

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: BUSINESS PLANNING & CONCEPT DESIGN
SERVICES FOR THE CITY MARKET IN NIAGARA FALLS, NY**

Addendum 1

Release Date: March 20, 2023

1. Niagara Falls City Market 2022 Annual Report

The following is an annual report for the operations of the farmers market program at the City Market courtesy of Field & Fork Network. Following the sale of the Market to the City of Niagara Falls in 2022, Field and Fork Network was chosen as the Farmers Market operator. They will be an important member of the advisory committee for this project.



NIAGARA FALLS CITY MARKET

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared & presented by:
Field & Fork Network, Inc.
487 Main Street, Suite 200 | Buffalo, NY 14203

Executive Summary

The Niagara Falls City Market has been a part of the community for over 100 years and was identified as a priority focus area under the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan (NFLFAP), a project led by the Healthy Food Healthy People work group, of which Field & Fork Network is a founding member. In 2022, Field & Fork Network took over market management of the Niagara Falls City Market with the goal of creating an accessible and equitable market, where food, culture and community can be celebrated. Field & Fork Network is a New York State food and farming non-profit organization that connects communities to innovative solutions that foster a sustainable food system.

In 2018, a group of stakeholders began discussing tangible ways to improve the Niagara Falls City Market (the Market). As part of these conversations, four priority areas were developed as the initial focus of these efforts. The priorities - and progress made for each - follow.

PRIORITY #1

Integrate SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks NY into Market Operations

The integration of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Double Up Food Bucks NY (DUFBNY) increased access and affordability for Niagara Falls residents and created a new customer base for market vendors. The market had 171 new customers and over 1,000 SNAP transactions between June-October 2022. A total of \$28,371.00 was spent at the City Market in SNAP/DUFBNY sales.



PRIORITY #2

Recruit Additional Vendors and Diversify Product Offerings

Outreach to local businesses resulted in 12 new vendors at the market this season: including restaurants and artisan goods. To encourage participation, we waived the initial fee allowing vendors to join risk-free.

Local community organizations were invited to table throughout the season to share resources with customers. These organizations included FeedMore WNY, The P3 Center for Teens, Grassroots Gardens of WNY, the Aquarium of Niagara, Moms and Kids, Independent Health Foundation and the Niagara Beautification Commission.

In addition, local restaurants including Judas Tree, Marketside Restaurant and Starry Night Cafe, were invited to make and offer sample food items using produce available at the market. Another highlight of the season, which allowed for the diversification of product offerings for the patrons of the market, was a demonstration put on by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Niagara County. CCE provided a hands-on learning opportunity on how to utilize produce purchased at the market and how to preserve these goods by canning/pickling.



"It was amazing today! I had so much positive feedback about how excited people were and how much they loved seeing the market so busy and full of life."

JESSICA NYLAND, Artisan Day Vendor
Lend-a-Leaf Tea Co.



PRIORITY #3

Host Multiple Events

Three signature events were executed during the 2022 season at the Niagara Falls City Market. The first event of the season, Kids Day, took place on July 22nd and helped kick off the official start of DUFB at the market. Kids Day was a collaborative effort with the Niagara Falls Boys & Girls Club and was a great success! Well over 75 children visited the market that day with produce vouchers in hand, giving them a chance to shop for fruits and vegetables. In addition to the typical vendors, many organizations were also present including the Albright Knox ArtTruck, Aquarium of Niagara, Niagara Falls Police Department, Niagara Falls Fire Department, Niagara County Sheriff's Department, and the Buffalo Bills Foundation with special guests: Buffalo Bills cornerback Siran Neal and Billy Buffalo.

In August, the market brought back a nostalgic community event, Cruise Night, inspired by stories shared by customers. The event featured 30 cars, live music, new vendors and an evening market, allowing individuals who are usually unable to attend during normal business hours an opportunity to shop.

To further extend the market's commitment to supporting locally owned Niagara County small businesses, the management team secured more than a dozen vendors to participate in the first-ever Local Artisan Day in October. The event featured live music, free food samples from local eateries, and Niagara County resident-owned businesses. The event was successful and led to three vendors returning for additional market days after seeing the potential in the resurgence of the City Market.

As an effort to appeal to all five senses, live music at the market was a priority, to add a bit of flair to the space. The music was made possible via sponsorship from the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. The funding allowed for three local musicians to perform at the market throughout the season.





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IN THE HEADLINES

"Program to Help SNAP Recipients Comes to Niagara Falls"

News 4 Buffalo, WIVB.COM

"Double Up Food Bucks Program Kicks Off at Niagara Falls City Market"

Channel 2 News, WGRZ.COM

"Bills Foundation Helps Launch This Healthy Food Program in Niagara Falls"

Buffalo Bills, BUFFALOBILLS.COM

PRIORITY #4

Increase Market Promotion

Promotion of the Market was a major point of emphasis this past season. Combining the efforts outlined above with direct marketing strategies, allowed us to maximize exposure of the market. Strengthening the Market's social media presence was a key strategy, supported by the Market Coordinator and vendors. Social media posts reached more than 36,000 people throughout the 2022 season.

