

**City of Greater Sudbury Capital Funding Support  
Greater Sudbury Market Association  
April 19, 2021**

This report is being presented to the City of Greater Sudbury in order to provide an update on the 2020 year for the Greater Sudbury Market Association (GSMA) and their Farmers' Market, and appropriate events.

The GSMA is extremely appreciative of all of the support and help from The City of Greater Sudbury, and to Public Health Sudbury & District for all the advice and guidance during the pandemic.

The GSMA would also like to say an extra thank you to the City of Sudbury for the annual \$20,000 funding for the Sudbury Market. These funds have an unparalleled aide in the market operations. It helps pay the salary for the Market Manager, cover pandemic supplies, rent, and so much more.

**Summary**

After many years of careful development by volunteers through The Market—as well as through the work of the outstanding volunteers of The Market Working Group—the Greater Sudbury Market Association (GSMA) was incorporated in early 2019.

The GSMA was incorporated for the purposes of:

- (a) promoting and encouraging markets where producers, vendors, and artisans sell their goods;
- (b) promoting the interests and the rights of those engaged in such markets;
- (c) promoting and encouraging fair and courteous dealings with customers;
- (d) promoting and encouraging ethical business practices;

The inaugural Board of Directors is composed of Market vendors, as well as community members and professionals who are all passionate about the success and future of The Sudbury Market. There was significant turn-over with the members of the Board of Directors during the 2020 season. The Board is currently developing a strategy to ensure Board turn-over is minimal and to ensure success for each member.

The Market has successfully made the transition to an independent non-profit organization and launched a number of projects, including implementation of a Market Bucks program and our trilingual vendor flags initiative. The GSMA has also expanded The Market to operate year-round and done so within a balanced budget.

With a full Market season near its end, the GSMA will engage in a thorough and detailed strategic planning session in early 2021. This planning will provide direction for future planning and activities, as well as identifying potential external funding to assist in improving The Market for community members, businesses, and the city as a whole.

## **Market Attendance for 2020 Season**

### **Thursday Markets:**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
June	1,766	1240	1117
July	5,877	2044	1939
August	5,340	3930	3191
September	2,884	1018	1882
October	1,722 (2 Thursdays only)	880	679
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>17,589</b>	<b>9112</b>	<b>8808</b>

### **Saturday Markets:**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
June	2,648	1811	1452
July	2,355 (1 day rained out)	1900	1834
August	5,696	2697	1721
September	3,104	2095	2877
October	4,504	590	934
November	1,521	?	
December	3,297	?	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>23,125</b>	<b>9093</b>	<b>8818</b>

We had an extreme increase in attendance due to the overwhelming “support local” campaign. Significant feedback was received from market patrons about the love of the York Street location.

### **Market Highlights:**

- New Market Manager hired February 2020, Kayla Smith
- COVID-19 forces closure in March
- Social media followers increased by more than 2,000 people, primarily through Instagram, but our Twitter feed has also been active
- Market resumed operating with the outdoor summer market (both the Thursday and Saturday Markets) in June
- The GSMA was given a grant from the federal government to hire a summer student to assist the Market Manager with Market operations. This grant was unbelievably helpful. Extra hands were desperately needed around the Market. Board members were regularly volunteering, but a summer student was a helpful addition.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic:**

The COVID-19 pandemic created obstacles for operating during 2020. The year began with a few Winter Market days in the Southridge Mall, but quickly turned into a mandatory shut down in March. This closure drastically affected vendors. Many farmers and bakers, in particular, were not able to continue to operate, resulting in great financial loss and suffering. Those who were able to adapt to the dramatic change in operations were faced with extreme financial and delivery difficulties.

The Board of Directors were not sure how long The Market would be forced to remain closed, so the Market Manager created new segments on The Market's social media pages to continue to engage consumers and promote vendors. This initiative received positive feedback and caused an increase in followers. With all the uncertainty of operating in the summer, farmers' operations were negatively impacted.

