

EST. 1837
HAMILTON FARMERS'
MARKET
OPEN YEAR ROUND

JANUARY 2026 BOARD MEETING PACKAGE





Hamilton Farmers' Market Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

**Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 5:00 pm
Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall**

- 1. Approval of Agenda**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – November 25, 2025**
- 4. Delegations**
- 5. Items for Information**
 - a) Q4 Programming Review & Year-end Update - Alexandra**
 - b) Q4 Marketing Review & Year-end Update – Terri**
 - c) Q4 Foot Traffic Report – Bill**
 - d) Market Managers' Reports – Bill**
 - e) November Programming and Marketing Motion Follow-up - Adam**
- 6. Items for Consideration**
 - a) Proposed 2026 Operating Budget Amendment – Adam**
 - b) Vendor Attendance Policy - Adam**
- 7. Motions**
- 8. Notices of Motion - None**
- 9. Private & Confidential - None**

Procedural motion to move into camera with only Directors, Adam Watson, Senior HFM Program Manager, Ray Kessler, Contract Manager, and the Market Manager (as required). Discussion of Items in closed session are subject to the following requirement(s) of the Operating Agreement and the Ontario Municipal Act, 2001, 239 (2)
(b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees.
- 10. Adjournment**

Next HFM Board Meeting: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 5:00PM - Council Chambers, City Hall



Hamilton Farmers' Market Board Meeting

HFM Programming Report
Tuesday January 20, 2026

Programming: Quarter 4 in Review

Programming at the Hamilton Farmers' Market in 2025 prioritized an increase in Market vibrancy, integrating vendor and community participation, and strengthening the Market's role as a community hub.

The final quarter of 2025 was a busy one and a culmination of staff, vendor, and community efforts throughout the year. A snapshot of activation attendance and comparative numbers from the previous year include:

	Q4 2025	Q4 2024
Individual Events	32	24
Programming Participants *This data is collected manually by Market staff and volunteers during activations, occasionally supplemented by other City staff and community partners following external activations.	9,131	7,876

Quarter 4 2025 Programming Summary

- **Individual Events:** 32
- **Programming Participants:** 9131
- **Partner Highlights Include:** Chaton, City of Hamilton Economic Development Division, Hamilton Day (Chamber of Commerce), McMaster University, Blk Owned, Hamilton Music Collective, Hamilton Public Library, Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, My Friend Christopher, Rivers and Meadows

Vendor Participation

A Programming highlight this quarter has been the steady increase in vendor participation in programming events, both passive and active. There were **seven individual programming events that included vendor participation** between October and December, and **fourteen vendors who received direct compensation** through their involvement. **Six vendor collaborations** have already been booked across the first and second quarter of 2026, including Market celebrations for Valentines Day, Easter, Mother's Day, and Asian Heritage Month.

Rental Programs

Short-term rental programs (**Market Cart and Local Showcase**) finished the year with full calendars and positive sales reports from vendors. The Local Showcase resumes in January and is fully booked, with additional vendors accommodated on the upper level and a waiting list.

City of Hamilton Collaboration

We continue to grow opportunities for public engagement as facilitated through City of Hamilton resources such as Crime Stoppers (October), Economic Development Division Day lunch (\$1,750 in direct vendor catering sales, October), and we played host to the International Entrepreneurial Market with EcDev Business Development outreach (November). To help encourage and facilitate continued internal City collaboration, Market staff are working with previous partners to develop planning models and vendor catering resources.

Q4 Key Learning

- Feedback from programming participants was clear and consistent
- Vendor opportunities and participation on upward trajectory
- Repeated programs, even smaller ones, delivered consistent impact and Market foot traffic

Programming: 2025 Year in Review

Programming at the Hamilton Farmers' Market serves as a strategic tool designed in alignment with broader City of Hamilton and Market priorities related to placemaking, economic viability, and community connection.

Strategy Development Process

The part-time Market Programming Coordinator role was staffed in August 2024, and recently transitioned to full-time in November 2025. Since August 2024 all programming has

represented core categories: **community programming, vendor driven/collaborative programs, family programming, and revenue generation.**

This straightforward categorization aligns with public-sector best practices of a blended qualitative and quantitative evaluation framework, allows for a proportionate evaluation approach and ensures oversight that is informed, realistic, and aligned with the unique nature of Market operations.

Though there is occasional overlap, each category also broadly outlines intended audience and potential collaborators.

Category	# 2025	# of attendees	Average Cost PP	Impact
Community Programming	40	3,995	\$2.89	<i>Thanks again for your incredible support this past weekend. I think the event went very well and we had a lot of great feedback so far.</i> Stefa Sokolowski Business Development and Global Hamilton Officer, Business Investment and Sector Development
Vendor Driven/Collaborative	8	574	\$3.96	<i>I have been telling other market about the success of the event and hope that they take advantage of the space and what the Market has to offer.</i> Anja Warunkiewicz Chaton Bakery Owner
Family Programming	43	10,437	\$1.20	A collection of questionnaire quotes: “We’ll be back next year” “Thank you for keeping them FREE”
Total	91	15,097	\$2.69	

For additional context, the **revenue generation category** is broken down below by program:

Revenue Generating Program	# of Rentals	Revenue Generated
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Market Cart Daily Rental Program	93	\$3,745.75
Local Showcase, Seasonal Rental Program	218	\$15,298.95
Programming/Event Rental	8	\$1,643.02
Total	319	\$20,687.72

Key Learnings from 2025

1. Rather than one-off events, programming has been intentionally grouped into focused categories to support consistency and long-term sustainability.
2. Smaller repeatable programs often delivered more consistent impact than large, one-time events.
 - a. Examples of this include our Sample Saturday programming, HFM Kids Club (launched Summer 2025), and Lil' Kids Club (launched September 2025).
3. Consistent seasonal programming supported better coordination and clear audience expectations and will continue into 2026.
 - a. Examples include HFM Strawberry Festival, Fall and Halloween related programs, and a robust Holiday calendar in December.
4. Creation of programs/means for vendor-integrated programming has seen a significant increase in participation and alignment with Market capacity.
 - a. This includes the digital form for programming suggestions and inquiries about collaboration. Accommodations have successfully been made for vendors seeking alternative means to begin the conversation.
 - b. Examples include Chaton's gingerbread decorating event (December 2025), EcDev Division Day expression of interest catering form, and Market Chats video series.

