Public Market Mobile Workshops & Tours

Participants at the 11th International Public Markets Conference will have multiple opportunities to visit and explore Toronto’s network of over 100 public markets, as well as food initiatives and retail innovations.

Half-day mobile workshops on Friday morning will offer participants the opportunity to dig deeper into one market or food initiative onsite, meet with stakeholders to learn more about the history of the market or initiative and its operations, and contribute their own ideas for how to achieve greater levels of success.

On Saturday, participants will spend the day visiting and learning the inner workings of Toronto’s extraordinary markets. The six tours will operate simultaneously, so each participant must select only one tour when registering. Saturday’s tours will all end at Stackt Market for the conference closing. Designed entirely out of shipping containers, Stackt is an ever-evolving cultural marketplace featuring a mix of shops, a microbrewery, and lots of ongoing community programming focused on supporting local art, music, social enterprise, and cultural communities.

In addition to the Saturday tours, we are pleased to offer an optional, early morning tour of the Ontario Food Terminal on Friday, which will be completed prior to the start of the mobile workshops.

Please keep in mind that space is limited for all mobile workshops and tours, including the optional early morning tour. Making changes to your workshop and/or tour selections after completing registration is strongly discouraged and may not be possible. *And please note that all mobile workshop and tour programs are subject to change.

Please select your mobile workshop and tour(s) when you register.

Friday, June 9

6:00–8:00am – EARLY MORNING TOUR (OPTIONAL)

Ontario Food Terminal

The Ontario Food Terminal plays a vital role in ensuring access to Ontario, Canadian and global fruits and vegetables at a wholesale price for independent retail stores and food processors, many of which sell at public markets across the city. It ranks amongst the top four terminal markets in Canada and the United States by volume of produce distributed. An average of 5.6 million pounds of fruits, produce, and agricultural products are distributed daily from this 40-acre site. During the tour, participants will be able to see the terminal in operation and learn about its model, which includes 21 warehouse tenants and 400 farmers market tenants that sell directly, as well as another 1,500 Ontario farmers that sell indirectly through the warehouse tenants or farmers market dealers to over 5,000 registered buyers.
Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Toronto had four primary public markets, which were complemented by street vendors and several farmers markets. These markets were key multi-purpose public spaces, serving neighborhood needs, bringing communities together, and effectively anchoring the public sphere. Over time, however, the public responsibility for building and maintaining food infrastructure in the city was surrendered, and with it, the responsibility to ensure equitable food access across a rapidly expanding geographic area. That is the past. The present and the future of public markets is about creating inclusive local economies in Toronto. During the mobile workshops and tours, conference participants are invited to learn from and contribute to the city’s new models and help mobilize partnerships to help Toronto on its way to becoming a Market City.

**WORKSHOP 1 | SELF-DETERMINED SOLUTIONS TO ADVANCE THE RIGHT TO FOOD, EQUITY, COMMUNITY, AND JOY THROUGH GOOD FOOD MARKETS**
FoodShare Toronto is an organization focused on food justice by collaborating with and taking our cue from those most affected by poverty and food insecurity — Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, and People with Disabilities. Supported by FoodShare, Good Food Markets make up a diverse network of 45 markets across the city, increasing access to high-quality, culturally appropriate, affordable produce in neighborhoods where it might not otherwise be available, as well as creating informal community hubs. The workshop will be delivered at Flemo Farm, which will highlight the unique relationship between the farm and the on-site Good Food Market that bring together urban agriculture, food access and community engagement.

**WORKSHOP 2 | HOW THE STOP IS BUILDING A FARMERS MARKET FOR EVERYONE: CHANGING NARRATIVES ABOUT WHO BELONGS**
The Stop Community Food Centre is one of Canada’s oldest food banks and has evolved into a thriving community hub. Their Farmers Market program is one of Toronto’s largest and more successful markets (vendors’ revenue and the number of customers). As an organization with a broader mandate, they are uniquely positioned to change current narratives that position the farmers markets as white spaces for high-earning customers by bringing together and integrating programs that promote social inclusion and inclusive local economies. Participants will enjoy a tour of the Wychwood Barns and onsite food gardens and greenhouse, and commercial kitchen, followed by a presentation and broader discussion on programs and strategies to create farmers markets where everyone (vendors & customers) feel welcome and included.

