

Staff Report to Council

Planning and Development

FILE: 6410-01/21

REPORT DATE: February 08, 2022 **MEETING DATE:** March 01, 2022
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Anne Berry, Director of Planning and Development
SUBJECT: Food Truck Pilot Program – Program Review and Update

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:



RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

- A. Direct Staff to extend the Food Truck Pilot Program to run during the summer 2022 season based on Staff's recommended modifications as outlined in the report titled "Food Truck Pilot Program – Program Review and Update" dated February 8, 2022; OR
- B. Other.

PURPOSE

To provide Council with an update and review of the Food Truck Pilot Program, which ran during the summer of 2021. Staff are also seeking direction from Council on whether to proceed with the Food Truck Pilot Program in 2022.

☐ Information Report ☒ Decision Report ☐ Direction Report

DISCUSSION

Background:

On June 22, 2021, Council endorsed the Food Truck Pilot Program (FTPP) and directed staff to report back upon completion of the trial period. In addition, Council approved up to two food trucks to operate at each location – Harris Road Park and the Pitt Meadows Athletic Park. The pilot program was intended to determine whether or not this initiative would be implemented permanently. The original proposal included a survey to be posted on "Have Your Say" to gather feedback to inform the evaluation of the trial. However, given the few vendors that participated,

staff decided not to proceed with the survey. If Council wishes to roll out the FFTP in 2022, staff will survey after the program concludes.

Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:

Mobile food vending is not permitted in the City under current business licensing, highway and traffic, and zoning regulations, except for City-sponsored special events (such as Pitt Meadows Day) and roaming ice cream trucks.

The Food Truck Pilot Program

The FFTP ran from July 01 to September 30, 2021, with vendors permitted to operate three days per week (Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays), plus statutory holidays. Two City park locations were chosen for the pilot program: Harris Rd Park and Pitt Meadows Athletic Park.

The issuance of Special Event Permits allowed food truck vendors to operate at the designated locations. In addition, vendors applied for a one-time business license which involved an interdepartmental review process to ensure the food trucks had all the necessary health and fire safety approvals and insurance requirements. With a business license obtained, vendors were then instructed to submit a request for vending indicating their preferred dates and park location. The requested vending dates were subject to the vendors' schedules and tentatively scheduled.



Figure 1: Permitted food truck location - Harris Rd. Park



Figure 2: Permitted food truck location - Pitt Meadows Athletic Park

Parking Signage

The Operations Department installed "Food Truck Parking Only" signage designating parking stalls to help ensure guaranteed vendor parking.



Figure 3: Food Truck designated parking sign



Figure 4: Food Truck designated parking sign

Program Promotion

The Communications strategy for the pilot project included:

- An announcement in a media release;
- A post on the City's website;
- Posts on the City's social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter);
- The information displayed on the City's digital boards and;
- A feature in August City Talks and July Council News (both ran in the local newspaper).

Communications Statistics:

The Food Truck Pilot program web page has received:

- A total of 2,053 visits to date (as of November 23, 2021).
- 1,054 visits during the pilot program (July 1-Sept 30)

Social Media:

Five posts across all channels during the pilot program received over 500 likes, 150 comments, and 60 shares.



Figure 5: Food Truck Social Media Post

Park Event Information

Staff coordinated with the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department to obtain a bookings schedule of the user groups, mainly sports organizations, occupying the parks for each weekend of the program. The bookings schedule was provided to vendors in advance of them requesting their vending dates to help vendors gauge the busyness levels of each location.

FTPP Review

A summary of the pilot program:

- The City received and approved four food truck business license applications;
- Staff fulfilled 16 requests for vending from food truck operators throughout the three months;
- Of the 16 tentatively scheduled vendor bookings, Staff are aware of five occasions in which they operated and;
- The Harris Rd park location was the more popular choice amongst the vendors.

Vendor Feedback

Intended as a trial, the FTPP provided staff insight into the different considerations for mobile food vending in the City. Through correspondence with vendors, site visits by the Bylaw Enforcement team, and social media inquiries, staff learned the following:

- Very little vendor interest in the FTPP;
- The City received many inquiries on social media channels requesting a food truck schedule;
- Vendors discouraged by designated parking stalls taken up by other park users;
- Park visitors disposed of personal garbage in the bins supplied by the food truck vendors and;
- More promotion of the program would be beneficial to its success.

Staff reached out to the participating food truck vendors to obtain their feedback about the pilot program. Of the four vendors contacted through email, two respondents provided input. Please see Attachment A for a summary of this feedback.

