

PUBLIC MARKETS WEEK

2025 REPORT



Prepared by:

marketcity^{TO}

public markets network

We respectfully acknowledge that the work detailed in this report has taken place in Tsi Tkarón:to. This special place has been and continues to be cared for by the Anishinabeg Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat, and its current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Now home to many First Nation, Inuit, Métis, and non-Indigenous communities, this territory is subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to share and care for the land and resources in the Great Lakes region peacefully.

This area has been a gathering place for Indigenous peoples for centuries before colonization; they hosted the original markets. The relationship between food, culture, land, and communities continues to inform our work on Public Markets as treaty people with responsibilities to uphold.

As we work towards collectively reimagining Toronto as a Market City, a place with many and diverse networks of commerce and trade, and mobilize the partnerships to make it happen, we will continue to prioritize ways to highlight Indigenous knowledge and support Indigenous Food Sovereignty.

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SUMMARY

HISTORY

Since 2023, marketcityTO has partnered with the City of Toronto and markets across Toronto to celebrate Public Markets Week, an annual event that recognizes the culture, diversity, and entrepreneurship that our diverse and dynamic public markets bring to the City. Through market activations and events, the public is invited to visit and learn more about the city's 150+ public markets, so they can appreciate the important role markets play in economic and community development across Toronto, especially for Indigenous, Black, and Immigrant communities.

2025: EXPANDING PROGRAMMING

marketcityTO, in partnership with the City, supported **23 public markets** in delivering programming including **5 neighbourhood market tours, 11 #LoveLocal activations, 2 Market Talks sessions at the St. Lawrence Market North Building, and the promotion of our interactive Toronto Public Markets Map.** We also introduced the new tradition of the Mayor opening Public Markets Week at a participating market.

All events were led by market operators and community champions/experts, with marketcityTO providing coordination and promotional support. This emphasis on market-led programming represented a key opportunity for marketcityTO and the City of Toronto to support grassroots organizations.

#LOVELOCAL ALIGNMENT

marketcityTO effectively aligned the {I Love Toronto Markets} campaign with the City of Toronto's #LoveLocal campaign, one of the ten actions outlined in the Mayor's Economic Action Plan in response to U.S. tariffs. This alignment increased the campaign's reach and **reinforced its message that public markets are vital places for residents to purchase locally produced products directly from local businesses.**



SEE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WEEK IN OUR “BEST OF PUBLIC MARKETS WEEK 2025” COMPILATION

IMPACT: AT A GLANCE



Snapshot 2025 Toronto Public Markets Week | June 15-21

7days | **1** citywide #LoveLocal campaign



PURPOSE:

To celebrate and promote Toronto's diverse public markets as key supporters of local businesses, inclusive economies, and increase connection with the City's #LoveLocal Campaign.

EVENT LANDING PAGE

5465 views

NEW

toronto.ca/publicmarkets

57% of mcTO website views driven by new city landing page

55% unique views

SOCIAL MEDIA

70+ social media posts

65,000 reels & post views

71% views from non-followers

Mayor Olivia Chow

Launched Public Markets Week

Global News & City News

2 Main-Stream media features

CITYWIDE
1map

112

markets featured in the map
25% increase from 2024)

11,510 VIEWS

MARKET
5tours

81% of organizers strengthened community connections

100% of organizers would host tours again

2 New Partners: Heritage Toronto & KMCLT

120 **1830**
PARTICIPANTS Eventbrite Views

81%
5/5 customers rating

11 MICRO-GRANTS
delivering public activations

100% micro-grant recipients will participate again

Grant recipients include:

- 6 Farmers' Markets
- 2 Specialty Markets
- 2 Flea, Antique & Vintage Markets
- 1 Community Fresh Food Markets