**WORKSHOP 3 | PARTNERSHIPS: HOW THE CITY AND COMMUNITY WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE PARKS PLACES FOR COMMUNITY ECONOMIC RECOVERY**
The Thorncliffe Park Women’s Committee (TPWC) is a grassroots organization dedicated to transforming and animating underutilized green space in Thorncliffe Park while also improving the lives and livelihoods of women and our community. Covid-19 restrictions underscored a lack of understanding and cooperation on the part of the City Parks Department to adapt to the community’s changing needs brought about by the pandemic. This workshop invites participants to discuss the barriers and opportunities affecting the role that parks play in supporting community economic recovery and resilience through park cafes, farmers markets, and small footprint / high community impact economic development programs.

**WORKSHOP 4 | UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT: HOW PUBLIC MARKETS FIND NEW WAYS TO SERVE AND REFLECT THEIR COMMUNITIES**
Farmers’ Markets Ontario (FMO), the provincial association representing 180 markets, presents four municipalities that have explored ways to provide more responsive, innovative, and entrepreneurial management for their historic public markets and market buildings. Managers from Ottawa’s ByWard Market, the capital’s #1 tourist attraction, Guelph Farmers’ Market, a thriving Saturday market, and Hamilton Farmers’ Market, now in the process of studying governance, will share their experiences and challenges. St. Lawrence Market, a conference co-host, will provide a governance-focused walking tour of the market district. Participants will have the opportunity to engage and share information throughout the workshop.
**WORKSHOP 5 | LEVERAGING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO ENSURE MARKETS REMAIN RELEVANT TO CHANGING COMMUNITIES AND NEW AUDIENCES**

CreativeHub 1352 is a non-profit, community-driven organization focusing on arts, culture and heritage programming that operates the Lakeview Farmers’ Market and Lakeview Artisan Market at the City-owned Small Arms Inspection Building. Over the next ten years, Lakeview will see a dramatic increase in population as large housing developments are completed, along with more traffic from rapid bus lines and the Hurontario LRT. The makeup of the community will change, along with their needs. In this workshop, organizers will share community engagement approaches they have used in the past to inform their current program and engage in a discussion on how the market can adapt and remain relevant in a changing neighbourhood.

**WORKSHOP 6 | LITTLE JAMAICA, CREATING SUCCESSFUL MARKETS IN RACIALIZED COMMUNITIES**

The Afro-Caribbean Farmers’ & Cultural Market is Canada’s first resident-led, culturally-specific farmers market founded and managed by a Black female. Located in Little Jamaica, it offers affordable, ethical, and clean vegetables grown by local Black farmers. This workshop will demonstrate how culturally dense pockets of communities can benefit from culturally relevant food and/or craft markets in their immediate neighborhoods, which also create safe spaces and community hubs. Participants will learn about the importance of building relationships with local Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and governments to support resident-led initiatives that create inclusive public spaces for everyone and rebuild trust and joy in communities.

**WORKSHOP 7 | SETTING A NEW TABLE WITH REUSABLES: GRASSROOTS ACTION TO REDUCE WASTE AT FARMERS MARKETS**

Withrow Park Farmers’ Market and Evergreen Farmers Market, in partnership with two reusable dishware programs Muuse and DreamZero, will showcase the work implemented at their markets and inspire change in waste reduction practices. Participants will learn concrete tools, including how to conduct waste audits, develop sustainability goals and policies, and design pilot projects and partnerships to make them happen while engaging residents in the process to strengthen community connections. Special guest vendors Spent Goods, Chocosol Traders, and Bruized will share how their food products and business operations reduce food waste and advance circular economy goals.

**WORKSHOP 8 | MARKET 707 CONTAINER MARKET: INCUBATING BUSINESSES BY REMOVING BARRIERS FOR URBAN ENTREPRENEURS**

Explore Market 707 – Toronto’s premier outdoor food and retail market housed in retrofitted shipping containers, founded by Scadding Court Community Centre. Located in the Alexandra Park neighborhood of downtown west Toronto, the market has transformed the streetscape and created a landmark destination. Join us for a tour to learn about the history of the area, how markets can revitalize underused public spaces while creating sustainable economic opportunities, and how cross-sectoral collaboration can produce replicable, scalable models that benefit businesses and communities. A presentation & conversations with management and vendors will bring to life the perspectives of those involved in creating successful markets.

