January 2019

Strengthening Pittsburgh's Farmers Markets

Building a network that will offer equitable access to fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate food, support regional food producers, and promote healthy eating choices for all residents.

FARMERS MARKET COALITION

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The goal of this study is to understand the effectiveness of current markets throughout the city and develop a plan for growth that improves equitable access to fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate food, supports our regional food producers and promotes healthy eating choices for all residents.

Thank you to the following organizations for participation in community outreach and information gathering throughout the report process:

The Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers Cooperative of Pittsburgh (BUGS FCP)
Chatham University
Clarion River Organics
GROW Pittsburgh
Hilltop Alliance
Just Harvest
PA Farm Link
Penn State Extension
Penns Corner Farm Alliance
PASA
Project for Public Spaces
Small Farms Central
The Food Trust
Three Rivers
Bellevue Farmers Market
Bloomfield Farmers Market
Etna Farmers Market
Green Tree Farmers Market in the Park
Lawrenceville Farmers Market
Market Square Farmers Market
The Market at Schenley Plaza
Sharpsburg Farmers Market
Swissvale Farmers Market
West Homestead Farmers Market
Wilkinsburg Thursday Open Market

Special thanks to Ken Regal and Averyl Hall of Just Harvest, Christina Howell of Bloomfield Community Development Corporation, Heather Manzo of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development, Dawn Plummer of the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council and Mirella Ranallo of Citiparks for significant time spent sharing insight.

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From Mayor Peduto

Nothing brings people together, culturally or socially, like food. Third only to air and water, food is essential to our survival. This is why strengthening our food system is a priority for a resilient Pittsburgh. The 2018 Farmers Market Study is the City's next step in evaluating the health our regional food system and our role as a contributor to that system.

Pittsburgh has been a leader in urban food policy: we created a model urban agriculture zoning code that allows our residents to be more self-sustaining; we were an early signator to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact; and we dedicated an entire chapter of our Climate Action Plan to Food and Agriculture. Within this context the farmers market study allows the city to create a system of accountability.

Over the past couple decades, increased interest in local food has led to an increase in farmers markets across the country. Currently, Pittsburgh has more farmers markets per capita than Washington D.C., but if we want to continue the trend, we need more people to shop there. Today, farmers markets make up less than 10% of our overall food sales. We can do better.

Farmers markets are an essential part of a healthy food system. Direct sales are vital to a farmer's bottom line. Farmers markets strengthen our economy by increasing local jobs, and add to our community by creating a social atmosphere, helping residents access fresh foods, reducing diet-related chronic illness, and promoting overall sustainability. It's important that the city support local businesses and address equitable food access.

Throughout 2018, Farmers Market Coalition and the Department of City Planning was tasked with understanding how the City can work with partners to ensure the quality of our market system is preserved, strengthened and expanded to improve equitable access to fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate food, support our regional food producers, and promote healthy eating choices for all residents. We interviewed and engaged farmers, residents, vendors, people who shop at farmers markets and those who don't, food advocates, and non-profit partners to get a broad feel for how

people interact with our markets and discover how we can encourage more folks to choose to shop at markets.

Southwestern PA is fortunate to be an abundant agricultural region. Overall, PA ranks 3rd in the country, with $224 million in direct farmer-to-consumer sales. With climate change bringing more extreme weather conditions, supply chains will shift. Even in the worst climate projection, our region is expected to have reliable, adequate rainfall, which will give us the opportunity to meet larger national market demands.

In addition, we have many other strengths: a strong tradition of hard work and regional pride; a network of existing farmers markets with a dedicated base of customers; and a robust network of health systems, universities and colleges. Not to mention the many amazing food access advocates and nonprofit organizations working to make farm fresh food more accessible to our residents.

The recommendations contained in this study will help us create a network of farmers markets that will better serve our residents and support our region's farmers - the next step to creating a sustainable food system for all Pittsburghers.

Mayor William Peduto

Executive Summary

Farmers markets offer myriad benefits to cities and regions: strong regional farms and food businesses, increased ecological stewardship among citizens, improved food security and fresh food access, and increased social and civic engagement. With a network of existing farmers markets, a base of dedicated farmers market shoppers, a robust support network of universities, hospitals and nonprofits, a population demonstrating strong city and regional pride, and an engaged City administration, Pittsburgh is primed to maximize these benefits.

This report was commissioned by the City of Pittsburgh to analyze Pittsburgh's farmers market system and a plan for growth. Over a period of 10 months, Farmers Market Coalition staff met with market operators, market vendors, community leaders and residents, conducted data collection at the City-managed markets, observed independently managed markets, analyzed past reports on the regional food and farming culture and met regularly with staff from the City of Pittsburgh.

Based on findings from these initiatives, recommendations are presented to build the capacity of Pittsburgh's farmers market operating organizations—for both the City-managed markets and independent markets. Farmers markets don't just happen. Market success requires careful planning, robust promotion, strong partnerships, responsive programming, and constant monitoring. For Pittsburgh's markets to reach their full potential, support must be provided to build the capacity of market management across organizations. Rather than considering the addition, removal or relocation of any markets, the City should build upon the existing conditions within the farmers market system: provide city services to support market operations, facilitate sustained, structured collaboration between farmers markets and partners, and position City-managed farmers markets as exemplars of best practices. By creating the framework and foundation required to bolster market operations across Pittsburgh, the City will create the conditions required for markets to take on the work of bringing new vendors and customers into the market system.

Three main goals have been established for the City, each provided with recommendations and strategies for how they can be achieved:

Goal A: Establish the City of Pittsburgh as an active facilitator of farmers market development.

The Office of the Mayor, City Planning, and the Sustainability + Resilience Division should collaborate to make support services available, and integrate farmers market definitions, processes and support into official plans and public documents. Offering clear objectives, and defined avenues for market management support such as parking allocations, special permits, and training opportunities promoted through a clear, annually updated guide will foster improvements across all of Pittsburgh's markets, both City-managed and independently managed.

Deliverables for Rec A: Provide Clear Support and Services	Lead Agency	Support	Timeframe
A.1. Statement of the City's goals for farmers market support.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	City Planning	Complete by February 2019
A.2. Definition of "farmers market" to be used across City departments and divisions.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	City Planning	Complete by February 2019
A.3. Pittsburgh Farmers Market Registry: Farmers markets submit their information to receive benefits and be included in city-wide promotions.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Allegheny County Health Department Parking Authority	Open by March 2019
A.4. Pittsburgh Farmers Market Operator Guide	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Allegheny County Health Department	Release by May 2019
A.5 Proclamation stating the City's definition of farmers markets, goals for supporting markets, and announcing the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Registry and services offered.	Office of the Mayor	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Release by April 2019

Goal B: Implement effective city-wide programs and promotions in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh, independent farmers markets, and community partners. Focus on steps that City Planning can take to facilitate consistent, effective collaboration among farmers markets and partners. A Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network will provide the platform for a systematic approach to addressing food access: markets and partners working toward common goals, optimizing promotional efforts, and evaluating market successes.

Through the City's leadership and facilitation of a new Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network, this network should seek long-term funding for the Fresh Access program to expand this vital program to all markets. It should also prioritize the collection and sharing of appropriate metrics to promote the impacts of farmers markets to stakeholders and to residents. That data should support the critical work already being done by the City to address climate challenges and resiliency efforts, as well as share information with residents on the economic, social, and health impacts that markets of every size and type contribute to their places. The network should also share that data regularly with sustainability advocates, public health agencies, and other regional stakeholders. Internally, the network of markets can bolster the capacity of all markets by centralizing some operational tasks: working together to host programs and promotions, and managing a vendor database to reduce the bureaucratic tangle for producers applying to markets, and offer a single platform for other buyers and food system organizers to seek out and support the region's producers.

Deliverables for Rec B: Activate Partnership Among all Pittsburgh Markets	Lead Agency	Support	Timeframe
B.1 Convene the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network: a public-private partnership to support and promote Pittsburgh's farmers markets.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Office of the Mayor City Planning	Convene by February 2019
B.2. Publicly share goals of the Network, meeting schedule, and participation requirements (including data sharing standards).	Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network	Sustainability + Resilience Division	March 2019
B.3 Draft budget proposal supporting the Fresh Access program.	Office of the Mayor	Sustainability + Resilience Division	May 2019

Goal C: Offer best-in-class markets that effectively serve a wide range of Pittsburgh's residents.

Increase the capacity of City-managed markets by hiring a full-time Farmers Market Director. The Farmers Market Director will emphasize improved operations, promotions, and evaluation of the City-managed markets, spearheading the City's efforts to implement operational structure that sets a high bar for the region's farmers markets. By building transparent systems that include feedback loops for the community to advise its market leadership, the City can lead its peer markets in small business and neighborhood support.

In early 2018, the administration of the City-managed markets transferred from Citiparks to the Office of Special Events. The Office of Special Events is well-suited to administer the City-managed markets, with well-established resources for event planning and promotion. Through the transition, progress was made on some of the strategies proposed in this report. The Office of Special Events should continue to work toward full implementation of the strategies presented within Goal C, to ensure that the City-managed markets are leading the way in meeting the needs of citizens, and showcasing best practices in farmers market operations.

Deliverables for Rec C: Manage Best-in-Class Markets	Lead Agency	Support	Timeframe
C.1 Hire a full-time, year-round Farmers Market Director.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by January 2019
C.2 Digital database of vendor records.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by May 2019
C.3 Define the unique role of each City-managed market.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.4. Updated market rules.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.5 Standardize & improve promotion.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.6. Offer a range of activities and events at the markets, including City-service tent.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.7 Conduct data collection on-site and with market stakeholders regularly.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete through 2019
C.8 Create a regular feedback loop with the market vendors via email and mail.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by July 2019
C.9 Establish an informal advisory group for each market.	Office of Special Events	Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network	Complete by July 2019
C.10 Extend the season of one of the flagship City-managed markets to year-round.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by September 2019

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01 The Opportunity

1.1 Why Farmers Markets?

When properly administered, farmers markets can strengthen regional farms and food businesses, promote ecological stewardship, improve food security, increase fresh food access, encourage social activity, and facilitate urban and rural connections. Municipalities across the country are capitalizing on the benefits they bring to the health and prosperity of their citizens by taking an active role in the development of a strong farmers market network.

Vendors reconnect residents to their region

Using urbanist Jane Jacobs' term, farmers market vendors are in the business of "import replacement," or offering strictly local items that do not have to travel thousands of miles to ship into the area, increasing the resilience of the region economically, ecologically, and intellectually. Vendors reconnect residents to the bounty of their region, sharing knowledge about seasonality and the variety of goods able to be made locally.

Farmers markets cultivate "town squares," giving civic and food initiatives an opportunity to engage with residents in a welcoming and inclusive manner. That engagement now includes programs to encourage greater access to nutritious foods for low-income neighbors with programs such as Just Harvest's Fresh Access program. Designing markets that successfully support these activities and encourage innovation and leadership among vendors requires each site to maintain strong partnerships, professional administration, and a consistent analytical framework.

Pittsburgh is incredibly well-positioned to maximize the impact of its farmers markets, due to the following conditions:

- Located in the middle of an abundant agricultural region.
- Strong city and regional pride among residents.
- A robust network of food access nonprofits and organizations.

- A robust network of health systems, universities, and colleges.
- A city government engaged in resiliency planning & market operations.
- A network of existing farmers markets throughout the city.
- A dedicated base of farmers market customers.

These conditions provide a solid foundation for the city to use farmers markets as valuable tools in reaching city-wide economic, health, safety, and security goals. Pittsburgh's markets are particularly well-suited to provide the following benefits:

Support Regional Farms & Food Businesses

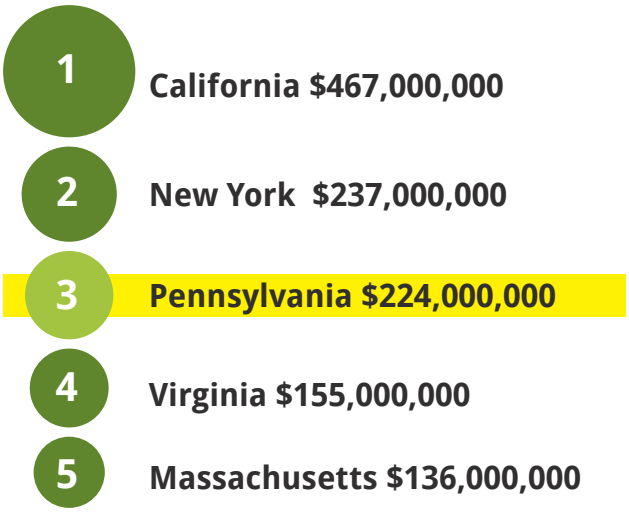
Farmers markets serve as small farm and business incubators. A growing body of research points to the economic benefits of farmers markets. One recent study[1] discovered that "for every dollar of sales, direct marketers generate twice as much economic activity within the region, as compared to producers who are not involved in direct marketing." The study goes on to reveal that for every $1 million in revenue, direct-market farms create almost 32 local jobs whereas larger wholesale growers create only 10.5. Similar analysis published by the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) analyzing the local food supply chain in the region found that "if economic activity in the [local food] supply chain can be increased by 10%, the region would add $4 billion in business activity and 33,000 new jobs."

Farmers markets provide one of the only low-barrier entry points for new farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs, allowing them to start small and test new products. This support is important, as there are currently 3.5 times as many U.S. farmers over the age of 65 as there are under 35. Studies have also shown that all farms, regardless of scale, are significantly more likely to survive if they have direct-to-consumer food sales as a part of their marketing plan.

Promote Ecological Stewardship

Farmers market farmers are much more likely to use sustainable farming practices than their larger, corporate counterparts, and are more likely to serve as important educators on the subject of production practices. In a national

Top States in Farm-to-Consumer Sales, 2015



1 http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/files/238053.pdf

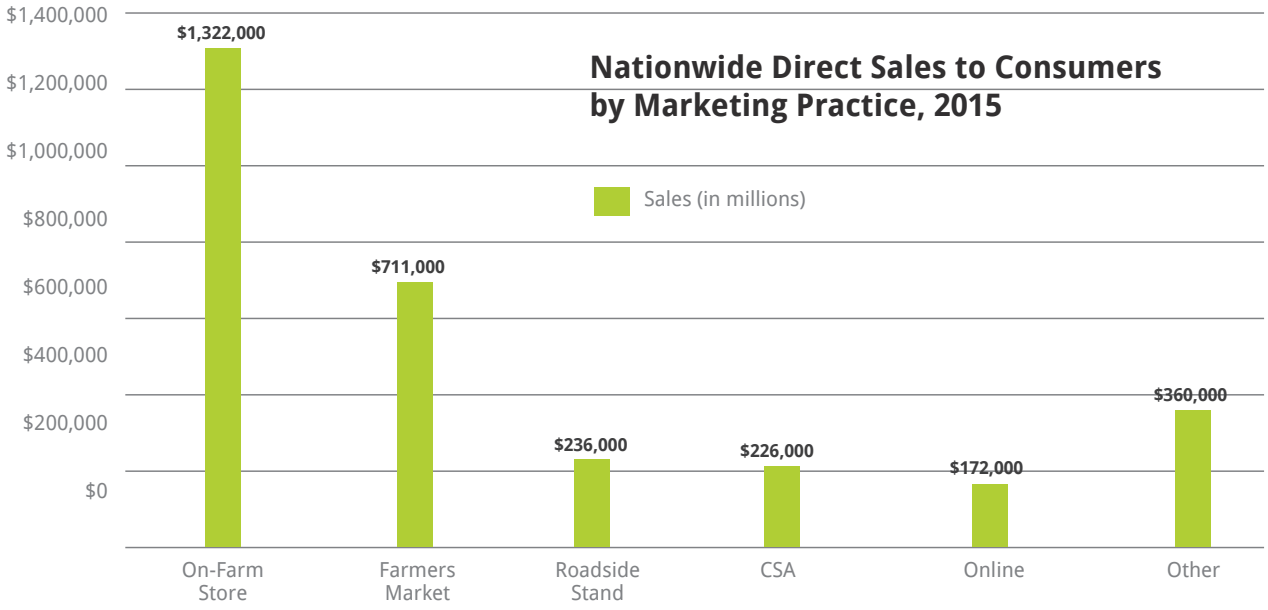
survey of farmers market farmers completed by American Farmland Trust and FMC, 81% reported the use of cover crops, reduced tillage, on-site composting, and other soil sustaining practices. In the same survey, 4 out of 5 farmers market farmers reported regularly discussing their farming practices with customers. By directly conversing with those who grow their food, shoppers learn about agricultural production methods and varieties of fruits and vegetables. Their purchases also ensure farmers can make a living off sustainably grown products, typically grown within 100 miles of the market.

Strengthen Food Security

Food security comprises several different components, including food access, distribution of food, and stability of the food supply; all of which can be strengthened significantly through strategically managed farmers markets.

With competitive prices and special programs for low-income families, farmers markets are expanding access to fresh, healthy food in communities that need it most. In 2017, more than $22.4 million in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits were redeemed at farmers markets. Unlike traditional grocery stores, farmers markets put fruits and vegetables front and center and create a shopping environment where nutritious foods are celebrated.

By ensuring that a robust network of farms surrounds a city, farmers markets contribute to a stable food supply. A natural disaster or other emergency can strain food supplies and



For every dollar of sales, direct marketers generate twice as much economic activity within the region. (Photo from the Crossroads Farmers Market, MD)

interrupt power and transportation routes needed to import food. A farmers market's ability to set up where needed while connecting cities with a robust network of regional farmers can help serve needs of residents during crises. Farmers markets in the Bronx and Queens were open for business less than a week after Superstorm Sandy hit New York. While grocery stores were flooded and 5.2 million people were without power, farmers markets were able to accept debit, credit, and SNAP benefits because the vendors were equipped with mobile Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) systems. The resiliency demonstrated by these markets is a testament to the integral role that farmers markets play in community food security.