Earned media was another strategy for the 2022 season. Multiple press releases and press events were produced to encourage local media outlets to cover the events and activities at the Market. In total, six news outlets covered the Market at different times during the season.

Direct marketing efforts were also employed. Most notably, a billboard was installed a few blocks away from the Market on Pine Avenue to promote the Market, market hours, and the availability of SNAP and DUFEB. Many patrons cited the billboard as their reason for visiting the Market.



Market Management Priorities

- ✓ Integrate SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks into market operations
 - ↳ SNAP was integrated into market operations in August 2021
 - ↳ Double Up Food Bucks launched July 2022
- ✓ Recruit additional vendors and diversity product offerings
 - ↳ 2x more vendors in 2022 vs. 2021
- ✓ Present multiple events to drive market traffic and awareness
 - ↳ Three events were hosted targeting different audiences
- ✓ Increase market promotion
 - ↳ Media attention gained from six local news outlets

Funding the future of the market.

When Field & Fork Network took over management of the Niagara Falls City Market, four priority areas were identified to improve and lay the groundwork for revitalizing the city market. In order to sustain the work outlined in the framework of the market management priorities, external funding and personnel support from Field & Fork Network would be necessary.

External Funding Sources

Field & Fork Network and the Niagara Falls City Market successfully leveraged funding from five key sources:

- \$245,000 from USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program
- \$35,000 from Niagara Falls Community Development Block Grant
- \$1,000 sponsorship from Niagara Falls National Heritage Area
- \$500 from Farm Credit East
- Field & Fork Network extensively advocated to Empire State Development, via the Niagara Falls Strategic Economic Development Fund process, for the inclusion of the Niagara Falls City Market and food entrepreneurship as a priority for their initiative.
 - Niagara Falls City Market Area Planning and Redevelopment was included in the Niagara Falls plan for \$15 million; and Food Entrepreneurship and Agritourism was included for \$4 million.

1,100+ Hours & \$34K in Field & Fork Personnel Investment

To support the ongoing efforts of market management of the Niagara Falls City Market, Field & Fork Network invested 1,111 hours of personnel time across five members for a financial investment of \$34,200.



A win for families, farmers, and our communities.

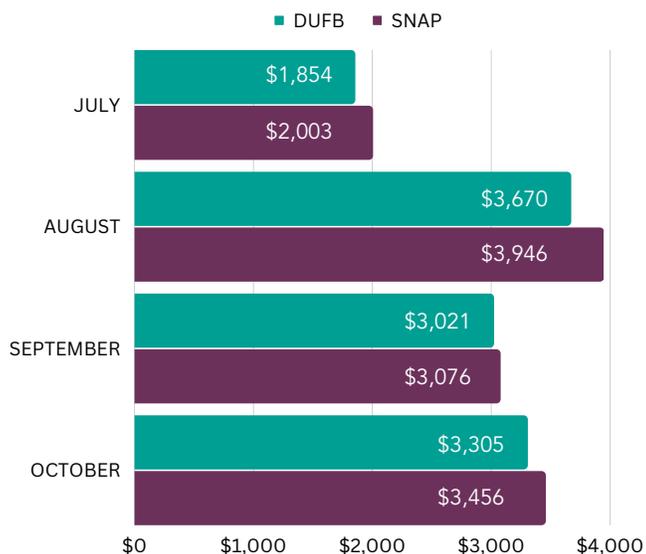
In July 2022, the Niagara Falls City Market began offering the Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) program to further provide SNAP shoppers access to more healthy food. The program offers individuals and families with SNAP benefits a \$1 for \$1 match on their SNAP produce purchases at the market, up to \$20 a day. This means families are getting more healthy local produce, farmers are getting a financial boost, and it's keeping food dollars circulating in the local economy.

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"Everything is so expensive at the grocery store. I'd much rather spend my money here. This way I know that I can TRUST the food I'm feeding my family."

Loyal Customer
using SNAP & DUFB to shop local

DUFB Monthly Redemptions



2022 Snapshot

18,000

lbs of Local Produce Purchased

98%

SNAP Redemption Rate

\$15,259

SNAP Sales



1000+

SNAP Transactions

92%

DUFB Redemption Rate

\$13,112

DUFB Earned



171

New SNAP/ DUFB Customers

Growth & Diversification of Vendors & Product Offering.