In Summary

These learnings are directly informing how programming is being shaped for 2026 and will continue to evolve as a strategic asset for the Hamilton Farmers' Market – supporting vendors, attracting visitors, and strengthening community connection. At the February Board meeting staff will present the preliminary programming calendar for 2026 and integrated evaluative framework.



Hamilton Farmers' Market Board Meeting

2025 Marketing Review Report

Tuesday January 20, 2026

Executive Summary

This report reviews the 2025 marketing performance for Hamilton Farmers' Market, highlighting key KPIs, Google Reviews, top-performing content, and competitor benchmarks.

Social Media

A high-level review of social media performance, 2025 results for Instagram and Facebook with a focus on growth, visibility, and audience engagement over time. The metrics included across both platforms reflect current follower counts, total content views, interactions with posts, and visits to our profiles, offering a clear picture of not just audience size, but how effectively our content is reaching people and driving action. This review also includes performance data for TikTok, which launched in 2025, these results establish an early benchmark for followers and interactions to help set a baseline for future reporting. We have added a new tool, Metricool, to assist with tracking analytics over various platforms and with planning content. This tool will also be beneficial in tracking KPIs in 2026.



CONTENT REVIEW:

Facebook: posts perform better than video with our top performing post (Mar 20, 2025 – Birks Clock “did you know” post) achieving 36.12K views and Video reel (Jul 15, 2025 – Fringe on the Street) achieving 10.97K views. One paid ad for SuperCrawl generated 7,411 views, 141 link clicks - \$35.92 spent (CPC \$0.25)

Instagram: video is performing better than posts with our top performing video reel (Jul 24, 2025 – Join us for Fringe on the Street) achieving 27.4K views and our top post (Nov 8, 2025 – Our “One hour free parking” program changes) achieved 21.9K views.

TikTok:

We launched our new TikTok account November 15, 2025. With the launch of the vendor partnered “Market Chat” series with the first of five Vendor video interviews posted weekly. We have added additional videos for the Holiday season and have seen an increase in Followers and Views. We plan to post a new video each week of general market content, with the addition of the second round of “Market Chats” vendor interviews taking place in January 2026 which will be shared out weekly.

Email Marketing

This overview highlights the year-over-year growth of our digital platforms, focusing on the Hamilton Farmers’ Market website and email newsletter. Email open rates rose from 34.8% to 46.7%.



EMAIL
2,512 Subscribers
Open Rate 46.7%
34.39% increase compared to 2024

Google

Our Google presence saw major gains: total reach jumped from 74K to 173K, Google Maps views from 24K to 54K, Search impressions from 49.8K to 118.8K and clicks from 12.1K to 34.4K, showing stronger awareness and engagement overall. Total Traffic Acquisition from our Google Analytics measures the number of visitors to our website. With the website improvements including improving SEO tactics, added Events page, and improving vendor profiles, we have seen a 39.29% increase to traffic.



Total Traffic Acquisition 66,428 (2024) vs 92,526 (2025)
39.29% increase

Reach 74.06K (2024) vs 172.8K (2025) 131.64% increase	Google Search 49.78K (2024) vs 118.81K (2025) 137.244% increase
Google Maps 24.28K (2024) vs 54K (2025) 122.405% increase	Clicks to Website 12.13K (2024) vs 34.44K (2025) 183.924% increase

Event/Programming Marketing:

We promote all our events and programs through multiple channels, including our website event page, our Market TVs, social media (Instagram and Facebook), Google Business Events, local and regional event sites, on-site signage, community flyers, and our monthly e-newsletter to subscribers, media, radio, and influencers. This multi-platform approach ensures broad awareness, reaching both local residents and visitors, and help draw foot traffic to our events and programs.

Strategic Wins (Vendor, Community, and Internal Technology)



We saw several strategic initiatives that increased foot traffic of community and tourists to the Market. We also have seen an increase in engagement, and community partnerships that have long standing results. Ongoing website SEO improvements, including a new Events page, making it easier for visitors to find and attend our programs and learn more about our Market. Media features like Breakfast Television, and collaborations with GO Transit/Metrolinx raised awareness beyond our immediate community.

We have renewed partnerships with Tourism Hamilton, including collaborations with Theatre Aquarius and HSR, which helps us expand out to the broader Hamilton community.

Vendor-focused initiatives, such as the “Market Chats” video series strengthened collaborations with Vendors while showing audiences how amazing our Vendor Community is.

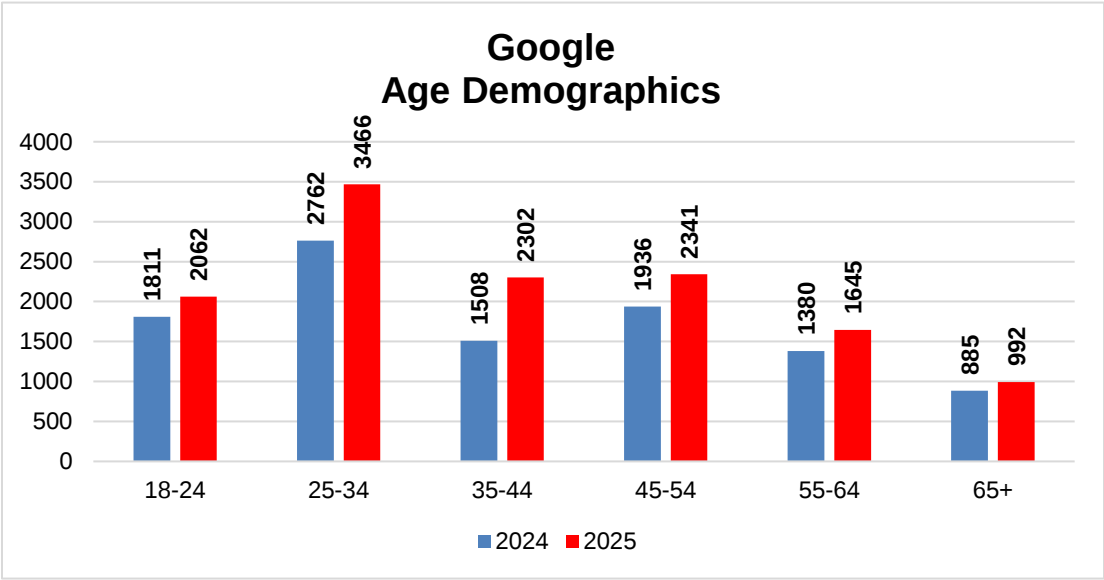
New collaborations with Hamilton Rising/Hometown Hub, top local influencers such as TasteHamOnt, EatCambridgeOnt, EarlyPete, Little Chats, HamOntSalsa, The Nacho Chronicles, The Generator and Urbanicity. Unprompted repeated features on CHCH News as well as other media outlets amplified our reach in 2025. A partnership with Playhouse Cinema about Women Farmers was another incredible opportunity.

