



The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle

To: Mayor and Members of Council

Prepared by: Patti Funaro, Director of Culture and Recreation

Department: Culture and Recreation

Date of Report: October 28, 2024

Report Number: CR-2024-23

Subject: 2024 Strawberry Festival Post Event and Future Festival Location Report

Recommendation

That the report of the Director of Culture and Recreation dated October 28, 2024 (CR-2024-28) regarding the 2024 Strawberry Festival and future festival location be received;

And that, the festival location remain at the Vollmer Complex until such time as the appropriate infrastructure is available at LaSalle Landing.

And further, that the location of the festival be brought back to Council for consideration once the necessary infrastructure at the waterfront is established;

Report

2024 Festival

Despite a slight dip in attendance compared to last year, the 2024 Strawberry Festival was well-received by the community, with positive feedback and effective security measures that ensured a smooth event with no significant incidents.

Over the four-day event, attendance reached 28,458 people, including 20,458 paid admissions, 2,356 children aged 5 and under, and 815 seniors aged 65 and over. Although attendance was slightly lower in 2024, cooler-than-usual weather, combined with some rain may have discouraged some attendees.

The cooler weather likely impacted strawberry and ice cream sales, which saw a 25% decrease, totaling 4,640 orders compared to 6,125 orders last year.

The decrease in admission revenue and strawberry and ice cream sales, along with higher park setup costs, led to a deficit of \$2,721.

Opportunities to increase the revenue at future festivals are limited, however expenses continue to rise. Administration presents the following options for Council's consideration at a future meeting:

1. Continue operating the festival at a loss, using festival reserves to cover the costs.
2. Cut back on non-essential options to reduce costs. Some ideas include:
 - a. Eliminate the parade for a savings of \$5,000
 - b. Eliminate the family thrill show for a savings of \$15,000 to \$20,000
 - c. Reduce the entertainment on Family Day for a savings of \$2,500 - \$6,500
3. Consider how revenue for the festival can increase. For example, by raising the cost of strawberries and ice cream or raising the cost of admission (which hasn't increased in nearly a decade)

Administration will prepare a more detailed report of options to increase festival revenue, which will be brought to Council in early 2025.

Festival Location

On March 10, 2023, Council approved (Resolution 76/23) the continued relocation of the Strawberry Festival to the Vollmer Complex. Originally moved in 2019 due to flooding, the festival remains at the Vollmer Complex due to ongoing construction at the waterfront, where necessary infrastructure is still lacking. Once the required infrastructure is in place at the waterfront, Administration will provide Council with a report to reconsider the festival location.

Consultations

Peter Marra, Deputy CAO

Tano Ferraro, Manager of Finance

Scott Bisson, Manager of Culture and Recreation

Owen Stichhaller, Supervisor of Recreation

Sue Nantais, Corporate Communications and Promotions Officer

Financial Implications

Deficit of \$2,721.00

Prepared By:



Director of Culture & Recreation

Patti Funaro

Link to Strategic Goals

- 1. Enhancing organizational excellence - Not Applicable
- 2. Strengthen the community's engagement with the Town - Not Applicable
- 3. Grow and diversify the local economy - Not Applicable
- 4. Build on our high-quality of life - Yes
- 5. Sustaining strong public services and infrastructure - Yes

Communications

N/A

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	CR-2024-23 2024 Strawberry Festival post event and future festival location report.docx
Attachments:	- 2024 Strawberry Festival Financials.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 8, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



Chief Administrative Officer

Joe Milicia