Encourage Social & Neighborhood Connectivity

Farmers markets serve as community-building and community-defining institutions. For many customers, the social aspect of many farmers markets may be as important as the mercantile. They provide opportunities for social interaction among diverse groups of neighbors, and serve as a civic forum regarding matters of importance to the community, e.g. public health issues, community planning issues, political issues, and campaigns. Farmers markets help bridge the cultural and economic schisms that often exist between the urban and rural citizens. Studies[2] of Los Angeles farmers market shoppers reveal that 75% came to market to do more than shop, 55% felt the market increased their connection to community, 99% of those surveyed believed the market improved the health of the community, and 53% believed the market improved perceptions of the neighborhood.

2 McCarthy, R. (2007). Evaluating the Social, Financial and Human Capital Impacts of Farmers Markets. Market Umbrella

Public officials can use markets as opportunities to meet with residents face to face in a low-pressure environment. (Photo from Fredericksburg Farmers Market, VA)

Public officials address the crowd during National Farmers Market Week at Columbia Heights Farmers Market in D.C.

Foster Positive Citizen-Government Relations

Markets offer an opportunity to showcase city services and create citizen-government connections. Markets are known to serve as welcome centers for new residents, citizens, and even refugee populations. Market booths dedicated to sharing civic information, or offering services (voter registration, tax preparation assistance, office hours with public officials) allow citizens to feel more connected to their government. Similarly, public officials can use markets as opportunities to survey public opinion of citizens and meet with constituents face to face in a low-pressure environment. These types of interactions foster trust between residents and their governing bodies, as well as governing bodies that are better able to serve their residents.

2.0 State of the Markets

Pittsburgh boasts a robust network of both City-managed and independently operated farmers markets. Nineteen markets within and just beyond the city borders were considered throughout this study. Information on the markets' operations and activities was gathered through site visits, interviews, surveys, and review of existing data and documentation. Secondary data from published reports and program data was used, with thanks to Just Harvest and members of the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council. Community perception and feedback was collected via surveys and interviews from September of 2017 through May of 2018.

The seven markets managed by the City of Pittsburgh Department of Recreation were analyzed in additional detail, with results and observations from each City-managed market site included in the Addendum under: City-Managed Market Snapshots. (Sheraden had closed for the season, and was not included). The following information collection efforts are referenced throughout this section:

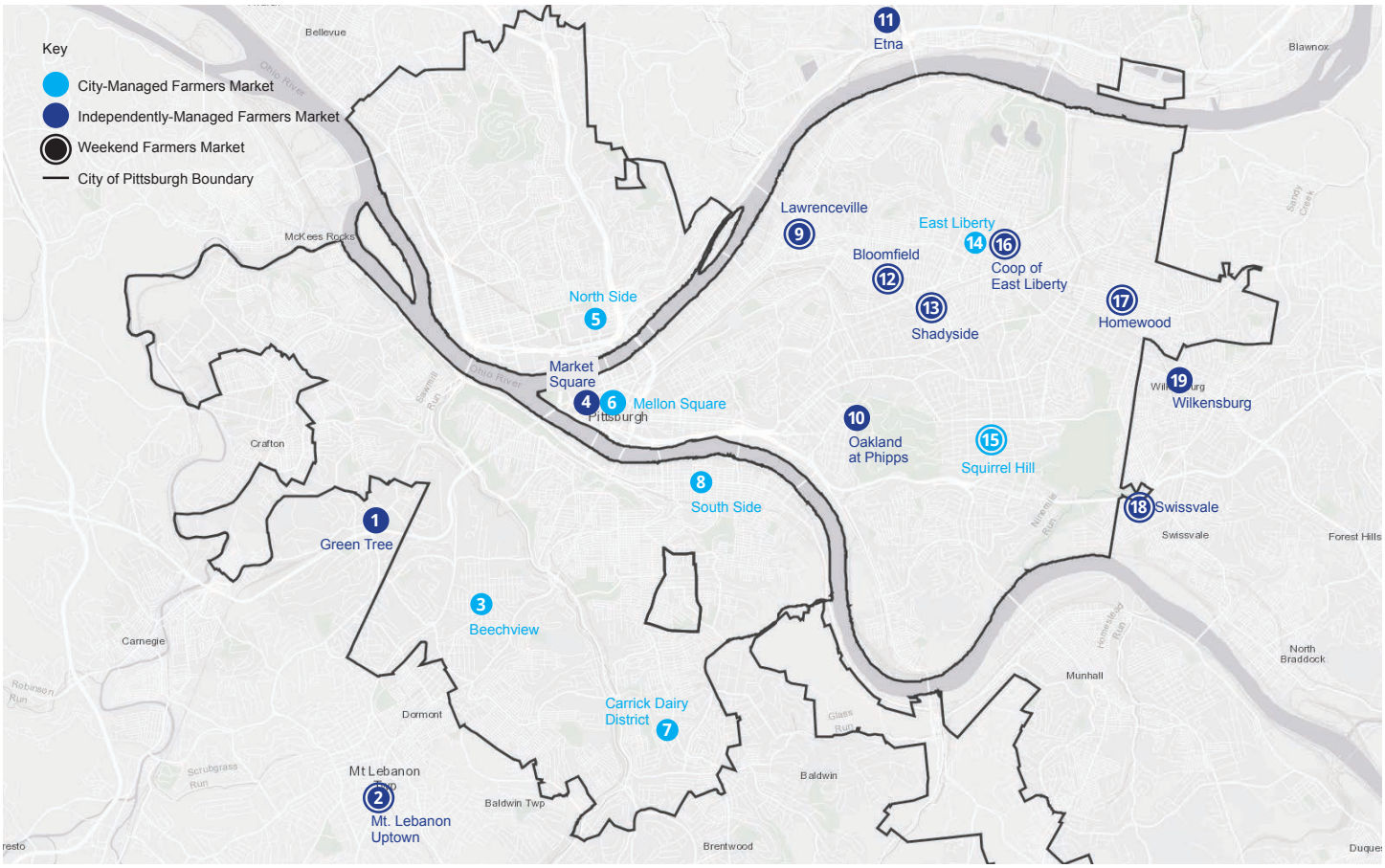
Community Survey: An online survey offered through the City of Pittsburgh Department of Urban Planning, open to anyone interested in providing feedback on Pittsburgh's markets. 100 responses.

Pittsburgh Food Policy Council Survey: An online survey offered to members of the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council. The survey resulted in 20 in-depth responses from leaders of Pittsburgh's social and environmental justice organizations.

Just Harvest Vendor Survey: A survey administered by Just Harvest annually to vendors participating in their Fresh Access program.

Just Harvest Customer Survey: Just Harvest staff conduct these brief customer surveys at the point of sale on-site at Fresh Access locations.

City-Managed Farmers Market Visitor Counts: City-managed farmers market staff collected these visitor counts throughout the 2017 season, via staff observation.



	Farmers Market	Location	Day	Time	Dates	Organizer
1	Green Tree Farmers Market	Green Tree Park parking lot	Thursday	4:00 - 7:00	May 24 - Oct	Green Tree Borough
2	Mt. Lebanon Uptown Farmers Market	Washington Road	Saturday	9:00 - 12:00	May 12 - Oct 27	Mt. Lebanon Partnership
3	Beechview Farmers Market	Beechview Ave. parking lot	Thursday	3:00 - 7:00	June 9 - Nov 17	City-Managed Market
4	Market Square Farmers Market	Market Square	Thursday	10:00 - 2:00	May 12 - Oct 27	Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
5	North Side Farmers Market	East Park	Friday	3:00 - 7:00	May 13 - Nov 18	City-Managed Market
6	Mellon Square Park Farmers Market	Mellon Square Park	Friday	10:00 - 2:00	May 6 - Nov 18	City-Managed Market
7	Carrick Dairy District Farmers Market	Historic Dairy District Marketplace	Wednesday	3:00 - 7:00	June 8 - Nov 23	City-Managed Market
8	South Side Farmers Market	Parking lot	Tuesday	3:00 - 7:00	May 10 - Nov 22	City-Managed Market
9	Lawrenceville Farmers Market	Arsenal Park	Saturday	1:00 - 4:00	June 4 - Oct 29	Lawrenceville United
10	Farmers at Phipps	Lawn at Phipps Conservatory	Wednesday	2:30 - 6:30	June - Oct	Phipps Conservatory
11	Etna Farmers Market	Borough parking lot	Thursday	3:00 - 6:30	June 11 - Oct	Etna Economic Dev. Corporation
12	Bloomfield Saturday Market	Liberty Ave. parking lot	Saturday	9:00 - 1:00	June 4 - Nov 5	Bloomfield Dev. Corporation
13	Shadyside Farmers Market	Liberty School parking lot	Saturday	9:00 - 12:00	June 4 - Sept 24	Think Shadyside
14	East Liberty Farmers Market	Parking lot	Monday	3:00 - 7:00	June - Nov 21	City-Managed Market
15	Squirrel Hill Farmers Market	Parking lot	Sunday	9:00 - 1:00	June 5 - Nov 20	City-Managed Market
16	Farmers Market Coop of East Liberty	Indoor	Saturday	5:00 - 12:00	Year-round	Farmers Co-op
17	Homewood Com. Farmers Market	House of Manna Worship Center parking lot	Alternate Saturdays	10:00 - 2:00	June 4 - Dec 10	Black Urban Gardeners Pittsburgh
18	Swissvale Farmers Market	Dickson Elementary School parking lot	Saturday	9:00 - 1:00	May 7 - Oct 29	Swissvale Economic Development Corporation
19	Wilkinsburg Farmers Market	S. Ave. Methodist Church	Thursday	3:00 - 6:30	June 16 - Nov 17	Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce

** This list represents the markets included in the study in 2017. See the attachments for a list of all markets in operation in 2018.*

City-Managed Farmers Market Visitor Surveys: FMC staff conducted visitor surveys on-site at six of the seven City-managed farmers markets in September and October of 2017.

Community Engagement Meeting: An open meeting took place in November of 2018, to introduce themes of the study and collect feedback from the community. Detailed notes from the breakout discussions were taken, and are summarized in this report.

Market Operator Networking Meeting: In February of 2018, an informal meetup of market operators and program partners took place to discuss the potential and interest in a Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network.

2.1 Overview

Pittsburgh's farmers markets are operated by a number of organizations with interests ranging from increasing economic vitality of the neighborhood to advancing environmental education. The City of Pittsburgh is the only entity in the city managing markets in multiple neighborhoods. The vast majority of independently-managed markets are governed in a strikingly similar manner, by neighborhood associations, chambers, or development corporations overseeing markets in a single neighborhood.

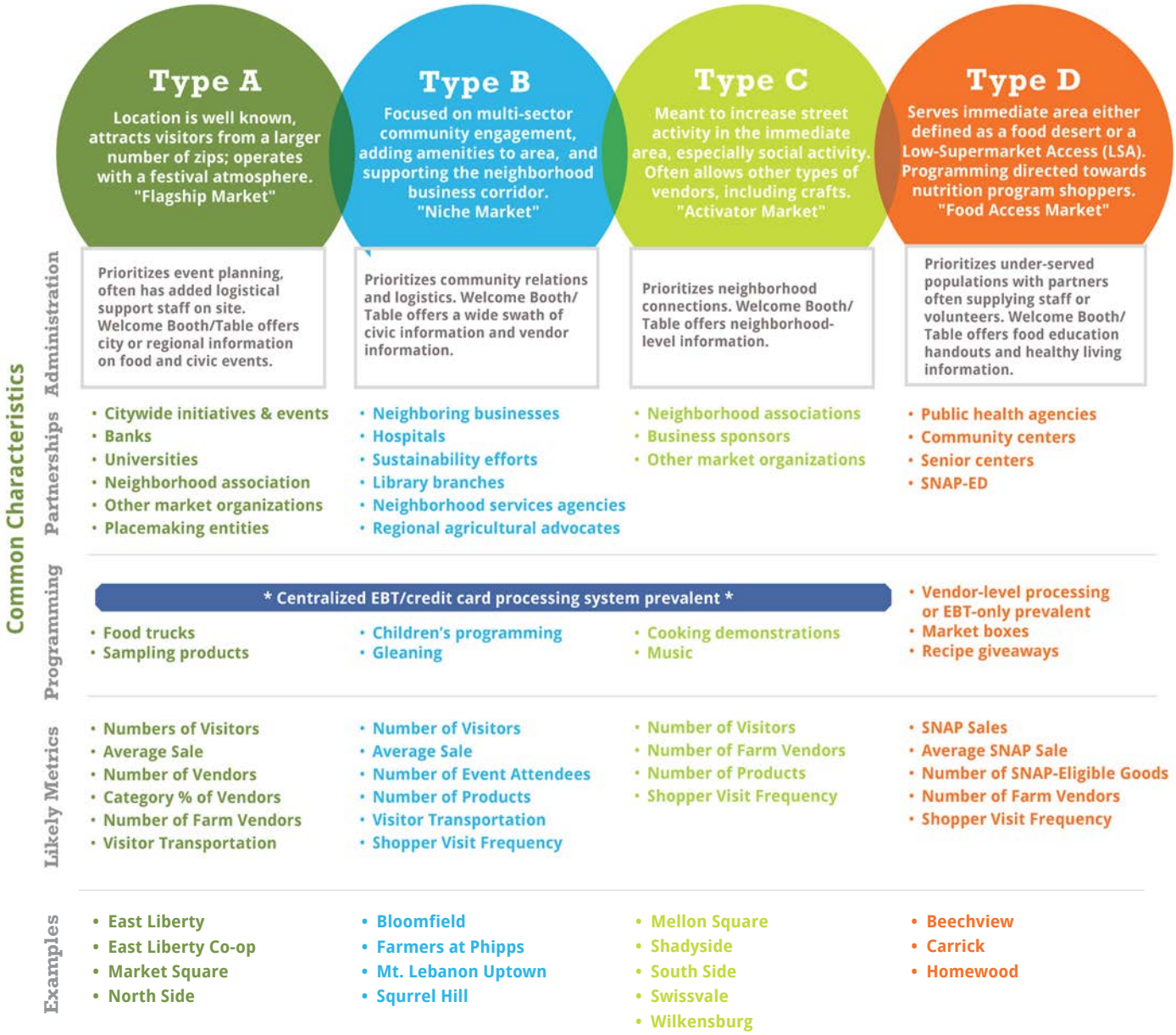
The level of staffing devoted to market operations is the most significant defining characteristic among the governance of Pittsburgh's independent markets. The largest and most stable of the open-air independent markets are managed by Bloomfield Development Corporation and the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. These organizations have impressive internal structures in place to support their markets, including year-round staffing, staff paid to be on-site for all markets, consistent promotion, comprehensive rules for vending, regularly staged events, and added amenities. For most of the other independent markets, the extent of the management over the market is most often a seasonal contracted position or staged by volunteers from the neighborhood entity. This type of governance limits their ability to execute consistent programming and outreach.

Mission

While all of the operating organizations publicly share the mission of their overall work, there is rarely a clear mission statement provided for the farmers markets themselves. The mission of a market is a significant starting point for any analysis. As markets can take on many forms and bring a range of benefits to a neighborhood, it's important that the purpose and goals are clear to operators, vendors, and visitors alike.

When a market does not have a public mission statement, its purpose can be gleaned through reviewing the goals of the operating organization and its history of administration. Using this method, the main purpose of the

Market Clusters



19 Pittsburgh-area farmers markets included in this study can be broken into the following categories:

- Improve quality of life of residents (9);
- Increase economic vitality of the neighborhood (6);
- Increase healthy food access & education (2);
- Provide environmental education & support (1);
- Provide economic opportunity for farmers (1).

As the City moves forward with plans for "growth that improves equitable access to fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate

food, supports regional food producers, and promotes healthy eating choices for all residents," it's important to note that only two existing market organizations cite increasing healthy food access and education as their primary purpose, with four total mentioning it at all. When working with farmers markets to improve food security and support regional farm livelihoods, the most successful initiatives will integrate seamlessly with or compliment the market's primary purpose.

Market characteristics from the 19 markets were compiled and categorized into four main types. The Market Cluster graphic illustrates markets' priorities and procedures, showing how the market is intended to be used by its vendors and its visitors. While characteristics are fluid (as are the types), as markets change their goals and their operation over time, categorizing by type provides a framework for thinking strategically about which programs and partnerships are best for each market.

Hours & Days

Most of the independently-managed markets operate on Saturday morning with the City's markets operating on weekday afternoons and Sunday morning. As is the case for most Saturday morning markets across the U.S., Pittsburgh's weekend markets tend be programmed with seating, children's activities, and music, which have the effect of creating more of a social atmosphere. The afternoon and evening weekday markets, such as Wilkinsburg's Open Market, offer fewer amenities that encourage visitors to linger and socialize. Pittsburgh's weekday markets offer more prepared food items and also allow more non-food items among the markets studied.

Only one market in the area (East Liberty Co-op) is open year-round.

Location

The vast majority of Pittsburgh's markets take place in parking lots. Parking lots tend to offer easy access for vendor vehicles, and typically provide a high-level of visibility on market days. Extra care is required to ensure pedestrian accessibility and safety in parking lots. Parks are also popular locations for Pittsburgh's markets. It's typically easier to facilitate a festival atmosphere in a park, where shoppers are encouraged to stay and socialize, but visibility from the street can be limited.

Two of the markets studied had permanent market structures (East Liberty Co-op and Carrick Dairy District). In addition to offering vendors and customers shelter on market days, the visibility of permanent market structures even when the market is not open helps significantly with market promotion.