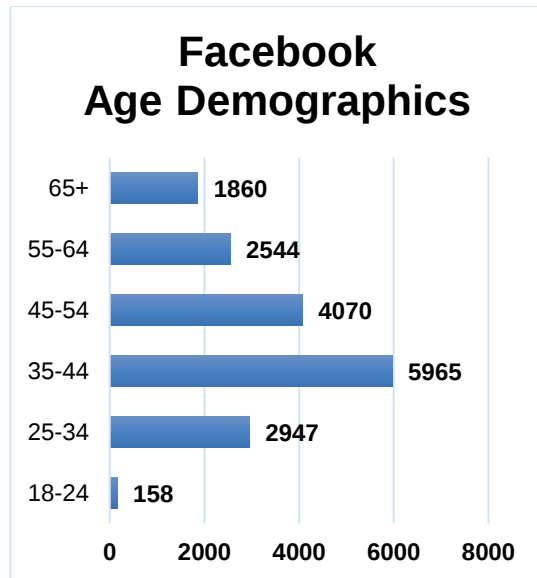
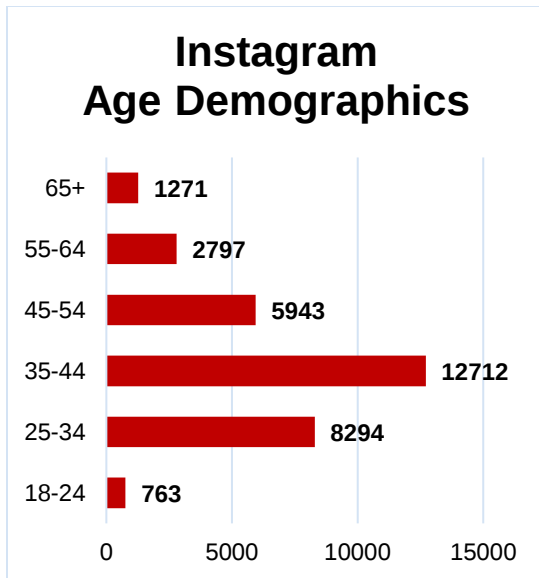
Collectively, these wins strengthened our brand presence, audience engagement, and ability to drive foot traffic to the Market in 2025.

Demographics

Age Demographics

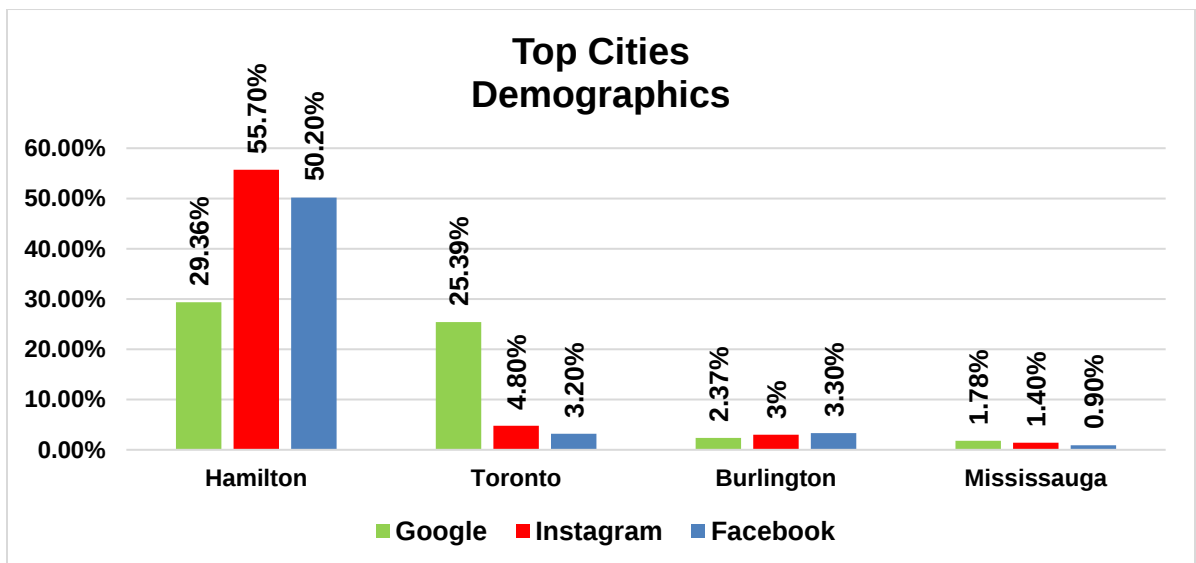
We are including age demographics in this report to show audience trends across Google, Instagram, and Facebook, noting that only Google provides year-over-year comparisons (2024 vs. 2025) while Meta platforms supply lifetime data, and overall we see our strongest age group on Google in the 25–34 range, the highest engagement on Instagram and Facebook in the 35–44 range, and increases across all age groups on these digital platforms.





