



CITY OF WHEATLAND

CITY COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT

July 23, 2024

SUBJECT: Consideration of Establishing a City of Wheatland Farmers' Market

PREPARED BY: Tim Raney, Community Development Director

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Wheatland City Council consider and provide direction to staff to establish and assist with the creation of a Farmers' Market in the City of Wheatland.

Background

City staff has received interest from the public regarding the City of Wheatland promoting a Farmers' Market with local goods for residents and visitors.

Pursuant to the Yuba County Agricultural Commissioner, there are currently two seasonal Certified Farmers' Markets (CFM) in Yuba County. Marysville has a CFM from May to October, and Brownsville has a CFM from June to September. Yuba County permits CFMs within residential areas on parking lots and other paved areas that serve public uses. CFMs in commercial districts may be permitted as special events. In Yuba County, CFMs must be operated by one or more certified producers, a non-profit organization, or a local government agency.

Yuba County relies on the State CFM program, which is regulated by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The California Department of Food and Agriculture states the direct marketing of agricultural products through CFMs benefits the agricultural community and consumers. CFMs provide a flexible marketing alternative without disrupting other produce marketing systems. The high quality and fresh produce brought to the CFMs by its' producers creates a diverse market and also provides the consumer with opportunity to meet the farmer and learn how their food supply is produced.

CFMs provide a great opportunity for small farmers to market their products without the added expenses of commercial preparation, which is intended to provide an opportunity to increase small farmers' net income and make it possible for them to stay in business. Per the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the State of California has approximately 655 CFMs and approximately 2,700 certified producers. Of these markets, about 60 percent are year-round markets. In a typical year, the majority of the seasonal markets operate from April through October of each year.

Although the State of California regulates CFMs and becoming a Certified Producer, local jurisdictions can adopt regulations that further support CFMs in their jurisdiction.

A review of surrounding jurisdictions found the approach to permitting farmers markets varied greatly. For example, the City of Woodland requires the City Manager to approve a Farmers' Market application, while the City of Davis requires the City Council to approve a Farmers' Market application, and the City of Lincoln requires a Farmers' Market to obtain a conditional use permit for operation within a park. Placer County established Placer Grown, which is a non-profit organization that supports all the CFMs throughout Placer County. In addition to any local requirements, each CFM must still apply to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and each producer must also apply. Each producer must be certified by the County Agricultural Commissioner and all CFMs are required to have a health permit.

Discussion

City staff recommends the City Council consider the level of involvement the City of Wheatland should have in the permitting of a CFM within the City and provide any direction to staff if necessary. For example, should the City take on the role of a CFM, or should the City invite an existing Yuba County CFM to operate within the City?

In addition, staff recommends the City Council consider the preferred location for a potential Farmer's Market in the City of Wheatland. City staff has identified the following possible locations for consideration:

Front Street and Front Street Park

Front Street and Front Street Park is centrally located near existing businesses with available street parking; however, the adjacent railroad tracks could provide generate concerns.

Settler's Village Parking Lot

The Settler's Village parking lot provides a large amount of area for producers and other vendors, as well as, the amount of parking, existing business, and access and visibility from State Route 65.

City Hall Parking Lot

The City Hall parking lot provides an adjacent park and the Community Center, as well as available street parking. The nearby residential neighborhoods could also benefit from a Farmer's Market at this location.

Fiscal Impact

Any necessary Planning staff time would be processed using General Fund dollars under the existing Raney Planning and Management contract services.

Conclusion

Staff recommends that the Wheatland City Council provide direction to staff to establish and assist the creation of a Farmers' Market in the City of Wheatland.