

Subject: Fee relief to taxi plate owners but no fee relief to Farmers Market Vendors?

To the Mayor and Members of Council:

From the vendors of the Hamilton Farmers Market Stallholders Association Inc.

At your December 16th council meeting you are being asked to accept the Planning Committee's recommendation of December 8 to provide special one-time 83% relief off the fees paid by taxi plate owners in 2020.

Why isn't Council offering the same level of relief to fees paid by businesses in the Hamilton Farmers' Market? We would like Council to reconsider rent relief/fees relief for the vendors of the Hamilton Farmers' Market.

The relief proposed to inactive taxi plate owners is a 83% reduction in fees. In comparison, vendors at the market are asked to pay full fees, with only an option to defer fees into next year or terminate.

From the report, 25% of taxi plates have become inactive during the pandemic. In comparison, there's been a drop of 50% or more in weekly customers at the market as measured by the market's automated people counts at all doors. Some stalls were required to close completely during the lockdown. 5 restaurants have not reopened due to the office employees working from home, and other vendors are closing as vendors cannot sustain their business. Most vendors don't qualify for other grant programs April – September of 2019.

In comparison, other businesses next door in Jackson square mall were provided rent relief. Limeridge mall tenants also received rent relief. Why should businesses be at a competitive disadvantage just because they lease city property? Other markets like Kitchener and London market had rent relief.

Premier Doug Ford who has urged landlords to cooperate with tenants. Premier Ford is quoted as saying: "It's not going to be forever. It's going to be for a few months. Help people out. You have an obligation to do that as a landlord." (Toronto Star, May 19, 2020)

Why is council not treating market vendors the same way they are treating owners of taxi plates or other commercial businesses?

Why did council not have an open discussion about the farmers' market request for fee relief in the same way that council is having an open discussion about reducing the taxi plate fees?

Appreciate your consideration.
Hamilton Farmers Market Stallholders Association