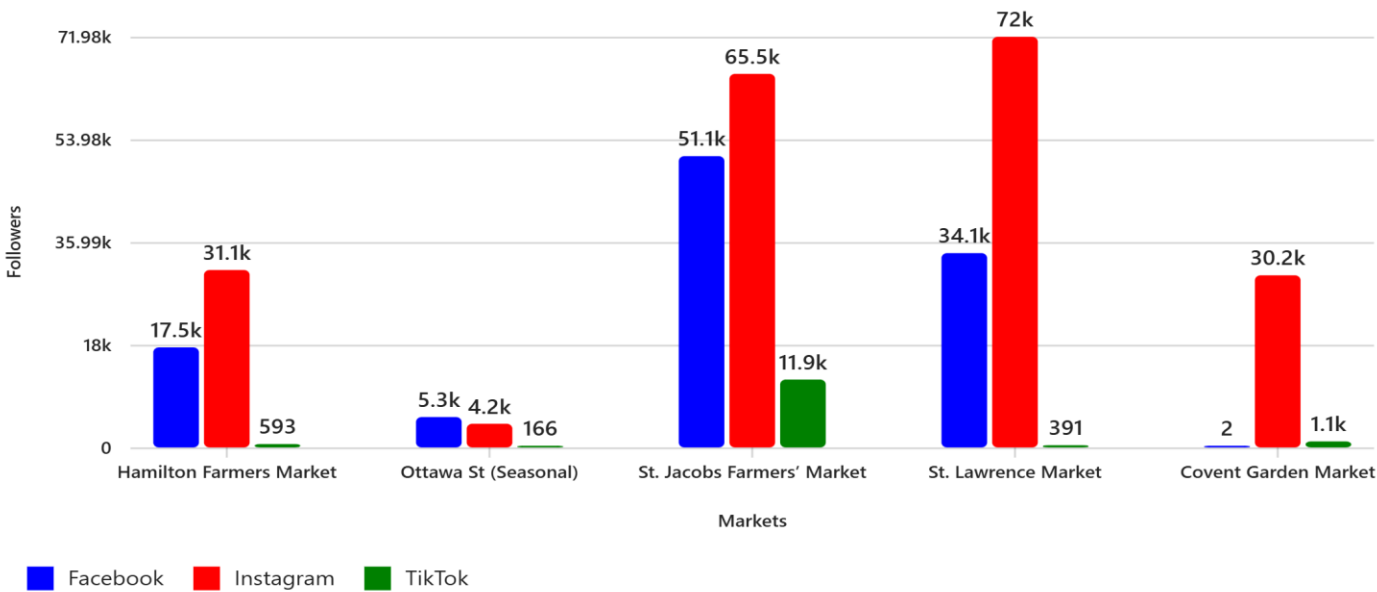
Top Cities Demographics

To complement the age demographics, we are also including Top Cities data to highlight where our online audience is geographically located and to better understand how far our digital reach extends. This data shows that people are finding us online from cities across Canada—and even from outside the country—demonstrating the growing visibility and influence of our digital presence. Below is a summary of the top cities engaging with us online via Google, Instagram, and Facebook.



Competitor Benchmark

Competitor benchmarking shows how we perform relative to similar markets, helping us quickly identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities. This chart compares social media reach across the five markets on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, highlighting which platforms drive the most engagement and where growth potential remains—guiding smarter, more targeted marketing decisions.



2026 Marketing Strategy

This 2025 performance review establishes a clear baseline for measuring growth, engagement, and visibility across our digital platforms and will directly inform the goals and tactics in our 2026 Marketing Strategy. The data provides a consistent benchmark for evaluating progress year over year, helping ensure our marketing efforts remain focused, strategic, and driven by audience behaviour and performance insights.

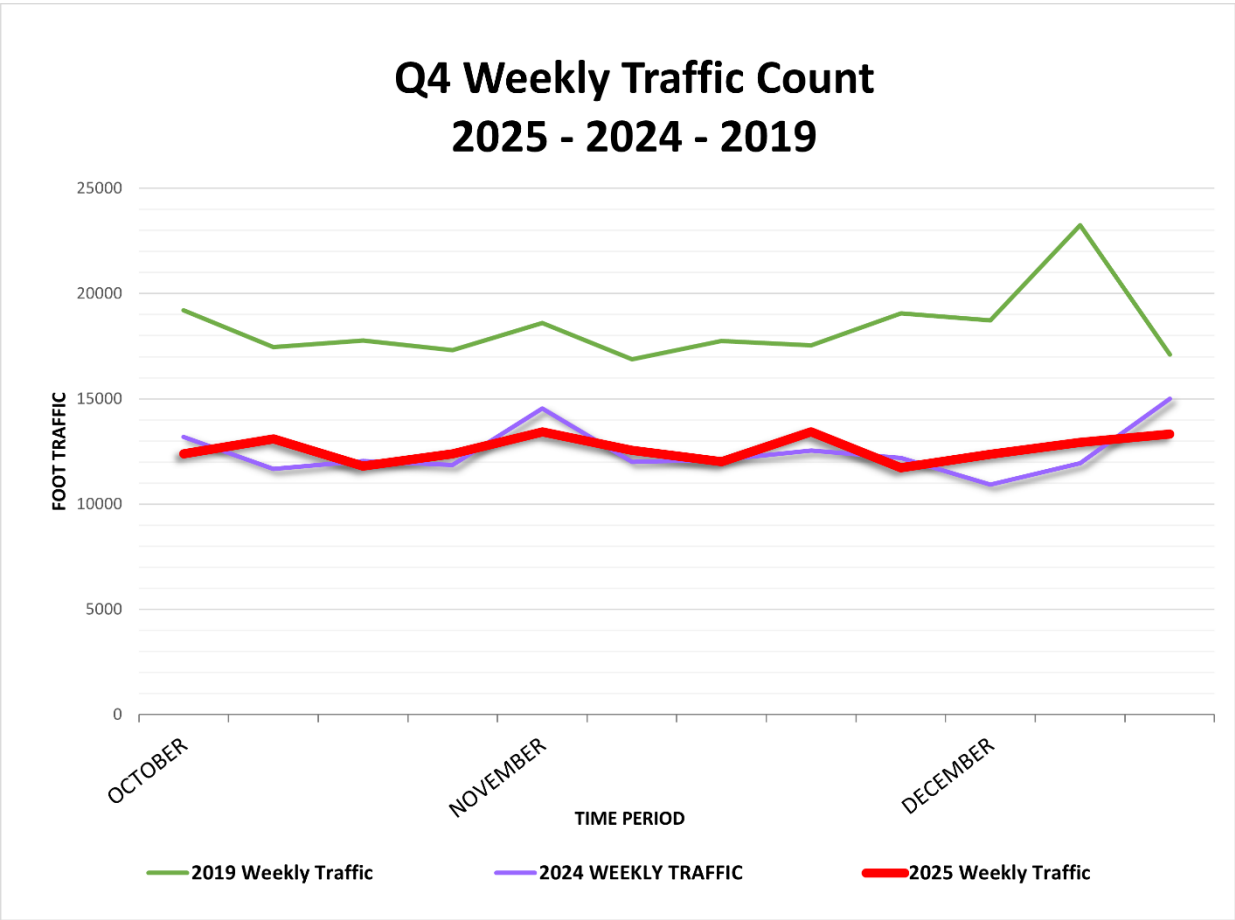
Looking ahead to 2026, several initiatives are already underway, including the implementation of Metricool to support advanced content planning and KPI tracking, the launch of Round Two of our Market Chats vendor interviews on January 27, and the development of new video series such as “Hungry?” to highlight our prepared food vendors. Additional priorities include continued website SEO and usability improvements, enhanced market wayfinding through updated kiosk maps, expanded partnerships (including TD Coliseum and the Ticats), a revitalized YouTube channel, geotargeted Google advertising, and paid promotion for high-impact events—all of which will be explored in more detail at our February meeting.

