



Hamilton Farmers' Market Board Meeting

Senior Program Manager & Market Managers' Reports (Combined)

Monday September 22, 2025

Local Showcase In Transition

The Local Showcase continues to draw interest from the local small business community and will continue Friday's and Saturdays to the end of the September. The Local Showcase will be transitioning to its new home currently occupied by Buttrum's Family Farm. Buttrum's will be transitioning themselves to a Saturday-only format in a downsized space as part of the re-launched Local Showcase. Vendor participation includes Humble Bee, Caribb Pop, and Summit Station Dairy after its September break in addition to Buttrum's Family Farm. This initiative will allow the Market flexibility to better utilize the new space on all Market days as well as work with a legacy farm to meet their needs to allow them to continue long term in the Hamilton Farmers' Market.

Market Painting - Update

The Market railing that runs from the base of the lower-level ramp to the end of the upper-level ramp has been recently painted to add to the overall luster of the Market. The project will be complete with the installation of the Market's Fall banners.

NEW HFM Lil' KIDS CLUB Launches with Fall Programming

Our new Lil' Kids Club is a Farmers Market themed weekly drop-in program designed for young children aged 0-4. This program introduces the love of the market experience through music, story-telling and interactive play. It's designed to build a foundation of social skills and strong sense of community as well as a love of music and the market. Classes include singing, interactive play, instruments, movement, storytelling and listening activities. This program is hosted by Enchantment Theatre.

Vendor Movement in the Market

We are excited to share that Coati Chocolate has relocated from their lower-level stall to the former Jepson's Fresh Meats on the upper level adjacent to the Jackson Square entrance. Their track record of excellent market attendance will be appreciated by the surrounding vendors and will add both interest and exposure to a new audience.

In addition, Ami Bae Café located at the York Blvd entrance of the Market will be expanding into the vacated space adjacent to them effective October 1st.



Hamilton Farmers' Market Vendor Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the development of the draft Hamilton Farmers' Market Vendor Attendance Policy (HFMVAP) and provides explanation to HFMC Board Members on certain changes and additions that have been made since the initial draft policy was presented in 2024. The current draft policy is included at the end of this report for review.

TIMELINE

The first version of a proposed HFMVAP was presented to the HFMC Board of Directors in Q4 2024. Board members provided comment and staff proposed that a vendor survey be undertaken to solicit further input on the proposed policy. The main feedback received is summarized in the five points below:

- Vacations should be allowed and tracked separately from other types of absences.
- Penalties for contravention of the HFMVAP should be financial instead of mandated stall closures.
- Provide clearly defined attendance rules and absence allowances and remove sole discretion of the Market Manager for enforcement of the policy.
- Provide some flexibility in terms of opening/closing hours due to the differences in business types in the market.
- While not universal, the proposed 3 day/week allowance for farmers was supported by a majority of vendors.

In Q2 2025 staff carried out a follow-up vendor survey to gain further insight on a variety of market matters, including preferred operating hours. The following survey question was the most applicable in the development of the revised HFMVAP.

Survey Question: What Hours Would You Prefer to be Open?

Vendor Response	# of Responses
Keep the Same Hours	18
No Response	12
Stay Open After 5pm	5
Open at 10am	4
Open at 8am	2
Close at 4pm	1

(Total Survey Responses = 43)

Based on the survey responses and the daily monitoring of vendor attendance, offering the option of a later start or earlier closure time provides some flexibility to vendors while maintaining clear and reliable hours for market visitors.

LOCAL SHOWCASE & OTHER TEMPORARY VENDOR INITIATIVES

One new addition to the draft HFMVAP relates to new initiatives launched since the creation of the original HFMVAP.

Feedback from vendors who have participated in the Local Showcase has been positive overall, but a limitation noted from a few primary producers has been the long market hours. In comparison to other local markets, the HFM daily hours are approximately double and this presents a barrier to attracting new and interesting vendors to the HFM. In order to attract and maintain primary producers it is proposed that participating vendors be required to operate from 9am to 3pm, with the option of staying later, or opening earlier (on Saturdays).

IMPLEMENTATION

It is proposed that the Vendor Attendance Policy is enacted as of January 2, 2026. Upon approval by the HFMC Board of Directors, staff will inform all vendors and be available to discuss any anticipated compliance issues prior to the end of 2025. It is also proposed that any vendor who does not wish to comply with the new attendance policy can request to be released from their existing stallholder contract.



HAMILTON FARMERS' MARKET - VENDOR ATTENDANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Hamilton Farmers' Market Vendor Attendance Policy (HFMVAP) is to define the expectations of the Hamilton Farmers' Market Corporation (HFMC) relative to vendor attendance at the Hamilton Farmers' Market (HFM). This policy is designed to maximize the customer shopping experience, restore customer confidence, and establish clear rules for all vendors.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The HFM Vendor Attendance Policy applies to all HFM vendors under contract to run their business in the Hamilton Farmers' Market. The goals and objectives of this policy include:

- Ensure equitable compliance among vendors.
- Restore customer confidence that stalls will be open when expected.
- Improve vendor morale through consistent compliance.
- Build customer traffic through predictability of vendor attendance.
- Support the future vision for the Hamilton Farmers' Market.