Product Mix

The quality and type of products offered by a market's vendors are largely the result of market rules, target population, and the available vendor population. General observations on vendor mix and management include:

- *Producer/Resale:* Most of the markets in the area are producer-only markets in theory, but only a few maintain a transparent process of authentication to verify producer claims.
- *Type of goods allowed:* In some independently-managed markets and all of the City-managed markets, non-food items are allowed. The independent markets indicated that they do their best to limit non-food vending spots to neighbors of the market. Whether non-food items are allowed and to what extent they are included is a significant measure of a farmers market across the U.S., as many farmers and some visitors avoid markets that allow non-food items.
- *Value-added goods:* All markets in the area encourage local businesses to sell packaged items, but none require local ingredients to be used.
- *Prepared food:* All of the City-managed markets offer prepared foods as do most of the independently-managed markets, with little difference between the quality and type of prepared foods available.

Fee Structure

Markets within the region have adopted similar fee structures: either collecting a seasonal fee from their vendors, or charging for each stall per market day that a vendor utilizes. The fee structures do not correlate to a specific type of market.

Food Access Programming

Farmers markets play a crucial role in food access strategies; the direct transactions between growers and eaters offer engagement and the impetus for behavior change. Farmers markets are most successful as an access strategy when they are aligned with other outlets also addressing food insecurity, including farmstands, CSAs, specialty stores, and farm-to-institution operations.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) spending at U.S. farmers markets grew to $22.4 million in 2017, continuing its climb in total dollars, number of transactions, and the rise of return shoppers using SNAP benefits (FNS 2018). Markets adopt SNAP programs to diversify their shopping bases to include those with limited means, and rely on partners to facilitate the targeted outreach required. The Pittsburgh anti-hunger advocacy organization Just Harvest has taken on this role for good reason: among cities with populations of 250,000-500,000, Pittsburgh

Vendors reconnect residents to their region

has the largest percentage of people residing in communities with "low-supermarket access" (LSA). Approximately 47% or 145,245 Pittsburgh residents experience low access and 71% of city LSA residents are low-income. In the metro area, including all of Allegheny County, 18% of residents, or 422,513 people, reside in LSA communities. Of the metro's LSA area residents, 57% are low-income. The high percentage of LSA areas in the Pittsburgh metro area corresponds with the fourth-highest rate of obesity (29.3%) among U.S. metro areas.

The Just Harvest initiative, named Fresh Access, allows shoppers to swipe their ACCESS electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards or their credit or debit cards and receive tokens they can use just like cash to purchase a variety of fresh produce, baked goods, meat, and dairy products. Fresh Access is unusual among programs in the U.S. because it is managed by a partner of the market organizations and not by individual markets. Markets can participate either by hosting a Fresh Access tent on-site, staffed by Just Harvest, or Just Harvest will provide all the materials and training to market staff, who implement the transactions and report back to Just Harvest to handle reimbursements.

The presence of Just Harvest's Fresh Access program provides a significant advantage to participating markets and SNAP shoppers. Centralized logistics, outreach, and measurement of the program allows analysis of its impact (including vendor feedback) to be more easily tracked and aggregated, and partnerships, such as those with the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, the Food Trust, and neighborhood leaders, more easily sustained. Additionally and importantly, SNAP shoppers have reliable, consistent access to their SNAP benefits and incentives at farmers markets across the city.

Fresh Access 2017 Program Totals	
Number of Fresh Access sites	22 (15 JH-hosted, 7 independently managed)
Number of credit card transactions	7,876
Amount in credit card sales	$168,121
Number of unique credit card customers	2,643 (representative of the 15 JH-hosted sites only)
Number of EBT transactions	2,035
Amount of EBT sales	$34,468
Number of unique EBT customers	1,081 (representative of the 15 JH-hosted sites only)
Amount of Food Bucks distributed	$13,710
Amount of Food Bucks redeemed	$12,578

Cash matches and other incentives have proven to be an effective means to encourage those shoppers who face more barriers in using markets frequently, since frequency is key to fomenting behavior change. Just Harvest also administers the Food Bucks

program in partnership with Philadelphia's Food Trust, which provides $2 coupons for fruits and vegetables for every $5 in SNAP spent at farmers markets and farm stands.

Just Harvest data indicates that vendors see merit in the program: in 2017, the Fresh Access program resulted in $215,167 of income for market vendors (through credit card, SNAP, and Food Bucks sales combined). Of the 21 vendors who reported that they sold more produce in 2017, 76.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they sold more produce because of the Fresh Access program.

Data also indicates that the program is successful in getting healthy produce and high-quality foods into the hands of low-income shoppers. Out of the total sales this past season, 65.4% of EBT dollars were spent on fruits, vegetables, and herbs (43.7% spent on vegetables and herbs; 21.6% spent on fruits.) The vast majority of Fresh Access shoppers surveyed reported that the selection and quality of foods available at the farmers markets was much better than that of their preferred supermarket or corner store.

A growing number of farmers markets also offer coupons to low-income seniors through the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and WIC (Women, Infants and Children Program) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). These programs provide participants with coupons or vouchers they can redeem for fresh produce, increasing the capacity for struggling families to purchase and eat more fruits and vegetables. FMNP currently has 71 outlets in Allegheny County for WIC recipients and qualified seniors to use their coupons. In Pennsylvania, each eligible recipient receives four $5.00 SFMNP checks each year to redeem at qualified farmers markets or roadside stands. The success of this program, like SNAP, relies on partners with client access to share information about markets and the goods they offer at the appropriate time. Program redemption rates across the U.S. tend to spike with good weather and the availability of fruit at the markets.

The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PFPC) has also played an important role in increasing accessibility of the city's farmers markets. PFPC provides an important avenue for Pittsburgh's broad range of social justice groups, nonprofits, food banks, universities, and active Extension Agency to work collaboratively toward shared food access goals. Due to their history of engagement in food access interventions at farmers markets, PFPC members were provided a separate, targeted survey regarding the state and needs of the city's markets. This survey received 20 thorough responses. Of the PFPC member responses, 40% identified themselves as working with a food access organization, 20% with a business development corporation, and another 20% with a social justice-focused organization. Discussion with PFPC members was ongoing during site visits by FMC and through direct email communication.

Increasing access was chosen by PFPC

How can farmers markets best assist community leaders in encouraging neighborhood wellness?

(Pittsburgh Food Policy Council Member Survey, November 2017, 20 responses, respondents could choose more than one response)

20 — **Education for residents on healthy food offerings**

"Informational sessions and materials on healthy eating and wellness at the markets."

11 — **General advertising**

"(Re)produce flyers to be distributed at community meetings; put info on neighborhood Facebook pages, Nextdoor.com, etc."

9 — **Increase access for under-served populations, including competitive pricing**

"Being present in areas that lack otherwise available fresh produce and offering incentive to purchase the healthy, fresh, locally sourced items."

7 — **Support new & expanding direct-to-consumer farms**

"Give farmers incentives to sell in low volume neighborhoods with low turn out at farmers markets."

7 — **Increase social interaction**

"Broadly offering community gardens, walking clubs, workshops, apiaries, urban farming, community based health or social workers on the ground in neighborhoods."

6 — **Add new markets for farmers to sell direct to consumers**

"Putting farmers markets, even if smaller, in accessible areas that can be walked to or are close to neighborhood destinations (like YMCAs, pools, or libraries.)"

How should farmers markets serve the needs of residents seeking healthy foods?

(Pittsburgh Community Engagement Survey, November 2017, 100 responses, respondents could choose more than one response)

- **51 - Being present in areas with low food availability**
- **38 - Offering incentives for purchasing fresh foods**
- **37 - Being open year-round**
- **31 - Being open multiple days per week**
- **23 - Collaborating with other entities that encourage healthy food**
- **17 - Through educational programs and events**
- **13 - Being present in areas with large amounts of fast food availability**
- **8 - Offering a place for neighbors to meet**
- **6 - Sharing data with policy advocates**
- **2 - Providing technical assistance to new farmers**

respondents as the primary role for farmers markets in the area, especially in LSA tracts of the city. This set of responses and communication from food access and social justice organizers highlighted the systems-based approach to food system development led by the Food Policy Council. The PFPC members commented on the difficulty (mirrored by other regions in the U.S.) in aligning the often chaotic entrepreneurial energy of markets, with the disciplined approach of system change that happens over years and decades in public health work. Without existing coordination and networking among Pittsburgh's farmers markets, organizations seeking to support food access efforts must have the capacity to build seperate partnerships with each individual market.

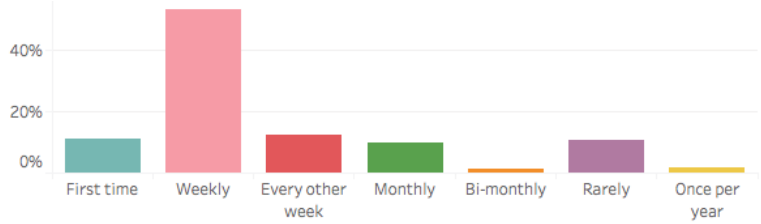
2.2 Visitors

Pittsburgh's farmers markets benefit from a loyal base of dedicated shoppers. At the longest running market locations, such as the East Liberty, North Side, and South Side neighborhood markets, many of the existing shoppers (and vendors) have a long history of shopping at their market, and a strong sense of allegiance to their market of choice.

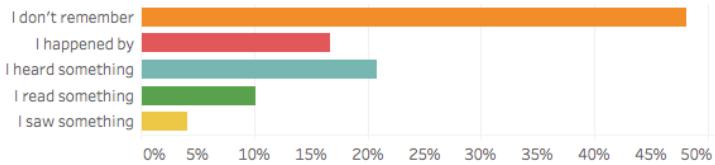
Most of the visitors surveyed at the City-managed markets responded that they went to one location to do most of their shopping. Respondents did not indicate a preference in shopping at only the markets managed by the City of Pittsburgh or only at those managed by independent markets. As with many markets

City-Managed Farmers Market Visitor Survey Snapshot

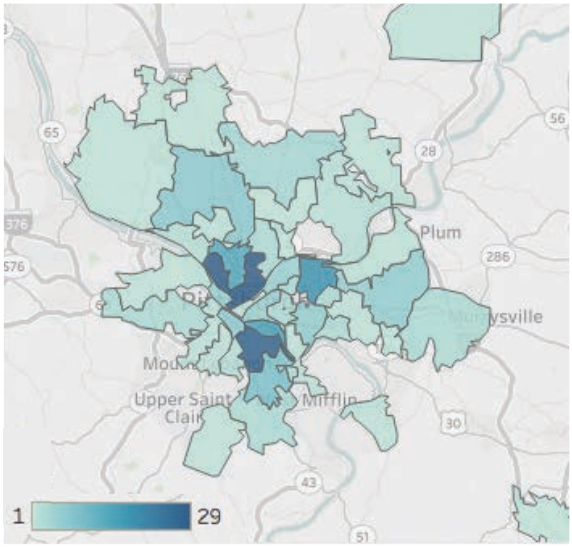
How often do you shop at a farmers market?



How did you first learn about the market?



In which zipcode do you live?



across the U.S., the presence of a particular vendor was often chosen as a reason when asked why a specific location was favored, followed by the choice of a location near to their home or work. Based on Just Harvest's (JH) 2017 Fresh Access data collection, August was the peak of the market season with only a few sites reporting their largest number of transactions or dollars spent in EBT and credit card transactions earlier or later.

The percentage of visitors who self-reported that they were weekly shoppers in the City-managed markets surveys ranged from 47% (Carrick) to 62% (East Liberty). When asked how they first learned about the market, nearly 50% of survey respondents didn't remember, with many noting that they had been customers since they were children. About 20% of those surveyed stated that they'd heard about the market through word of mouth, with 17% stating that they'd just happened by the market, 10% stating that they'd read about the market, and 5% stating that they saw signage or an ad for the market. This survey question speaks to the established, loyal customer base of the City-managed markets, and highlights the lack of traditional promotions (signage, advertising, etc.) taken on by the market organization.

First time visitors to these markets ranged from 7% at East Liberty to 19% for Carrick. Having around 10% - 20% of new visitors is in the normal range for markets across the U.S. Marketing to this shopping base has become even more important as markets seek to better serve low-income populations. Active enrollment in SNAP changes monthly, requiring continual communications to new beneficiaries.

Freshness (71%) and ease of access (49%) were the top two reasons chosen by visitor survey respondents as to what they look for when purchasing items at markets. Seventy-seven percent of Fresh Access shoppers who answered the Just Harvest survey said they came at least monthly.

Few survey respondents or market visitors were aware that individual markets often have a unique set of goals, specific reasons for selecting certain vendors, or a strategy in mind when setting their time or day of the market. Visitors often had high expectations of the markets, suggesting the markets should significantly increase their efforts to rid the city of food insecurity, use more of their resources to attract people who do not already feel part of the food movement, oversee multi-sector year-round initiatives, or spend more effort to increase the number of farmers able to sell in the city. This speaks to how stakeholders see markets as community efforts rather than just as retail outlets, which is a valuable asset to leverage.

The variance in knowledge about markets among visitors and other residents indicates that the market organizations don't regularly share information about their structure,

City-Managed Markets Summer Snapshot

SNAP and Food Bucks Sales

	Beechview		Carrick		East Liberty		Mellon Square		North Side		South Side		Squirrel Hill		Market Total	
	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#	Amount	#
June	$29	2	$155	7	$937	39	$112	4	$1,038	44	$588	25	$772	23	$3,631	144
July	$151	8	$476	21	$1,829	78	$70	4	$2,060	84	$453	24	$1,348	57	$6,387	276
August	$258	18	$733	30	$1,315	55	$137	10	$1,653	57	$321	18	$1,459	53	$5,876	241
Total	$438	28	$1,364	58	$4,081	172	$319	18	$4,751	185	$1,362	67	$3,579	133	$15,893	661

Percentage of Market Visits Resulting in SNAP Transactions

	Beechview	Carrick	East Liberty	Mellon Square	North Side	South Side	Squirrel Hill	Market Total
June-August	4.9%	3.3%	3.6%	.4%	3.1%	4%	1.3%	2.9%

Market Visits

	Beechview	Carrick	East Liberty	Mellon Square	North Side	South Side	Squirrel Hill	Market Total
June	235	331	1,344	2,565	1,810	533	1,733	8,551
July	154	551	1,804	--	1,768	535	4,785	9,597
August	182	865	1,608	1,983	2,315	601	3,847	11,401
Total	571	1,747	4,756	4,548	5,893	1,669	10,365	29,549

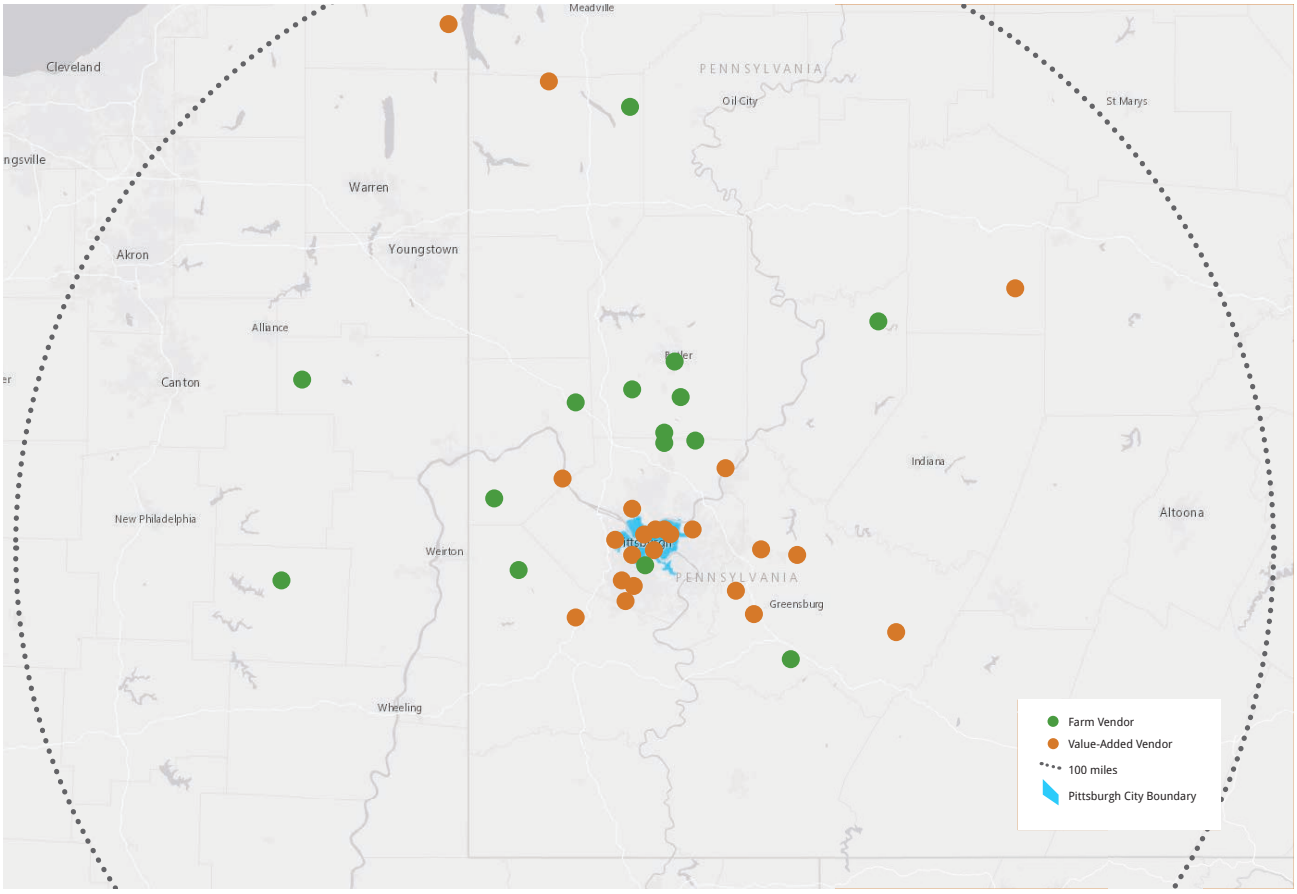
Estimated Economic Activity

	Carrick	East Liberty	Mellon Square	North Side	South Side	Squirrel Hill	Combined Average / Total
Average spent at market per visit	$18	$29	$15	$26	$15	$28	$24
Estimated total vendor revenue for July-August	$31,446	$137,924	$68,220	$153,218	$25,035	$290,220	$706,063
Percentage of shoppers who spend money at neighboring businesses before or after their market visit	7%	17%	6%	29%	9%	33%	17%
Average spent at area businesses by market shoppers per visit	$17	$28	$23	$36	$32	$21	$26
Estimated revenue at neighboring businesses from market shoppers for July-August	$2,079	$22,639	$6,276	$61,523	$4,807	$71,829	$169,153
Percentage of shoppers who came to the area specifically to visit the market	60%	50%	0%	80%	33%	65%	48%

capacity, and goals. It also indicates a need for well-publicized partnerships with food and farming initiatives, such as agricultural experts, community gardeners, farm stand operators, pantries, WIC program, etc. to find and meet shared goals on these larger issues.

