



<b>Subject:</b>	Food and Refreshment Vending Pilot Program – Fee Approval
<b>To:</b>	Committee of the Whole – Community Services & Infrastructure
<b>From:</b>	Community Services

<b>Report Number:</b>	CS-10-22
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Date to Committee:</b>	June 29, 2022
<b>Date to Council:</b>	July 11, 2022

### **Recommendation:**

Receive and file Report CS-10-22 regarding the implementation of a Food and Refreshment Vending Pilot Program – Fee Approval; and

Approve the implementation of the Food and Refreshment Vending Pilot Program and associated fees for use as outlined in the report; and

Direct staff to proceed with all necessary actions in relation to implementing the pilot program as described in this report.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to provide a recommendation to Council regarding providing opportunities for food and refreshment vending and associated fees in select Town-owned and operated parks as a part of a new pilot program.

### **Background:**

Food and refreshment vending opportunities help create vibrant public spaces in a variety of ways. They create opportunities to draw “foodies” and the culturally curious into the community. These visitors are often seeking new ways to invest their time and money. In recent years, several food and refreshment businesses have expressed interest in operating from within Town-owned and operated parks and open spaces.

Section 6.38(a)(i) of the Town’s Zoning by-law states that food carts are prohibited in all zones unless for a special event. To permit them appropriately, Section 6.35(g) states they would require a special event permit. The Town does not currently have a process to allow interested parties to request a permit for food or refreshment vending or approved

rates or fees for this activity. Staff are proposing that food and refreshment vendors be temporarily permitted through the Special Event Permit process.

Currently, a non-refundable \$78 Special Event Permit fee applies to all Special Event applications. Staff are proposing the introduction of a seasonal permit fee of \$350 (Class “A” vendor) or \$200 (Class “B” vendor) in addition to the Special Event Permit fee. A Class “A” vendor fee would apply to motorized vehicles and a Class “B” vendor fee would apply to non-motorized vehicles.

Through the implementation and evaluation of a proposed pilot program, data collected will inform a future permanent food and refreshment vending program in Lincoln’s parks and open spaces.

## Report:

Staff found that for food and refreshment vending opportunities in communities, there is no “one size fits all” template for successful programs and it is always best to begin with a pilot program. Pilot programs are flexible, encourage innovation, and can help uncover and address issues unique to particular communities. They are usually implemented on a small scale and they provide insight that can inform the decision-making process. Their flexibility and emphasis on experimentation make them an especially useful tool for new industries such as food and refreshment vending.

The addition of amenities of all kinds can support a park’s success by attracting attendance and extending the length of stay, creating concentrated hubs of activity. High quality and diverse food selection can increase these benefits, and food and refreshment vendors can provide opportunities to enhance both. Food and refreshment vendors can generate a range of benefits to parks, including:

- **Attracting visitation:** Food and refreshment vending can increase attendance throughout parks. Often a “gateway into the park,” providing a node of activity at the park that welcomes regular users and first-time visitors.
- **Providing an amenity:** Park users enjoy the presence of food and refreshment vending and may sustain higher levels of park use and enjoyment.
- **Generating revenue for parks:** Food and refreshment vending typically pay fees in exchange for the right to vend on-site, which can be dedicated to supporting park operations.

Food and refreshment vending spaces in Town parks would support local businesses and food operators as another means of economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is an opportunity to offer food vending services in some of the Town’s active park spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy through the summer months. Additionally, the pilot will:

- Create incremental revenue opportunities for Lincoln’s tourism-based businesses to expand daily operation outside traditional ‘brick and mortar locations

- Showcase the diversity and amenities of our local parks to both residents and external visitors alike; by creating a calendar of micro-events that encourages discovery and exploration of the Niagara Benchlands tourism destination.
- Develop a pilot case study, that measures the return on investment (ROI) and return on engagement (ROE) for both the participating vendor and the Town as a result of these activations.
- Enhance resident and visitor experiences at our local parks by adding temporary food and refreshment vending in locations that do not traditionally offer this service or have similar food and beverage offerings nearby.
- Test the efficacy of food and refreshment vending within the Town.
- Determine resident and visitor interests and enhance the overall park experience.

