

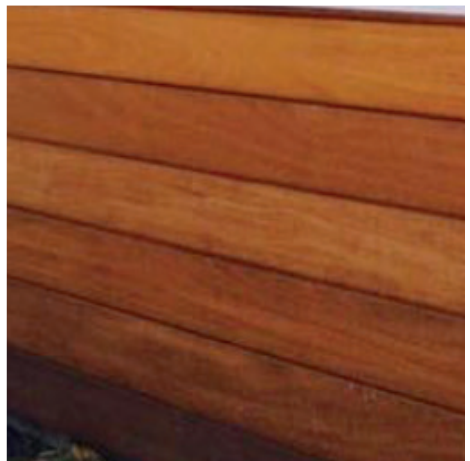
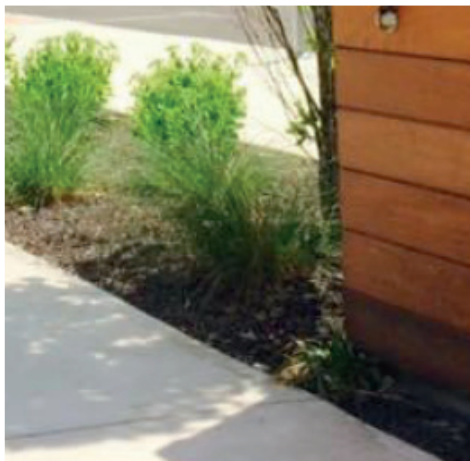
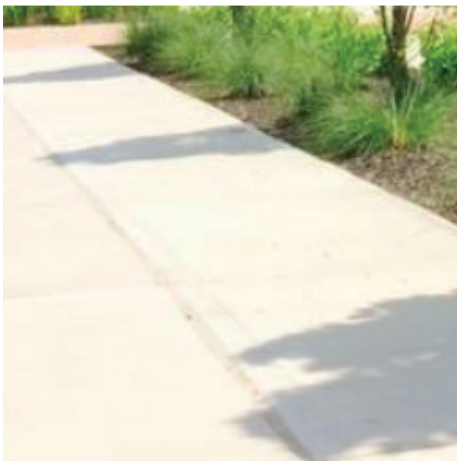
RICHMOND

FARMERS

MARKET

2024 STRATEGIC PLAN





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01

INTRODUCTION

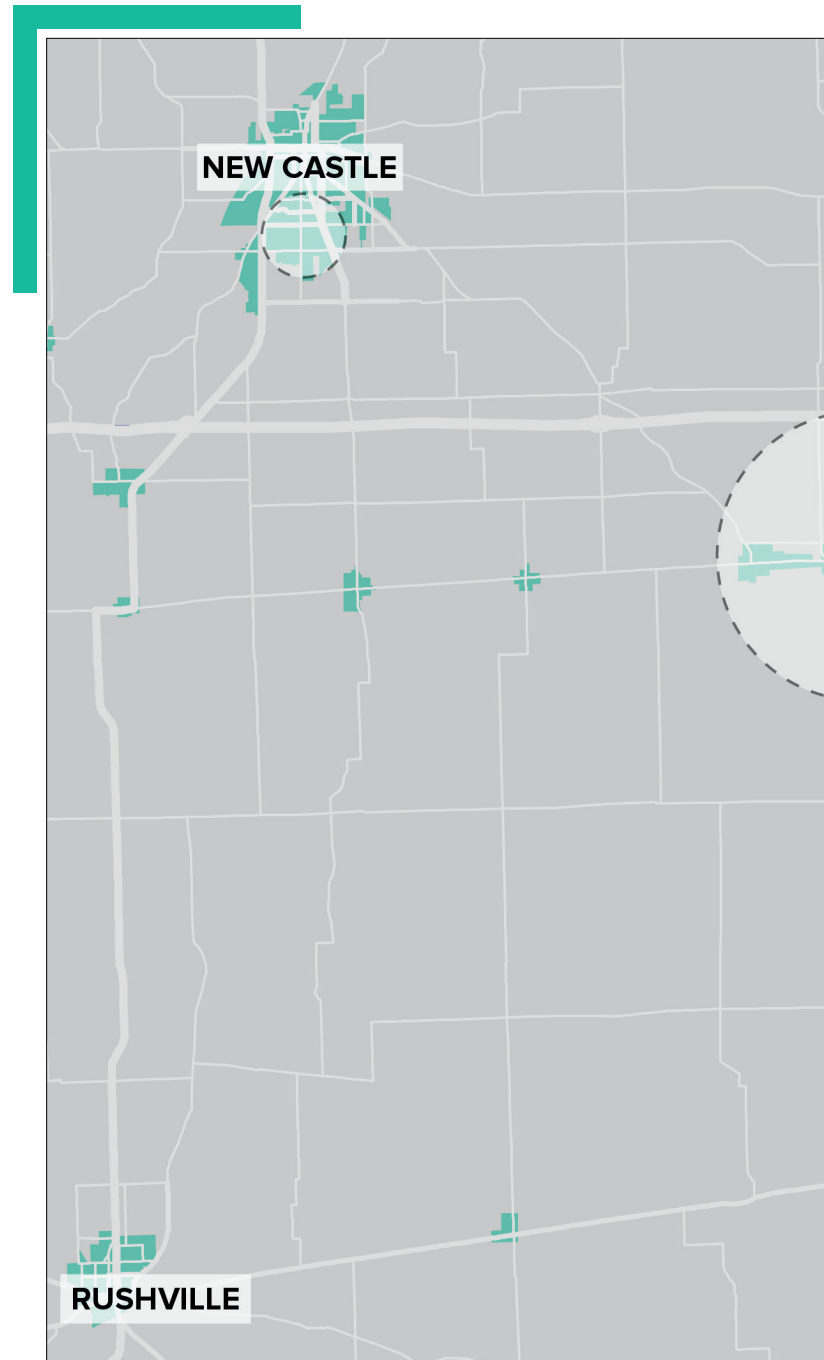
As the only urban center east of Central Indiana, Richmond is the primary provider of recreation and social services for approximately 85,000 residents within Wayne County. Social services are programs or services offered by either the government or local organizations for the benefit of the larger community including programs surrounding food security, personal health and wellness, and education.

In Indiana, 726,020 people are facing hunger - and of them 225,750 are children. Access to fresh and nutritious local foods is limited for many people across the state and East Central Indiana region, and when considering the low median household income in Richmond (\$40,213) access to fresh and nutritious food is a serious issue in the Richmond and greater Wayne County community. In addition to Richmond's low median household income, the community also has a high percentage of residents who do not own a vehicle (16%) and a high percentage of one-vehicle households (40%). Richmond's low median income and limited access to vehicles contribute to the existing food desert classification assigned by the US Department of Agriculture to the majority of the city.

Food deserts are defined by the US Department of Agriculture as areas with low income and low access to affordable, nutritious food. Specifically, a low-income area is characterized as an area where 20% or more of the residents are below the poverty line or the median family income of the area is at 80% of the statewide or metropolitan area's median family income.

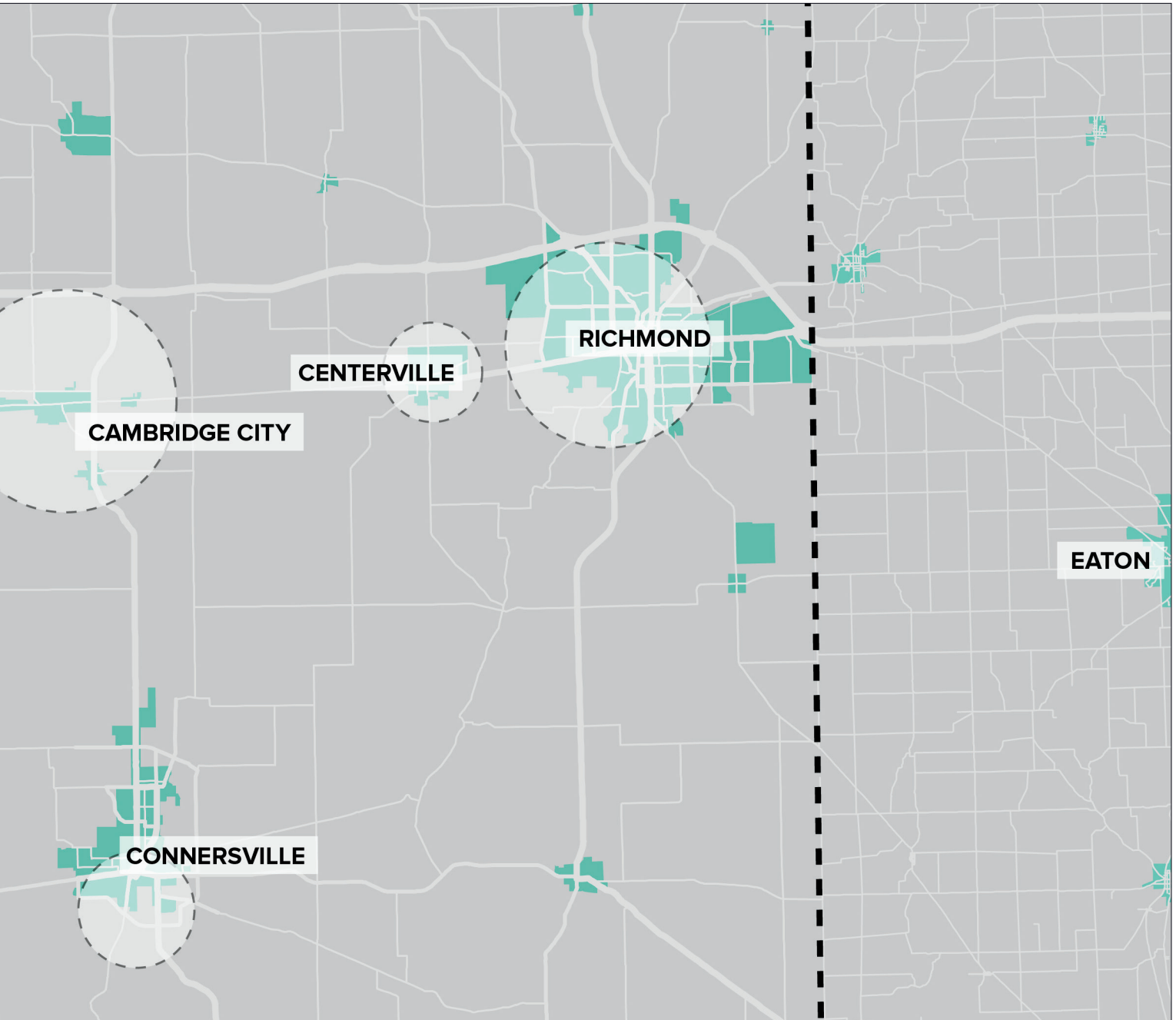
Recognizing the harsh reality faced by residents, the City of Richmond has been actively working to leverage the historic Farmers Market to fill the local and county-wide gap in the food system in order to assure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food.