One of the primary goals of the City Market Task Force was to increase the number of vendors participating in the market and diversify the product offerings. Historically, the market was comprised of nine farm vendors offering primarily fresh produce. In 2022, we added 12 new vendors to the market, each offering a unique product not currently available at the market.

Making a positive impact on the vendor experience.

More than \$28,300 spent at the City Market in 2022 were SNAP and DUFEB sales. The vendors from the 2022 season noted that their sales were positively impacted by the implementation of Double Up Food Bucks and SNAP programming. Aside from the financial boost experienced by the vendors, they also noted that they were most satisfied with:

- the opportunity to give feedback to market management
- sense of community among vendors
- market rules & regulations
- advertising & promotion efforts

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"Every once in while we get to observe the better side of mankind. Today at the Niagara Falls City Market we got to see it twice over. A local vendor quietly loaded two bushels of produce in the trunk of a vehicle belonging to an individual who runs a food pantry here in the Falls. A senior Veteran was handed cupcakes and a card from a number of the vendors, with a heartfelt "thank you for your service." No press. No looking for recognition. Just folks doing something because...we like this Market! And the people who support it."

DAVE BARBER, *First Time Vendor - M&M Pickles, The Grouchy Old Biker*

Produce Vendors

Canfield Farms
Everyone's Eating Fresh
Hurtgam Farms
Miller's Farms
Pollow Farm
Richard Nursery
Robinson Farms
Senek Farms
Zastrow Farm

New Vendors in 2022

Goodfellas Pizzeria
Flicker and FLora
JC Tees
Lend a Leaf Tea Co.
Lux Vita
Moxes Boxes
M&M Pickles
Paradise in Pink Boutique
Skinny Wick Candle Company
Steamworks Coffee
The Whole Empanada
What's Pop-In Gourmet Popcorn



Driving market traffic with signature events.

As an effort to aid in the further success of the Niagara Falls City Market, our management team collaborated with farmers, local business owners and organizations to host signature events. These events brought new customers and encouraged returning customers to spread the word about the resurgence of the Market.

Kids Day & DUFB Kick-Off

Kid's Day at the Market was our first signature event, hosted in collaboration with the Niagara Falls Boys & Girls Club. With more than 75 children visiting the market that day, the event proved to be a huge success. Students were able to shop for fruits and vegetables using vouchers created and distributed by the Club. In addition to our typical vendors, we had many other organizations participate including Albright Knox, Niagara Falls Aquarium, NFPD, NFFD, Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Buffalo Bills Foundation with special guest Buffalo Bills cornerback Siran Neal. This event also marked the kick-off for DUFB at the City Market, a key priority for market management.

Cruise Night Car Show & Evening Market

We brought it back! An event which was once a staple to the market, made its return on August 31, 2022. More than 30 cars arrived at the market with their proud owners. Marketgoers browsed the collection while shopping farm fresh produce. Prizes were awarded to some real showstoppers and to top it off we had live music.



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"I haven't seen the market
THIS FULL in decades!"

LOYAL CUSTOMER,

attending Kid's Day at the Market 2022





Fall Event **Local Artisan Day**

To further extend our commitment to supporting locally owned Niagara County small businesses, the management team recruited a lineup of more than one dozen vendors to participate in our Local Artisan Day this fall. The event featured live music, free food samples from local eateries and Niagara County resident owned businesses. The event was a great success and after seeing the potential in the resurgence of our City Market, three vendors returned for additional market days.

Live Music

As an effort to appeal to all five senses, we were determined to bring music to the market to add flare to the pavilion. The music was made possible by the Niagara Falls Heritage Area. The donation allowed us to welcome three different musical groups for four performances.



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"This is the most interest we've had
around here in years."
”

SHERI SENEK - Vendor, Senek Farms

Driving Market Awareness

Another key pillar for market management of the Niagara Falls City Market was improving the marketing and promotion of the market. During the 2022 market season, we successfully engaged with the local press and media, gaining news coverage from six local news outlets.



Thank You to Our Supporters & Community Partners

American Heart Association
Aquarium of Niagara
Boys & Girls Club of Niagara Falls
Buffalo AKG Art Museum
Buffalo Bills Foundation
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County
Double Up Food Bucks New York
Feedmore WNY
Field & Fork Network, Inc.
Fire716
Grassroots Gardens WNY
Independent Health Foundation
Judas Tree
LiveNF

Marketside Restaurant
Niagara Falls Fire Department
Niagara Falls Police Department
Niagara Beautification Commission
Niagara County Sheriff's Department
Niagara Falls City School District Head Start
Niagara Falls National Heritage Area
Niagara Gazette
Northtown Automotive Companies
Office of Senator Robert G. Ort
Office of Assemblyman Angelo Morinello
Office of the Mayor of Niagara Falls
P3 Center for Teens, Moms and Kids
Save-A-Lot
Starry Night Cafe



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Buffalo, NY 14203

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