### **Approval Process**

Staff is proposing that Special Event Permits be issued to address the specific needs of food and refreshment vendors. As such, the following requirements would be requested from all applicants in advance of permit processing:

#### **Step 1: Application submission**

Submit a completed Food and Refreshment Vending Application in person or by email. The submission must include:

- A completed application form and a non-refundable fee of \$78 (existing practice and approved fee);
- A detailed site plan demonstrating how the food service will be provided and set up (e.g., vehicle, tent or food cart) dimensions of the required space, and details on the day of event signage (see Appendix A);
- A Niagara Region Public Health Food Vendor Permit that has been updated and completed;
- A description of the type of fare proposed to be accepted;
- A waste management plan;
- Certificate of Insurance in the amount of \$2M naming the Town of Lincoln as an additional insured; and
- Preferred park locations and dates.

#### **Step 2: Application review**

Planning staff will review applications for compliance with the Town's Special Events Policy and any other relevant Town By-laws. Staff will follow up with the applicant if more information is required. The application will be circulated to Town's Special Events Review Team (SERT) for comments. Any comments received will be included as conditions for the Special Event Permit.

### **Step 3: Permit approval**

Successful applicants will be contacted upon approval and issued a Special Event Permit. A 2022 seasonal permit fee of \$350 (Class “A” vendor) or \$200 (Class “B” vendor) is payable.

### **Pilot Implementation**

The pilot period would run from July to October, 2022 at the following locations:

- Charles Daley Park - 1969 North Service Rd, Jordan Station
- Jordan Lions Park - 2793 Fourth Ave, Jordan Station
- Beamsville Lions Park - 5162 Fly Road, Beamsville
- Rotary Park – 5020 Serena Drive, Beamsville

Pilot park locations were selected based on space suitability and size, regular park usage and ability to draw in and maintain regular park users and visitors from outside of the community. Vending opportunities will be available daily from 10 a.m.- 10 p.m. Staff have identified appropriate set-up areas for each park space; both parking lot and on-turf options will be made available to interested parties (See Appendix B). Staff proposes to issue vending food and refreshment vending permits in 2022, based on a first-come, first-served basis, application completeness and suitable to the desired park setting. Staff will report back to Council following the pilot period.

### **Evaluation and Future Program Expansion**

Throughout the pilot period and post-completion, staff will seek feedback from business operators and the community on their experience via a community survey. Staff will also work with vendors to collect statistical data on customer usage and sale activities.

Following staff evaluation and receipt of public feedback, future expansion will be considered for the 2023 season. Depending on expressed interest by businesses, resident feedback and space availability, there is potential to expand the Food and Refreshment Vending Program to other suitable parks in Lincoln in the future. Future revenue generated from this program could be placed into the Parkland Reserve Fund to support future parkland development and enhancement projects.

### **Financial, Legal, Staff Considerations:**

Financial:

Staff reviewed several fee structures in other municipalities (see below chart). Staff proposes the use of two distinct fees during the pilot period. The Food and Refreshment Vendor Permit Fee would only be charged if an application is approved and a permit is issued for the pilot period:

- Class “A” Food & Refreshment Vendor Permit – \$350
- Class “B” Food & Refreshment Vendor Permit - \$200

Upon completion and review of the 2022 pilot program, staff will propose a permanent fee structure for use through the 2023 Municipal Fees and Charges that will be reviewed and approved by Council.

