



# REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

Meeting: March 10, 2025

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## SUMMER MARKETS/ TOURISM

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### DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Proposal for a Downtown Open Market Event

#### **Objective:**

To create a recurring downtown open market event that enhances foot traffic, supports local businesses, attracts tourism, and generates funds for community events — all without placing a financial burden on small businesses.

#### **Background:**

Through a recent downtown business survey, administration identified that local businesses want to see increased foot traffic and more activity in the downtown core. Additionally, as we seek fundraising solutions for summer events, we are committed to avoiding direct financial requests from small businesses. With these insights, we propose launching a weekly Open Market event in Amundsen Park from May Long Weekend to October.

#### **Market Details:**

The market would run on Tuesdays 1-5pm in alignment with our Stay & Play tourism initiative to maximize community engagement.

Over 80+ vendors from previous markets have expressed interest, ensuring a strong starting base.

The market will feature artisans, low-risk food products (e.g., bread, jams), and commercial kitchen vendors selling prepared food.

Food trucks may be incorporated as an additional draw, pending final decision.

#### **Logistics & Town Involvement:**

Vendors will be self-sufficient, bringing their own tents and tables for setup and takedown.

**Town facilities required:** Washrooms at Amundsen Park will be open for use.

A town information booth will distribute market bags (from surplus inventory), summer event calendars, and town-branded merchandise.

Minimal staff involvement is required, as vendor coordination and fee collection (\$20 per vendor) will be managed by the event organizer.

#### **Community & Economic Benefits:**

Drives consistent weekly tourism and local engagement in the downtown core.

Encourages visitors to explore local businesses before and after the market.

Creates a self-sustaining fundraising model to support town events, generating approximately \$300-\$600 per event based on vendor participation.

Enhances Claresholm's visibility as a tourist destination through a recurring summer attraction.

**Approvals & Compliance:**

Alberta Health Services (AHS) has approved the market for operation under current guidelines.

The event aligns with our downtown revitalization and tourism growth efforts.

Administration recognizes that the community has a Farmers' Market. Our intention is not to replace or compete with the Farmers' Market but rather to complement it. Farmers' Markets cater to a different vendor base, allowing for all types of food, farm-to-table products, and beverages with a stronger agricultural focus. In contrast, an Open Market includes a wider range of vendors, such as artisans and non-food businesses. By operating on a separate day, the Open Market will enhance, not detract from, the Farmers' Market, ensuring both events support downtown foot traffic and provide distinct opportunities for vendors and visitors alike.

**DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:**

Administration is seeking direction from Council on whether to proceed with this initiative, allowing for minimal town resource use while maximizing community and economic impact. The Open Market event provides a financially responsible, high-impact way to enhance tourism, drive downtown traffic, and fund community events.

Administration believes this initiative could be a great asset to the community. Please consider the positive impact it will have on the downtown area, as well as the financial benefits it brings. Typically, administration collects around \$6,000 in sponsorships from businesses; however, given the current economic climate, we recognize the challenges they face. By demonstrating our understanding and commitment to finding alternative funding sources, we build trust within the business community while ensuring the Town does not need to ask for additional financial assistance.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS:**

MOVED by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ to approve administration to coordinate Open Markets at Amundsen Park on Tuesdays from 1-5pm Starting May 20<sup>th</sup> 2025 until sept 30<sup>th</sup> 2025 as a means to increase tourism and as a fundraising effort for future events.

**COSTS/ SOURCE OF FUNDING (if applicable):**

No funding or cost of resources are needed for this event or initiative. If any expenses arise, they will be covered through the event budget and fundraising efforts.

PREPARED BY: Megan McClung, Community Engagement Coordinator

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APPROVED BY: Abe Tinney, CAO

DATE: March 6, 2025

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