Market mission and goals are important to take into account when examining the numbers presented in the City-Managed Markets Summer Snapshot table. Comparing markets to other markets is unwise, unless the markets share the same goals and audience. For example, the average amount spent at nearby businesses and the percentage of shoppers who came to the area specifically for the market are important indicators of success of an "Activator" market (such as South

City-Managed Farmers Market Vendor Point of Production



Vendors participating in the 2017 City-managed farmers markets all traveled within 100 miles of the market location.

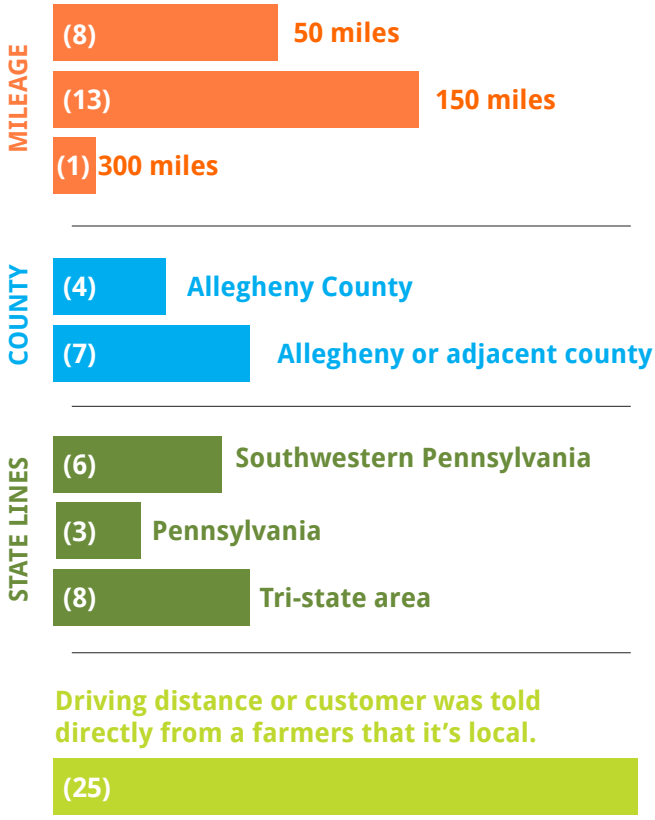
Side) whose mission is to support economic development in a main street or downtown corridor. Alternatively, a "Food Access" market, such as Carrick, should pay attention to the percentage of market visits resulting in SNAP transactions, and number of SNAP transactions. The numbers presented in the table represent a snapshot of visitor activity at the markets in the busy summer months of June, July, and August of 2017. The data was calculated using visitor counts from City-managed market staff and Just Harvest transaction reports, cross-referenced with visitor surveys. These numbers should serve as a benchmark for setting goals and monitoring trends among the City-managed markets in future seasons.

2.3 Vendors

Overall, vendors were aware of the many markets that operated in the region. Many had attempted to vend at a number of those markets, dropping the outlets soon after joining due to low sales or lack of trust in the operator. When pressing vendors for examples of markets with best practices for others to emulate, Bloomfield Farmers Market was most often cited as a high-functioning market with Market Square close behind. For the smaller markets in the area, some vendors at the community meeting noted that the process by which selling is allowed is not transparent as an example of limited management.

What constitutes a "local food product" to you?

A local food product is one that was produced within...



Among active or recently active market vendors at all the region's markets, the most significant reason that they vend at their markets was their relationships with customers. The least important reason was their relationship with the market operator. Reported reasons to sell at the market were as follows (ranked):

- I have good relationships with the customers who attend (30);
- It provides an opportunity for me to connect with new customers (25);
- I make good money (24);
- I like the social atmosphere (14);
- It's close to my farm, work kitchen, or place of business (9);
- The market accepts SNAP EBT or other government food assistance benefits (9);
- The market has high quality standards for locally produced food (9);
- The market accepts credit and debit cards (7);
- It's easy to communicate with the market managers and staff (5).

Vendors deeply understand the direct relationship made possible by their active presence behind the table as the most important attribute of farmers markets. However, the low ranking of the importance of the market operator in the survey was contradicted by the interviews and meeting comments made by vendors, where a great deal of the discussion was focused on those operators, with vendors suggesting many ideas for increasing their supervision and outreach. The low ranking may simply mean that vendors have significantly reduced their expectations for market operators.

Market vendors believe that farmers market marketing should encompass the City-managed markets and independently-managed markets together and many of those interviewed volunteered that they would "pay higher stall fees if we see that they are contributing to more promotion."

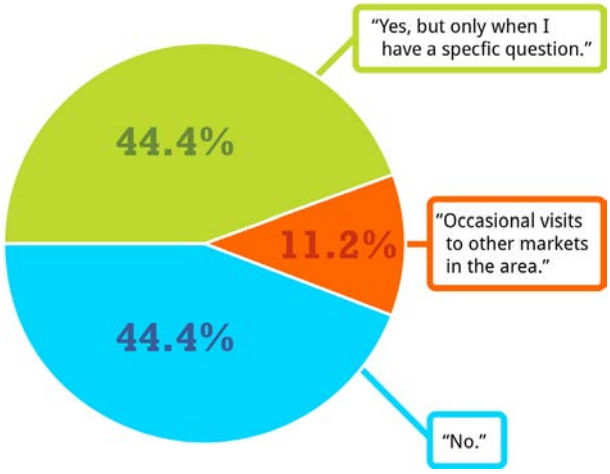
The vendors of a successful market represent a cross-section of products and approaches, continually striving to offer the best quality items and refining their customer service. As evidenced by markets such as Beechview, Carrick Dairy District and North Side, recent immigrants are among those currently attending area markets yet their needs are still not widely understood by most market organizers. Market organizations can gain insight into how to attract more shoppers and encourage entrepreneurs to serve as vendors by working more directly with immigration advocates. This is especially important in neighborhood markets where the vendor levels are low.

2.4 Market Operators

As shown in the chart titled Networking Among Market Leaders, there is little connection among the markets beyond a casual check-in between a few market leaders, which has yet to include the City of Pittsburgh's market staff. The Bloomfield Farmers Market was most often identified by other operators as the entity willing to share information and to collaborate. When markets operate within networks with other markets, the marketing and operational capacity of those markets increases exponentially as costs of marketing efforts can be shared and a single message can be developed to encourage more visitors. Market operators can also split site visits to prospective vendors' production sites and share information about certifications and trainings to reduce the number of requests for information by individual market organizations.

Networking Among Market Leaders

Do you talk regularly with any other market leaders in the area?



However, since most of the operators are managing a long list of neighborhood and/or organizational tasks in addition to their market, they have yet to prioritize networking with others markets or with the City. In order for any network to function, any added meetings must result in professional development or in assisting leaders in designing or analyzing programs at markets.

The statewide entity, PA Farm Markets, already offers regional training and support to direct marketing farmers and outlets, and in 2019, is combining its efforts with the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) to offer a single statewide conference which will help increase the training and networking for market leaders and farmers across Pennsylvania.

To connect markets effectively, any viable network will need to be sensitive to market schedules and individual market capacity. It will also need to build on shared goals such as children's programming, or operational needs such as site visits for shared vendors, lessening the workload on individual markets. The City should not assume market operators will network without supporting these shared goals or assume that they will maintain a meeting schedule without having specific tasks to accomplish. Those tasks include compiling individual and aggregated market data to offer stakeholders data for policy needs and analysis, but should also include projects that are addressing regional goals of sustainability and resilience. If individual market operators and their stakeholders only gauge success by the number of visitors or the number and type of transactions on market day, the markets will not reach their potential to support larger civic needs and will not attract the level of operational support they need to increase their impact.

Independent market operators were surveyed through an online survey in the fall of 2017, with nine responses collected from the 15 operating in that season. The remaining markets were not operating by the time of the data collection, were in the process of hiring a manager, or did not respond. The Market operators reported that their main goals for the 2018 season were:

- "Recruit more farmers and consider location change to increase shopper attendance."
- "Possible move location to increase attendance."

Scenes from the Northside Farmers Market

- "Increase size while maintaining quality and appropriate vendor mix."
- "Grow vendor mix and attendance."
- "Get more vendors."
- "No official goals yet, but we hope to keep up momentum, attract quality vendors and customers, and maintain our spot in the community."
- "Maintain our present group of vendors and try to add one or two in specialties we do not have."
- "Increase customer attendance and vendor numbers."

Market operators also offered feedback while in attendance at a networking session hosted in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh in the spring of 2018. There was agreement among the 16 attending market operators and partners at the event that markets should work together to maximize promotional efforts, and offer more city-wide farmers market programming, such as farmers market bike tours and kids programming.

2.5 Community Discussion

On Wednesday, November 29th, more than 50 community members, social justice and economic development leaders, farmers, and City staff gathered at 200 Ross Street to discuss opportunities for improving Pittsburgh's farmers markets. Breakout groups were organized according to the multi-faceted approach used by markets across the U.S. to measure their impact and included:

- Their impact on the regional economy;
- Success in expanding access to healthy food;
- Role in anchoring neighborhood, retail corridor spaces, and offering ways to engage as citizens.

All of the input received from the breakout groups was captured through detailed note-taking. Input ranged from operational suggestions to how markets can expand their support of farming and civic activities in the region. A brief summary of each discussion follows.

Breakout Discussion: Support Regional Food and Farming Economy

Most of the discussion was focused on discussing operations and the need for active, committed management.

System-Level Issues and Ideas

The discussion began with the observation that so much of the conversation in food retail is about convenience: customers wanting (or thinking that they want) to spend as little time shopping and cooking as possible. This segued into discussions of how farmers markets can do a better job of dispelling the idea that cooking with raw ingredients is "hard."

Consensus in the group was that the farmers in attendance don't sell at more markets because

they all (sic) run CSAs and sell to restaurants and don't have enough time for more markets.

The default response to facing challenges was for the producers to work together and pool their resources/knowledge.

Market-Level Issues and Ideas

The discussion focused on City-managed markets, although Bloomfield Farmers Market was referenced among those present as to what a high-functioning market looked like.

There was universal agreement that cooking demonstrations illustrating how easy it is to turn market products into a meal would be incredibly helpful for vendors' sales. The vendors present agreed that they would donate products for cooking demonstrations and would appreciate the market handling some sampling because it is too time-consuming to manage while selling.

All present vendors had heard from shoppers that they were discouraged from buying more because they felt that they threw away too much perishable food. Vendors thought that markets providing education and assistance with basic food preparation and storage would go a long way.

One vendor suggested a chopping station at the market, where shoppers could chop onions, de-vein kale, etc., put it in tupperware or bags, and head home with food that is ready to cook. This could perhaps also be done as a service by volunteers or on a fee basis.

Vendors are acutely aware that they have unmet marketing needs (particularly around social media and market day programming) that they would love for someone to coordinate. The general feeling was that marketing should encompass City-managed and independently-managed markets together. Vendors attending the meeting suggested, "we will pay higher stall fees if we see that they are contributing to more promotion."

Vendors also said that smaller markets actively solicit vendors, but since the process by which some markets choose vendors or decide on which products are allowed is not transparent, it keeps many of them from participating in those markets.

Participants in the November 29th community meeting engaged in discussion groups, and presented major themes and threads back to the crowd.

Breakout Discussion: Markets Provide Access to Healthy Food

The group was predominantly populated by representatives from food access and social justice organizations, including the Community Food Bank, Grow Pittsburgh, urban agriculture programs, and local universities (namely, Chatham and PSU). A handful of market managers were also in attendance.

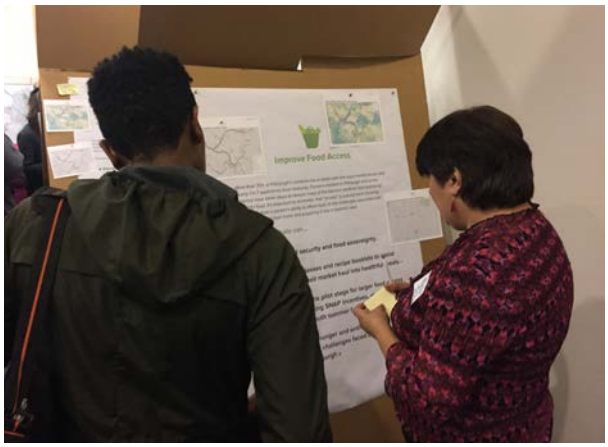
System-level Issues and Ideas

About 40% of the discussion was spent addressing operational issues, and 60% the systematic issues negatively impacting access. There was discussion of the housing authority making it difficult for markets to locate in certain neighborhoods, and the Port Authority not making it easy to access markets and other food retailers by public transit. Mobile markets were noted as a potential solution to this problem. A significant amount of time was spent trying to identify ways to increase interest in purchasing fresh ingredients, and the resources required to cook with them (interest, time, knowledge, cooking tools, pantry items, etc.).

The group cited the existence of a wide variety of educational programs on growing and preparing food, but a lack of robust participation in these programs. Increased promotion and coordination among the educators was recommended. Urban gardens were identified as a good place to offer cooking education, as well as community kitchens. There was agreement in the desire for the public schools, health systems, and the Public Library System to become more active partners in this arena.

Market-level Issues and Ideas

Little time was spent discussing actual operational issues at markets, other than the need for coordinated promotion and programs across the city. There was agreement that the City government should be promoting all the



Participants in the November 29th community meeting left notes and feedback on presentation materials highlighting potential benefits of farmers markets. The feedback was recorded and summarized in this report.

markets, not just the City-managed markets, and that they should do it through existing direct-mailing (from the electrical company, updates from the city, etc.). Social media and tech support (text-messaging apps) in promotion and delivery of services (UberEats) was of interest to many, although the social workers were quick to point out that they would further the digital divide. The need to make markets accessible to seniors by offering handicap accessible sites was brought up multiple times.

There was an interest in the City actually becoming more involved in activating public parks with markets. The Lawrenceville neighborhood leaders made a point to share their appreciation of assistance from the City for their site, and thought other parks could benefit from the same attention.

Breakout Discussion: Markets as Civic Hubs

The largest group participating was comprised of people directly associated with managing or working at their neighborhood market. Also participating was a shopper of Squirrel Hill market, county health staff, and neighborhood leaders from Oakland and Beechview.

Systemic Issues and Ideas

The discussion about what neighborhoods want from markets was lively. Some of the barriers noted were lack of transportation choices around market locations, lack of visibility of market on non-market days, and no complete up-to-date list of all of the amenities and services available in an area with which a market could partner.

Assets include centralized token system, SNAP availability, and a strong link between neighborhood leaders and markets in most

What formal role should the City play in supporting local food initiatives?

(Pittsburgh Community Engagement Survey, November 2017, highlights from 100 qualitative responses coded and categorized into the topics listed. Quotes indicate a representative answer from each.)

Policy changes

"Without government involvement (e.g., providing locations for markets, information on assistance for seniors or mothers using WIC, marketing and PR, etc.), farmers markets in the city of Pittsburgh will inevitably just be co-opted by for-profit entities or die out altogether. The City is vital to the small-scale feel and community success of farmers markets."

Incentives for growers

"I understand there is a cost for farmers to attend neighborhood markets. Would help if City could subsidize some of that overhead."

Incentives for shoppers

"Local food initiatives are a wonderful way to help people to learn to eat in a more healthy way and to support local farm industry. Cities should be leaders in planning and implementing ways that people can shop at farmers markets."

Run markets

"If the City is going to run City-managed farmers markets, I think their formal role should be providing more paid staff to manage the markets. There cannot be only one person running eight markets around the city--it's not realistic. If we want to work to make the farmers markets better, then we should be making sure there are enough people to help run programming/community events, to do social media/flyering outreach, and to physically be there and ENGAGE with the community."

Citywide outreach and marketing

"Advertising where the markets are and what days. I would like the option of going to surrounding area markets, but I have no idea where or when they are held."

"Get the word out as to how important it is to support local farmers."

Build umbrella organization

"An umbrella organization structure, such as the green markets in NYC or the market umbrella in NOLA, seems like the most preferable option for PGH. The current City-run markets do not feel inclusive, and do not meet many of my needs in terms of quality of practices represented by the vendors."

areas. The City-managed markets were noted as having little or no focus on maintaining neighborhood connections and not interested in the concerns of neighborhood leaders.