The Richmond Farmers Market is a growers-only market in support of the interest of local farmers, producers, and consumers. The purpose of the market is to create a sales venue for area farmers, provide an opportunity for consumers to purchase quality local food and farm-grown goods, provide a community gathering place, promote and stimulate economic development, and create traffic in the Downtown area. The Market has been a central program for the city since 1836 and has consistently worked to evolve and change based on the needs of the Richmond and Wayne County community. Today, the Richmond Farmers Market is the only year-round market in Wayne County and is likely the largest Market Program being offered within the area.



() Low-income census tracts where a significant number of residents are 1+ mile (urban) or 10+ miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

USDA LOW INCOME AND LOW ACCESS MAP



HISTORY OF THE MARKET

1836

The Borough of Richmond passed an ordinance that dictated Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays of each week be public Market days.

1855

The Richmond Market House was built as a 7 bay arched post-colonial Market house. The building was demolished around 1965.

1907

Improvements including sliding doors, corrugated iron ceiling, adding four windows and painting/whitewashing the building were made to the Market House.

1850-1999

2000-2005

2006

The Board of Public Works approves the closure of North 9th Street from North E to Elm Place on Tuesdays for the Tuesday Twilight Market.

2010

The Board of Public Works approves the placement of temporary banners along North A Street to advertise the Farmers Market.

2006-2010

2003

Karen Gabbard requested the use of the North 7th Street Lot for the Farmers Market starting May 1, 2003. She also requested the Depot for use on Tuesday evenings.

2004

Approval from the Board of Public Works to close Main Street from 7-8th Streets for five weeks on a trial basis to host the Farmer's Market.

2005

Richmond Farmers Market celebrated its 31st season.

HISTORY OF THE MARKET

2016

Farmers Market standards introduced in City zoning.

2017

Reid Health partners to start SNAP double dollar days.

2018

City hired first full-time Market Coordinator.

There was a noticeable presence on social media sites including Instagram.

2011-2015

2012

First social media post regarding Market.

2013

Richmond Indiana was chosen as a Stellar Community and was awarded \$3.25 million for the revitalization of Downtown Civic Center.

2014

Completion of the Earlham Farmers Market Report which recommended the creation of a permanent home for the Farmers Market.

City hired first part-time Market Coordinator.

2016-2020

2021

The Winterization of Starr Gennett Patronicity Campaign was a success.

The Winter Market launched "Home for the Holidays" promoting permanent move to Starr Gennett for winter Market.

2021 - 2022

PLANNING PURPOSE

Beginning in 2018, Richmond leaders began a collaborative process to update the City's comprehensive plan. Richmond Rising: A Community Action Plan, the City's new comprehensive plan, was developed for the community, over the course of 12 months, and included input, ideas, concerns, and suggestions from hundreds of Richmond residents, business owners, and stakeholders. One of the Plan's primary outcomes was the acknowledgment that within the Richmond community, parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational programs are valued by current residents and have the opportunity to contribute to Richmond's continued success in the future. With a renewed interest in maintaining and growing the city's quality of life, City leaders and Department of Parks and Recreation staff undertook a planning process to identify how parks and recreational programs can become a critical tool in the revitalization and growth of the city.

The 2020 Richmond Comprehensive Parks Master Plan was developed with the intention of identifying how the Department could continue to build upon the community's vision to GROW the City's built environment, CONNECT the City's destinations, PROTECT the City's natural resources and CELEBRATE the City's offerings and accomplishments.

In support of these broad ideas, the 2020 Richmond Comprehensive Parks Master Plan outlined a process to build upon their rich history and legacy to support interaction, inclusivity, and diversity within the parks and open space system and resiliency and sustainability within the Department itself. The Comprehensive Parks Master Plan outlined five park P.R.I.D.E. goals that are intended to provide structure to a diverse and comprehensive set of short, mid, and long-term action items.

Each goal focuses on a specific topic that was developed in direct response to the challenges, opportunities, and trends that were identified; however, they stopped short of providing detailed recommendations on how park properties and programs could be enhanced to become resilient and sustainable opportunities.

One specific recommendation that was identified in the 2020 Parks Master Plan was the development of a strategic plan for the Farmers Market. Since its beginning, the Richmond Farmers Market has grown organically based on the needs of the local vendors and customers. The intent of the follow-up planning effort was to proactively identify how fiscal sustainability, partnerships, staffing, and community services could be intertwined to leverage and grow the current Market program.

PLANNING PROCESS

In early 2022, the Department of Parks and Recreation initiated a planning process to address the following key items:

- Identify and build upon the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the current Market program;
- Gather case study data on similarly sized, successful Farmers Market programs within Indiana and Ohio;
- Establish a community-supported vision for the Richmond Farmers Market;
- Identify strategic and measurable goals for the Richmond Farmers Market; and
- Identify short, mid, and long-range action steps to support the expansion and maintenance of the Richmond Farmers Market program.

While the vast majority of the planning effort relied on the input gathered during the 2020 master planning process, specific and strategic efforts were used over the course of a six-month period to further inform the development of the Farmers Market Strategic Plan.

Vendor Interviews: By facilitating one on one interviews with Market vendors, additional information on the specific opportunities and challenges impacting the existing program were identified. In total, three separate vendors were interviewed, including representatives who have been winter and summer Market participants for multiple years.

Staff Discussions: To understand the ideas and concerns of Market and Department staff, one on one interviews were conducted throughout the planning process. The conversations focused on conducting a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) assessment of the current program, and a review of proposed recommendations.

Case Studies: During the effort, four comparison communities and programs were identified and reviewed to better identify opportunities and expectations for the Richmond program. Using available data and interviews, the case studies sought to quantify metrics including revenues, attendance, vendor participation, and resource needs so they could be used as a benchmark during the Visioning and Idea Development phase.

Community and Vendor Surveys: To supplement interviews and focus group discussions, two surveys were prepared to collect additional details from both vendors and Market visitors. The surveys were administered through a digital platform and additional hard copies were made available during Market events. Over the course of one month, a combined 140 individuals provided responses to the digital survey.

Site Visits: A visit to both the Winter and Summer/ Tuesday Twilight Market took place to see firsthand how the Market is organized and executed. During each visit, the flow of customers, the use of space, and the potential challenges with site facilities were noted for inclusion in the process and final recommendations.

Pop-up Events: Using existing Market events, consulting team members and staff from the Richmond Parks and Recreation Department assisted in facilitating numerous one-on-one conversations during the work phases.

Advisory Group Meetings and Listening Sessions: The Market Advisory Group, a committee of vendors, customers, and Department staff, was used as a sounding board for proposed recommendations during the process. Additionally, a listening session was conducted during a regularly scheduled meeting to gain additional insight on current Market challenges including vendor attendance.





