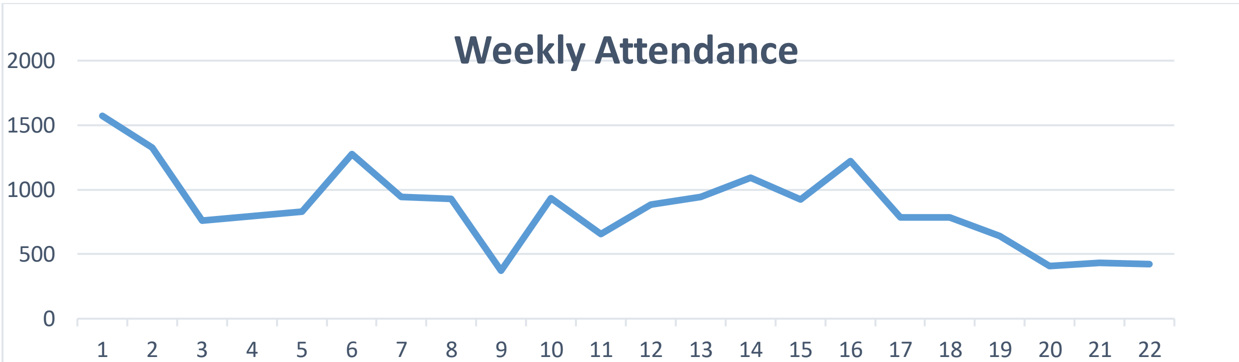
Overall event revenue was down by $4,970.02 compared to last year, however in 2022 we collected HST in which this year we did not therefore true difference would be $1,889.40 less. Following this, we were short of our vendor revenue goal by 7,161.52 therefore we ensured our 2024 budget will be more realistic. However, the market ended with $8,246.36 in profit as there were major cost savings due to not needing porto-potties and being able to reuse signage from 2022. Over all the market generated $2,146.36 more profit than expected that can go towards additional BIA programming and improvements.

There were no issues this year in terms of accessibility for all days of the market, no car tows needed. We had a great market supervisor who attended to all matters calmly and professionally.

Recommendations

- **Not completed from last year -** The Weston Village BIA board should work on creating a mission statement for the Farmers Market to define its purpose. What kind of market does it want to be? The realities of the location being at the Artscape Weston Common mean its potential for revenue generation and high attendance is more limited. **I suggest the focus be on business incubation.**
- **Still relevant, the market hours were only reduced by 30 mins later from last year.** Consider starting the market later and ending later for a more casual approach. Many of the businesses are not open until 9-10am, it makes sense to coincide the market to when the main street is also open for business to encourage more local shopping.
- Explore potential grants the BIA can apply to help with the regrowth of the market since we now have two years of good data. Other markets have successfully received grants to do a "Market Coupon" program – prepaid coupons distributed by the local agencies/shelters/foodbanks to be used at the market. It was found most users of the coupons spent some of their own money they may not have spent if they didn't feel welcome.
- Consider a membership with Market Cities Network for $350/year; they hosted the Public Market conference and can provide resources and networking opportunities.
- Consider using the Manage My Market tool to make managing vendor placement week to week more efficient.
- The situation with Artscape needs to be clarified; if it is not open in time for the market the BIA will once again need to invest money into porto-potties.
- Ensure those 6 vendors with high infraction rates are dealt with appropriately; their acceptance as a vendor in 2024 should be conditional. The failure to follow the guidelines brings down the market and causes unnecessary stress for staff.
- Identify what the market is missing and target those vendors; we don't need several farms selling the same items. We do not have the attendance to justify that amount of competition.
- The BIA will be creating a marketing plan in 2024 – ensure the marketing for the events such as a the Farmers Market is included and/or guidance is given on how to better utilize our limited advertising dollars.
- Would not recommend lawn signs; not only are they expensive but they require manpower and time to put out. Majority of those that were put out end of May were gone within a week. Can use the leftovers and those recollected for next year (approx. 50 pieces)

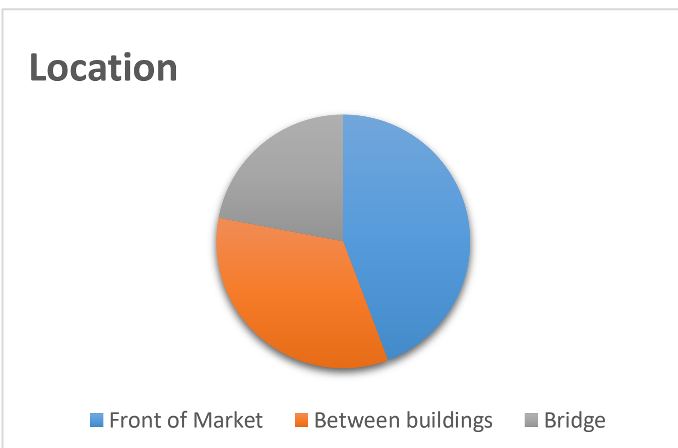
Attendance



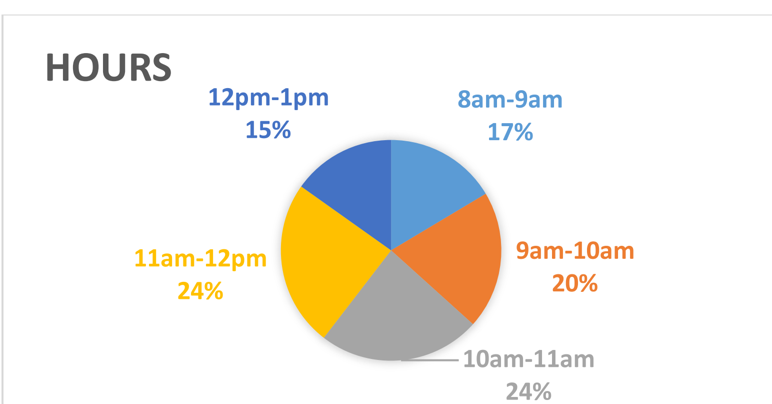
Total Attendance for season: 18,934 Average Weekly Attendance: 861