IMPACT: MARKETCITYTO

23

Public markets
engaged

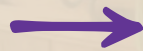


18

More new markets
engaged from 2024

4

New partnerships
established



1

New funding
partner in
addition to the
City of Toronto

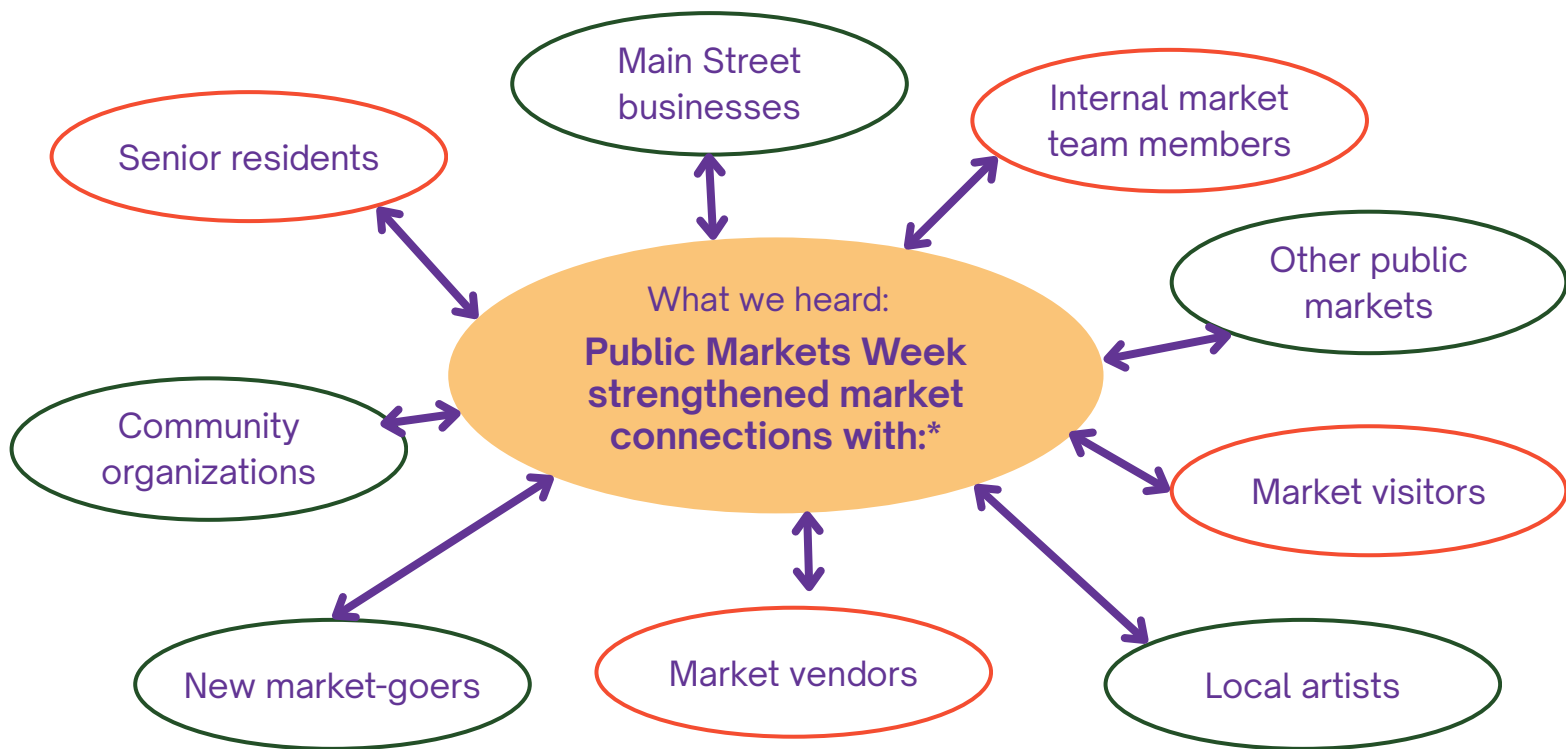
+509%

Increased website traffic

+755%

New website visitors

IMPACT: OUR PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY



* findings from market operators' post-event evaluation survey


65% Surveyed participants: tours provided new perspectives on how markets enrich Toronto neighbourhoods



Photo: Katrin Faridani
Black Creek Community Farm at Leslieville
Farmers' Market

20,000+

Potential market-goers reached through this year's participating markets



"I felt like a tourist in my own city in the best way. It was great to learn more about a neighbourhood I wasn't as familiar with and I loved trying food from local businesses. I can't wait for [Public Markets Week] next year!"

-Tour participant

"The medicine bag workshop became a powerful space for cultural sharing, connection and healing - allowing participants to engage with Ojibway traditions and leave with something meaningful."

-#LoveLocal microgrant recipient

"The tour participants enjoyed spending their money around the market. Public Markets Week is a very important initiative to help the community of Toronto understand what markets offer them."

-Tour organizer

"#LoveLocal brought a spark of creativity with live music and screen printing workshops that turned shoppers into participants and our market into a true community celebration."

-#LoveLocal microgrant recipient

"We are so grateful to have been able to participate in the #LoveLocal campaign. As a small non profit we are always trying to do more, to deepen people's connection to good seasonal food, to connect with our neighbouring food system activists, and to engage better and more deeply with our community. This campaign encouraged and allowed us to do all three things at once, and it was really such a pleasure."