02

WHY MARKETS MATTER

By definition, farmers markets are recurrent organizations at fixed locations where vendors sell farm products and other goods, but they are much more than just a place to sell products; these markets are a centerpiece of local food systems. Over the last several years, the Richmond Farmers Market has grown to become the heart of the community. This year-round event provides a common ground where people can interact, buy local fresh produce and artisan items, and generate economic activity. Understanding the economic impact of farmers markets involves looking at both direct and indirect benefits. Direct benefits can be seen through data-driven results such as profits made by the vendor, job creation, and tax revenues, among others. Indirect benefits, such as downtown revitalization, enhanced social gathering spaces, and agricultural preservation can be linked to enhanced quality of life. The following pages outline several benefits that explain why farmers markets matter.

SERVES AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

Farmers Markets support the economic viability of farms by shortening the supply chain and helping the economy thrive as local dollars will circulate in the region longer.

Why do markets matter?

When food is produced, processed, distributed, and sold all within the same region, more money stays in the local economy. In economics, this is referred to as the multiplier effect. A high multiplier effect in the local economy means the money is circulating more times in the area before leaving. This money is directly spent on wages for local individuals or on buying local products which contributed to economic development and job creation. Research indicates that “growers selling locally create 13 full-time jobs per \$1 million in revenue earned. Those that do not sell locally create only three jobs.”¹

Additionally, farmer’s markets create the option for producers to cut out the middleman and instead sell directly to the consumers. According to the American Farmland Trust, small and mid-size farmers who sell at farmers markets have nearly a 10 percent greater chance of staying in business than those selling goods through traditional channels.² This is a win-win situation for the vendor and customer. The vendor has a shorter supply chain meaning a profit can be made quickly while the customer is getting a better price and fresher products.

What is the local impact?

According to the 2022 Vendor Survey, the majority of Richmond Farmers Market products are traveling 0-10 miles with the closest vendors coming from within the city and the furthest vendor located in New Paris, Ohio. Furthermore, the market is generating profit for both the seller and the Richmond Parks Department. The 2021 summer market saw a total of \$216,000 in sales and \$4,300 in vendor fees. The 2020-2021 winter market experiences a total of \$81,000 in sales and \$1,900 in vendor fees. This data reflects a 40% increase in sales and 45% increase in vendor fees from the 2020 summer market. While fees have increased, it is not enough revenue to sustain the market.

Survey results indicated that the profits earned at the Market are typically the vendor’s primary method of selling their products (83.3%), but it is not their primary source of income (22.22%). Currently, the farmers market revenue (made up of vendor fees and merchandise sales) is used to support facility maintenance, marketing, and operations. As the market grows, the Richmond Parks Department will have the opportunity to use the revenue to expand services and fund other improvements.

¹ Feenstra GW, Lewis CC, Hinrichs CC, Gillespie Jr GW & Hilchey D. (2003). *Entrepreneurial Outcomes and Enterprise Size in US Retail Farmers Markets*. *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture* 18, 46-55. [dx.doi.org/10.1079/AJAA200233](https://doi.org/10.1079/AJAA200233)

² American Farmland Trust. *Farmers Market Celebration*. action.farmland.org/site/PageNavigator/Americas-Favorite-FarmersMarkets/best_local_farmers_market_vote

SUSTAINS THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Farmers Markets provide one of the only low-barrier entry points for beginning farmers which encourages entrepreneurship by allowing farmers to start small, test the market, and grow their businesses.

Why do markets matter?

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, both Indiana and Wayne County have experienced a decline in the number of farming operations. In 2017, there were a total of 56,649 farm operations in Indiana, a 3.6% percent decrease from 2012. Similarly, Wayne County saw a downward trend from 805 operations in 2012 to 768 operations in 2017, representing a 4.6 percent decrease. This decline will continue putting pressure on our food systems which then builds the case for why communities should prioritize and protect the agricultural industry.

Farmers markets provide one of the only low-barrier entry points for beginning farmers which is extremely important given the demographics of current farmers. In 2017, the average age of all U.S. farm producers was 57.5 years with over 4 times as many U.S. farmers over the age of 65 as there are under 35. The markets provide a critical opportunity for vendors to promote their business, get to know the community, and build an understanding of the local needs. Not only do the markets foster entrepreneurship within the agricultural industry, but in turn, the markets are working to preserve the rural heritage surrounding our cities and towns.

What is the local impact?

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 1,323 total producers in Wayne County with 25% of producers being “new and beginning farmers.” In terms of the age structure, 12% of producers are under the age of 35, 60% are between the ages of 35-65, and 28% are 65 years and older. The Richmond Farmers Markets provides an outlet for new producers to promote their business while generating a secondary or supplemental income. It also provides an outlet for aging farmers that want to continue selling products while downsizing from their larger operations.

INCREASES FOOT TRAFFIC

Farmers Markets can help revitalize and support the surrounding area by promoting spending at neighboring businesses.

Why do markets matter?

Farmers markets can reverse the trend of shopping in the suburbs by bringing people into the central city. A 2010 study of the Easton Farmers Market in Pennsylvania found that 70% of farmers market customers are also shopping at downtown businesses.¹ By bringing shoppers into a defined physical area, it can stimulate local business and generates a strong sense of community.

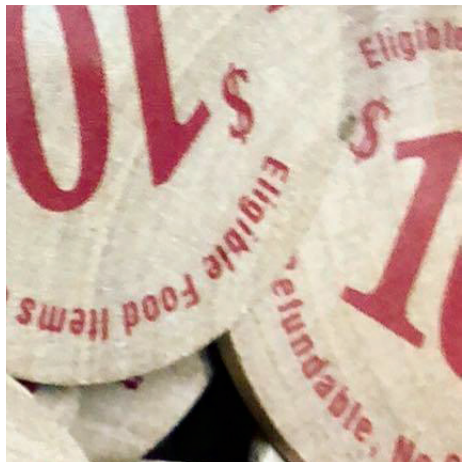
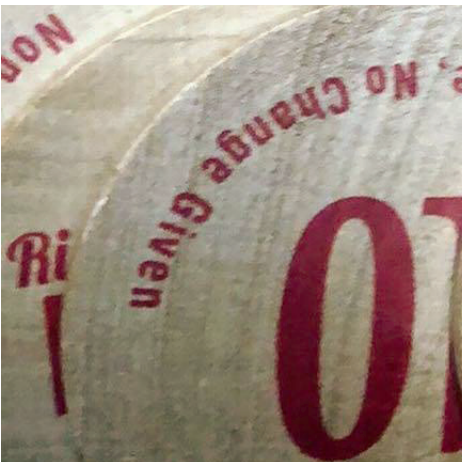
Site selection, or location, is one of the key factors to a successful market. Viability, connectivity, and parking play a critical role in ensuring people have convenient access to the farmers market. In addition to increasing foot traffic for surrounding businesses, markets can also attract people to historic sites or community destinations.

What is the local impact?

Nearly every Saturday and Tuesday morning in the summer, the community is experiencing an influx of customers going to the market. For Richmond specifically, the summer market at Jack Elstro Plaza is right in the middle of the downtown district. It is likely these visitors will not only stop at the market but will also run other errands.

During the winter market, additional customers are visiting the Starr Gennett facility every Saturday morning. While there isn't much in terms of surrounding businesses, hosting the winter market at this facility has increased the community's awareness of the historic structure. The winter market moved to the Starr Gennett building in 2021 having a positive impact on the use of the facility.

¹ <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/stimulate-local-economies-2/>



PRESERVES RURAL HERITAGE

Farmers Markets work to preserve the rural heritage of communities by supporting local and regional farmers, producers, and artisans.

Why do markets matter?

In small towns across the United States, communities are fighting to protect their community character and rural heritage. While agriculture was once a leading industry, community leaders are exploring innovative strategies to support local farmers including building successful farmer's markets and encouraging agritourism. These heritage-based economic development strategies work to protect the characteristics of rural areas that many people value and inform the community about food systems and agriculture processes.

What is the local impact?

While the quality of life impacts are harder to quantify, preserving the rural heritage is typically one of the top priorities for growing areas in rural settings. Oftentimes, people move to these areas because they value and enjoy the rural characteristics of the area. For Richmond specifically, the city is large enough to offer great amenities and services while still remaining fairly rural on the outskirts. As mentioned in the economic section, Wayne County saw a downward trend from 805 operations in 2012 to 768 operations in 2017, representing a 4.6 percent decrease. The Richmond Farmers Market provides the opportunity for city residents and producers to interact, socialization, and educate one another. By buying fresh, local produce, the customers are supporting the producer's establishment and preserving the rural heritage of Wayne County.

ENCOURAGES SOCIAL INTERACTION

Farmers Markets are important to the social vitality of the community by providing opportunities to connect with friends, neighbors, and strangers.

Why do markets matter?

It can be easy to view a trip to the grocery store as an undesirable errand or household chore but a trip to the farmers market on a warm and sunny Saturday morning can be much more exciting and interactive. Projects for Public Spaces found that people who buy food at the farmers market have 10 times more conversations than they would have at a supermarket.¹ These social events provide a place to meet up with your friends, bring your children, and meet new community members which promotes interaction, commerce, entertainment, and education. What once started as a small food stand for farmers to make an extra buck has grown to be a community destination with live music, cooking classes, gardening tips, and educational opportunities.

What is the local impact?

