

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. SI-2025-01

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

February 5, 2025

SUBJECT: 2024 Beach Vendor Pilot Program Update and 2025 Program Extension

1. RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council receive Report No. SI-2025-01 prepared by the Economic Development and Tourism Division, Strategic Initiatives Department dated February 5, 2025, respecting the 2024 Beach Vendor Pilot Program Update and 2025 Program extension.
2. That Council approve the continuation of the Vendor Pilot Program for the 2025 Season, as outlined in Section 4 of Report SI-2025-01.
3. That Council direct Staff to issue an Expression of Interest for the 2025 Beach Vendor Program and allow up to four food vendor spaces at De La Salle Park and two food vendor spaces at Willow Beach Park.

2. PURPOSE:

This report provides an update on the 2024 Vendor Pilot Program at De La Salle Park and Willow Beach Park and recommendations for the continuation of the Program for the 2025 summer season.

3. BACKGROUND:

On May 8, 2024, Council approved the following resolutions respecting the implementation of a vendor program for the 2024 Summer Season at De La Salle Park and Willow Beach Park.

- **Resolution No. C-2024-0161:** That Council receive Report No. SI-2024-0010 prepared by the Economic Development and Tourism Division, Strategic Initiatives Department dated May 8, 2024, respecting a 2024 Food Vendor Pilot Program at De La Salle Park.
- **Resolution No. C-2024-0162:** That Council approve the implementation of a Food Vendor Pilot Program for the 2024 Summer based on the program and selection criteria as outlined in Section 4 of Report No. SI-2024-0010; a) four vendors at De La Salle Park, preferably 2 permanent food vendors and two rotational food or non-food vendors, with preference given to local vendors and the weighting system give preference to local vendors

- **Resolution No. C-2024-0163:** That Council approve the implementation of a Food Vendor Pilot Program for the 2024 Summer based on the program and selection criteria as outlined in Section 4 of Report No. SI-2024-0010; b) two preferably permanent food vendors at Willow Beach Conservation Area with the option of being rotational, with preference given to food and local vendors.
- **Resolution No. C-2024-0165:** That Council direct Staff to issue an Expression of Interest to vendors for the opportunity to participate in the 2024 Vendor Pilot Program.

In addition to the above, Staff was requested by Council to provide data on food delivery to parks by tourists, including orders placed through the QR codes provided. This QR code was developed by the Georgina Chamber of Commerce through their publication “Hungry Restaurant Guide”.

4. ANALYSIS:

Subsequent to Council’s approval of the 2024 Vendor Program, an Expression of Interest seeking vendors was issued. The 2024 EOI is provided as Attachment 1. A total of 6 submissions were received. Following the evaluation of the submissions two refreshment vehicle vendors and two merchant vendors were approved for De La Salle Beach Park and one refreshment vehicle vendor was approved for Willow Beach Park.

Despite the initial enthusiasm, the food vendors selected for the De La Salle Beach Park location experienced challenges in getting their refreshment vehicles operational. One of these vendors withdrew from the program and the other operated for only several days. The two merchant vendors at De La Salle Park had chosen to operate on select days during the summer and after one day of operation withdrew from the program.

The licensed refreshment vehicle vendor at Willow Beach Park provided consistent service throughout the summer season and provided positive feedback on the program with an expressed interest in participating in 2025.

The QR codes on the signage for dedicated food delivery are managed by the Chamber of Commerce and direct visitors to the Chamber’s Hungry Guide webpage. The Chamber was unable to provide QR scan numbers for beach signs from January to December 2024 as they do not subscribe to the software required to conduct these analytics. Given that Town staff have access to the software required, staff will be updating the QR codes such that usage can be tracked in 2025.

Chamber Pop-up Market at De La Salle

During the May 8, 2024, Council meeting, the Chamber of Commerce was also given the opportunity to showcase their members at the Chamber’s tourism trailer at De La Salle Beach Park. However, the Chamber determined that featuring one business per week was not in the best interest of their members and to better serve their members

organized two pop-up vendor markets at De La Salle. Town Staff supported these events by allowing additional signage leading up to the markets and providing access to electrical outlets.

The Chamber's July market featured seven vendors. The Chamber of Commerce offered the following insights into their vendor experiences:

Sales Outcomes:

- One vendor indicated they had sold a high-priced item during the event and another indicated they had made a sale while setting up. However, others, particularly those with items less suited to beachgoers, reported limited sales.

