



To: Niagara Falls City Council
From: Niagara Falls Community Development
Date: June 6, 2018
Re: Letter of Award for North End Food Access Request for Proposal (RFP)

The Niagara Falls City Council approved a proposal for the North End Food Access RFP on October 2, 2017. Funds for this RFP were made available from unexpended 2015 and 2016 CDBG funds previously budgeted for the Highland Avenue area and 2017 CDBG Annual Action Plan funds approved on July 17, 2017 in the total of \$166,090.00. The North End Food Access RFP is intended to lead to the declassification of the Highland Ave area of Niagara Falls as a food desert as identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Department of Community Development received one valid response to the RFP from the African Heritage Food Co-Op.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a “food desert” as a part of the country vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers. Further, USDA states that individuals living more than ½ mile (urban areas) or more than 10 miles (rural areas) from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store are living in a food desert. Per these federal definitions, the City of Niagara Falls’ North End (Census Tracts 202 and 204) is a food desert. The original purpose of the North End Food Access RFP, as advertised, was to award the aforementioned funding to:

1. A permanent store or cooperative, within the aforementioned federal census tracts, that gives residents a daily opportunity to shop for and purchase fresh produce and food products at competitive price; and/or
2. A mobile food service model, within the aforementioned federal census tracts, that gives residents a daily opportunity to shop for and purchase fresh produce and food products at competitive price.

This requested action does not expend general fund or casino fund dollars. In recent months, Niagara Falls Community Development has successfully executed a due diligence and financial review process with the African Heritage Food Co-Op. The presentation of this council agenda item for vote is the culmination of that process. Will the Council vote to so approve and authorize the Mayor to execute the Agreement, in a form acceptable to the Corporation Counsel?

Paul Dyster, Mayor

Nick Melson, City Administrator

Seth Piccirillo, Director
Niagara Falls Community Development

Kennedy Scott Tompkins Voccio Touma