The Richmond Farmers Market provides more than just local produce, it is a social event. Children may want to play in the splash area at Jack Elstro Plaza on a warm, sunny day. Friends may meet up for coffee and a chess game. Families may bring a picnic and listen to live music. During the 2021 summer market, the parks department facilitated live music performances as well as yoga classes, kids market and specialized market programs based on community partnerships. Additionally, non-profit organizations from across the community were hosted at the market throughout the year.

¹ <https://richmond.ces.ncsu.edu/2015/04/farmers-markets-provide-economic-and-social-benefits/>

PRIORITIZES THE ENVIRONMENT

Farmers Markets promote sustainability by minimizing the amount of waste and pollution they create.

Why do markets matter?

As is true with any local product, buying local produce from the farmers market means that it traveled a shorter distance to get to the customer. On average, food in the U.S. travels an average of 1,500 miles to get to your plate. By shopping local, it eliminates a large amount of pollution associated with shipping and avoids the creation of trash from the extra packaging. In 2003, the Leopold Center of Sustainable Agriculture published a study indicating, "Locally or regionally sourced produce travels about 27 times less distance than conventionally sourced produce."¹ Furthermore, smaller agricultural businesses generally use safer products for the environment and aren't depleting the nutrients from the soil the way that larger commercial farms are. This depletion leads to the use of fertilizer that then runs into local water supplies, damaging the surrounding ecosystems.

What is the local impact?

While the national average is 1,500 miles for food to get to your plate, most of the Richmond Farmers Market Vendors are driving less than 10 miles to sell their products directly to the consumer. This represents a more environmentally friendly approach to grocery shopping. Furthermore, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, nearly 40% of farms in Wayne County use no-till practices which decreases the amount of soil erosion and increases nutrient cycling. With fewer miles traveled, limited packaging used, and better soil practices, the Richmond Farmers Market is working to reduce its carbon footprint.

¹ Pirog, R. & Benjamin, A. (2003). *Checking the food odometer: Comparing food miles for local versus conventional produce sales to Iowa institutions*. Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://www.leopold.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/pubs-and-papers>



PROMOTES ACCESS TO HEALTHY, AFFORDABLE FOOD

Farmers Markets provide an alternative source for buying healthy food and promote the inclusion of low-income shoppers.

Why do markets matter?

When purchasing produce at the farmers market, the food is coming straight from the source eliminating the costs associated with shipping, packaging, and general mark-ups. Because of this, shoppers are likely getting more bang for their buck compared to grocery stores or supermarket prices. Farmers markets across the nation have taken strides to increase fresh food access for shoppers with low incomes by accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits. According to the Farmers Market Coalition, the number of SNAP benefits redeemed at farmer's markets across the U.S. increased by nearly 450% from 2009 (\$4.2 million) to 2014 (\$18.8 million).¹

What is the local impact?

As of 2017, Wayne County had only 64 SNAP-authorized stores.² This has likely created challenges for these individuals as they were limited to shopping at certain establishments. The Richmond Farmers Market started accepting SNAP benefits back in 2017 with just over \$12,000 redeemed within the year. By 2021, there were just over \$60,000 SNAP benefits redeemed reflecting a 386% increase. This increase is likely the result of the Richmond Parks Department creating the double dollars program. The SNAP Double Dollars Program, sponsored by Reid Health, doubles the values of any SNAP dollars redeemed at the Farmers Market. Eligible market-goers can trade their SNAP dollars for \$1 or \$10 market tokens that can be used anytime at the Richmond Farmers Market.

¹ Blaustein Rejto, D. (2015). SNAP Update: Redemptions at Farmers Markets Continue to Increase. Retrieved from www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/snap-redemption-at-marketssteadily-rises-with-continued-federal-support/.

² <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>

PROVIDES ACCESS TO SEASONAL ITEMS

Farmers Markets offer seasonal items which can include common produce but also uncommon items that may be hard to find at the grocery store.

Why do markets matter?

Before refrigerated shipping and new technologies were used, humans ate seasonal produce because that was all that was available at that time. Today, we have the option to eat just about anything whenever we want. Some nutritionists suggest eating seasonally is better for your body by encouraging lighter fruits and vegetables in the spring and summer and heavier produce in the colder months. Farmers markets offer fresh, seasonal items encouraging buyers to eat seasonally and educating them about seasonality.

In addition to seasonal items, oftentimes markets will have unique items that are harder to find at the supermarket or grocery store. Coming across these unique finds encourages shoppers to try new things and be a little adventurous with their selections.

What is the local impact?

Indiana's spring/summer seasonal produce ranges include asparagus (April to June), cabbage (June - November), Blackberries and blueberries (July-August), Corn (June - August), and Tomatoes (July-October), among others. Based on previous years, some of Richmond's most popular summer market items include tomatoes, corn, plants and beef. Market-goers may even have the chance to try more usual items such as local crafts and hand made items.

Indiana's fall/winter seasonal produce includes pears (August-January), celery (September - April), pumpkins (September - October), sweet potatoes (August - December), among others. Some of the most popular winter market items include meat, bread, baked goods and value added meal items such as prepared sauces and condiments.

INTRODUCES HEALTHY HABITS AT A YOUNG AGE

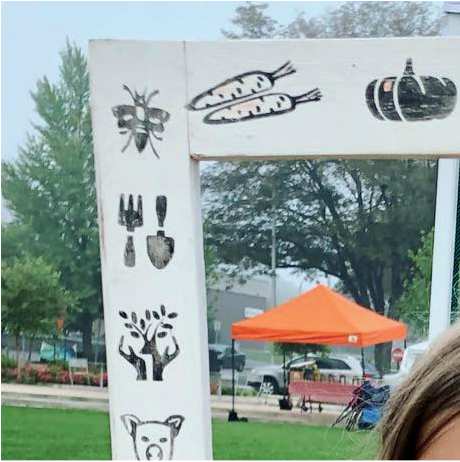
Farmers Markets create a kid-friendly atmosphere for people of all ages to pick out something new to try which aids in forming healthy habits.

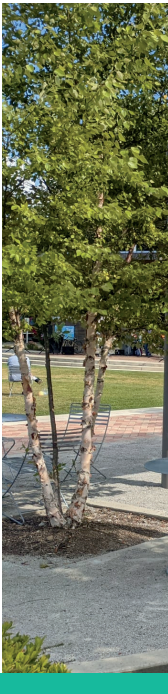
Why do markets matter?

Farmers markets are the perfect venue for children to learn about and experience fresh, healthy food in a positive setting. For example, parents can let the child make their own purchases or create a challenge to find an unfamiliar product to try. Farmers markets can also be educational by teaching children about the seasons of produce, where the produce comes from, and why it is a healthy choice. This builds a solid foundation for establishing healthy eating habits and will likely transcend into the individual's adult life. Some farmers markets have programs available for kids to participate in such as, "The Power of Produce Club" created by the Farmers Market Coalition.

What is the local impact?

While not necessarily geared toward youth, the Department recently launched a new 'Harvest Your Health' program in partnership with Reid Health. The program allows healthcare providers to identify diabetic patients who could benefit from additional produce in their diet and then prescribe vouchers for fresh, local produce redeemable at the Richmond, Connersville, or Fayette County Farmers Markets. In alignment with the statewide Produce Rx Pilot Program, the Harvest Your Health program will make nutritious food more accessible, and help to reduce COVID-19 risk factors and diet-related diseases.







03

THE MARKET TODAY

This inventory and analysis is intended to document the current conditions of the Richmond Farmers Market in an effort to identify opportunities and challenges related to how the Market is currently operating. The Market didn't become what it is today in just a few short years, or even decades. The year-round event has been evolving and growing for quite some time. It is important, and interesting, to review key milestones and recognize significant individuals that have paved the path for future generations.

A successful Market requires careful planning, robust promotion, strong partnerships, adaptive programming, and constant monitoring. While the Market may be strong in one area, the Market may benefit from additional attention in other areas. The following pages provide a high-level inventory of the Market's current practices related to marketing, vendor registration, community attendance, partnerships, revenue and funding, facility infrastructure, and programming.

THE MARKET TODAY:

MARKET ORGANIZATION AND OVERSIGHT



WE ARE HIRING!
Farmers Market Assistant

- Must have a passion for local food and the Richmond Farmers Market!
- Fun, flexible job
- \$10.00/hr
- ~10 hours/week
- Anyone can apply
- Must be available on Saturday mornings and Tuesday nights
- Involves marketing for the Market, planning events, increasing food access, working with vendors, and much more!

To apply as Market Assistant, visit <https://www.richmondindiana.gov/postings/farmers-market-assistant> (or Google "Richmond Indiana Job Postings")

Richmond Farmers MARKET

The Richmond Parks and Recreation Board serves primarily as the system's governing body while the Parks and Recreation Department staff ensures that each of the City's parks, facilities, and programs run smoothly on a daily basis. Today, the City's Parks and Recreation Department is comprised of 23 full-time staff members, and 10 part-time staff members. Currently, one full-time and one part-time position facilitates the Farmers Market program. The Market Coordinator provides support to all vendors and consumer activities and upholds the rules and regulations set for weekly Markets. The Market Coordinator also provides support to community engagement efforts across the Department. Currently, the Department classifies staff into six divisions based on their role and responsibilities. Market staff falls under the 'Recreation Division' which also includes staff who facilitate and manage the Department's community and educational programs.