Highest: 1,572 (Week 1 – Opening Day) Lowest: 372 (Week 9 – Rainstorm)

Percent Average Attendance by Entrance:



Percent Average Attendance by Hour:



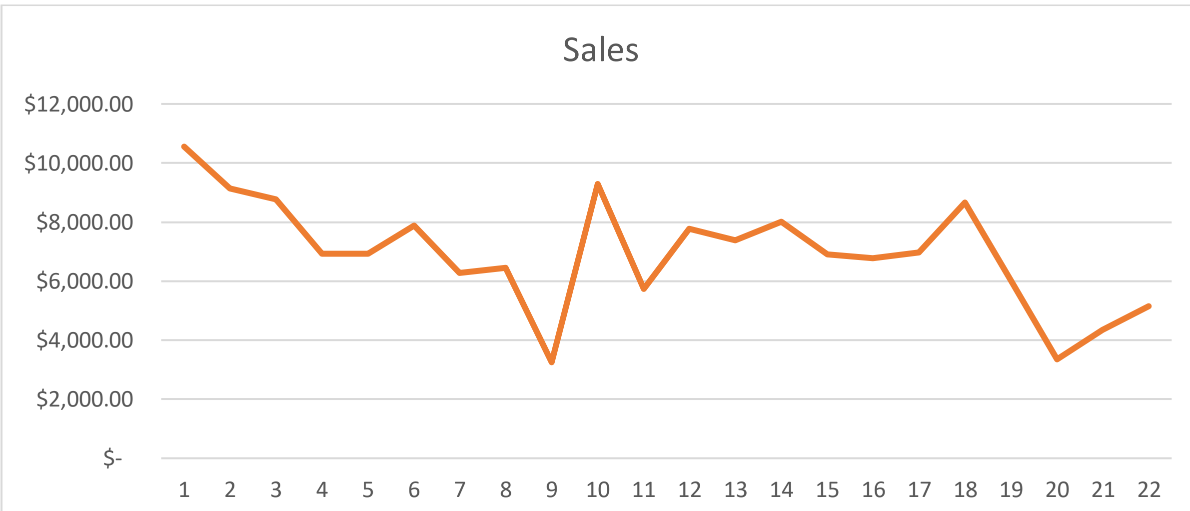
Vendors & Governance

Vendor by Category:

- Artisan – 25
- BIA members, non-profits and community – 8
- Prepared Food – 30
- Primary Producer – 9
- Vehicle – 5

Vendor by Commitment:

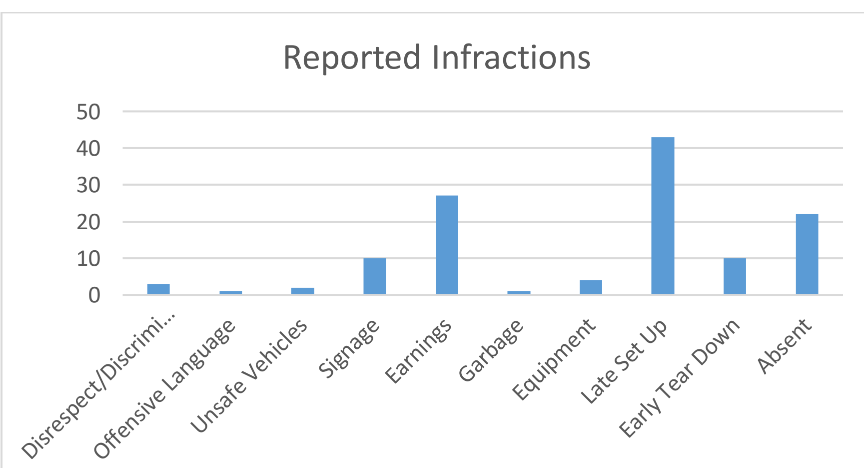
- Part Time (1-5 times) – 41
- Part Time (6-10 times) - 16
- Part Time (+10 times) - 4
- Full Time - 16



Total Estimated Sales $138,688

Average Sales $6,934.40

Infractions



Total reported infractions: 123

By Vendor:

- No infractions: 42
- Less than 5 infractions: 29
- More than 5 infractions: 6

Financials

Revenues

Source	**Proposed**	**Actuals**
Vendors	$30,000.00	$22,838.48
Sponsorship	$2,000.00	$4,500.00
Donations	$0.00	$100.00
TOTAL	**$32,000.00**	**$ 27,438.48**

Expenses

Budget Item	**Proposed**	**Actuals**
Market Manager	$5,000.00	$5,000.00
Market Supervisor	$4,000.00	$2,828.55
Entertainers	$5,000.00	$3,410.00
Permits	$0.00	$100.00
Signage	$2,000.00	$236.00
Advertising/Promotion	$5,000.00	$6,201.02
Porto-Potties	$2,400.00	$0.00
Tents/Equipment	$500.00	$314.63
General Expenses	$2,000.00	$1,101.92
TOTAL	**$25,900.00**	**$ 19,192.12**