<b>Municipal Comparators - Fee Structure Review</b>			
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Class “A” Vendor*</b>	<b>Class “B” Vendor**</b>
Township of Clearview	14,151	\$500	\$300
Town of Collingwood	21,793	\$555	\$280
Town of Innisfil	36,566	\$300	\$300
Municipality of Meaford	10,991	\$500	\$300
Town of Midland	17,817	\$235	--
Town of New Tecumseth	23,300	\$132	\$132
City of Owen Sound	21,612	\$150	\$150
Town of Penetanguishene	10,077	\$250	\$100
City of Orillia	33,411	\$526	--
Town of Wasaga Beach	24,862	\$326	\$326
Town of Lambton Shores	11,876	\$500	
<b>Average Fee:</b>		<b>\$361</b>	<b>\$235</b>

*\*Class A: Motorized Food Sales (e.g., food trucks and ice cream trucks)*

*\*\*Class B: Non-motorized Food Sales (e.g., ice cream carts, portable bbq/grills)*

#### Staffing:

Several departments have a role to play in the development and implementation of a pilot program that supports food and refreshment vending businesses. An interdepartmental team of staff comprised of Planning, Economic Development, Tourism and Community Services have been meeting since mid-March to review and plan for the pilot project.

The circulation list for all applications received will include staff from Public Works, Building and Planning, Fire, Economic Development and Tourism, Legislative Services, Municipal Law Enforcement and Community Services.

#### Legal:

All food and refreshment vendors will be required to meet the identified insurance requirements. No alcohol will be permitted to be sold by a food and refreshment vendor through the pilot program. Alcohol may only be permitted as a part of special event that has received approval from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) and can satisfy the Town’s Municipal Alcohol Policy.

## Public Engagement Matters

As noted in the 2020 Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, the identified the importance of third-party events and festival attractions for the growth and sustainability of Lincoln's tourism economy. Festivals, events, and pop-up markets can be powerful tools for building community pride and capacity, as well as for 'placemaking' and delivering economic benefits. They can bring residents and visitors to areas targeted for urban transformation, capture visitation and media attention from well beyond the normal market trading area, and support destination objectives for enhancing civic pride, building community capacity and celebrating local culture and heritage.

This pilot project has an opportunity to attract and engage a wide array of key audiences in Lincoln. Town Staff will develop a multi-channel marketing approach to educate, communicate and promote the pilot program to residents, visitors, and potential vendors.

Using the Town's corporate communication channels, Town staff will:

- Create a program information page similar in layout to the Special Event Application program to which the online application, park profiles, and participating vendor guidelines will be available for preview and download.
- Develop a supporting social media campaign showcasing the featured vendors and calendar of events for Lincoln's residents and the community at large.

In addition to the Town's Corporate Communication channels, Town Staff will leverage the newly developed Niagara Benchlands and ShopLincoln tourism digital platforms to support program awareness and create visitor interest to drive traffic to these activations. This includes and is not limited to:

- A dedicated landing page on the Niagara Benchlands website that showcases the program, frequently asked questions, an annual calendar of events and a directory listing of all featured food and refreshment vendors
- Offer support to participating vendors by developing an online program directory that includes the vendor's pop-up locations schedule, business contact information, a brief profile, and links to their supporting social media and marketing channels.
- Develop a supporting social media marketing campaign to be delivered through the Niagara Benchlands visitor-focused social media channels to highlight vendors and ongoing micro-events.

## Conclusion:

Food and refreshment vending is a popular and growing segment of the culinary tourism -value chain in Lincoln. Activations and micro-events of this kind attract residents and visitors alike to Lincoln while showcasing the municipality as a viable destination to grow your existing business or invest for future growth and continued prosperity.

Industry research conducted by the Culinary Tourism Alliance highlighted that approximately 10 per cent of tourists plan their trips based on the destination's food

experience, while eighty per cent of tourists who include a food experience into their overall itinerary. The 10 per cent of tourists who are travelling through the destination make an unplanned stop to eat; this is where Staff suggest there is an opportunity to promote local culinary tourism experiences and create opportunities for economic impact.

The Town recognizes that vendors may wish to temporarily conduct business on select Town-owned properties, and this requires an approvals process that supports this type of business operation.

Respectfully submitted,

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## **Appendices:**

Appendix A: Proposed Set-Up Locations in Parks

## **Report Approval:**

The report has been reviewed by the Director of Community Services, Director of Planning and Development and Director of Economic Development and Communications. Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.