With staff leadership, the Market is advised by the Farmers Market Advisory Team, a group of volunteers organized to make recommendations regarding the Market and its operation. The Advisory Team is a flexible, open group that vendors, customers, and Richmond Parks & Recreation supporters are all welcome to attend to advise on Market affairs. While the Market Advisory Team provides input on Market decisions, the Parks Department makes the final determinative action on issues that arise after they have been presented to the Market Coordinator.



Richmond Farmers MARKET

SUMMER FARMERS MARKET PRE-MARKET MEETING AND POTLUCK

Monday, April 17th at 6:00 PM at Starr Gennett
101 S. 1st St. Richmond, IN 47374

THIS MEETING IS FOR ANYONE WHO WISHES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SUMMER FARMERS MARKET. BRING A DISH TO SHARE TO WELCOME IN THE WARM WEATHER WITH YOUR FELLOW VENDORS!

Contact Market Coordinator with questions at hsnoddy@richmondindiana.gov or (765)983-7425



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **The responsibilities of the Market Coordinator are varied.**

As identified in the 2020 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan the expectations of the Parks and Recreation Department include numerous responsibilities ranging from the development and maintenance of facilities to providing various programming opportunities. The Market Coordinator position is a prime example of the varied responsibilities since the position coordinates not only the Market program but also additional community outreach efforts. As the Market continues to grow, a better delineation of responsibilities may be necessary to allow for time for Market coordination, vendor outreach, and program facilitation.

- **Current organizational structure could be limiting.**

The Market program is currently aligned as part of the Department's 'Recreation Division' which also includes community programming, recreational programs, festivals, and events. As both the recreational and Market programs grow, evolve, and expand, it may be beneficial to explore dividing the divisions into two separate entities that report to the Department superintendent. This separation could support growth and expansion better by allowing program leads to create distinct goals, roles, and responsibilities.

THE MARKET TODAY:

REVENUE AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



RICHMOND FARMERS MARKET

Farm to Fork

FUNDRAISING DINNER

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF GRATITUDE

ONLY \$35 PER TICKET LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE!

STARR GENNETT BUILDING
101 S 1ST STREET
RICHMOND, INDIANA 47374

DOORS OPEN AT 5PM
DINNER STARTS AT 6PM

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 19, 2022

 Bethany
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

 Richmond Farmers
MARKET

 3 RIVERS

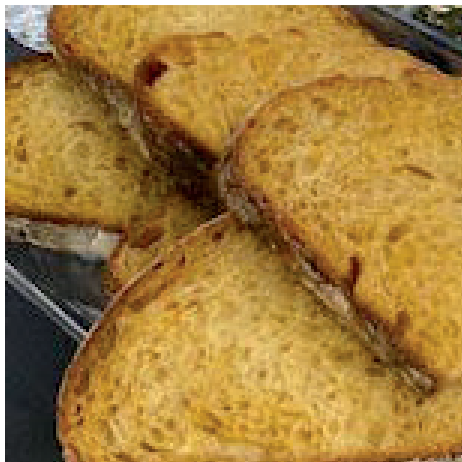
The Department of Parks and Recreation's operating costs are distributed among five different municipal budget funds, including one reverting fund, and four non-reverting funds. Reverting funds include yearly appropriations and return any unspent monies to the original source at the end of the fiscal year. Non-reverting funds do not revert unspent money and instead allow for funds to accumulate and grow from year to year. The Department's four non-reverting funds handle the revenue and expenses of the Widow Services Program, McBride Stadium, the Highland Golf Course, and the City's Farmers Market program.

For the fiscal year 2022, the Market program has an estimated expense budget of \$73,902.72 which includes salaries, benefits, and training for program staff, as well as supplies and promotional expenses for the Market itself. The 2022 expense budget accounts for a 15% increase in budgetary expenses since 2020 and a 3% increase since 2021. The majority of the budget increase can be accounted for in the rising costs of staff benefits including insurance and retirement fund contributions.



To match the increase in program expenses, the Market program has a revenue budget, or goal, of \$83,643 for the fiscal year 2022. The anticipated revenues are primarily collected from program vendor fees but also include yearly subsidies from the City of Richmond, sponsorships, and merchandise sales. The 2022 revenue budget has increased 29% since 2020 and 14% since 2021. While the rising costs of services are one reason for the need to increase program revenues, the growth of the Market is also represented in the increase in budget revenue streams.

Within the budget expenses, there is a specific line item for 'capital improvement facilities' which could be used to fund improvements to Market locations and facilities. For the past three years, no funds have been budgeted for capital improvements within the Market program fund.





Today, vendor fees are projected to account for 24% of the program's revenue. This percentage has remained consistent since 2020. Currently, based on financial data collected through June 30, 2022, the program is on track to meet or exceed the yearly vendor fee goal. In previous years the program has met its vendor goal, with the primary exception being 2020 when the summer Market was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of the fiscal year 2019, nearly 3% of the Department's total budgeted revenue comes from the Farmers Market program. The Market is one of the Department's primary sources of funding behind public tax dollars, program and rental fees, and revenues from Highland Golf Course. Like Highland Golf Course, the Market program is one of the few revenue sources that have the opportunity to keep collected funds based on the non-reverting budget format used by the program.



Additional revenue from the sale of merchandise, community sponsorships, and Market supported events such as the Farm to Table dinner, account for roughly 30% of the program's budget. While the budgeted amounts for these revenue streams have remained consistent over the past three years, the actual collected revenue has decreased in all areas with the greatest loss being in the sale of merchandise.



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Need to increase revenue streams.**

With the continued growth of the Market program the Department has the responsibility of raising additional funds to cover operation, maintenance and potential program and facility improvements all while meeting the increasing needs and expectations of the vendors and Market patrons.

- **Opportunity to diversify revenue streams.**

While the Department's primary revenue source comes from tax allocations, the second largest revenue stream comes from earned and or generated revenue including program fees, shelter rentals, pool fees, and concessions. Program and rental fees are often restricted by the ability of a local resident to tolerate program increases. Since local residents do not pay to attend the Market, the Department's primary opportunity to increase revenue is in the form of vendor fees, yearly program sponsorships, and merchandise. Moving forward the Department will need to be proactive and creative about identifying new revenue opportunities and growing those that already exist.

- **Long-range goal to become financially sustainable.**

Currently the Market program received a subsidy from the City of Richmond to support program staff and benefits. This amount of public tax dollars is currently the only direct City funding for the program. Since City funds often rely on tax funding, the availability of this yearly subsidy may not always be guaranteed. To ensure that the Market program can be supported appropriately, the Department should work to ensure that the program is financially self-sufficient, meaning that no additional City funds are needed to accommodate the maintenance and growth of the Market program.

THE MARKET TODAY:

MARKETING TOOLS



As with any business venture, marketing is a critical component to growing your customer base and attracting quality vendors, employees, supplies, etc. For the Richmond Farmers Market specifically, it is important to evaluate the motivations and demographics of both the vendors and the shoppers to craft a Marketing strategy based on the targeted audience. Today, the RFM relies heavily on social media (Facebook and Instagram) and weekly newsletters to promote the Market events and programs. On average, the Market is posting on Facebook and Instagram one to five times per week. At the time this plan was complete, the Richmond Farmers Market Instagram has just over 2,100 followers and nearly 9,000 followers on Facebook. Weekly newsletters are more frequent once the Tuesday Twilight Market begins in the summer.

Serving as secondary tools, mainly for special events, the Market broadens its reach by creating print materials or recording radio appearances. On average, the RFM utilizes these tools about every two months. While less frequent, the Market has used billboards as a Marketing tool as well. These billboards usually happen twice a year and rotate between the winter and summer Market. Another common marketing tool used throughout the city are department or event-specific websites. While the Richmond Farmers Market does not have their own website, basic information on the Market including location, dates and times is included on the City's website (www.richmondindiana.gov/resources/farmers-market).



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Social media is continuously evolving so the method of sharing information will need to evolve as well.**

Several years ago, sharing information on social media was as simple as writing a sentence or two and attaching a photo. Today, not only have more social media platforms become available but the method for creating or sharing content has changed. While Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are still popular platforms, the latest trend is Tik-Tok which features countless short video clips. Furthermore, Instagram, a platform developed for photos, has shifted to Instagram Stories and Reels which amplifies the demand for recorded video content.

- **Social media is likely only reaching a certain demographic.**

A common challenge with relying on social media for marketing and promotion is that the online platforms do not always capture the largest audience. Even in today's society, there is still a large portion of the population that does not use or have access to social media. While it can be a critical piece of a marketing campaign, it needs to be paired with more inclusive marketing methods.

- **The Richmond Farmers Market webpage could be expanded to share more information.**

The current webpage provides a high-level overview of the Market but offers only a limited amount of information such as a brief overview of the Market, and links to vendor websites.