The Market Manager and the Board of Directors worked tirelessly with Public Health Sudbury and District (PHSD) and the City of Greater Sudbury (CGS) to ensure a safe environment for patrons to be able to buy local goods. Many unexpected costs were incurred because of these unlikely circumstances. The Market had to purchase safety equipment, additional signage, and many other items, as per guidelines set by PHSD.

### **The Market Bucks Initiative:**

The GSMA Board instituted a program, Market Bucks, that allowed for the creation of a cashless market. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GSMA was instructed by Public Health Sudbury and District to stop this program as part of infection prevention and control. The program has been greatly missed by vendors and customers alike, and the GSMA hopes to re-launch the Market Bucks program after the pandemic has receded.

### **Business Incubation:**

It is difficult to discuss just a few vendor success stories as many of our usual vendors experienced great loss in 2020, but those who were able to continue selling at the Market had great success. Vendors, especially farmers and bakers, sold out of goods on a regular basis. The residents of Sudbury realized the importance and benefits of shopping locally during the 2020 pandemic. Seeing as how many stores could not stock their shelves and couldn't provide residents with fresh and healthy options, Sudbury folk turned to the Market. Attendance for the Market has been at its highest since we began tracking numbers.

### **Special Events:**

- Multiple free entry draws were held, with most prizes/items donated by Market vendors.
- Halloween Market took place on Saturday, October 31. Children were able to safely trick-or-treat at The Market. A number of patrons especially remarked how fantastic it was to have a Halloween event when so many events had to be canceled.

### **Vendor Recruitment:**

Due to the pandemic, The Market implemented a number of safety measures, with the guidance of PHSD. Safety measures restricted The Market to a lower maximum number of vendors allowed per Market day. The average number of vendors during the summer was 22 and the average number of vendors in the winter was 24. The Market had a total of 68 different vendors this year. This number is down slightly from previous years; however, a large portion of vendors were seasonal such that overall participation remained high.

**Revenue:**

The revenue generated through vendor fees was agreed to be used by the GSMA to offset additional expenses for the organization that were not included in the contract with the City. Vendor fees of approximately \$34,000 were collected during the 2020 Market season. A portion, 75% of this amount, will be put into reserve funds to assist with operating capital, and to provide matching money for future funding applications. The pandemic did require that the purchase over \$1,000.00 in PPE, signage, and other safety requirements, but was able to absorb these costs.

**Elgin St Plans:**

The GSMA have been working diligently to determine the summer 2021 market locations. Multiple surveys had been created by the GSMA, requesting vendor input. Majority of vendors prefer operating from the York Street location due to multiple reasons including more space, higher traffic count, more public visibility, and safety concerns.

The GSMA plan to use the York Street location for summer 2021 as it is the site approved by PHSD for safe pandemic operations. As soon as the Elgin Street location is deemed safe for use again, the Board of Directors will explore options for returning Downtown.

**Strategic Planning for the 2021 Season:**

The GSMA held its AGM in October 2020, by web conference, and appointed four new Board directors. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic does pose a series of challenges, but we have an enthusiastic and active Board, and supporters in the community, and are confident that the challenges will be managed.

Some of our initiatives include:

- researching various forms of advertising so we can reach a broader demographic
- develop strategies to introduce more farmers to The Market
- create a more interactive and informative website
- build partnerships with more Sudbury businesses and environmentally conscious groups
- determine an appropriate, permanent location for the Market
- informational packages & workshops for those who want to become food vendors but don't know where to start

**2021 Operational Plans:**

The Market is running out of the Southridge Mall on Saturdays from January 9 - May 29, 2021. The Market will be operating outdoors from May 15 - October 9, 2021 on Saturdays. Thursdays, they will be held from May 20 - October 7, 2021.

The GSMA would like to use the York Street location for both Thursdays and Saturdays for 2021 outdoor markets. It allows for better social distancing during the pandemic.