**WORKSHOP 9 | PATHWAYS TO INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC MARKETS IN ADVANCING RECONCILIATION**

Ojibikaan Indigenous Cultural Network is an Indigenous-led nonprofit offering land, food and culture-based programming in Toronto and the surrounding region. In partnership with NishDish Marketer, they will welcome everyone to the BrickFord Centre, a Toronto District School Board building and Urban Indigenous Education Centre, to tell stories of celebration and reclamation and share projects they are leading to advance Indigenous food sovereignty. During this workshop, participants will learn about traditional teachings, food, plants and medicine through storytelling, art created by Red Urban Nation Arts Collective, an urban healing garden and tasting Indigenous foods.

**WORKSHOP 10 | BREWING DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PATHS IN FOOD ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Taking place at Junction Brewery, this workshop will be led by Foodpreneur Lab, a Black woman founded and led nonprofit in Canada, that focuses on creating access for food entrepreneurs and businesses from underserved communities. The organization’s mandate is to support BIPOC and women-identifying entrepreneurs within the food ecosystem. Attendees will learn approaches to removing barriers to entrepreneurship and building an environment where businesses succeed and thrive, while enjoying food from a pop-up market and a craft beer pairing with a beer diversity expert. This workshop invites conference members to learn and co-design new diversity, equity, and inclusion actions and strategies that will contribute to building more robust, multicultural food ecosystem landscapes.
WORKSHOP 11 | ALTERNATIVE MODELS FOR INTEGRATING URBAN FARMERS AND GROWERS AT PUBLIC MARKETS
Urban farmers are hyper-local producers who provide many types of value to cities: access to fresh, local and culturally relevant produce, community building and ecological services. Hear how new, flexible programs, such as the Urban Growers’ Project at Withrow Park Farmers’ Market, the Deeply Rooted Market and Malvern Urban Farm, offer scale-appropriate marketing opportunities that match urban farm production capacity. The Deeply Rooted Market also demonstrates the community-building power of market spaces managed by BIPOC organizers for Black and Indigenous communities. This session includes a tour of the Ubuntu Community Farm and SARN Farms at the Fresh City Farms incubator project at Downsview Park.

WORKSHOP 12 | TASTE OF COMMUNITY: THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF MARKETS IN STRENGTHENING INCLUSION AND COHESION
Regent Park is the site of Canada’s first public housing project and a community in the midst of efforts to transform its aging housing infrastructure into a successful mixed-income, mixed-use neighborhood. Fred Victor, a social service charitable organization that fosters long-lasting and positive change in the lives of homeless and low-income people living across Toronto, will lead a tour of the public markets of Regent Park: Taste of Regent Park, The Cultural Bazaar, and the Moonlight Market. Participants will explore the role these markets play in strengthening the community by contributing to inclusion and cohesion, community wealth building and economic development, and increased safety through public space animation.

Saturday, June 10 – Market Tours
Morning – Early Afternoon
(ALL TOURS WILL END AT STACKT MARKET FOR THE CLOSING PARTY)

TOUR 1: CENTRAL & NORTH (bus tour)
The first stop is Evergreen Brick Works, the former Don Valley Brick Works quarry and industrial site, which is now a hub to learn about sustainable practices and visit the largest produce-direct farmers market in Toronto. Attendees will travel to the North York neighborhood, a rapidly growing part of the city, to visit Flip Kitchen, a project led by the City to create the first “retail incubator,” followed by a stop at Toronto’s first Asian food hall—the Upper East Food Club. Participants will then head to Downsview Park to visit the Downsview Flea & Fresh Food Market, featuring an antique, flea, fresh and prepared food market with more than 400 small businesses. The park is also home to two urban farms—Fresh City Farm and Sundance Harvest, plus an urban orchard. [EVERGREEN SATURDAY FARMERS MARKET, FLIP KITCHEN, UPPER EAST FOOD CLUB, DOWNSVIEW FLEA & FRESH FOOD MARKET, FRESH CITY URBAN FARM]