- **Marketing can become costly.**

Diversifying the types and frequency of marketing materials requires additional funds. Currently, the Richmond Farmers Markets has a marketing budget of \$4,000 to \$6,500, which equated to 10% of the Market's projected expenses. To make the most of this small budget, the parks departments rely heavily on social media as it is a free service. As the Marketing budget grows, the Department can expand its methods and tools for promoting the Farmers Market and assist in cross promotion of Parks Department events and programs.

- **Don't forget "word of mouth" program.**

Word of mouth programs are the easiest, and sometimes most valuable. This form of marketing is a strategy that encourages existing customers to tell their friends and family about a product they're happy with. Other Farmers Markets across the mid-west have used word-of-mouth programs to encourage this behavior through the creation of a referral or loyalty program.

THE MARKET TODAY:

FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE



Summer Market (May-October)

The Richmond Farmers Market rotates between two facilities depending on the season. Summer Markets are held at the Jack Elstro Plaza on Sixth Street in downtown Richmond. Established in 2015, Jack Elstro Plaza is a 1.2-acre mini-park named for longtime Richmond Common Council member Howard “Jack” Elstro, who passed away in July 2014. The plaza features a variety of amenities including a performance pavilion, an open lawn area, a spray plaza, restrooms, and passive seating opportunities. This facility can hold up to 50 vendors comfortably with an overflow area located on the south side of the performance pavilion. Market visitors can park on-site at a parking lot located to the north of the facility. Based on the analysis and recommendations documented in the 2020 Richmond Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the facility could benefit from the following improvements:

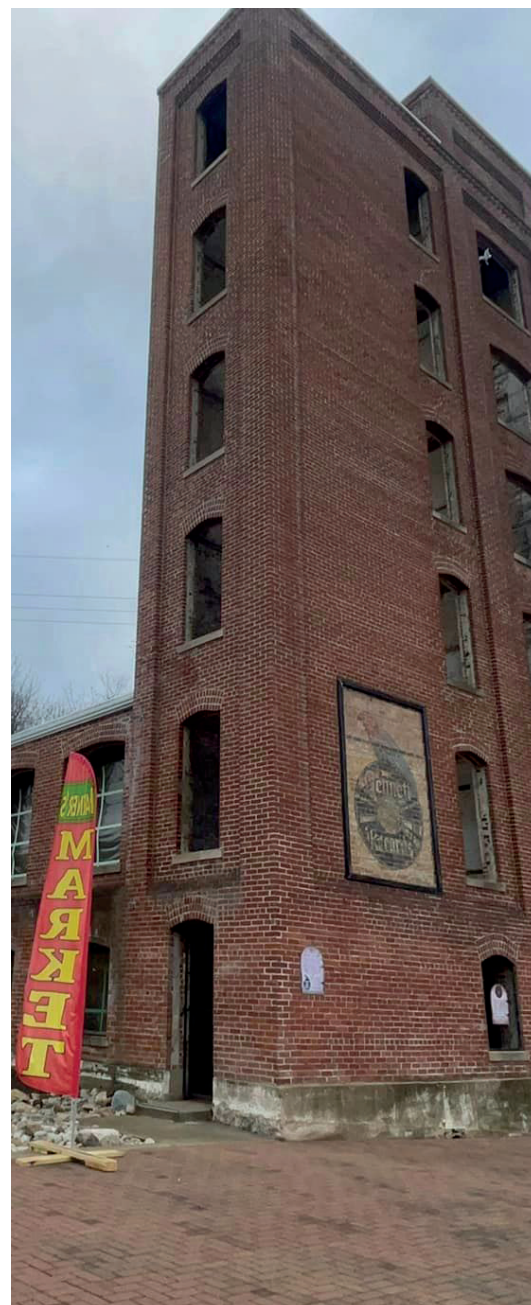
- Install in-ground bollards to control parking on site.
- Install a barrier gate to block Service Street during the Tuesday Twilight Market and Food Truck Wednesday event.
- Install electric monument signage.
- Add utility services to allow for public Wi-Fi, adequate electricity, and security.
- Construct a shade structure.
- Construct a permanent Farmers Market enclosure.
- Upgrade the site’s electrical service to accommodate community and entertainment events.
- Transition the management and oversight of the adjacent parking lot to the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Explore the addition of on-site social interaction opportunities including fitness equipment and interactive seating elements.
- Renovate the existing pavilion to address current and future maintenance needs.

Winter Markets (November - April)

Winter Markets have been held in varying facilities including the Richmond Senior Center in the past. In 2020, through a collaboration between the Richmond Farmers Market, Patronicity, and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, the Market moved to its new home, the historic Starr-Gennett building. The lone remaining building of the historic Gennett Records and Starr Piano Company, the Starr Gennett facility is located within the Whitewater Gorge Park and served as a seasonal multi-purpose activity and event center for the City. While the facility was used heavily in the spring and summer months, the building's open-air concept limited its use in cold weather.

Following the winter Market's ongoing growth and the need to provide applicable social distancing measures following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Parks Department undertook a capital campaign to fund infrastructure improvements to the historic Starr-Gennett building. The successful "Home for the Holidays" donation campaign funded improvements to the 12,000-square-foot historic building that better accommodated events in the winter and fall months. Today winter Market attendees traveling by vehicle have access to an on-site parking lot, a covered and enclosed vendor area that accommodates electrical service, and public restrooms. This facility can hold nearly 40 vendors comfortably with the option to have more located outside depending on the weather. Based on the analysis and recommendations documented in the 2020 Richmond Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the facility could benefit from the following improvements:

- Establish a signage program to label existing building footprints.
- Clear overgrown vegetation in designated areas to establish a Riverwalk.
- Construct an outdoor concert venue.
- Provide a historical marker on-site that provides information on the previous site uses and buildings.
- Promote the site to the community.



The background of the page is a vibrant image of several baskets filled with fresh peppers. On the left, there are yellow and orange peppers. In the center and right, there are baskets of bright red and orange-red peppers. The baskets are made of light-colored plastic mesh.

LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Outgrowing Current Facilities.**

While it's a good problem to have, as the Market continues to grow and become more successful, it may require additional space in terms of product and equipment loading and unloading, vendor booth space, and parking for customers.

- **Possible Elstro Plaza Enhancements.**

According to the 2022 community and vendors survey results, participants have expressed the desire for public restrooms (available at all hours), additional seating, and weather protection. A covered structure could increase attendance on days when it was raining or make it more comfortable on hot, sunny days.

- **Possible Starr Gennett Enhancements.**

According to the 2022 community and vendors survey results, participants have expressed the desire for additional building improvements including heat, enhanced acoustics, additional on-site parking, and an enhanced drop-off for vendors to use. Other challenges identified were limited visibility from the road making it difficult for people to find the location. Because the structure is historic, the addition of heat and improving the acoustics could be more costly improvements.

WHAT TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS WOULD MAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE BETTER AT JACK ELSTRO PLAZA?

“I think that more trees for shade would add to the appeal.”

“More shady spots. Better directional signage for parking. I keep wondering if making it so you enter on side and exit on the other might help with traffic flow/parking.”

“Shaded areas. If there was a permanent “roof above” where vendors could just bring their tables, it would be nice. Plus, makes it perfect for food trucks and patrons to visit. It gets hot!”

“I believe it is the perfect place for the market. Parking can be a challenge some days, but it is awesome!”

- 2022 Survey Feedback

WHAT TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS WOULD MAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE BETTER AT THE STARR GENNETT BUILDING?

“It’s a nice size, but many people dislike the location as it’s difficult to find and not visible from the road.”

“Often when we have music it is very hard to have conversations with our customers. Not necessarily because the music is too loud but because of how the sound travels. Many of my customers make a point of not liking the music.”

“More parking for customers, better acoustics in the building, move the stage from the front to the middle or back of the building.”

“A new door for the main entrance that would make it warmer in the building”

- 2022 Survey Feedback

THE MARKET TODAY:

VENDOR REGISTRATION

The Richmond Farmers Market is a grower-only Market which means individuals or businesses that grow, raise, tend to, cares for, produce, or otherwise create the goods they wish to sell are invited to submit an application for participating in the Market. The application process and rules are slightly different based on the type of vendor and product of which they are selling.

For food and farm vendors, an application must be submitted to vend in each Market season. In general, application acceptance depends on whether there is a need for that specific product at the Market. Following the submission, the Market Coordinator has ten days to review the application and has the ability to make a decision. In addition to an approved application, the vendor has to have a site visit every 1-3 years to ensure the vendor is actually producing the goods they are selling.

For art and craft vendors, an application must be submitted to vend in each Market season. New artisan vendors are reviewed on a monthly basis during the Market Advisory Team Meeting when necessary. In general, application acceptance is based on the quality of the products and whether similar products are already being sold at the Market.

