

Subject: **Country Market Research and Recommendations**

Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Prepared By: Jenna Kester, Economic Development Officer

Presented By: Jenna Kester, Economic Development Officer
Wendy Gerbrandt, Manager Economic Development

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)				
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
				Effective Leadership
			<input type="checkbox"/>	
				Level of Service
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Provincial (cite)- N/A

Council Bylaw/Policy (cite)- N/A

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

At the March 12, 2024 Council Meeting, Council motioned to host three Country Markets at Horseshoe Canyon with a budget of \$34,000 as part of the Growing Kneehill Project. Through vendor marketing on social media, email and telephone calls, Administration was able to secure nine vendors and one sponsor for the 2024 Country Market.

Administration returned to Council on May 28, 2024 to provide an update and receive further direction on the Country Market due to the decline in participation amongst vendors and sponsors. Council set a threshold of 15 vendors, per event, by May 31, 2024 for the Country Market and directed Administration to cancel any respective Country Market that does not meet this threshold. Following the decision, Council directed Administration to conduct outreach to potential market vendors.

On May 31, 2024, Administration cancelled all 3 markets as directed by Council, due to low participation numbers and then diverted their efforts to restructuring for a 2025 event. Administration developed a preliminary plan in July 2024 and met in October once full staffing levels returned to finalize the project plan, communications, marketing plan and survey questions. The vendor survey was released on October 23 through to November 1 on social media and over 50 contacts were reached.

Upon preliminary review of the vendor results, Administration felt it necessary to seek feedback from the sponsors and service organizations and consequently distributed a survey to support Administration and Council with a deeper understanding and ability to develop and make informative decisions on the future of the Kneehill Country Market. These surveys were distributed to over 60 contacts.

The survey goals were to achieve a response rate of 25 – 35% and Administration received an overwhelming response of 73% (73 responses). A research findings report was developed and shared amongst Parks and Economic Development to conduct a SWOT Analysis and develop a list of recommendations for review and consideration by the Committee of Whole to assist Council in determining the future direction of the Country Market.



Our administration team's level of effort has spanned over the course of 4 weeks with tasks including:

- 6 team review collaboration meetings with 5 Community Services staff members
- 12 interdepartmental strategy and review meetings
- Creation of a project matrix
- Creation of a communications plan
- Creation of 3 different surveys
- Conduction of a SWOT analysis
- Creation of a findings report
- Creation of a findings report presentation

DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

The evolution of this event has changed overtime, beginning with a Farm Days and Agriculture celebration into more recently an Economic Development driven event. As such, the sole purpose and vision needs to be assessed.

If the Country Market is to be considered as an economically-driven event, we must identify a suitable location and a target audience that aligns with the goal of attracting investment.

If this initiative is for the purpose of Community Economic Development, we recommend finding existing markets in the region and fostering multiple avenues of support that we could give, such as funding and grant opportunities. This type of support will not take away from the industry but will only enhance it.

If the Country Market is to be considered an Agricultural event, we would need to identify potential partners to collaborate with and determine the target audience for the event. This will ensure we are effectively meeting the needs of both the agricultural community and attendees.

FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

\$4,000 was allocated for the project from the Growing Kneehill Parks Budget. Total expenditures were \$1,905.98 with a remaining project budget of \$2,094.02.

RECOMMENDED ENGAGEMENT:

Directive Decision (Information Sharing, One-Way Communication)

Tools:	Individual Notification	Other:	
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ATTACHMENTS:

Country Market Findings and Recommendations Presentation

Country Market Findings and Recommendations Report

COUNCIL OPTIONS:

1. That Council recommends administration provide support through a grant program to Community-based initiatives to support markets.
2. That Council recommends administration to continue operating the country market internally.
3. That Council request additional information.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

1. That Council recommends administration provide support through a grant program to Community-based initiatives to support markets.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:



APPROVAL(S):

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved-