Handicap accessible sites were seen as a major barrier, including lack of large-font signage or accessible seating.

Market-level Issues and Ideas

Not surprisingly (since market leaders were in the majority), the conversation focused more on problem-solving market-level issues for those operating markets. Participants noted that it was important for markets to understand how the timing of markets means some markets are better at attracting young families (weekends), while others do better keeping seniors and residents with non-traditional work schedules (weekdays).

There was a discussion as to how markets can attract people who do not already feel part of the food movement, by providing services and events such as book swaps, kids programming, health services (flu shots), and accessible educational opportunities (such as the LU beekeeping event).

There was agreement that neighboring markets should make an effort to work together on cross-neighborhood marketing (i.e. bike event held recently between the Bloomfield and Lawrenceville markets), and to include vendors in storytelling around markets creation of neighborhood and regional leaders.

3.0 Improving Pittsburgh's Farmers Markets

Pittsburgh is well-positioned to amplify the impact of its farmers markets by maximizing its significant existing resources. These include:

- Location in the middle of an abundant agricultural region;
- Strong city and regional pride among residents;
- A robust network of food access nonprofits and organizations;
- A robust network of health systems, universities, and colleges;
- A city government engaged in resiliency and climate planning, as well as farmers market operations;
- A network of existing farmers markets throughout the city;
- An existing city-wide SNAP incentive program at markets; and
- A dedicated base of farmers market customers.

The following section offers goals and recommendations on how to best capitalize

Scene from the Squirrel Hill Farmers Market

on these existing resources, with a focus on creating the framework and foundation required to drive and sustain collaborative action among the City and its partners. The recommendations presented here are designed to build the capacity of Pittsburgh's farmers market operating organizations (both City and independent) so they may take on the work of assessing their unique vendor needs, and work with a network of supporting partners to bring new vendors and customers into the market system. This report does not offer recommendations to add or remove any markets, but rather to better support the existing network. Once the existing network of markets has been provided adequate administrative support and promotion, then individual evaluations of the success of each location will be appropriate.

Previous analysis by the City, as well as university and nonprofit partners, resulted in recommendations regarding market management and promotion procedures that were not implemented or were implemented temporarily. Any of these recommendations that were found to be relevant today were also included.

Goal A

Establish the City of Pittsburgh as an Active Facilitator of Farmers Market Development.

Reccomendation A: Provide Clear Support & Services.

The strategies provided to work toward Goal A are intended to foster improvements across all of Pittsburgh's markets, both City-managed and independently managed. The **Office of the Mayor, City Planning,** and the **Sustainability + Resilience Division** should collaborate to make support services available, and integrate farmers market definitions, processes and support into official plans and public documents.

A.1 Define "farmers market."

Adopt and share a definition of "local," and "farmers market," that is relevant to and enforceable in Pittsburgh.

Locally grown foods have skyrocketed in popularity, and are now available in restaurants, grocery stores, online delivery services, schools, hospitals, and a host of other access points. This increased demand is good news for local farmers and ranchers, who are able to diversify their marketing outlets and increase sales. However, the term "locally grown" has become so valuable that it has suffered rampant overuse, and occasional outright misuse. Some retailers purport to offer "locally grown" goods when they are, in fact, selling products that have traveled thousands of miles, lost much of their flavor and nutritional content, and are not remunerative to farmers; all factors that distinguish direct from wholesale marketing channels. Customers patronize these retailers based on the mistaken belief that they're getting the same freshness and providing the same level of support to their region's producers. Farmers markets are built on the trust developed between farmer and customer; when customers no longer feel that they can trust a vendor or market, the incentive to visit that farmers market drops dramatically. As a result, farmers markets have to work harder than ever to attract, educate, and retain customers.

Defining and promoting a clear definition of Pittsburgh's farmers markets protects the "local" brand. Farmers markets have

thrived by satisfying the consumer's desire for authenticity and transparency in the food system. In a marketing environment rife with misleading claims of "locally grown," markets need to proactively reinforce consumer trust in their farmers, and continuously remind customers of the unique benefits of shopping at the farmers market. Markets are doing this successfully by exposing more of the "behind the scenes" work of running a market to the public, including:

- Drafting stronger producer-only policies;
- Actively verifying and enforcing producer-only policies;
- Including the market's mission, vendor policies, and practices in market promotions;
- Collecting and sharing data on vendors and market activities.

Additionally and importantly, by offering a clear definition of "farmers market," municipalities are able to enforce rules and provide standardized support for markets, including:

- Waiving the requirement to obtain other business licenses;
- Waiving permitting or parking fees;
- Health and safety licensing tailored to markets;
- Cooking demonstration permitting allowances; and
- Training and authorization to participate in federal nutrition programs.

Implementation

As indicated in the Market Clusters graphic on page 10, individual markets within a region will often have different goals, programming, and partnerships, while still sharing characteristics

across market types. It is important for any definition to take those variances into account and only define the term by a short list of "non-negotiable" characteristics that are fair to all types. Those qualifiers usually include, but are not limited to: the market is regularly occurring, has a majority of food producers residing in the region, the product list is defined and managed, and that an entity or person is named as the market operator.

When drafting Pittsburgh's definition, reference the definitions created by other cities and states, as well as the vendor map on page 19. Farmers market operators, vendors, and stakeholders should have the opportunity to weigh in on the definition before it is adopted, to ensure relevance and usability.

Examples & References

Successful markets define local as it matters most to their vendors and customers, and promote that definition widely. Markets can demonstrate their commitment by offering data on their vendors, such as miles to market, definition of local, and mission of the market. This message of authenticity is then reinforced by inclusion in promotions, on websites, and on on-site signage, including booth signs that identify vendors as "market approved." In Pittsburgh, existing independently-managed markets maintain their own rules for vendor participation, which can inform the City's definition. For example, the Lawrenceville United regulations state that "all agricultural products offered for sale at the Market shall be grown or produced in a 250-mile radius of Pittsburgh."[3]

The federal government, along with many states and commonwealths, defines "farmers market" in statute or code to reduce confusion and target policies or programs aimed at farmers markets more precisely. These definitions determine eligibility for participation in programs, including the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, as well as state-administered farmers market certification programs. In the interest of consumer protection, lawmakers in multiple states have explicitly prohibited the use of the phrase "farmers market" to describe retail establishments that do not adhere to the tenets of direct-to-consumer agricultural marketing. Some jurisdictions define what constitutes a "farmers market" to clearly differentiate these markets from fairs, festivals, flea markets, events with temporary vendors, and other businesses that may use the term "farmers market" or appear synonymous to the public.

City of Philadelphia: An area where, on designated days and times, growers and producers of horticultural and agricultural products sell those products directly to the public.[4]

City of Baltimore: A recurring event on designated dates and times consisting primarily of agricultural producers selling their products

3 http://www.lunited.org/programs/community-planning-development/lawrenceville-farmers-market/
4 Bill No. 140010, amending Section 9-213 of The Philadelphia Code,

directly to the public. At least 50% of vendors must sell agricultural or food products as designated by the State of Maryland's definition for 'Farmers Market.'

Maryland Department of Agriculture: A public space where fresh food from a defined local area is sold by the people who have grown, gathered, raised or caught it.[5]

A.2 Clarify the City's Goals.

Clarify why the City is interested in supporting farmers markets, identifying the range of benefits that markets offer.

Existing documentation reflects the City's desire to support farmers markets as healthy food access points and drivers of local farm economy. The City should also promote the important role that existing markets are playing as cultural and civic meeting places, and take steps to capitalize on the social benefits. It's recommended that the City broaden its scope for supporting farmers markets to reflect their full range of benefits, so that they may be properly included in formal plans and initiatives (such as the Climate Action Plan and Resilient City initiatives), and used to implement commitments such as those in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

Implementation

When adopting a definition of "farmers market," the City should also explain its interest in defining and supporting markets. Sample text may read: *The City has a substantial interest in supporting a robust network of farmers markets due to their role as cultural and economic assets that provide a range of public benefits, including:*

- *Improved access to fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate food;*
- *Promotion of healthy and sustainable eating choices for all residents;*
- *Increased social and civic cohesion and connectivity;*
- *Economic support for local food businesses and regional family farms;*
- *Opportunity to support sustainable food production practices and preservation of regional farmland; and*
- *Activation of public spaces and business corridors.*

This language should be released through official proclamation or charter. (See strategy A.5 for additional explanation and examples).

A.3 Create a Pittsburgh Farmers Market Registry.

Create a registration process that provides benefits to qualifying farmers markets.

5 http://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Documents/SoYouWantToStartAFarmersMarket.pdf

Maintaining an accurate list of the city's farmers markets is a baseline requirement in facilitation of a strong city-wide farmers market network. The list should include location, day and time of operation, manager contact information, market mission, and products offered. Ideally, the markets would also provide a copy of their rules and vendor requirements. As farmers market contacts and locations can be fluid from year to year, collecting them can be a time consuming task. In order to incentivize markets to provide their up-to-date information to the City, the City should offer services to those markets who participate.

Implementation

Markets who register their information with the City each year should be provided with the following:

1. Listing in a city-wide directory of farmers markets. At minimum, this list should be available on the City's website, and shared with media outlets for broad promotion. Best practices include using the list to offer a printable guide, or partnering with a local newspaper to promote widespread use.

2. Inclusion in the Pittsburgh market manager listserv, networking events, and training opportunities (see Goal B).

3. Parking permits for vendors and operators. Coordinate with the Parking Authority to offer a "parking permit package" to registered farmers markets.

4. Inclusion in a parking ticket-free zone on the days and times of operation. Coordinate with the Parking Authority to avoid ticketing within three blocks of any registered farmers market on days of operation.

5. Provide a package of data collection support hours. The City will provide or coordinate with a partner to provide volunteers or interns to the market for two market days per season to perform visitor counts and surveys.

6. A streamlined permit process to offer sampling and cooking demonstrations. The City should continue work with the Allegheny County Health Department to develop a farmers market-specific permit that allows for markets to offer safe, effective sampling and cooking demonstrations.

Other benefits and services to consider offering registered markets include:

- The opportunity to participate in city-wide incentive and promotional programs;
- Rentals of promotional materials, such as A-frames, banners, etc.; and
- Rentals of food preparation equipment, such as handwashing stations, or equipment required for cooking demonstrations.

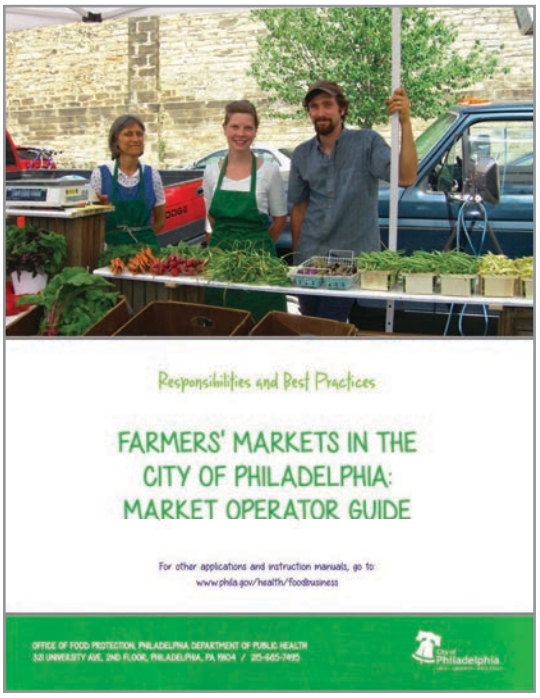
A.4 Publish a Farmers Market Operator Guide.

Publish an annual guide for Pittsburgh's farmers market operators, offering information on available services and contacts.

Farmers market administration within the City will improve when all requirements, rules, regulations, and information on services available are clear and centrally located. Pittsburgh's farmers market operators are predominantly volunteers or part-time employees who have limited time to spend searching for information and assistance.

Implementation

This Pittsburgh farmers market guide should provide information on:



- The City's definition of "farmers market;"
- How to obtain any relevant permits, including parking permits and special event permits;
- Tax requirements;
- How to participate in federal nutrition assistance programs like SNAP and FMNP;
- How to obtain a food sampling and cooking demonstration permit;
- Food safety best practices;
- Any promotional opportunities or services offered by the City and its partners; and
- All relevant contacts, websites and forms.

The City will need to coordinate with the Allegheny County Health Department to obtain information on the proper food safety permitting procedures. The guide should be provided by the Sustainability and Resilience Division's Sustainable Local Foods Initiative website for download.

Examples & References

Philadelphia and Baltimore both offer Farmers Market Operator Guides (Attachments C and D), providing detailed guidance on permitting requirements, registration forms, food safety best practices, and other relevant information for farmers market operators. These guides clearly outline requirements and expectations of their city's markets.

A.5 Codify the City's Support for Farmers Markets.

Codify the City's position and new initiatives through an official charter or proclamation.

Making the new definitions, plans, and support official and public is an important step to ensure that citizens and all City departments are aware of the updates. This also allows them to include support for the farmers market initiatives in their own work.

While the City has offered support for farmers market growth through the direct administration of markets and commissioning of studies like this one, little official guidance exists on its role or goals in developing a thriving farmers market network. Planning documents should explicitly outline how the Pittsburgh's existing farmers markets can participate in sustainability or healthy living efforts. Inclusion in the City's existing planning initiatives helps solidify the City's goals for farmers market growth and offer concrete channels for support. Once established and appropriately documented, these planning efforts can more easily be factored into zoning maps, permitting requirements, regulations, and programming initiatives.

Implementation

The City should publicly announce their new or updated farmers market positions and intentions with a charter or proclamation, potentially announcing the new Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network (see Goal B.1). This announcement would provide an opportunity to share the newly adopted definition of farmers market, and/or implementation of any new programming. The language in this proclamation should then be included throughout other City initiatives. For example, in 2016, the City of Pittsburgh signed on to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. Implementation of the recommendations in this report represent fulfillment of a range of the Pact's commitments regarding governance, food production, food supply and distribution, and social and economic equity.[6]

The City of Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan 3.0 admirably dedicates a full chapter to Food and Agriculture, identifying goals to: "Make Strengthening the Local Food System a City Priority," "Build Demand for Local Food," and "Increase small farm profitability." One action item then recommends "Promotion of farmers markets on the city website."[7] Future iterations of the Climate Action Plan should expand upon plans to maximize the city's robust existing network of farmers markets as a mechanism for reaching these goals.

Similarly, ONE PGH: Pittsburgh's Resilience Strategy mentions farmers markets improving access to healthy, affordable food choices (page 45). Support for the initiatives recommended

6 Miami Urban Food Policy Pact (www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/text)
7 City of Pittsburgh Climate Action Plan 3.0, page 77 (apps.pittsburghpa.gov/redtail/images/606_PCAP_3_0_Draft-_9-26-17.pdf)

in this report should be included in ONE PGH implementation plans as well.

Goal B

Implement effective city-wide programs and promotions in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh, independent farmers markets, and community partners.

Recommendation B:
Activate & support collaboration among all Pittsburgh markets.

The strategies provided for Goal B will lay the foundation for ongoing, effective collaboration between Pittsburgh's farmers markets. The strategies focus on steps that **City Planning** can take to facilitate this type of collaboration, providing the platform for **market managers and partners** to work toward common goals, maximize promotional efforts, evaluate market successes, and take a systematic approach to addressing food access.

B.1 Create a Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network.

Lead a public-private partnership that will support and promote all of Pittsburgh's farmers markets.

The range of administrative capacity among Pittsburgh's farmers market organizations is widely divergent. When market operators work without regard to a larger set of shared goals, they can actually restrict the growth of a regional food system. Farmers markets working in isolation from larger food system efforts have difficulty withstanding external or internal pressures. Any effort to build professional capacity for individual markets must also include building a network among those operators. This regional network of market organizations would be able to share duties, such as vendor site visits or educating buyers about sustainable certifications. A collaborative network would also be ideal for building a unified, seasonal market "brand" to remind Pittsburghers of their rich market culture and to share data on the impacts of these markets once each season has ended.

State-level farmers market networks have been operating since the mid-1960s, growing in number and capacity in the past 10 years. Cities have begun to follow suit, forming more localized collaboratives and associations that increase the capacity of individual markets. Associations have varying degrees of discretion in defining their constituencies,

with memberships varying from nine to 200 member markets, which in turn represent between several hundred and 2,000 producers per state. The services offered by associations vary dramatically by locality, with most seeking to facilitate networking among market managers, training opportunities, and services such as insurance and shared promotions. With the rise of nutrition incentive programs, more and more state associations are offering state-wide matching programs. The New Mexico Farmers Market Association was instrumental in securing federal grant funding, as well as matching funding from their New Mexico Human Services Department for their Double Up Bucks program (www.doubleupnm.org), and continues to provide training and promotion for participating markets. The Massachusetts Federation of Farmers Markets partnered with the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture to implement the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) discussed in section B.3, and led the effort to include funding for the program in the state's budget.

Pennsylvania is now benefiting from state-wide farmers market support, through PA Farm Markets. Working with Penn State Extension, PA Farm Markets hosts a Farmers Market Managers Conference, organizes a retail farm market tour for on-farm market managers, offers vendor training, and performs market assessments. Regional trainings have also been made available to Pittsburgh area farmers market managers. Partnerships with PA Preferred and the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers Association have recently been formed to increase value and add additional training opportunities for PA Farm Market members.