In addition to an approved application, all vendors must also pay a Market fee. The Market fees are used to support the promotion and operations of the Market. Approved vendors can choose to pay a booth fee seasonally or per Market. If a vendor chooses to pay per Market, the cost of a booth is \$15. For season pass holders, there are three options to choose from:

- Option A - This option costs \$300 which includes an “L” shaped space that is equivalent to a space and a half.
- Option B - This option costs \$225 which includes a space large enough for a vendor to back into and sell products from the vehicle.
- Option C - This option costs \$200 which includes a space where vendors have to carry items and don't allow access to vehicles.

Vendors wishing to be season pass vendors will be put into a lottery in accordance with the vendor option they purchase. Option A pass holders are drawn first and receive priority in choosing their location. Option B is drawn second, and Option C is drawn last. Beginning in 2021, vendors who participated in the previous season's Market events had the option to keep their booth space throughout the season if they choose. They can also reenter the lottery in hopes of selecting an alternative booth location.

Both season and daily pass holders are held to a high standard and expected to follow the rules and regulations of the Market as well as the standards put in place by local and state health departments. The Richmond Farmers Market Rules and Guidelines are available online for download and print.



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Daily pass could create competition.**

While the existing Market vendor pass options provide flexibility, the daily pass can create unnecessary competition for season pass holders especially when it comes to a peak, seasonal produce including tomatoes and sweet corn. This unintended vendor competition puts those seasons pass holders, who provided limited offerings in early Market months, at a disadvantage during the peak of the Market season.

- **Vendor attendance is key.**

Many seasonal vendors rely on complementary vendors to support their business and offerings. Since many vendors focus on one type of product (beef, eggs, dairy, produce, herbs, etc.) having a wide array of vendors who offer multiple options helps create a successful Market venue. When vendors are absent, especially during low produce months, it can hurt the sales of other vendors in an indirect way. To overcome this challenge, the Market Committee passed an attendance policy in time for the 2022 summer Market. Season pass vendors are required to attend at least 75% of Saturday Markets. If a season pass holder does not attend 75% of the Markets for that season, then they are not eligible for a season pass for that season the following year.

- **Diversity of products and a balance between food and craft vendors.**

As the Market continues to grow, an additional emphasis will be placed on the review and final selection of seasonal vendors to ensure that there is minimal duplication and competition- especially during peak produce seasons. Additionally, it will be important to maintain a “food first” perception within the community so it is clear that the Market is intended to provide access to healthy, fresh foods.

THE MARKET TODAY:

COMMUNITY ATTENDANCE



At the time this inventory was complete, the Richmond Farmers Market was not tracking Market attendance but had a desire to start exploring methods to do so. Tracking attendance can be used to help gauge the number of vendors needed, tailor programming, and adapt facility space for future Markets. It is estimated that on average 750-1,000 people are attending the summer Markets with upwards of 3,000 visitors on Market days with special events. According to stakeholder interviews with Market vendors, participation significantly increases when sweet corn and tomatoes are in-season.



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Undefined Entry and Exit Points.**

Tracking the number of visitors can be challenging because attendees are spilling in from all sides and traveling by various modes of transportation. Overcoming these challenges starts by identifying a primary entry point into the Market. Following that, the Market could utilize staff or volunteers to supervise the entry points with a clicker or more advanced technology to count people when they are entering the Market. With the winter Market being located at the Starr Gennett facility, the Market has only one entry and exit point. Testing equipment, technology, and an overall methodology may be easier to facilitate at the winter Market since the facility and grounds are more defined.

- **Tracking Market Growth.**

Similar to tracking and recording sales and number of vendors, tracking the number of visitors per Market and/or per season can help illustrate how much the Market is growing or declining. By comparing visitor attendance against seasonal produce offerings and community events, Market organizers would have the ability to track and predict trends that impact local attendance. This data could be used to develop community programming opportunities that would enhance and potentially increase Market attendance at key points throughout the season.

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY IMPACT

OUR DONORS (2017-2020)

- 3Rivers
- Anonymous Donation
- Bethany Seminary
- Black Dog Printing
- Claudia Edwards
- Dana North & Derric Watson
- Earlham College
- Farm to Fork Dinner - Tickets
- First Bank
- Indiana American Water
- Jay & Marcie Roberts
- Jessica Foster
- Katie Reisling
- Lonnie Valentine
- Michael Khamis
- Natco Credit Union
- Rebecca Hilty
- Reid Health
- Richmond Association of Realtors
- Rose Marie Othmer
- Steven Schweitzer
- Tarot Tattoo
- United Way
- Urban Enterprise Association
- Wayne County Foundation
- West End Bank

A number of community organizations and businesses can contribute to the success of a local Market. Local merchants, government agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and health and social services can act as community partners by supporting the Market through donations and/or other in-kind services.

One of the most popular ways that Richmond citizens, businesses, and organizations are supporting the Market is through donations. Over the last five years, the Richmond Parks Department has received donations from over 25 community partners. These donations are ranging from a few dollars at a time to over one-time contributions over \$15,000. The Market has been actively tracking donations since 2016 when donations were totaling \$6,000. Today, donations have increased to over \$39,000

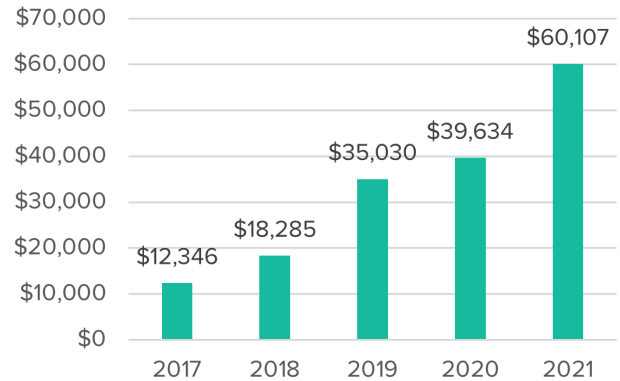
These donations have played a critical role in the Markets ability to expand and improve throughout the years. Without the support of the community partners, the Market couldn't have launched the SNAP Double Dollars Program, and winterized the Starr Gennett Building to provide a permanent home for the Winter Market program.

While donations are crucial, partnerships can result in additional promotion and Marketing, an increase in human capacity such as volunteers, and/or the use of additional resources. These partners could also be used to facilitate new programs or events at the Market as it continues to grow.

One of the Market's primary partners is Reid Health. Serving regional health care needs, Reid Health is Wayne County's largest employer and provides diverse support to efforts throughout the City of Richmond. As part of its mission to improve the health of the community, Reid Health began partnering with the Richmond Parks Department in 2017 to fund the SNAP Double Dollars Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal assistance program that provides low-income families with electronic benefit transfers that can be used to purchase food.

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SNAP Redeemed (by year)



The purpose of the program is to assist low-income households in obtaining adequate and nutritious diets. SNAP benefits can be used like cash to buy food items at any store, supermarket or co-op approved by the USDA. Items that can be purchased with SNAP benefits include breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, dairy products and seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat. Within Richmond, SNAP dollars can also be used towards eligible items on the Online Farmers Market. The SNAP Double Dollars Program, sponsored by Reid Health Community Benefit, doubles the value of any SNAP Dollars redeemed at the Farmers Market in the form of \$1 and \$10 “Market Tokens”. These tokens can be spent on any SNAP-eligible product at the Market. In addition to doubling SNAP Dollars, Reid Health’s donations to the program have also allowed participants to receive support through the Pandemic EBT program (P-EBT) a program developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by the Indiana Family & Social Security Administration.

P-EBT benefits were given to all families that receive subsidized school meals, regardless of whether they were previously SNAP recipients or not. The primary goal of this double-dollar program is to increase local access to fresh and nutritious foods; however, Market vendors are also able to reap the benefits of the program by increasing their weekly sales.

While the Market has used SNAP tokens for several years, the Market experienced an increase in participation when the Double Dollars program launched in 2020. Prior to the Double Dollars program, there was just over \$35,000 redeemed using the SNAP tokens. By 2021, sales had increased to just over \$60,000 representing a 71.5 percent increase.



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Sponsorship Program.**

Communities across the nation have created sponsorship programs that include various levels of support and benefits based on the amount of money donated. Currently, many Richmond Farmers Market community partners donate money and services with little to no understanding of how the resources are used. By structuring a community sponsorship program, the RFM could garner additional program support by clearly identifying the resources and capital investment needed to sustain and improve the Market and the benefits and recognition the donors would see throughout the Market season. A well-thought-out program could encourage more businesses and organizations to become Market partners and volunteer their services which could lead to a greater impact on the community.

- **Programming Partner.**

With limited staff and financial resources, the Market cannot function in a silo. Partnerships can help increase capacity in various ways. As the Market expands and diversifies the types of programs and/or events offered, the Parks Department will need to find ways to provide additional capacity to fund and manage the Market's growth. Strong partnerships with regional and local employers, businesses, and community organizations can facilitate additional revenue, staffing, and programming opportunities which can support the Market moving forward.



SNAP Double Dollars Program at the Richmond Farmers Market



What is the Double Dollars Program?



The SNAP Double Dollars Program, sponsored by Reid Health Community Benefit, doubles the value of any SNAP Dollars redeemed at the Farmers Market.