-#LoveLocal microgrant recipient

CONCLUSION: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

This year we saw increased engagement and visibility for Public Markets Week thanks to the additional support from City of Toronto staff focused on public markets, the new City of Toronto Public Market landing page, and alignment with the Love Local campaign. This demonstrates the critical role the City can play in amplifying the work already happening in the community. The section below summarizes what we achieved in 2025, and how we can continue to grow this fantastic city-wide event.

#LOVELOCAL CONNECTION

- **Success:** Embedded Public Markets Week in the City's #LoveLocal campaign
- **Opportunity:** Grow the Market Talks program at St. Lawrence Market

PUBLIC MARKETS MAP

- **Success:** Increased community engagement and awareness of different market types
- **Opportunity:** Embed map in the City of Toronto's Public Markets landing page

NEIGHBOURHOOD TOURS

- **Success:** Strengthened new partnerships with community groups (e.g. Kensington Market Community Land Trust)
- **Opportunity:** Create new partnerships and introduce new markets into the tour roster

MICROGRANT EXPANSION

- **Success:** Directly supported markets with programming dollars
- **Opportunity:** Increase number of markets supported by at least 25%, and microgrant budget by at least 40%

MARKET PASSPORT

- **Success:** Engaged farmers' markets to lead the design and prototype a market passport program
- **Opportunity:** Expand and scale the program to encompass all public market categories



Photo: Charlie Mercado



Photo: Marina Queirola



Photo: Charlie Mercado



Photo: Natasa Hansen



Photo: Marina Queirola



Photo: Jeremy Acosta



Photo: Matt Canaran



Photo: Caroline Clair

Appendix: Program Details

Social Media and Promotional Campaign

What We Accomplished

- **Toolkit:** We built a more accessible, easier to implement {I Love Toronto Markets} social media toolkit for market managers and market-based vendors, with a direct connection to the City's #LoveLocal campaign.
- **Councillor Outreach:** This year we reached out directly to City councillors' offices for the first time, providing information on Public Markets Week and activities in their wards and asking them to share with their constituents in their newsletters and social media.
- **Merchandise:** We distributed tote bags with {I Love Toronto Markets} branding and the #LoveLocal hashtag to tour participants and microgrant participants to increase Public Markets Week visibility and connection to the #LoveLocal campaign.

What We Learned

- We modified the social media toolkit for 2025 in response to market managers' feedback that they lacked the time and/or knowledge to customize the {I Love Toronto Markets} branding for their markets. This was **an effective way to increase engagement, with more markets and several market-based businesses making Public Markets Week posts this year.**
- **Engaging City councillors directly was an effective strategy**, with 7 councillors sharing Public Markets Week information and/or posting on social media.
- The tote bags were very popular with market goers, and were an effective way to boost engagement with market activations. They may be **an effective tool in the future to increase awareness of Public Markets Week and further strengthen the connection with the City's #LoveLocal campaign**, amplifying the message that supporting Toronto's public markets is an important way to support local entrepreneurs.

Appendix: Program Details

Toronto Public Markets Map

What We Accomplished

- **Market Map:** We expanded on the Market Map we developed last year by refining market categories, making the map easier for the public to navigate.
- **Online Research:** We conducted online research and incorporated data from other marketcityTO projects to ensure the map was up to date for the outdoor market season, as well as conducting research for the winter and holiday map update in November.
- **Engagement:** We liaised with market managers to ensure the map was up to date and accurate for the 2025 outdoor market season.
- **Promotion:** We distributed postcards advertising the map and Public Markets Week.

What We Learned

- The map was **an important tool to build engagement with members of the public.** Market visitors would express interest in the map, which we were able to leverage into longer conversations about Public Markets Week and the role that public markets play in supporting local businesses and building community connections. Year to year growth in engagement and views demonstrate how important the map is both for market managers, visitors and shoppers.
- Reaching out to market managers in May/June for information can be challenging since many are focused on the opening of the outdoor season. Leveraging other projects (e.g. our annual Public Markets Survey) and the interest shown by marketgoers are important tools in facilitating research. **Earlier outreach and availability of honorariums are key** to increasing the number of market managers that submit information.