DEFINITIONS

- "HFM" is defined as the Hamilton Farmers' Market
- "HFMC" is defined as the Hamilton Farmers' Market Corporation
- "HFMVAP" is defined as the Hamilton Farmers' Market Vendor Attendance Policy
- "Primary Producer" is defined as a vendor who grows, raises, or produces the primary or raw products, or utilizes these materials to make other value-added products, that are sold in their stall. This would include fruit, vegetable and flower growers, and livestock farmers, beekeepers, and dairies.

OPENING DAYS/HOURS

1. All Vendors must be open all 4 market days (Wednesday to Saturday), with the exception of primary producers/farmers who can be open 3 or 4 days each week.
 - 1.1. A stall is considered "open" if there are vendor staff present and there is product available for sale.
 - 1.2. All areas of the stall facing the aisles or other common areas must be open and uncovered on all market days.

- 1.3. Farmers/primary producers must open the same 3 days each week and notify the Market Office of any changes to their opening days at least 2 weeks in advance. This notice is required to update the website and prepare updated signage to be posted at the stall.
2. Vendors can choose to be open one of the following:
 - 2.1. Wednesday to Friday - 9am-5pm, 9am-4pm or 10am-5pm
 - 2.2. Saturdays - 8am-5pm, 8am-4pm or 9am-5pm.
 - 2.3. These are set hours that will be posted at the stall and on the HFM website.
 - 2.4. Vendors must provide a minimum of 2 weeks' notice to the Market Office prior to changing these hours. This notice is required to update the website and prepare closure signage to be posted at the stall.
3. Local Showcase & Other Areas of the HFM Supporting Primary Producers and Temporary Vendors
 - 3.1. Areas of the market set up to host primary producers or temporary vendors on a one-time or recurring basis will be required to operate from 9am-3pm.
 - 3.2. Participating vendors may also choose to operate between 3-5pm on all open market days and 8-9am on Saturdays.
 - 3.3. Participating vendors must notify the market office of their planned operating hours at the time of registering/contract signing. This notice is required to update the website and prepare signage to be posted at the stall.

VACATION

4. Vendors are permitted up to 2 vacations per year to a maximum of 16 market days.
 - 4.1. No vacations/stall closures longer than 16 consecutive market days will be permitted.
5. Vendors must inform the Market Office of any vacation or planned stall closure a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the first day of the closure. This notice is required to update the website and prepare closure signage to be posted at the stall.
 - 5.1. For stall closures longer than 2 weeks (8 market days), vendors must provide an area of along the front of the stall for the Market Office to place a display during the stall closure. This display is intended to avoid a prolonged inactive area in the market and provide something of visual interest for market visitors in front of the closed stall.

LATE/EARLY DEPARTURES

6. Vendors are permitted a total of 5 late arrival or early departure occurrences (combined) per year without penalty (based on the license agreement term — prorated for licenses less than 1 year).
 - 6.1. Arrival more than 15 minutes after the posted opening time is considered a late arrival.
 - 6.2. Departure more than 15 minutes prior to the posted closure time is considered an early departure.

- 6.3. Vendors are considered to be in compliance if they can transact business while either setting up at their posted opening time or packing up at their closing time.
- 6.4. Late or Early Departure for the 6th to 10th occurrences will result in a \$50 per occurrence penalty.
- 6.5. Late or Early Departure on the 10th occurrence will require a mandatory meeting with HFM staff to review attendance.
- 6.6. Late or Early Departure for the 11th to 15th occurrences will result in a \$100 per occurrence penalty.
- 6.7. Late or Early Departure on the 16th occurrence will result in termination of the vendor's license agreement.
- 6.8. Occasional early-departure due to selling out of product will not be counted as an early departure, but will be tracked by the Market Office. A 5th occurrence will result in a mandatory meeting between the vendor and HFM staff to determine options to prevent further occurrences. Incidents of early-departure due to selling out of product beyond the 5th occurrence will be counted towards the vendor's early departure allowance.

UNPLANNED ABSENCES

- 7. Vendors are permitted a total of 5 partial or full day closures per year without penalty (based on the license agreement term – prorated for licenses less than 1 year).
 - 7.1. The intent of these days is to cover illness, emergencies, unanticipated product delivery problems, or a personal day-off.
 - 7.2. Vendors must provide notice of the closure to the Market Office by phone ((905) 546-2096), email (farmers.market@hamilton.ca) or in writing (delivered to the Market Office) in advance of market opening on the day of the absence. In the event of illness or emergency, vendors shall inform the Market Office as soon as they are able.
 - 7.3. Multi-day illness or emergencies can be considered a single-day closure event provided the vendor communicates with the Market Office and a reopening date can be determined.
 - 7.4. Closures for the 6th to 10th occurrences will result in a \$75/day penalty.
 - 7.5. Closure on the 10th occurrence will require a mandatory meeting with HFM staff to review attendance and discuss options to prevent further closures.
 - 7.6. Closures for the 11th to 15th occurrences will result in a \$150/day penalty.
 - 7.7. Closure on the 16th occurrence will result in termination of the vendor's license agreement.
- 8. A combined total of Late/Early Departures and Closures exceeding 20 occurrences per year (based on the license agreement term – prorated for licenses less than 1 year) will result in termination of the vendor's license agreement.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 9. All vendors will be notified in advance of the Vendor Attendance Policy launch in writing indicating the effective date.

APPROVAL

<INSERT DATE APPROVED BY THE HFMC>