Implementation

The Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network should include a core group of participants appointed by the Mayor, but be open to any group or individual engaged in operating a market or its programming, or participating as a vendor. The leadership of this network should be shared between the City of Pittsburgh, members of the working groups within the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, and representative market operators, with the clear goal of creating shared competencies and transparent systems for all farmers markets. Tasks to be taken on the by the Network should include:

- ***Promotion of all Pittsburgh markets that meet the definition***. In addition to sharing the farmers market directory online, the directory should be published as a poster or pamphlet. The City should also promote the farmers market directory through existing communications, public relations channels, and partnerships across City departments.
- ***Short-term and long-term goal setting for Pittsburgh's market impact***. The Network should collectively determine goals for the group, and identify the ideal metrics for measuring progress.
- ***Networking and training events:*** Monthly or bi-monthly gatherings for Network meetings, food safety trainings,

or market manager development, held by PA Farm Markets.

- ***City-sponsored data collection and reporting, in collaboration with participating colleges and universities.*** Market operators typically find it difficult to dedicate the time required to complete data collection. Network partners should create a pool of volunteer or intern data collectors, who have been trained and are able to dedicate a set number of hours to data collection assistance at markets. A university or college partner would be ideal to coordinate the data collector pool.

The Network should select additional projects based on the collective needs of the group. Potential activities may include:

- Market integrity support: sharing responsibility to complete and report on farm and booth audits.
- Securing private sponsors for signage, programming, transportation, and promotion.
- City-wide programming, such as farm tours, market tours, scavenger hunts, food-themed festivals, etc.

Creating a city-wide farmers market vendor application to streamline the process for regional farmers.

Examples & References

The Louisville Farmers Market Association (Kentucky) was created in 2017 via charter by Mayor Greg Fischer. The Association receives staff support from the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness and

MARKETING & PROMOTION

FARMERS MARKETS OF MPLS

NEW BRAND IDENTITY & PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

including name, logo, social media page & ad campaign

95K PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH FACEBOOK ADS AND PROMOTIONS

DECLARED AS FARMERS MARKET WEEK BY CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

2017 AUG. 6-12

8K BRANDED REUSABLE BAGS DISTRIBUTED AT 22 MARKETS

- *Weekly schedules, market events, recipes and photos for markets and from Beth Dooley and Mette Nielsen for 16 weeks on Facebook.*
- *5,000 Homegrown Minneapolis edition MN Department of Agriculture Minnesota Grown Directories at 16 farmers markets and 21 restaurants, coops, and organizations.*

LEADERSHIP TEAM

$800K LEVERAGED FOR WORK SINCE 2015

3 CITYWIDE COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS HELD IN 2017

100+ STAKEHOLDERS GAVE INPUT ON IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIC PLAN

PARTNERED WITH *all farmers markets in Minneapolis; University of MN; MN Dept. of Agriculture; Terra Soma; Beth Dooley; David Nicholson; Mette Nielsen; City of Minneapolis (Coordinator's Office of Sustainability; Community Planning and Economic Development; Health Dept.; Civil Rights Department Urban Scholars Program; Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council; City Council and Mayor's Office); and many local food champions.*

FUNDING AND IN-KIND SUPPORT FROM *City of Minneapolis, Funders Network, General Mills Foundation, Greater Twin Cities United Way, McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, MN Dept. of Agriculture, MN Dept. of Health Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, University of MN, USDA*

Shared promotions for the Farmers Markets of Minneapolis includes an interactive website at farmersmarketsofmpls.org.

Louisville Forward, along with the Kentucky Department of Public Health Community Health Action Team (CHAT) Grant. Together, they seek to assist farmers markets with marketing, financial advisement, and vendor and volunteer recruitment. In its first year of operation, the association released a Louisville Local Food Guide, and implemented a city-wide SNAP incentive program.

The Farmers Markets of Minneapolis Collaborative (Minnesota) was formed to "foster the vitality of the City's farmers markets through strategic and informed innovation, advocacy, education, and cohesive partnerships."[1] Officially forming in early 2017, current activities include collaborative metrics collection, marketing, and technical assistance to build a more connected, accessible, and effective market system, in partnership with the City of Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council, Minnesota Department of Agriculture and market managers. The Collaborative welcomes and encourages all markets to participate. Funding is provided by City of Minneapolis, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Health Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, University of Minnesota, USDA, and a handful of private foundations. Through a strategic planning process, the Collaborative has identified the following four goals:

- Ensure Minneapolis has a profitable, sustainable, and equitable 'ecosystem' of farmers markets;
- Foster trusting, productive relationships and mutual initiatives to advance the success of Minneapolis farmers markets, market vendors, and farmers;
- Establish a strong, shared operational base for all city farmers markets; and
- Maintain rigorous data collection and evaluation practices to inform funders and guide planning and policy advocacy.

With the Collaborative's focus on data collection and sharing, they've released a brief report that also serves as an effective promotional tool for the city's markets.

B.2 Regularly Share Data.

Regularly share standardized data on the impact of Pittsburgh's markets.

Using data from the farmers market registration process, supplemented by additional data provided by Network participants, the City should collaborate with a research partner to release an annual farmers market impact report. At a minimum, this report should share:

- the number and type of farmers participating at markets;
- the number of acres of farmland farmer vendors have in production;
- the number of jobs supported by market vendors;

1 http://farmersmarketsofmpls.org/

- the number of market visits over the season; and
- the amount of SNAP dollars spent at markets.

When data on markets is collected, it's imperative that it be shared back with the community. Not only will this data help to promote the markets and improve promotions, it cultivates trust and a willingness to participate in data collection efforts in the future. FMC has provided the City and all participating markets access to Farmers Market Metrics, a standardized, automated tool to facilitate this data collection, as an option for working toward this goal. Farmers Market Metrics data collection instructions and a sample summary graphic are included as Attachments G and F.

B.3 Increase Support for the Fresh Access Program.

Champion farmers markets as food access points for all residents by supporting Just Harvest's Fresh Access program and other nutrition benefit programs with shared funding and evaluation.

According to USDA FNS data, 7,377[2] farmers and farmers markets across the country were authorized to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in 2017, more than double the number of farmers and farmers markets authorized in 2012 (3,214). In 2017, more than $22.4 million SNAP benefits were redeemed at farmers markets. This brings more fresh, local produce to the doorsteps of low-income neighborhoods and enables SNAP recipients to purchase the nutritious food their families need to stay healthy. The cash incentive programs that match SNAP purchases began at farmers markets around 2008 and are designed to increase the regular participation of SNAP shoppers, as well as maximize their ability to take advantage of seasonal surges in products by allowing more items to be purchased at one time. In a 2010 study of the Boston Bounty Bucks program, 87% of participating SNAP recipients reported they were consuming more fresh produce as the result of the program and that they would continue to eat more produce even without the assistance of Bounty Bucks.

Administering a SNAP, coupon, and/or incentive program can be an onerous activity for an individual farmers market or producer, as it requires each to become an authorized retailer, train participating vendors, acquire the necessary wireless EBT equipment and tokens, and dedicate staff to executing transactions, redeeming tokens, accounting, and reporting. Therefore, the most successful SNAP and FMNP programs in terms of benefit dollars redeemed are those that establish collaboratives between a group of farmers markets, local social service agencies, nonprofit partners and governing bodies, as is done in Pittsburgh with Just Harvest's Fresh Access program. Coordinating educational materials, promotions, redemption systems (tokens, swipe cards, or receipts), in

2 USDA Food and Nutrition Service Data, https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/SNAP-Farmers-Markets-Redemptions.pdf

conjunction with offering a financial incentive, results in marked increases in low-income customers spending their benefits at their local farmers markets.

The Fresh Access program streamlines implementation and promotion of SNAP incentives across more than 20 farmers markets (2017) in Allegheny County, easing the process for market managers, and providing continuity for customers who can acquire or spend their Fresh Access tokens at any of the participating markets across the city. In 2018, for every $5 in SNAP spent at farmers markets, an extra $2 in Fresh Access Food Bucks is provided to spend on additional fruits and vegetables. Funding for the program comes from a partnership with The Food Trust, using a USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Program grant, as well as support from the Allegheny County Health Department's Live Well Allegheny program, funded by the Richard King Mellon Foundation.

Promotional material from Just Harvest from years past.

Implementation

Just Harvest currently operates on-site at the City-managed markets, via a memo of understanding (MOU). This MOU should be expanded to facilitate increased promotion of the program, and to streamline data collection efforts. Just Harvest hosts staff at each City-managed market, allowing them to take on the responsibility of collecting and sharing market day data (weather conditions, number of vendors, programming participation, visitor counts) in addition to the amount of Fresh Access and Food Bucks distributed and redeemed at each market site. Sample text to be used in an MOU is included in Attachment K.

The Just Harvest Fresh Access program is a significant resource that fulfills many of the City's food access goals. It should be a priority to provide funding to the program to increase the availability of the incentives. About 1,100 SNAP benefit users took advantage of the Fresh Access program in 2017. With about 65,000 households in Allegheny County using SNAP, there is a huge opportunity for Fresh Access growth. In order to maximize the potential of farmers markets to improve food access

Promotional material from the Healthy Food Incentive Program in Massachusetts.

in Pittsburgh, the City should contract Just Harvest to expand the Fresh Access program to include a city-wide incentive program available to Pittsburgh residents who participate in SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, TANF, SSI Disability, or Medicare QMB. An expanded Fresh Access program should be modeled on D.C.'s Produce Plus Program, which offers $10 to spend at the farmers market to eligible participants twice weekly. Produce Plus staffs a group of "Market Champions" to help spread the word and provide training on how to use the program throughout the city. This type of face-to-face pomotion has proven to be integral to program success.

The program should be funded through the City's annual budget. Detailed planning will need to take place with Just Harvest to set an appropriate budget. Based on similar programs in other cities, Pittsburgh could reach six times the current population using the SNAP EBT through Fresh Access, with a program budget of about $800,000 (70% spent on incentives and 30% spent on program administration, education, and promotion).

The City should also work with Just Harvest to explore Fresh Access administration improvement options, such as transitioning from a token system to a swipe card system. Additional in-kind support, such as shared promotions, should be increased where possible.

References & Examples

The State of Massachusetts has had notable success with their statewide SNAP doubling program, known as HIP (Healthy Incentives Program). All SNAP users are automatically enrolled, and are able to double SNAP dollars spent on eligible fruits and vegetables at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and Community Supporting Agriculture operations (CSAs), up to a monthly limit. The doubled funds are automatically added back onto the user's SNAP card, dramatically improving the efficiency of the redemption process and reducing the reporting required of market management. In the first year of HIP operation, SNAP families purchased $3.3 million in fresh, healthy foods from more than 200 local farms. 36,110 families earned HIP incentives. 63,630 individuals increased their fruit and vegetable intake by 1 serving per day. 48% of those families included seniors, who studies have shown spend less time in the emergency room when they eat healthy foods. That increase in healthy eating can mean savings of more than $1.1 million in public health costs.[3] The program is funded through the USDA FINI program, with significant additional support provided by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture.

The D.C. Produce Plus Program is a city-wide initiative that provides $20 a week to farmers market customers receiving any federal benefit (SNAP, WIC, TANF, SSI Disability, Medicaid, Medicare QMB). Funding for the program is

The city-wide D.C. Produce Plus Program tested a variety of methods of implementation, including card-based.

provided by the Government of the District of Columbia, Department of Health, and Community Health Administration. The City partners with D.C. Greens, a local nonprofit, to administer Produce Plus at farmers markets throughout the city.

Participants must visit the farmers market information booth, show a D.C. photo ID and an EBT card, Medicaid card, WIC ID folder, senior voucher, Medicare QMB card, or Social Security ID card. In 2017, 9,453 D.C. residents participated in the program, spending $759,785[4] in Produce Plus on fresh fruits and vegetables. Produce Plus distribution sites were limited to areas of the city with the highest concentration of eligible residents, specifically focusing on neighborhoods where at least 10% of residents are SNAP recipients. The availability of the program increased farmers market visitor counts, with Produce

3 https://mafoodsystem.org/projects/hip-citations/

4 https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a0de798ccc5c53cfc15685c/t/5a980fbc8165f5deb781375a/1519914975696/2017+Produce+Plus+Report+%284%29.pdf

Plus customers tending to visit a farmers markets once every two weeks. An important component of the success of Produce Plus has been the inclusion of 21 paid Market Champions tasked with conducting outreach and cultivate welcoming, inclusive spaces at distributing markets. Market Champions are typically program participants themselves. Recruiting and training Volunteer Leaders and hiring Market Champions helps D.C. Greens develop food system leaders within the neighborhoods of participating markets.

The city-wide D.C. Produce Plus Program uses a network of "Market Champions" to promote and administer the program.

Ongoing Responsibilities of City Planning and Sustainability and Resilience Division Staff

Upon completion of the strategies listed in Goals A and B, ongoing support will be required to continue and maintain the initiatives and resources. Staff in the Sustainability and Resilience Division will be tasked with:

- Facilitation of the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network:
  - Maintain email list and listserv of all area market managers.
  - Coordinate quarterly meetings.
  - Coordinate annual production of farmers market directory.
  - Serve as liaison to City services as needed (to assist in coordination of cross-agency events or promotions such as National Farmers Market Week, and connecting independent market operators with City services when available.)
- Annual updates of the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Operator Guide.
- Ongoing intake and management of farmers market registration.
- Annual release of farmers market impact statement.
- Overseeing the city-wide incentive program, administered by Just Harvest (as a contracting officer).

Goal C

Manage best-in-class markets that effectively serve a wide range of Pittsburgh's residents.

Recommendation C:
Improve operations, promotion, and evaluation at City-managed farmers markets.

Goals A and B are focused on improving the landscape for all farmers markets within the Pittsburgh area. Strategies included in Goal C are focused solely on improving operations and promotions of the City-managed markets. In early 2018, the administration of the City-managed markets transferred from Citiparks to the Office of Special Events. The Office of Special Events is well-suited to administer the City-managed markets, as the resources for event planning and promotion are well established. Through the transition, progress was made on some of the strategies proposed in this report. The **Office of Special Events** should continue to work toward full implementation of the following strategies, to ensure that the City-managed markets are leading the way in showcasing best practices in farmers market operations.

C.1 Hire a full-time, year-round Farmers Market Director.

Housed within the Office of Special Events, this position would oversee operations of the City-managed farmers markets, and implement all recommendations included in Goal C.

Farmers markets don't just happen. Market success relies on careful planning, robust promotion, strong partners and constant monitoring. Successful farmers markets have appropriately trained market managers on-site every market day. Stall fees collected from vendors should be used to fund this position, and should be adjusted to accommodate a well-qualified candidate. Vendors who participated in the engagement meetings indicated that they would be open to an increase in fees, if they were to fund improved market administration.

The Farmers Market Director should complete all of the additional tasks outlined in Goal C. A sample job description is included at the end of this section. The position would also participate in the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network, as a Mayor appointed member.

C.2 Maintain digital vendor records.

A complete list of vendors, product information, and contacts should be up to date at all times. Use a safeguarded online system that allows for multiple levels of access, including allowing vendors to update their own profile and certifications. FMC has provided the Office of Special Events with a software subscription, Farmspread, to begin the process of digitizing vendor records and interactions. The software also provides the framework for submitting and reviewing vendor applications, as well as collecting stall fees online. The City should download and archive the database at the end of the season.

C.3 Define the unique role of each City-managed market.

Each market location should be regularly evaluated in terms of its mission, the population served, and its potential for reducing food insecurity (see City-Managed Market Snapshots section in the addendum). The purpose and goals of each market site should be documented within the market policies.

C.4 Update and adhere to market rules.

The Farmers Market Director should be responsible for ensuring that the rules are followed, and that reasonable penalties are uniformly enforced when the rules are broken.

The City-managed farmers markets have a blanket set of rules across all their markets. To improve the existing set, each market location should be evaluated to identify its unique goals and mission. The rules and regulations may need to be adjusted slightly to accommodate the varying needs of each market site. At sites where increasing local production is the primary goal, this should be made clear by defining the number and type of products allowed from resale and/or non-food vendors at each market and rewarding steady attendance among regional farmers with prime retail spaces. As rules are refined, a fair and transparent penalty process for rule-breaking must be used, reviewed annually, and shared publicly.

Market day audits of products and food safety should be managed and maintained by the Farmers Market Director. Annual visits to production sites can be coordinated with other market operators through the Farmers Market Network. Electronic files for market vendors should be maintained with certifications and correspondence. Explanations of certifications and site visit images should be shared with market visitors and stakeholders.

C.5 Standardize and improve promotion.

Neighborhood-level and city-wide promotion of markets should be conducted at the start, midpoint, and near the end of the market season. Promotion should use all avenues offered by the Office of Special Events, including radio spots, seasonal banners, posters at neighboring businesses, and flyers for social service partners. Each farmers market site should be clearly marked on the market day, using banners and A-frames. Where possible, the City should install permanent, year-round signage at market sites.

Vendor booth signage should be standardized to require the vendor name, type of products available (approved), and the general location of the point of production (city, state).

Promotion should include in-person visits from the farmers market staff to partner organizations. The farmers market staff should serve as a friendly ambassador of the City-managed markets, ensuring that the community feels welcome and encouraged to engage. When a formal visit isn't feasible, a volunteer swap with a like-minded organization provides an opportunity to engage with new potetnial customers. For example, farmers market staff could participate in volunteer days at a local school garden, or food bank, and use the opportunity to inform participants about market programs and offerings.

C.6 Offer a range of activities and events at the markets.

Events should be strategically planned with partners and vendors, and could include cooking demos, children's activities, city services information, or regional agricultural events. Goals for activities should be reviewed annually using data from previous events, such as attendance counts or quantity of materials shared.

C.7 Conduct consistent data collection.

In addition to the data collection framework to be defined by the Farmers Market Network, the Farmers Market Director should ensure that any data required to measure the success of each individual market site is being collected and reported regularly. This could include visitor counts and/or visitor surveys, in addition to the vendor information shared through vendor applications. FMC's Farmers Market Metrics tools provide a data collection framework that facilitates the evaluation process and immediate data sharing.