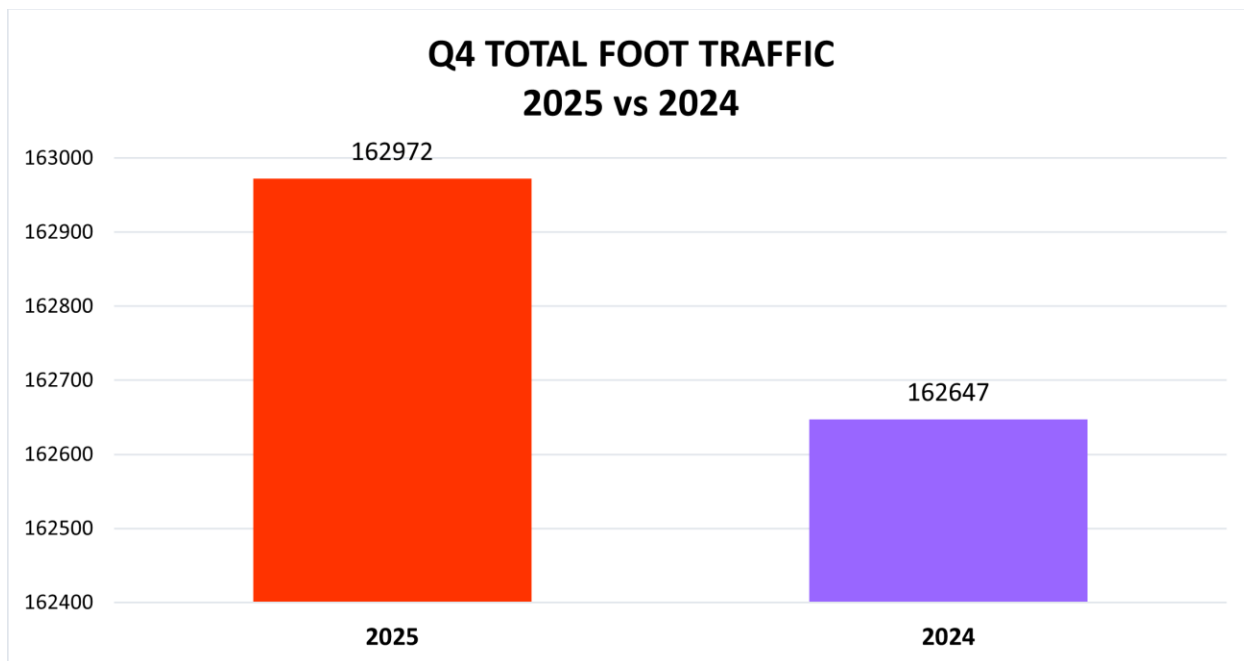


Hamilton Farmers’ Market Board Meeting
2025 Foot Traffic Report - Q4 and Year in Review
Tuesday January 20, 2026

Q4 2025 HFM Foot Traffic Data

The following three graphs illustrate the Q4 2025 foot traffic data compared to previous years. Overall foot traffic is trending in a positive direction however we had some issues with security, violence in downtown, inclement weather, and the 28 York Blvd Parkade transition that adversely affected our Q4 foot traffic.