Appendix: Program Details

Neighbourhood Market Tours

What We Accomplished

- **Delivered 5 tours:** Building on last year's tours, we again worked with 2 host markets from the previous year, added 2 new tours (including our first market district tour in Kensington Market and Chinatown), and added 1 industry-focused tour of the Ontario Food Terminal.
- **Surpassed targets:** Tours were incredibly popular, with a total of 120 public attendees. This was above our target of 100 participants, with additional spots being added to the Ontario Food Terminal tour.
- **New partnerships:** We built new partnerships with Heritage Toronto and the Kensington Market Community Land Trust to support or lead the tour, increasing our capacity to grow the program and engaging local experts in our activities.

What We Learned

- We heard from tour organizers that **costs had increased and that the tour experience would be improved by a small budget increase.** Due to unforeseen circumstances, one of our planned market partners was no longer able to deliver a market for this season. While this was unfortunate, it allowed us to pivot and use the planned budget for this tour to increase the budget for the other market tours in response to the organizers' concerns.
- 56% of tour participants who completed our survey would pay \$0-10 to take a tour; 38% would pay \$11-20; 6% would pay \$21-30. However, 88% indicated they would definitely take another Public Markets Week tour and the remaining 12% would consider it. This suggests that the **partnership with the City is the most effective way to maximize participation.**

Appendix: Program Details

#LoveLocal Microgrant

What We Accomplished

- **11 Microgrants:** We opened applications for markets to apply for \$500 microgrants towards market workshops and activations. We funded 11 market activations: 4 activations centred BIPOC voices and vendors and 1 market supports racialized, low-income, and underhoused community members.
- **Secured additional funding:** We connected one cross-market initiative with an additional funder, the Canadian Centre for Food and Ecology (CCFE). marketcityTO's core funding and existing relationships enabled this microgrant recipient to double the funds for the Market Passport pilot initiative, which can now be scaled across more markets while increasing connections between market operators and promoting a wide range of markets to visitors.
- **Strengthened local connections:** Microgrant recipients told us that the market-goers loved the activations. The programs likewise strengthened the market's connections to customers, vendors, local artists and businesses, other public markets, and community organizations.

What We Learned

- This program was developed in response to hearing from market managers that they wanted more market programming but struggled to access funding. It was an **effective way to engage markets that have been more passive participants** in marketcityTO's initiatives and the broader public markets landscape in the City.
- **Funders are interested in being connected to Public Markets Week, and the City's involvement in the program is a key leverage point.**
- 63% of microgrant recipients stated that increased funding (\$700-1,000 vs. \$500) would allow them to include more local artisans and businesses and increase programming.

Appendix: Emerging Programming

This year's Public Markets Week programming also featured three emerging activities. While they were not initially included in the original proposal, these initiatives came out of the planning process and eventually proved successful. Their success indicates that these activities should be maintained in future years.

PUBLIC MARKETS WEEK LAUNCH

- To strengthen the connection with Toronto's #LoveLocal campaign, we worked with Leslieville Farmers' Market to launch Public Markets Week with Mayor Olivia Chow, who visited the market to welcome marketgoers, read the Public Markets Week proclamation, and ring the opening bell.
- We also began the tradition of flag signing as part of the Public Markets Week Opening Ceremony. This symbolic action will involve the mayor and manager of the host market signing a flag on a sail bunting (crafted by Li/Ne Bags) for posterity, and to indicate the City's continued support for the Toronto public markets sector.

MARKET TALKS AT ST. LAWRENCE MARKET

- 2 market talks at St. Lawrence Market brought together public markets across the City to discuss common goals and the impacts of public markets on the local economy.
- 7 market organizers, 4 farmers, and 2 food systems academics discussed the impacts and opportunities presented by American tariffs, and the programs and policies to strengthen local and regional food systems.
- These talks represent an important opportunity to bring market managers together and to reinforce the role of the City, through the only municipally managed public market in Toronto, in strengthening public markets.

MARKET PASSPORTS

- We funded a microgrant application for a cross-farmers' market passport, organized and led by 2 farmers' markets (with 13 markets participating). We were able to partner with the Canadian Centre for Food and Ecology (CCFE), who also contributed funding.
- 800 passports were distributed at markets and through giveaways, with participants who visited at least 6 markets between June 21 - Sept 26 being entered into prize draws.
- Both markets and CCFE indicated in post-programming discussions that they would like to be involved in organizing next year, and feel that marketcityTO is the right partner to lead the project, particularly in expanding it to include all public market categories.

FUNDER RECOGNITION

Program Funder:

We thank the City of Toronto Economic Development and Culture Division for supporting Public Markets Week 2025.

Microgrant Funder:

We also thank the Canadian Centre for Food and Ecology for co-funding the Farmers' Market Passport program.



Photo: Caroline Clair