TOUR 2: CENTRAL (walking tour)
The first destination is The Stop Farmers Market, housed at the Wychwood Barns, a century-old streetcar facility redesigned and transformed into a community centre and park. Participants will then take a bus to Market 707, Toronto’s premier food and outdoor retail market housed in shipping containers, operated by Scadding Court Community Centre. A few blocks away is Kensington Market, an open-air food and clothing market district dating back to the 1910s. The group will then head to Mirvish Village, a new private development located in what used to be Honest Eds, a landmark discount store and a destination for many immigrants arriving in the city. Participants will be able to learn about how this progressive developer is integrating public programming, pop-up markets, a food hall and retail strategy into the site. [THE STOP FARMERS’ MARKET, MARKET 707, KENSINGTON MARKET, MIRVISH VILLAGE]

TOUR 3: CENTRAL & WEST (bus tour)
This tour begins at Union Station, an iconic revitalized downtown space featuring year-round public programming, from winter skating rinks to pop-up markets and micro-retail. The next stop will be Humberbay Shore Farmers Market, located a few steps from Lake Ontario. Participants will then head to the Black Creek Community Farm, which includes vegetable fields, a forest trail, greenhouses, outdoor classroom, pavilion and bake oven, and selling their products via a farm stand and Community Supported Agriculture model. The last stop is the Bentway, located under the Gardiner Expressway. This infrastructure reuse project hosts seasonal events and pop-up markets that feature local food, fashion, and crafts. [UNION STATION, HUMBERBAY SHORE FARMERS MARKET, BLACK CREEK COMMUNITY FARM, THE BENTWAY]
TOUR 4: CENTRAL & EAST (bus tour)
The tour will begin at St. Lawrence Market, which has hosted the Saturday Farmers’ Market every week since 1803. Participants will then learn about Building Roots’ Moss Park Market, where customers can enjoy a welcoming public space and purchase fresh produce via a “pay what you can” model. The tour will then head to Building Roots’ volunteer-powered urban farm at Ashbridge Estate, which features the Ojibiikaan Indigenous Garden. Next is a visit to Withrow Farmers Market, which has successfully piloted programs including clothing swaps, zero-waste coffee cups, and reusable food containers. Attendees will then head to Thorncliffe Park Community Market. Commonly known as “the Bazaar,” this women-led initiative played a key role in revitalizing the park where it operates, establishing a container that houses the Park Cafe, and provides income to participating women year-round. [ST. LAWRENCE MARKET FARMERS MARKET, MOSS PARK MARKET, BUILDING ROOTS URBAN FARM, WITHROW FARMERS MARKET, THORNCLIFFE PARK COMMUNITY MARKET]

TOUR 5: SCARBOROUGH FOODWAYS (bus tour)
Scarborough is one of Toronto’s most diverse places, rich in cultural pride and grassroots organizing. Built during the height of suburban development, the area was planned for cars and big grocery stores without much thought for the public realm and neighborhood places. Scarborough residents were heavily impacted by COVID-19, and food insecurity has become a primary concern. Led by Scarborough resident Howard Tam, Eat More Scarborough, and informed by community work led by members of Scarborough Food Network, this tour will take participants through various Scarborough neighborhoods, making stops at malls, plazas, informal markets, supermarkets and grassroots initiatives. Participants are invited to taste Scarborough foodways while discussing how we learn from what the private sector has built in response to the lack of public infrastructure to inform new public market models in Scarborough. [MIDLAND & FINCH PLAZAS, ADONIS SUPERMARKET, WEXFORD HEIGHTS ALONG LAWRENCE AVENUE EAST, FEED SCARBOROUGH, PACIFIC MALL]

TOUR 6: TORONTO’S UNOFFICIAL PUBLIC MARKET HISTORY (walking tour)
Produced by Tasting the Global City, Feeding City, and Sustainable Food and Farming Futures, this walking tour takes participants on a historical journey through several of Toronto’s unofficial market districts. Throughout the twentieth century, Toronto’s busiest markets were erected in response to local needs and often in defiance of city officials and the business interests they served. The tour starts at Jackman Humanities Institute to learn about the centuries of food exchanges between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe. Then, we head off to Kensington Market and central Chinatown. Kensington emerged in the 1910s as a Jewish market carved out of a residential neighborhood, evolving into a prominent “ethnic bazaar” by the 1950s. Central Chinatown meanwhile developed in the 1960s out of the Chinese community’s efforts to retain its longstanding foothold on Dundas street. We will then convene in Grange Park to explore the fossilized remains of the city’s other two official markets, St. Patrick and St. Andrews.