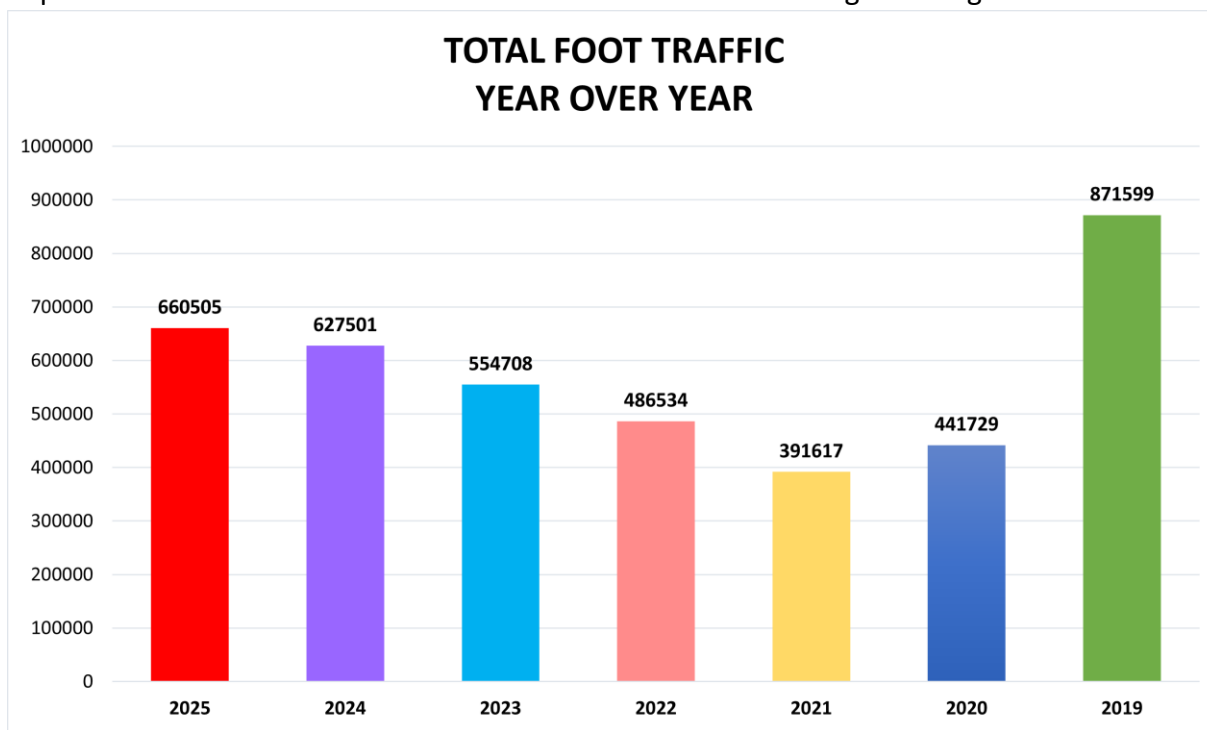




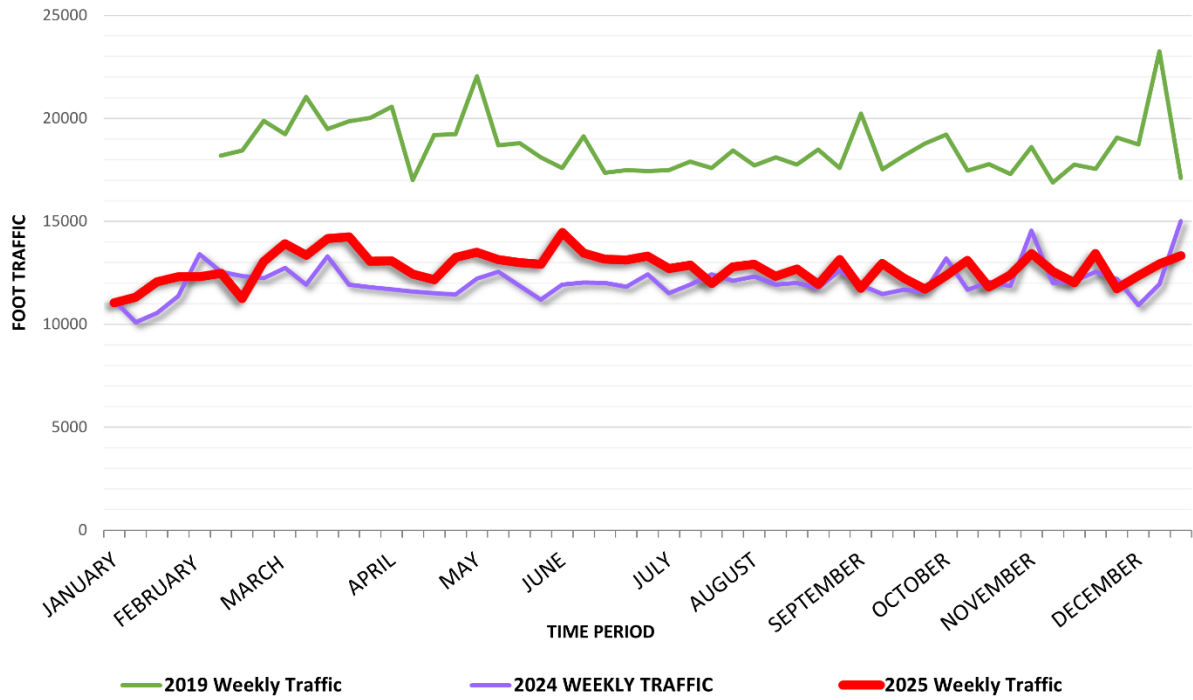
Total foot traffic in Q4 2025 showed marginal improvement Over 2024 reflecting the Marketing and Programming efforts were the biggest drivers in overcoming the challenges we faced in Q4.

Year in Review - 2025 HFM Foot Traffic Data

2025 Total Annual Foot Traffic represents 75.8% of the Market's pre-COVID annual count (660,505 vs 871,599). 2025 vs 2024 HFM foot traffic counts show a 5.2% year-over-year improvement. Each year since COVID struck in 2020, we have demonstrated continuous improvement to Market foot traffic counts. Our Market is moving in the right direction.



Weekly Traffic Count - Hamilton Farmers' Market





Hamilton Farmers' Market Board Meeting

Senior Program Manager & Market Managers' Reports (Combined)

Tuesday January 20, 2026

Parkade Parking - Update

The Parkade located across from the HFM has recently transitioned from City ownership to private hands (HUPEG). Our one-hour free parking program remains, however the process by which market shoppers pay for parking has changed. Market shoppers will be directed by signage in the Parkade to pay for parking inside the HFM. Inside the HFM shoppers will find signs posted that require them to scan a QR Code with their phone to access the parking website. They will automatically receive their first hour of parking for free with an option to purchase more time if desired. To complete the process, they would enter their license plate, phone number and email address followed by payment if required. Note that shoppers with disability certificates will no longer be able to park in the Parkade at no cost.

For Market shoppers who do not have a cell phone, we can assist them in the Market Office providing they have their license plate. This is a cashless system.

An Administrative Burden

For the period Nov. 26th - Dec. 31st (21 Market Days);

- Market Office has assisted customers with the Parking App (parkwhiz) approx. 265 times.
- Each interaction lasts between 3 -5 minutes (with a few exceptions) totaling 13-22 staff hours lost in office productivity over the 21 Market days (12% - 21% lost time overall)
- Saturdays are the busiest days with most interactions occurring from 8 am - 1 pm.

Customer Feedback

- Do not like having to give the phone number and email so Market Staff pivoted by offering to enter the Market's phone # and email in its place. This represents approx. 40% of the interactions.

- Too complicated. Too many steps. You must scroll through all US states to get to Ontario and enter your province. Market Staff talked with OVG about condensing and changing their site to simplify the app process, but that has not happened to date.
- Not Senior friendly. Many seniors do not have cellphones or emails. Most do not know how to scan a QR code. Staff have been assisting customers by teaching them how to scan a QR code and navigate the website so those that do have a cellphone can do it themselves.
- Signage in the Parkade is not clear. Market Staff printed and laminated signs that were hung beside the OVG sign inside the Parkade directing Market Shoppers inside the Market to "pay" for parking which is the only way they can access the free one-hour program. OVG has not removed the old vinyl banners from the Parkade facing directing Market Shoppers to the red pay machines which is leading to customer confusion.
- OVG informed us initially that there would be an option for Market Shoppers to extend their parking after their one hour free, but that process has not been fixed yet. Market Staff has notified OVG about the issue, but we are still waiting on a fix.
- Customers initially were very confused and did not know that the Parkade was not owned by the Market. Market Staff spends a good portion of their time educating customers on the changes.