Vendor Feedback:

- Vendors suggested relocating the pop-up market closer to the beach to attract more foot traffic, although it was recognized that wind and sand may be an issue.
- A food vendor recommended shifting the pop-up market hours from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. to 11 a.m.–5 p.m. to capture lunch and late-afternoon beach traffic.
- There were requests for more consistent scheduling, such as holding markets every Saturday, but the Chamber emphasized its goal of targeting beachgoers on specific days rather than creating a recurring event.

Unfortunately, the 2nd vendor market was cancelled due to inclement weather.

This feedback from the Chamber together with the experiences of those who submitted an expression of interest and were accepted as vendors for the 2024 season has been taken into consideration in order to plan for a 2025 vendor program.

In consideration of the limited success at De La Salle and the limited infrastructure to support vendors (ie. water, electrical hookups, dedicated vendor booths), staff are recommending that the Town continue with the pilot program into 2025 in order to gather more fulsome data before considering a permanent program and expanding the number of vendors and locations.

Staff note that comments were solicited from Town Staff involved in the launch of the 2024 Pilot Program (Clerks Division, By-law Enforcement Division, Parks and Facilities). One concern was raised by the Clerks Division concerning the operation of a 2024 Vendor Program and the continuation of the program in 2025.

Clerks recommended that applicants possess a valid annual refreshment vehicle licence at the time of the application period. Should the licensee have a licence that expires during the summer months while this program is underway, the applicant must renew before the expiration date or cease operation until such time that the refreshment vehicle licence has been renewed. This approach will streamline the application process and allow for the internal review team to consider applicants who can deliver services as outlined in their EOI.

Proposed 2025 Beachfront Food Vendor Program:

Based on the information above, Staff recommend the continuation of the Vendor Pilot Program in 2025, with the following amendments and evaluation criteria:

1. Vendor Type: Due to the desire to focus on the initial request from the public to consider food vendors at beachfront parks, the 2025 pilot will focus exclusively on refreshment vehicles. Vendors must possess a current refreshment vehicle license with the Town of Georgina by Friday, April 11, 2025, to be eligible for participation. Staff recommend that any non-food vendors continue to participate through the Chamber's pop-up market opportunities.
2. Expression of Interest (EOI) Timeline: The EOI as indicated in Attachment 2 will be advertised on February 10, 2025, with a submission deadline of Friday, April 11, 2025. Successful applicants will be notified within three weeks of the deadline to allow vendor time to prepare for the 2025 season.
3. Program Timeline: The 2025 pilot will begin in mid-May and run through to the end of September.
4. Vendor Locations: A total of six vendor spots will be allocated as follows:
 - Four at De La Salle Beach Park
 - Two at Willow Beach Park
5. Operating Requirements: Vendors must commit to operating at their designated park locations on Saturdays and/or Sundays weather permitting
6. Permit Fee: A fee of \$250 will be required to submit an EOI for this program for operating at one of the parks from May – September 2025. This fee will be refunded to unsuccessful applicants. This amount will be applied to the \$500 minimum permit fee for successful applicants.

This refined approach aims to streamline operations, maximize visitor satisfaction, and support local refreshment vehicle businesses while minimizing impacts on the park's infrastructure and staff resources.

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report is aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan's goal to diversify our local economy through:

- continuing to support Georgina's tourism sector as an economic driver.

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

There is no budget assigned to the implementation of the proposed 2025 Vendor Program. Vendors selected to participate in the 2025 Food Vendor Pilot Program at De La Salle Park or Willow Beach Park will be required to obtain a permit and provide compensation to the Town in the form of a minimum permit fee of \$500 for the dedicated vendor space.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

There are no statutory requirements for providing notice of this report. Upon Council's consideration, Town staff will circulate the EOI through various online channels to the Chamber of Commerce and to all refreshment vehicles/carts licensed in the Town of Georgina.

8. CONCLUSION:

In consideration of the research completed to date and the feedback received, Staff are recommending that Council approve the extension of the vendor pilot project for 2025 with the amendments to the program as reviewed above. With this opportunity being presented earlier in the year, staff expect the EOI to generate additional interest from the local business community.

At the conclusion of the pilot program, staff will report back to Council on the operation of the pilot program and recommendations for the implementation of a permanent beachfront vendor program.

APPROVALS

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Attachment 1 - 2024 Expression of Interest
Attachment 2 - 2025 Expression of Interest