Farmers markets sales as reported by the USDA in 2015 were less than one tenth of one percent of U.S. food sales. Recent reports from retail researchers such as The Hartman Group show a significant number of Americans have greater interest in spending their dollars on healthy food purchases and in

supporting the availability of fresh ingredients. Notwithstanding the percentage of household items unlikely to ever be available at farmers markets, the number of shoppers attracted to market shopping has ample room to grow. What has stymied many market operators is how to define the act of shopping at a farmers market as separate from those stores that now carry local goods. In response, many markets now stress the direct connection made between those growing the region's food and producing small-batch items with those seeking authenticity, value, and innovation created by their neighbors, curated by an organization that is driven primarily by a mission of increasing regional wealth and health for all residents. For organizations that develop this messaging, "transparency and trust" becomes the public promise to their community, and in turn, the vendors who offer the same to their individual customers benefit from this social contract.

Even so, many food and farming leaders suggest the rapid increase in the number of these outlets within the region has a negative side. However, what is often reported as ***saturation*** of direct marketing channels within a region might more appropriately be defined as ***stagnation*** in product development. Operators should aid producers in introducing new varieties and securing funding for season-extending methods of production. Just as grocery and other traditional food retailers regularly make changes to inventory based on sales data and trends in customer demands, farmers market operators, in partnerships with anchor vendors and Extension agents, should work towards an ideal seasonal product mix at the market to meet consumer expectations, and offer programming and promotions to highlight that month's available products and producers. Market operators should also be working closely with vendors to evaluate customer behavior and plan collaboratively to maximize sales. To properly address changing consumer demands, markets should engage in grassroots evaluation. The recent rise in data systems has allowed markets to be able to analyze the effects of their programming, but few markets calculate "retail" metrics, either for their own use or for their vendors. These retail metrics, including product category sales versus market level sales, shopper attendance at different points of the season, psychographics, and frequency of shopper versus average sale, are the next step for making decisions based on actual data both at the market and the vendor level.

C.8 Create a regular feedback loop with market vendors via email and mail.

Market staff should be sharing information and actively soliciting feedback from vendors during the market season. Email or mail should be used to share market-level data at the end of the season and before the start of the spring season.

C.9 Establish an informal advisory group for each market.

Increase the number of stakeholders actively engaged in each market location through implementation of an advisory group. That group should include a mix of neighborhood leaders, urban farmers, environmental and social justice activists, public health agency staff, immigrant service providers, and nearby business owners. This group can support on-site market staff by assisting with data collection, vendor application reviews, localized outreach, and feedback on market activities.

C.10 Extend the season of one City-managed market to year-round.

By offering one four-season farmers market, the City can increase awareness of local food, highlight the ingenuity of producers to extend seasons and increase value-added goods, and provide better access to healthy local foods to residents. Survey vendors to identify the best existing market for season extension.

Implementation of all strategies in Goal C rely on hiring an appropriate full-time, year-round staff person as Farmers Market Director.

Ongoing Responsibilities / Sample Job Description of Farmers Market Director

The City of Pittsburgh Office of Special Events operates seven farmers markets throughout the city. The markets provide access to locally grown fruits, vegetables, and other farm products, showcasing the best of the region and Pittsburgh's local products. The Farmers Market Director is a full-time position with primary responsibility being the day-to-day operation of the seven farmers markets. The director will represent the markets to the markets' vendors, the consumers, and to the community. This will include an on-site presence at the market during all market hours, as well as off-site administrative work. The Farmers Market Director will report to the Special Events Manager. Completion of the Market Season Duties will require assistance from on-site program and logistics staff at all market locations.

Off-season Duties:

1. Evaluate market strengths and weaknesses. Analyze market data, and make adjustments for potential improvements in daily logistics, outreach efforts, and product selection.
2. Act as liaison to the Office of the Mayor, and Sustainability and Resilience Division, providing accounting and performance reports.
3. Solicit entertainment for market days, as well as sponsors for the entertainment.
4. Coordinate vendor application process. Enroll vendors in the market seasonally. Determine the eligibility of vendors based on the rules established by market's governing body and the product mix goals of each market location.

5. Recruit new vendors when necessary. Work with Extension and regional farming organizations to identify potential vendors.
6. Collect and maintain vendor records, including contact lists, signed vendor agreements, and proof of insurance when necessary.
7. Create and implement promotional plans. Use the existing avenues available through the Office of Special Events, as well as identify and collaborate with partners and sponsors.
8. Host annual vendor meeting.
9. Participate in the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network.

Market Season Duties (with assistance from program and logistics staff at all market locations):

10. Ensure that all applicable licenses, permits, and insurances are filed with relevant agencies. Be knowledgeable about exactly where to refer a vendor in need of permits or registrations.
11. Collect all stall fees owed, ensure accurate accounting, and deposit in market accounts.
12. Communicate market policies, activities, and rules to farmers, keeping them informed throughout the season.
13. Verify each farmer at least once per season, using a standard procedure defined in the vendor policies (farm visits, booth audits, and/or sharing receipts).
14. Coordinate with partners to host 2-4 customer survey days throughout the season.
15. Establish and enforce regular hours of operation. Arrive prior to market vendors arriving and remain throughout each market day to:
    - Properly place vendors in stalls, including assigning market stalls to daily vendors;
    - Place market signs, parking signs;
    - Assure the market is operated in a timely and efficient manner, and that sales occur only within the specific market hours;
    - Ensure all rules and regulations are adhered to;
    - Ensure all state and county regulations are adhered to;
    - Collect and record data including: vendor attendance, visitor counts, and market day conditions;
    - Answer questions for vendors and consumers;
    - Resolve disputes that arise;
    - Maintain market grounds in a safe manner;
    - Operate market manager's booth. Engage with customers, providing guidance, samples, recipes when available; and
    - Implement emergency procedures in the case of accidents, medical emergencies, safety or crime issues, severe weather, or natural disasters. Have quick access to a first aid kit and, in some cases, a fire extinguisher. Knowledge of first aid and CPR is beneficial.

Table of Recommendations and Deliverables

Deliverables for Rec A: Provide Clear Support and Services	Lead Agency	Support	Timeframe
A.1. Statement of the City's goals for farmers market support.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	City Planning	Complete by February 2019
A.2. Definition of "farmers market" to be used across City departments and divisions.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	City Planning	Complete by February 2019
A.3. Pittsburgh Farmers Market Registry: Farmers markets submit their information to receive benefits and be included in city-wide promotions.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Allegheny County Health Department Parking Authority	Open by March 2019
A.4. Pittsburgh Farmers Market Operator Guide	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Allegheny County Health Department	Release by May 2019
A.5 Proclamation stating the City's definition of farmers markets, goals for supporting markets, and announcing the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Registry and services offered.	Office of the Mayor	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Release by April 2019

Deliverables for Rec B: Activate Partnership Among all Pittsburgh Markets	Lead Agency	Support	Timeframe
B.1 Convene the Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network: a public-private partnership to support and promote Pittsburgh's farmers markets.	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Office of the Mayor City Planning	Convene by February 2019
B.2. Publicly share goals of the Network, meeting schedule, and participation requirements (including data sharing standards).	Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network	Sustainability + Resilience Division	March 2019
B.3 Draft budget proposal supporting the Fresh Access program.	Office of the Mayor	Sustainability + Resilience Division	May 2019

Deliverables for Rec C: Manage Best-in-Class Markets	Lead Agency	Support	Timeframe
C.1 Hire a full-time, year-round Farmers Market Director.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by January 2019
C.2 Digital database of vendor records.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by May 2019
C.3 Define the unique role of each City-managed market.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.4. Updated market rules.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.5 Standardize & improve promotion.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.6. Offer a range of activities and events at the markets, including City-service tent.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by June 2019
C.7 Conduct data collection on-site and with market stakeholders regularly.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete through 2019
C.8 Create a regular feedback loop with the market vendors via email and mail.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by July 2019
C.9 Establish an informal advisory group for each market.	Office of Special Events	Pittsburgh Farmers Market Network	Complete by July 2019
C.10 Extend the season of one of the flagship City-managed markets to year-round.	Office of Special Events	Sustainability + Resilience Division	Complete by September 2019

4.0 Attachments & Links

Attachments

A. Literature Review / 59

B. Farmers Market Impact Summary Report / 71

C. 2018 Farmers Market Map / 73

Links

D. Philadelphia Farmers Market Guide

E. Baltimore Farmers Market Guide

F. Farmers Markets of Minneapolis Collaborative Strategic Plan

G. Farmers Markets of Minneapolis Collaborative 2017 Report

H. Louisville Farmers Market Association Local Food Guide

I. Farmers Market Metrics Data Collection Methods

A. Literature Review: Analysis of Pittsburgh Farmers Market Operation and Impacts

The analysis of Pittsburgh's farmers markets considers both historical data on farming and farmers markets in the region and also best practices of other markets across the U.S. Analyzing Pittsburgh's markets through these two lenses better contextualizes the recommendations advocated in the report. The wider lens permits comparison and contrast of Pittsburgh's farmers markets with other regions' efforts. The narrow lens focuses on the stages of development in regional food and farming in Southwestern Pennsylvania. By considering both, the report positions market advocates in the City of Pittsburgh to be better equipped for the future. Available literature on farmers markets in and around the City of Pittsburgh and reports on regional food and farming efforts were reviewed for this paper, focusing on studies of farmers markets in the City of Pittsburgh or production analysis across the region. Relevant research on farmers markets and market networks from across the U.S. was also examined to identify best practices and operational solutions for a wide variety of markets.

A region's agricultural history, including land ownership, production, and marketing trends profoundly impact a region's local food system. Those with a history of diversified, owner- operated small and mid-sized farms and ranches have met with success fostering farmers markets and other direct-to-consumer agricultural marketing systems. By that metric, Southwestern Pennsylvania is primed for success. According to the Pennsylvania Agricultural History Project "diversity" was the defining feature of the state's agricultural production from the settlement period through the Second World War. In a state already characterized by its agricultural diversity, Pennsylvania's five southwestern counties (Greene, Washington, Allegheny, Beaver, and Lawrence) stood out as the state's most diverse. Southwestern Pennsylvania's steep, well-irrigated hillsides and numerous rivers and draws gave the region a comparative advantage in the cultivation of fruit and vegetables as well as small-scale animal husbandry. Those features also made Southwestern Pennsylvania comparatively ill-suited to the type of large-

scale commodity grain and cereal cultivation that came to predominate in the trans-Appalachian Midwest. The type of agriculture that historically thrived in Southwestern Pennsylvania—small-scale and focused on producing fresh food for people—necessitated the creation of a system of public markets where the region's farmers could sell their goods to the settlements emerging along the Ohio, Allegheny and Monongahela rivers.

During the nineteenth century, Pittsburgh's markets were well regulated by market bylaws, professional guilds, and city ordinances (Conway et al., 2001). Then as now, markets sought to ensure a safe food supply and transparency for the benefit of both vendors and markets. Dogs, alcohol, and salted meats were prohibited from the market, as was "huckstering" (the reselling of goods by non-farmers) and "forestalling" (a farmer buying and reselling produce grown by other farmers). To modern eyes, Pittsburgh's nineteenth century markets would have resembled a hybrid between today's farmers markets and grocery stores. By the 1830s, many Pittsburgh public markets had established permanent market places, which organized individual farmers and butchers' stalls in aisles. Farmers markets in the nineteenth century "served not only as places to buy groceries, but also as cultural and social meeting grounds. Producers and consumers came into frequent contact with one another and markets served as a tangible reminder of city-rural connections." Markets proliferated and farmers traveled an average of only 12 miles from farm to market. By the mid-twentieth century the aggregate market impact was significant: 60% of the fruits and 50% of the vegetables grown in Allegheny County were marketed through farmers markets.

The rich history of farmers selling directly to Pittsburghers has essentially been an unbroken one, although by the latter half of the 20th century only a few of these outlets remained. One such market was (and is) the Farmers' Cooperative Market of East Liberty (FCMEL). The FCMEL has been in existence since 1941. Thanks to the prescient decision to purchase their building in the early days, FCMEL is still in their original location. Studying the development and market attributes of the FCMEL yields a basis of analysis for the City-managed and independent markets. (Danko+Day, 2012). This analysis uses some combination of the collected forty-eight qualities for successful markets which fall into four categories: location, farmer/vendor/product, customers, and planning and management.

Since collecting and analyzing shopper behavior data is key to market measurement—especially metrics of zip code origin among shoppers and amount of purchase—the baseline data collected at FCMEL offers a template with which to begin to collect that same data at other markets. At FCMEL, the majority of respondents traveled to East Liberty from more affluent neighborhoods bordering it

or nearby. Most had been attending the market for more than 10 years and many for up to 30 years. Danko+Day also noted that the addition of direct-trade coffee and ready-to-eat foods have created a more sociable atmosphere on Saturday mornings in recent years but also that the addition of non-local items in less bountiful months of the year frustrated some shoppers. Last, several recommendations for FCMEL are widely applicable: the addition of a centralized EBT and credit card processing station at the market, the creation of a strategic plan for both short- and long-term growth, and hiring a full-time market manager.

Fresh Access

Between 1994-2004, the USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) began an ambitious plan to offer food stamp benefits (now called SNAP) on an electronic benefit card (EBT) to reduce fraud and delay in receiving payments. This lengthy state-by-state transition meant that during the time period with one of the largest increases in the number of markets across the U.S., (Briggs, S., Fisher, L. M., Miller, S., & Tessman, N., 2012), any market without a permanent phone line and electricity instantly became unable to process those benefits. Many markets thus landed on the lonely side of the "digital divide." To illustrate that point, between 1994 and 2008 the value of SNAP benefits redeemed at farmers markets dropped by 71% in constant 1994 dollars, after topping $9,000,000 in 1993 with less than 2,000 markets in operation. With the new technology in wide use and programs to incentivize shopping now widely available, SNAP spending at farmers markets grew to $22.4 million in 2017. This represented an increase in total dollars, in the number of transactions and in the rise of return shoppers using SNAP benefits (FNS 2018).

Since the adoption of these programs, diversifying the farmers market shopping base to include those with limited means has been a major goal for thousands of markets across the U.S. It has also been a focus for Pittsburgh anti-hunger advocacy organization, Just Harvest. And for good reason: among cities with populations of 250,000-500,000, Pittsburgh has the largest percentage of people residing in communities with "low-supermarket access" (LSA). Approximately 47% or 145, 245 Pittsburgh residents experience low access and 71% of city LSA residents are also low- income. In the metro area, including all of Allegheny County, 18% of residents or 422,513 people reside in LSA communities. Of the metro's LSA area residents, 57% are low income. The high percentage of low-supermarket access areas in the Pittsburgh metro corresponds with the fourth-highest rate of obesity (29.3%) among US metro areas. The statistics provided depict a region in which "access to healthy food appears to be more of a privilege than a right of all citizens" (Murray, 2013).

In 2010 a team from the Heinz College at Carnegie Mellon University completed a four-month research project on behalf of Just Harvest to determine how to integrate SNAP

into area farmers' markets (Bergman-Bock, K, et al 2010). Their recommendation was that Just Harvest "implement a central cashier system at each Citiparks' farmers market, utilizing a token-based scrip system. This system requires that Citiparks' farmers markets users of SNAP, credit, and debit cards first go to the central cashier; the central cashier runs the user's card in exchange for market tokens; the card users purchase produce with market tokens; and farmers exchange tokens for cash reimbursement after the market. "We recommend that Citiparks employees currently assigned to each market serve as the central cashier for each market and that Just Harvest manage the training and accounting activities necessary to operate the system at each market, along with the marketing and evaluation tasks of the project. Resources required for this project include personnel time from Citiparks farmers' market staff and Just Harvest management and staff, point of sale machines, token supplies, marketing expenses, and evaluation expenses." The research team further recommends that Citiparks market staff operate the central cashier station as a part of their regular market management activities, and that Just Harvest seek local and federal funds to support operating procedures."

This initiative, named Fresh Access, is unusual among markets in the U.S. since it is managed by a partner of the market organizations and not by individual markets. By having a social justice entity overseeing the program at multiple markets, the reach and impact of the program including vendor feedback, can be more easily tracked and partnerships such as those with the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council and neighborhood leaders, more easily sustained (Just Harvest, 2015).
In May 2013, the program was launched at the two largest Citiparks markets (East Liberty and the Northside), allowing Pittsburgh residents the ability to use SNAP benefits as well as credit and debit cards to buy local foods. In August of that year, the program added four more markets in the Southside, Carrick, Bloomfield, and Beechview areas (Schless-Meier Emerson 2014).

Data Collection

A survey following the Fresh Access program's pilot year demonstrated that the program boosted consumption of fresh produce among participants. Of note, 96% of EBT and 68% of credit/debit user respondents rated Fresh Access as "very important" or "important" for buying produce. Meanwhile, 80% of EBT and 59% of credit/debit users surveyed reported eating more fruits and vegetables since they started using Fresh Access (Schless-Meier Emerson, 2014). In the 2015 season, Just Harvest expanded Fresh Access to fifteen markets.

Because the data from Fresh Access also includes credit and debit shoppers, Just Harvest and the participating individual market operators can also collect data on common characteristics of a wide variety of shoppers (Byker, Shanks, Misyak, & Serrano, 2012, see

also Wolf, M. M., Spittler, A., & Ahern, J. 2005).