Staff Feedback - Negatives

- Lack of security in the Parkade. Vandalism to the property has increased dramatically.
- Dealing with upset and difficult customers about parking
- Managing parking issues pulls staff away from their tasks frequently.
- Parking App has too many steps and frustrates customers.

Staff Feedback - Positives

- Customers are learning through patience and guidance, turning once cranky customers into appreciative customers.
- Relationship building with customers who appreciate our assistance and become frequent shoppers.

Summary

Customers are slowly learning, however the issues have been brought to the attention of OVG but have gone unaddressed to date. A meeting with OVG is tentatively scheduled for Friday, January 16.

Market One-hour Free Parking Update

The Parkade began our One-hour Free HFM parking program via their ParkWhiz app on Nov. 26th. Tracking data provided covers all Market days from Nov. 26th - Dec. 31st.

Weekdays (16): 820 Free Hours / Ave. 51 per Weekday

Saturdays (5): 1060 Free Hours / Ave. 212 per Saturday

Total (21): 1880 Free Hours

HFM Vendor Transitions - Update

We have multiple vendors transitioning to new spaces currently under construction within the Market in January and into February. The former Coati Chocolate space located at the west end on the lower level of the Market has been divided into two stalls.

The Pleasant Cookie Company, owned by Rosalynde Stearn, will be transitioning into her new space there in late January thus affording more space to expand production for her successful cookie business which began in the Market back in November 2024.

The Artisan Market, owned by Anne Miller, has been in the Market for the past ten years and is currently transitioning into the stall next door. In doing so, the new refreshed space offers uninterrupted retail frontage and enhanced amenities.

Cookie D'Oh, owned by the Gloster Group, has decided not to renew their HFM License for another term. Their current agreement ends Jan. 31st.

HFM Vendor Occupancy On The Rise

We are currently in the final stages of our due diligence process to bring a new butcher to the Market who will be located on the lower level across from Thango Meats. The new business will fill the entire space previously occupied by our Local Showcase initiative. Although no timeline has been established for an opening date, we are hopeful that the space will be ready for use by early February.

In addition, we are currently vetting two additional business proposals to join the HFM. More information to follow at the February Board meeting.



Hamilton Farmers' Market Board Meeting November 2025 Programming and Marketing Motion Follow-up Tuesday January 20, 2026

Background

At the November 25, 2025 HFM Board meeting a motion was approved requesting staff report back on seven aspects HFM programming and marketing. Staff have compiled a response to each of these requests below. While a number of indicators are already in place and have been tracked throughout 2025, staff will continue to develop a more comprehensive series of KPIs to help monitor and improve the effectiveness and impact of HFM programming and marketing initiatives.

(A) A listing of programs and events and linkages back to the market;

What we have provided at this meeting is a presentation of our programming categories, initially developed in August 2024, and currently used to plan out our yearly programming calendar. Since August 2024 all programming has represented core categories: **community programming, vendor driven/collaborative programs, family programming, and revenue generation.**

This straightforward categorization aligns with public-sector best practices of a blended qualitative and quantitative evaluation framework, allows for a proportionate evaluation approach, and ensures oversight that is informed, realistic, and aligned with the unique nature of Market operations.

Category	# 2025 (91 Total)	# of attendees (15,097 Total)	Average Cost PP	Impact
Community Programming	40	3,995	\$2.89	<i>Thanks again for your incredible support this past weekend. I think the event went very well and we had</i>

				<i>a lot of great feedback so far.</i> Stefa Sokolowski Business Development and Global Hamilton Officer, Business Investment and Sector Development
Vendor Driven/Collaborative	8	574	\$3.96	<i>I have been telling other market about the success of the event and hope that they take advantage of the space and what the Market has to offer.</i> Anja Warunkiewicz Chaton Bakery Owner
Family Programming	43	10,437	\$1.20	A collection of questionnaire quotes: “We’ll be back next year” “Thank you for keeping them FREE”
Total	91	15,006	\$2.69	

For additional context, the revenue generation category is broken down below by program:

Revenue Generating Program	# of Rentals	Revenue Generated (2025)
Market Cart Daily Rental Program	93	\$3,745.75
Local Showcase, Seasonal Rental Program	218	\$15,298.95
Programming/Event Rental	8	\$1,643.02
Total	319	\$20,687.72

(B) An indication of the target audiences for each program and event;

Though there is overlap, each category broadly outlines intended audience and potential collaborators. Staff feel that all programming events, passive programs, and activations link

back to the Market, as they are all designed to align with City Values, Market Vision, and Market goals and vendor interest.

Something Market staff will be developing for 2026 is a plan to better understand Market consumer demographics. This will be absorbed into all Marketing and Programming planning and evaluation.

(C) A listing of marketing strategies and tactics and associated costs;

A summary of 2025 marketing expenses is provided below.

2025 Marketing Expenses	Amount
Paid Advertising	\$900
Print	\$5360
Videography	\$2200
Still Photography	\$1500
Promotional Gift Cards	\$500
Merchandise Donations	\$260
Total	\$10,720

In terms of indicators and tracking, staff have recently introduced more demographic data in relation to our social media and online platforms, which can be seen in the Marketing Report included in the January HFM Board package.

Although staff made significant progress in improving tracking and reporting on marketing in 2025, continued work is required. Discussions are ongoing around what staff can handle internally and what external support is required to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy, including KPIs, for the HFM in 2026.

(D) An identification of key performance indicators for each program and event and how they will be measured;

Since the creation of the Program Coordinator role, Market staff has worked to deliver consistent, equitable, and policy-aligned programming that support the Market vision, vendor community, and the Market's public role. The creation of programming categories, application/proposal procedure for vendors and community members, and consistent evaluation and reporting has been essential.