Suggested Modifications to the 2022 FTPP

Taking into consideration feedback from vendors, City staff, and through inquiries from the public, staff recommend the following changes to the FTPP for the 2022 season:

- The program will begin earlier in the season - June 15, 2022.
- The Pitt Meadows Athletic Park location to be tentative
- Add Spirit Square location to correspond with the new farmers market operations.
 - The farmers market will run on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from June to September (8 markets in total) from 3 – 7 pm.
- Move the designated parking stalls at the Harris Rd Park location closer to Harris Rd to increase visibility.
- Additional measures, such as parking cones or portable traffic barricades, to block off designated parking stalls to ensure availability of vendor parking.
- Open up the bookings in the spring of 2022 to allow ample time for vendors to plan their schedules.
- Post a food truck schedule on the City's website and social media channel.
 - Based on the farmers market and PMAP tournament schedules.
- Increase promotion of the FTPP:
 - Boosted social media posts to be done in early spring;
 - Staff to reach out to vendors directly to promote the program.

These suggestions are based on feedback and lessons learned for 2021. Flexibility is requested to allow for minor changes to the program as it nears its commencement. Notably, the exclusion of

the Pitt Meadows Athletic Park location is due to the strong likelihood that the concession will operate during the summer season. However, this is yet to be confirmed. If it turns out that the concession does not open, staff would like the flexibility of locating food trucks at this location to service the sports field users during weekends that have confirmed tournaments scheduled.

To keep the pilot program simple, staff decided to focus only on City park locations. These locations see a significant amount of visitors, have an adequate supply of parking, and offer areas for food truck patrons to sit and enjoy their meals. At this point in the trial, adding a street location would likely require staff resources beyond current capacity to coordinate the logistics, especially given the lack of food truck vendor uptake that the 2021 FTTP experienced. If the 2022 FTTP is more successful, it will be apparent that an appetite exists (by both the public and vendors), for food truck operations in the City, and at that point, staff may consider including street or private property locations in the creation of a permanent food truck program.

Conclusion

Overall, the 2021 Food Truck Pilot Program saw a lack of food truck presence. The trial provided insight into the busyness levels of the selected locations, with Harris Rd Park more popular amongst the vendors. The administrative processes in terms of business licensing and special event permits were established and proved efficient for both staff and vendors. Staff have made some recommendations to modify the program to increase vendor participation if Council wishes to continue the pilot program for the 2022 season. Staff believe that the recommended modifications can increase the success of mobile food vending in the City. If the 2022 program does not see an uptake in food truck vendor participation, the food truck operation may be most successful, appearing at City-sponsored special events only, as is the status quo in Pitt Meadows.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- ☐ Principled Governance ☐ Balanced Economic Prosperity ☐ Corporate Excellence
☒ Community Spirit & Wellbeing ☐ Transportation & Infrastructure Initiatives
☐ Not Applicable
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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- ☐ None ☒ Budget Previously Approved ☐ Referral to Business Planning
☐ Other

Financial implications will involve the costs associated with dedicated food truck vendor parking signage for adding the Spirit Square location, which is estimated at \$200. This amount includes the labour, materials, and equipment used for sign installation. There is also the cost associated with the Communications strategy to promote the program, specifically for the boosted social media posts, estimated at \$200-300. Both of these costs can be absorbed within the Planning Department's existing approved 2022 budget.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

☒ Inform ☐ Consult ☐ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

Comment(s):

KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

Referral ☐ Yes ☒ No

SIGN-OFFS**Written by:**

Sarah Nickerson
Development Services Technician

Reviewed by:

Alex Wallace
Manager of Community Development

ATTACHMENT(S):

A. Vendor Feedback

Attachment A: Vendor Feedback

Respondent #1:

Q1. Of the dates that you requested and were issued special event permits for, how many of the dates did you operate your food truck?

- A. Out of the 3 days we were scheduled, we went twice. The other day, we didn't go because of heavy rain.

Q2. How was your general experience of the program?

- A. Due to the fact it was a pilot program, it could have been better.

Q3. How did you find the business license and special event permit process?

- A. The process was fast and efficient.

Q4. If the pilot program was extended for the summer of 2022 (with bookings available much further in advance), would you be interested in participating?

- A. Yes, I would be interested.

Q5. Any comments about the program or recommendations you wish to share?

- A. If there were more advertising about the program, it would have been nice.

Respondent #2:

Q1. Of the dates that you requested and were issued special event permits for, how many of the dates did you operate your food truck?

- A. All of them. However, on one occasion the spot was occupied.

Q2. How was your general experience of the program?

- A. In general I found the program was not promoted well, there was no advertising done, other than what we did for ourselves on social media. The community had no idea that there would be food truck at the locations. It did not provide a good return on investment.

Q3. How did you find the business license and special event permit process?

- A. It was a two step process for the applicant. It took approximately 2weeks to get the license.

Q4. If the pilot program was extended for the summer of 2022 (with bookings available much further in advance), would you be interested in participating?

- A. Yes, but I would like more information about what events that are happening in the area so I can make more informed decision on the dates chosen. This will increase support and awareness of the program.

Q5. Any comments about the program or recommendations you wish to share?

- A. More advertising, more coordination with local events and sports organizers in the area, and add a street location.