This data can help to expand the use of Fresh Access and situate new markets in future years. Improving access for SNAP shoppers with programs like Fresh Access requires a constant calibration of outreach strategies and sensitivity to the barriers that at-risk families face in seeking out healthy food. The success of recent case studies of markets that shared strategies and best practices in convening focus groups to uncover perceptions and remaining barriers about using farmers markets should encourage more of this type of data collection and sharing among markets (Farmers Market Coalition, 2017). The Pittsburgh Food Policy Council (PFPC) also contributed data on area markets (Lindsey, Olivia, and Gretchen Sneegas, 2013), conducting two complete Rapid Market Assessments at the East Liberty and North Side markets, and Dot Surveys and visitor counts at four other markets (South Side, Carrick, Bloomfield and Beechview). The survey questions used also offer a solid framework for other markets to begin to collect the similar data. That framework closely mirrors the survey questions offered with the Farmers Market Metrics program, a national online evaluation tool for market operators:

1. How did you get to the market today?
2. How did you learn about the market?
3. How much money did/will you spend here today?
4. At which other farmers markets did you shop?

Just Harvest annually surveys the vendors who participate in the Fresh Access program to find the impact on sales, new customers and production. The data indicates that vendors see merit in the program: of the 21 vendors who responded to "I sell more produce", 76.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they sell more produce because of the Fresh Access program (Hwang, 2018). The survey offers rich data as to characteristics of market vending in Pittsburgh: "37% of vendors surveyed have been selling at farmers markets for more than 10 years. Out of the total sales this past season, 65.4% of EBT dollars were spent on fruits, vegetables, and herbs (43.7% spent on vegetables and herbs; 21.6% spent on fruits).

This annual survey, done in late fall, could be expanded in future years to be used across all markets in the area and to ask for more data on market vendors, including vendor demographics, the number and type of sales channels used, and production methods used.

Vendors & Production

Once the goals are set and the operational structure of a market created, the chief work for the organizers and stakeholders is to build the right support for the family farms that will serve those outlets and programs. The unique topography of Western Pennsylvania continues to supply small farms both the space and the proximity to the city's residents, which may account for the large number of farmers markets historically and currently available in the city. Still, the struggle for profit remains a

problem among those farms and so improving channels for marketing their goods requires analysis, including general consumer feedback (NOFA-VT, 2017) and awareness of the effect of other Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) channels such as Community Supported Agriculture (Small Farms Central, 2015). This remains especially important, according to the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission (2013), the region "does not have a mechanism in place to connect the many small food producers to markets within the region or to major markets within 275 miles of Southwestern Pennsylvania."

Some food and farming activities noted by the Commission:

- 175 farmers markets operate throughout the area.
- Pittsburgh has a Food Policy Council to look at "a food system that benefits the community, the economy and the environment in ways that are equitable and sustainable."
- In Fayette County, an effort is underway to open a grocery store featuring local foods and products.
- A brewery is in the works in northern Butler County.
- Local restaurants in several counties feature locally produced meats and vegetables.
- A private non-profit is operating a "farm-to-fork" service serving several counties in the region.
- A local group in Indiana is working to establish a food hub and farmers market.
- The Commission also outlined many of the barriers that remain for farmers:
- Regulations at the state and federal level frustrate growers and value-added producers.
- Challenging labor markets and immigration uncertainties affect many of the producers in the region.
- There are numerous organizations across the ten counties that focus on serving parts of the local food value chain or organizations representing a statewide trade group. However, there are no efforts to build regional businesses or groups directed towards value-added processing.
- Some specialty producers have a difficult time reaching customers. Some of these producers need specialized production facilities.
- The smaller size of farms in the region makes it difficult for producers to generate enough quantities to meet the needs of institutional buyers and larger product distributors.
- The shorter growing season in Pennsylvania limits produce sales and produces large seasonal variations in income.
- There is a declining number and a perceived lack of livestock processing facilities in Southwestern Pennsylvania.
- The lack of data for and about Southwestern Pennsylvania food processing establishments hinders the growth of regional industry sectors and clusters.
- The Food and Drug Administration is in

charge of promulgating regulations for the enactment of the new Food Safety and Modernization Act. Depending on the regulations, the Act could have far-reaching impacts on how local food systems operate.
- The lack of local networking groups and regional support for businesses in the local food value chain is a deterrent to growth and innovation.
- Local companies are not connected to the research in technology that is being undertaken at regional universities.
- There is no viable market for produce that does not meet the highest grade requirements even when the produce is healthy and sound.

To better understand current production and marketing issues faced by farmers, Pittsburgh Food Policy Council also conducted data collection among vendors for the Citiparks markets (Lindsey, Olivia, and Gretchen Sneegas, 2013).

"Out of the 27 vendors surveyed, 15 have been at the EL [East Liberty] and/or NS [North Side] markets for four years or less, representing over 50% of the vendors. However, six vendors reported being at the markets for over twenty years—several responded that they had been involved with the market since it first began." Two additional vendors reported attendance of 15-19 years. Although there is a sizable group of relatively new vendors between the markets, the number of vendors who have attended 10 years or more represent 30% of the group. Of that, vendors attending 20+ years represent a little more than 1 in 5 vendors, indicating a high level of market stability.

Vendor respondents had several recommendations for improving Citiparks Farmers Markets in the future:
- Increase marketing and advertising for the markets, including social media.
- Increase number of trash cans and bathrooms accessible to vendors.
- Increase community involvement through special events, such as cooking/chef demos and live music.
- Enforce market rules equally for all vendors, e.g. start/stop times, stop vendors from "huckstering," etc.
- Keep an eye on what different vendors are selling—don't bring too many vendors selling the same products into the market. This decreases sales.
- Enforce "Producer Only" rules for vendors.
- At smaller markets, bring in additional vendors to fill all the spaces.

Market Operation

One drawback to focusing analysis only on programmatic outcomes is the current lack of research conducted on the management of markets. Creating such strategies to increase the capacity of key market organizations can be aided by building data collection, and operational and marketing collaboratives across organizations. The plan devised by the Minneapolis Farmers Market Collaborative (2016) concluded their planning with these

recommendations:

- Explore feasibility and need for a shared organizational infrastructure for all markets in Minneapolis (e.g. St. Paul Farmers Market)
- Create and formalize a Minneapolis farmers market backbone organization/association
- Develop accompanying budget and recommended staffing plan to present for funding.
- Develop shared technology and accounting for 'market bucks,' EBT, and credit cards at all markets
- Provide regular communication, training, and technical assistance opportunities to market managers and vendors, as appropriate
- Conduct staffing needs audit to determine what positions can be shared cross-market. Assess which jobs, duties, and skills require professional expertise and which are suitable for market volunteers. Develop budget and recommended staffing plan to support all markets in the city
- Conduct operational needs audit of all markets, identifying systems and processes with potential for sharing costs and services (e.g. accounting, technology, evaluation, insurance, communication/public relations, data analysis, vendor support, etc.). Create and execute plan to share costs and services
- Develop integrated scheduling and siting process, so markets can act in the best interests of vendors and communities
- Explore options for most effective system for financial transactions at markets. Support operationalizing this system at interested markets.

In 2013, New Orleans-based market organization Market Umbrella began to develop recommendations for the City of New Orleans to address issues and challenges concerning farmers markets. Those recommendations included adding a definition for public markets, revising and updating the definition of farmers markets, revising and updating the Farmers Markets Use Standards, and requesting that farmers markets be allowed in a variety of zoning districts with the appropriate site and use standards. The recommendations also included the creation of a Farmers Market Policy Advisory Board to assist market operators address the concerns and issues mentioned in the report, help create opportunities for promotion of farmers markets in New Orleans, and help to develop a framework for farmers markets that contain concise, simple rules for market operators and vendors.

In addition to building shared tasks across market operators, creating the "right management" (PPS 2014) for the type of governance and goals that markets choose is vital. Markets with paid managers reported average sales of $56,375 per month and median sales of $22,641 per month (Wolnik, 2012). Markets without paid managers reported average market sales of $11,059

and median sales of $4,000 per month. Both average and median sales of all markets with paid managers were five times that of markets without paid managers. In addition, lower numbers of regular market vendors and a high turnover of managers have also been shown to contribute to markets closing down entirely (Stephenson, Garry, 2008).

Summary

The analysis of the literature reveals that current programmatic interventions on food access issues at farmers markets have been well considered, possibly due to their management by a regional anti-hunger organization rather than being directly overseen by individual market organizations with little capacity or encouragement to date for data collection. Many of the recommendations about the Pittsburgh farmers markets by various stakeholders from past reports still need to be implemented. For Southwestern Pennsylvania, the data indicates that the proud lineage of small and mid-sized farms is deeply ingrained even while the lack of infrastructure and low-capacity of most market management continues to stymie food and farming stakeholders.

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2017

Seven City of Pittsburgh Farmers Markets

June, July and August of 2017

The following data represents a snapshot of the impact that the seven farmers markets managed by the City of Pittsburgh had during the summer of 2017. The markets included are Beechview, Carrick, East Liberty, Mellon Square, North Side, South Side, Squirrel Hill.

74 total vendors

were supported by the City-managed markets.

The market allows new and small businesses to enter the marketplace.

30 miles

average distance food travels from farm to our market.

That's fresh! Most food eaten in the U.S. has traveled nearly 1,500 miles.

48% of visitors

came to the neighborhood specifically to visit the market.

Our markets attract residents from across the region.

62% of visitors

come to the market at least twice per month.

Visitors enjoy 2.5 times more social interaction than at a supermarket.

29.5k visits

to our markets took place from in June, July and August.

Our market connects families to farmers weekly.

$26 average

is spent by market shoppers at neighboring businesses.

Businesses benefit from customers drawn to the area on market days.

Fresh ACCESS

SNAP benefits accepted.

The farmers markets accept cash, credit cards & SNAP EBT through the **Just Harvest Fresh Access** program. $15,893 in 661 SNAP transactions were redeemed at these markets in the summer of 2017.

Learn more at:

pittsburghpa.gov/events/farmers-market

Stay in touch!

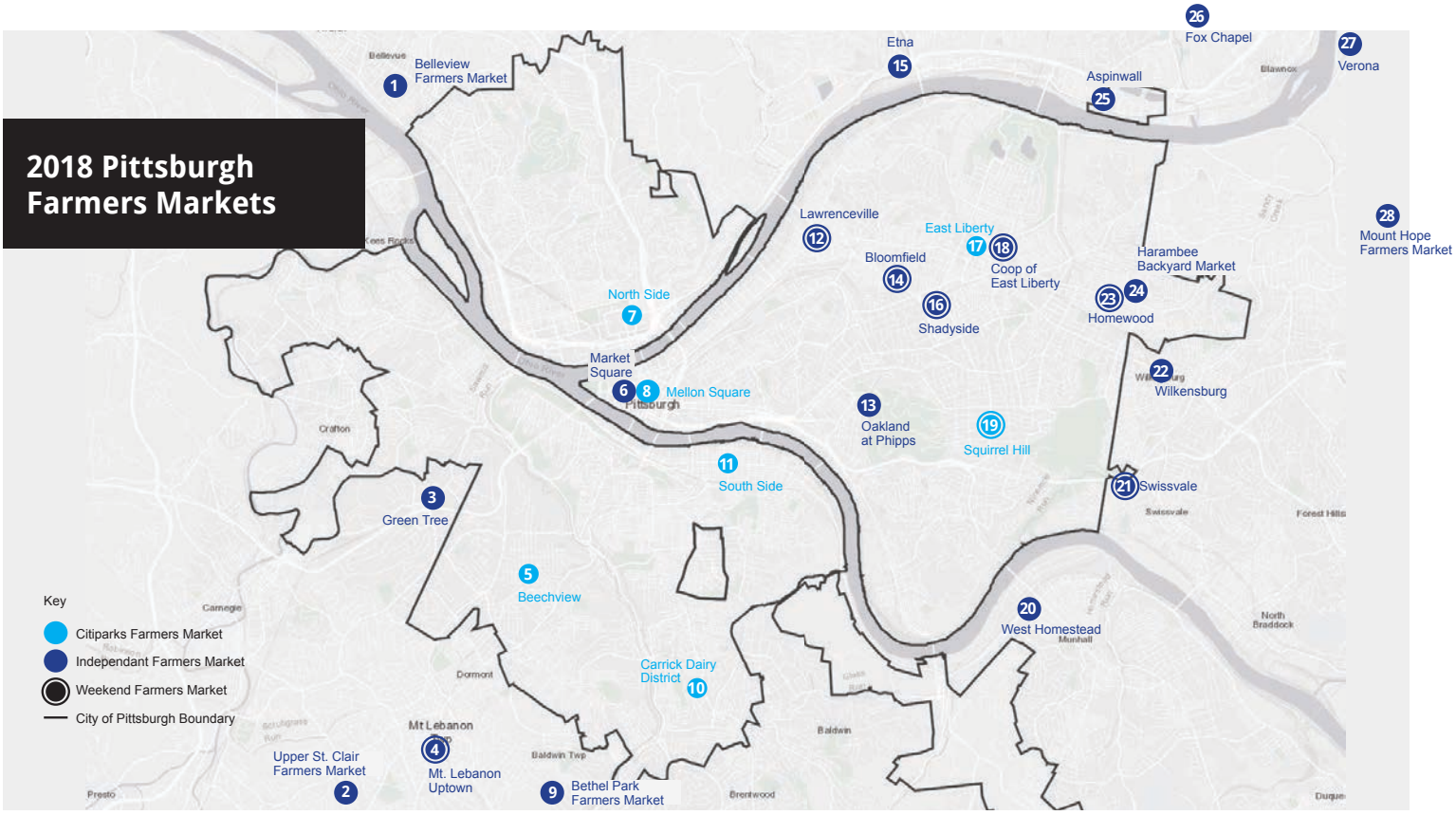
(412) 255-2493 Special Events Hotline

@PghEventsOffice

@PghEventsOffice

Data was collected through document review, market observation, and surveys.
This report was created with Farmers Market Metrics, a program of the Farmers Market Coalition.

2018 Pittsburgh Farmers Markets



	Farmers Market	Location	Day	Time	Dates	Organizer
1	Bellevue Farmers Market	Balph Avenue	Wednesday	3:00 - 7:00	Late June - Oct	Bona Fide Bellevue
2	Upper St. Clair Farmers Market	Washington Road	Thursday	4:00 - 7:00	May 17 - Sept 27	Rotary Club of Upper St. Clair-Bethel Park
3	Green Tree Farmers Market	Green Tree Park parking lot	Thursday	4:00 - 7:00	May 24 - Oct	Green Tree Borough
4	Mt. Lebanon Uptown Farmers Market	Washington Road	Saturday	9:00 - 12:00	May 12 - Oct 27	Mt. Lebanon Partnership
5	Beechview Farmers Market	Beechview Ave. parking lot	Thursday	3:00 - 7:00	June 9 - Nov 17	City of Pittsburgh
6	Market Square Farmers Market	Market Square	Thursday	10:00 - 2:00	May 12 - Oct 27	Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership
7	North Side Farmers Market	East Park	Friday	3:00 - 7:00	May 13 - Nov 18	City of Pittsburgh
8	Mellon Square Park Farmers Market	Mellon Square Park	Friday	10:00 - 2:00	May 6 - Nov 18	City of Pittsburgh
9	Bethel Park Farmers Market	Corrigan Drive	Tuesday	3:00-7:00		
10	Carrick Dairy District Farmers Market	Historic Dairy District Marketplace	Wednesday	3:00 - 7:00	June 8 - Nov 23	City of Pittsburgh
11	South Side Farmers Market	Parking lot	Tuesday	3:00 - 7:00	May 10 - Nov 22	City of Pittsburgh
12	Lawrenceville Farmers Market	Arsenal Park	Saturday	1:00 - 4:00	June 4 - Oct 29	Lawrenceville United
13	Farmers at Phipps	Lawn at Phipps Conservatory	Wednesday	2:30 - 6:30	June - Oct	Phipps Conservatory
14	Bloomfield Saturday Market	Liberty Ave. parking lot	Saturday	9:00 - 1:00	June 4 - Nov 5	Bloomfield Dev. Corporation
15	Etna Farmers Market	Borough parking lot	Thursday	3:00 - 6:30	June 11 - Oct	Etna Economic Dev. Corporation
16	Shadyside Farmers Market	Liberty School parking lot	Saturday	9:00 - 12:00	June 4 - Sept 24	Think Shadyside
17	East Liberty Farmers Market	Parking lot	Monday	3:00 - 7:00	June - Nov 21	City of Pittsburgh
18	Farmers Market Coop of East Liberty	Indoor	Saturday	5:00 - 12:00	Year-round	Farmers Co-op
19	Squirrel Hill Farmers Market	Parking lot	Sunday	9:00 - 1:00	June 5 - Nov 20	City of Pittsburgh
20	West Homestead Farmers Market	8th Avenue	Thursday	3:00 - 7:00	June 14 - Sept 27	West Homestead Borough
21	Swissvale Farmers Market	Dickson Elementary School lot	Saturday	9:00 - 1:00	May 7 - Oct 29	Swissvale Economic Development Corporation
22	Wilkinsburg Farmers Market	S. Ave. Methodist Church	Thursday	3:00 - 6:30	June 16 - Nov 17	Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce
23	Homewood Com. Farmers Market	House of Manna Worship Center parking lot	Alternate Saturdays	10:00 - 2:00	June 4 - Dec 10	Black Urban Gardeners Pittsburgh
24	Harambee Backyard Market	Frankstown Road	Saturday	3:00 - 6:00	July - Oct Monthly	Harambe Ujima, BUGS
25	Aspinwall Firemans Flea & Farmers Market	Freeport Road	Sundays	7:00-2:00	June - Oct	Aspinwall Fire department
26	Fox Chapel Farmers Market	Fox Chapel Road	Wednesday	3:30 - 6:30	June 13 - Oct 24	Shadyside Academy
27	Verona Farmers Market	East Railroad Avenue	Thursday	2:00 - 7:00	June 1 - Oct 8	Verona Borough
28	Mount Hope Farmers Market	Frankstown Road	Wednesday	2:00 - 6:00	July - Sept Monthly	Mount Hope Community Church