Refinement of programming/marketing KPI's will continue through 2026 as external reports are returned and incorporated, but current programming KPI's include:

1. Attendance and foot traffic

2. Accessibility and inclusion
3. Community engagement
4. Opportunity for vendor engagement
5. Operational efficiency

These are measured through a blended evaluation approach aligned with public-sector best practices, including: manual and digital foot traffic counts, public surveys, programming feedback activations on-site, and vendor participant surveys.

(E) An outline of methods for capturing data of program and event attendee spending in the market;

These are measured through a blended evaluation approach aligned with public-sector best practices. These include: manual and digital foot traffic counts, public surveys, programming feedback activations on-site, and vendor participant surveys.

Spending in the Market is something that will be built into additional consumer demographics study but is currently collected based off observational reporting and made note of on an individual daily/programming basis. These notes include observations regarding dwell time and how many programming attendees also physically enter the Market (not only the dedicated event space).

It is important to note that customer surveys will only provide an approximation of spending in the Market. As the Market does not currently collect sales data from vendors, we are not able to track detailed sales or economic activity generated by the Market overall or related to specific programming or marketing initiatives.

(F) An outline of opportunities for vendor inclusion in programs and events - program delivery, purchases of materials from vendors, etc.;

Market vendors have always been invited to participate and share ideas for staff-managed activations. To help ensure this invitation and process for involvement is clear, in March 2025 vendors were incited to use HFM Programming Application Form. This form went out internally before it went live on the Market website/formal call went out to the public.

Since its launch, there have been seven individual programming events that included vendor participation between October and December, and fourteen vendors who received direct compensation through their involvement. Six vendor collaborations have already been booked across the first and second quarter of 2026, including Market celebrations for Valentines Day, Easter, Mother's Day, and Asian Heritage Month.

All external bookings (e.g. City of Hamilton Ec Dev Division Day and various craft events) are required to purchase food directly from Market vendors and are encouraged to purchase supplies internally where possible.

Specific programs designed for vendor involvement include: Sample Saturdays and the Market Chats video series. Market run passive programs also drive traffic across the Market and include seasonal scavenger hunts and bingo cards.

(G) A breakdown of programming and marketing costs based on attendance.

The cost per programming participant is provided in the table in Section A. A comparable indicator for marketing cost based on attendance is not as easy to implement. It may be possible to integrate some marketing costs if staff are undertaking promotion of a specific event, but the majority of HFM marketing activity outside of event promotion is focused on the HFM as a whole, or profiling specific features of the market or vendor profiles, that can't be attributed to a specific number of market visitors. Foot traffic data can be a useful proxy for the overall success of the Market, but it is difficult to attribute changes in foot traffic to specific marketing or programming initiatives.



Hamilton Farmers' Market Board Meeting
Proposed 2026 Hamilton Farmers' Market Operating Budget
Amendment
Tuesday January 20, 2026

Background

In early 2025, due to increased security concerns, staff increased the security presence in the HFM to include hourly walk-throughs and a full-time guard on Saturdays. This resulted in a \$10,000 increase in security expenses in 2025, which was covered through savings found in other budget areas. As part of the 2026 budget process, staff proposed increasing the security budget by \$10,000 (from \$25,000 to \$35,000) to further fund this security enhancement and this was approved by the HFM Board at the November 25th, 2025 HFM Board meeting.

However, due to ongoing issues in the downtown, and changes occurring on York Blvd, staff have seen an increase in problematic behaviour outside and inside of the market in late-2025 and so far this year. In order to provide a safe and welcoming experience for market visitors and to provide staff with the support needed to safely operate the market, we feel it is important to further increase the security presence to have a guard present in the market during all operating hours. In addition, we propose to install new detectors in the three downstairs washrooms that have the ability to detect and notify staff of any smoke, vape or fire, as well as other safety monitoring functions. The same detectors have been installed at the HPL Central branch and their staff are reporting positive results. We believe that these enhancements will go a long way to improving HFM operations and alleviate the additional burden HFM staff are experiencing in monitoring and responding to security issues in the market.

A further enhancement to the security budget of \$25,000 is required to implement the proposed improvements. If approved, the new security budget would cover full-time security presence, installation of the new detectors and the required annual monitoring fee. The following table outlines the existing and proposed security budgets.

Budget	Budgeted Amount	Notes
2025 Security Budget	\$25,000	- On-call security response and opening/closing of the HFM
2026 Security Budget	\$35,000	- \$10,000 increase approved by HFM Board November 24, 2025 - Added hourly walk-throughs and Saturday all-day guard
2026 Proposed Security Budget	\$60,000	- \$25,000 increase over already approved 2026 budget - Addition of full-time weekday security, washroom detectors and monitoring



Hamilton Farmers' Market Board Meeting Vendor Attendance Policy Revisions Tuesday January 20, 2026

Background

Staff have consulted with the Vendor Association to review the draft policy and determine options for revisions based on input from the vendor community. The revised policy is provided below.

Policy Changes

The following are the agreed upon revisions to the draft Vendor Attendance Policy presented at the September 22, 2025 HFM Board meeting:

Section 2.1 – Permitted opening hours amended to allow for either 6- or 7-hour openings on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and only 8am or 9am openings on Saturdays.

Section 4 – Vacation maximum remains at 16 market days per year, but no longer limited to a maximum of two vacation closures per year.



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-3pm, 9am-4pm, 9am-5pm, 10am-4pm, 10am-5pm or 11am-5pm.
 - 2.2. Saturdays - 8am-4pm, 8am-5pm, 9am-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 are permitted to open their stalls outside of their posted opening hours at their discretion.
 - 2.5. Vendors are permitted to change their posted opening hours annually at their contract renewal date.
 - 2.6. Requests to change the opening hours prior to the contract renewal date can be made to the Market Manager, and approval for any changes is at the sole discretion of market management.
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 to close their stall for vacation up to a maximum of 16 market days per year.
5. Vendors must inform the Market Office of any vacation or planned stall closure a minimum of 3 weeks (12 market days) 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. Closure on the 5th occurrence will require a mandatory meeting with HFM staff to review attendance and discuss options to prevent further closures.
 - 7.5. Closures for the 6th to 10th occurrences will result in a \$75/day penalty.
 - 7.6. Closure on the 10th occurrence will require a mandatory meeting with HFM staff to review attendance and discuss options to prevent further closures.
 - 7.7. Closures for the 11th to 15th occurrences will result in a \$150/day penalty.
 - 7.8. 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>