The Double Dollars program helps the Richmond Farmers Market in providing healthy, fresh, and local foods to residents who receive SNAP, while also promoting and increasing revenue for Indiana-grown and local produce.

How to use SNAP at the Farmers Market:

- Purchase SNAP Tokens to use at the market using a P-EBT issued card or regular Hoosier Works EBT card by visiting the Market Info tent or by calling (765) 983-7425.
- Your card will be charged and you will be given wooden Market tokens in **double the value** of your purchase.
- Wooden tokens can be used at any Richmond Farmers Market vendor on any SNAP eligible item!

“Partnering with Richmond Parks and Recreation just makes good sense for Reid Health Community Benefit. With funding for programming, they’re able to help us provide opportunities for physical activity for adults and kids. We’re also able to increase access to fresh, local produce, which impacts nutrition and overall health.”

- Angela Cline, Director of Reid Health Community Benefit

THE MARKET TODAY:

MARKET EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



In addition to providing access to healthy fresh food, farmers markets provide a community gathering space for social interaction. Scheduled events and programming can serve as entertainment, education, and/or fitness opportunities that encourage people to attend the Market.

The Richmond Parks Department and Market Coordinator have taken strides to utilize this method to increase attendance. The primary focus has been on providing live music performances during Saturday Markets. This effort is recognized and valued by vendors and customers. Through vendor stakeholder engagement, current vendors shared that they feel attendance is better when there is a scheduled event such as live music. The Richmond Farmers Market does offer some additional programming periodically such as holiday celebrations, and seed and plant swaps. Today, these events and programs are typically only promoted via social media which potentially limits the number of residents that have access to the information.

As outlined within the *2020 Richmond Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, one of the biggest challenges the Department faces is getting the word out about its vast recreation offerings to the public. This concern also applies to the Market and the program offerings held in conjunction with the summer or winter Markets.

The Parks Department offers a wide range of opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles, environmental sustainability, and community connectedness. However, it lacks a full-time communications/ Marketing Coordinator to increase program participation. Since community members are more likely to take advantage of park offerings when they know about them, increasing the number of participants is dependent on improving marketing strategies to heighten awareness.



LOCAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Expanding Events and Programs.**

While the Market does have some programming, there is an opportunity to utilize existing Department recreational programs to increase the frequency and types of events offered at the winter and summer Market. The Market could explore expanding demonstrations and on-site community programs to include the following:

- Food education programs - Intended to teach participants about healthy eating habits, food prep tutorials, recipe swaps, and more.
- Youth programs - Intended to teach children about agriculture, encourage them to try new items, and get involved in the community.
- Fitness programs - Intended to promote physical and mental health such as Saturday morning yoga classes, walking programs that starts or ends at the Market, etc.

- **Comprehensive Market Calendar.**

According to the 2022 community and vendor survey results, and the 2020 Richmond Parks and Recreation Master Plan effort, it can be difficult to track down when events and programs are occurring. In cooperation with the broader Parks Department, the Market could explore the creation of a community calendar to promote and advertise the scheduled events and programs throughout the year.

- **Marketing Events and Programs.**

Currently, events and programs are only promoted on social media, about a week or two in advance making it difficult for community members to be aware of the events and plan ahead for attending. Scheduling and promoting events and programming well in advance can help increase attendance and participation.





04

THE FUTURE MARKET

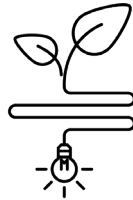
With a thorough understanding of the benefits of farmers markets and a complete inventory of the Richmond Farmers Market today serving as the foundation, this strategic planning effort establishes a series of Market value statements. These statements outline a set of general guiding principles that define the overall direction of the Richmond Farmers Market and its role in enhancing the region. The Market values shed light on the idea that the RFM is a critical component of not just the region's food system but also the city's parks and recreation system. These value statements are crafted to showcase how the RFM fits into the larger vision and goals for the Department.

In 2018, the Richmond Parks Department completed the Richmond Parks and Recreation Master Plan which outlines a 5-year vision for the development, improvement, maintenance and operation of the City's entire park and recreation system. This plan established five park P.R.I.D.E. goals to work towards:

- Promote our offerings,
- Respond to our community's needs,
- Invite activity into our spaces,
- Diversity and optimize our resources, and
- Enhance our parks and open space system.

Building on the Market values and the park P.R.I.D.E goals, the following chapter summarizes the market-specific goals, objectives, and strategies.

MARKET VALUES



Rooting for Entrepreneurs

The market serves as one of the region's only sales venues for area growers and marketers. The Richmond Parks Department will [respond to our community's need](#) for supporting the region's entrepreneurs by ensuring the farmers market is a consistent place for commerce.



Cultivating Equitable Access

The market provides an opportunity for consumers to purchase quality local food and homemade goods. The Richmond Parks Department will [respond to our community's need](#) to overcome food insecurities and the health consequences that follow by improving access to healthy, affordable food.



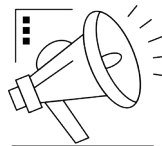
Nurturing Community

The market provides a community gathering place. The Richmond Parks Department will [enhance the parks and open space system](#) by continuing to make strategic facility improvements and [inviting activity into our facilities and public spaces](#).



Sprouting Growth

The market promotes and stimulates economic development. The Richmond Parks Department will [diversify and optimize its resources](#) in an effort to create a sustainable successful farmers market. This success supports vendors and the surrounding businesses and amenities while keeping the money within our local economy.



Harvesting Appreciation and Awareness

The market increases awareness and appreciation for local businesses, healthy eating habits, environmental stewardship, and more. The Richmond Parks Department will [promote the market's offerings](#) through creative, consistent, and inclusive advertising practices.

MARKET GOALS

01

PARK PRIDE GOAL #1 - PROMOTE OUR OFFERINGS

Develop a robust marketing strategy for promoting the Richmond Farmers Market.

OBJECTIVE 1A

Ensure information is delivered in a manner that is inclusive and accessible to a wide audience.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to adapt the methods and platforms for sharing content on social media based on marketing trends.
- Ensure traditional (paper) marketing materials are being created and distributed to maximize outreach efforts.
- Consider the creation of a standalone Richmond Farmers Market website to improve the quality and quantity of information being shared.
- Explore the creation of a referral or loyalty program to recognize people for their participation and commitment to the market.
- Create and publish a monthly community calendar to advertise special events, programming, or live performances.
- Create and publish a weekly newsletter that outlines the vendors and specific items that will be available.

OBJECTIVE 1B

Ensure the Parks Department has the staff and resources available to increase awareness and participation in the Richmond Farmers Market.

STRATEGIES

- Create a new staff position dedicated to Communications and Marketing to increase the department's capacity to execute a more comprehensive marketing approach.
- Develop a Comprehensive Marketing and Communications Plan to identify the targeted audiences, key messages, branding, channels, and methods for building awareness.
- Maintain a consistent brand for all market-related materials.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING

CULTIVATING

HARVESTING

SPROUTING

HARVESTING

MARKET GOALS

02

PARK PRIDE GOAL #2 - RESPOND TO OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS

Continue to adapt the farmers market based on the interest of vendors and demand from the community.

OBJECTIVE 2A

Continue to increase the variety of items and types of vendors at the market.

STRATEGIES

- Consider the creation of booth design guidelines to educate vendors on best practices on how to present their products.
- Facilitate vendor training sessions for new vendors to review policies, procedures, and customer service expectations.
- Strive to have at least two of each type of vendor to provide options to customers.
- Hold growers and makers accountable for producing their own products.
- Develop a communication tool for vendors to share weekly information with the market manager.

OBJECTIVE 2B

Ensure current and future vendors are complying with local, state, and federal rules and regulations.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to enforce the attendance policy to ensure consistent attendance and location of vendors.
- Explore the creation of Vendor Choosing Guidelines to ensure the quality and mix of vendors is maintained.
- Work with vendors to implement Good Agricultural Practices and review food safety procedures to lessen the concern of food-borne illnesses.
- Consider a later start time and end time for the Saturday market. (9AM - 1PM)
- Develop a vendor site visit checklist to ensure an effective evaluation process.
- Rethink the lottery system for assigning booth locations for vendors to encourage seasonal pass purchases.
- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the day passes in generation additional revenue and impacts on season pass holders.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING

CULTIVATING

NURTURING

SPROUTING

HARVESTING

MARKET GOALS

03

PARK PRIDE GOAL #3 - INVITE ACTIVITY INTO OUR SPACES

Promote the market as a community gathering space by providing activities and events for all ages.

OBJECTIVE 3A

Grow the types of partnerships, funding resources, and incentives utilized to support the Richmond Farmers Market programs.

STRATEGIES

- Continuously track grant funding opportunities at the state and federal levels to maintain or expand market programming. (Example - Cooking class from Oxford)
- Enhance the market experience by collaborating with local organizations in an effort to expand market resources and programs.
- Keep an accurate record of department partners and volunteers that includes names, contact information, project/ program names, and year of participation.
- Develop a partnership assessment guide that can be used to help develop a set of expectations, appropriately define structure and oversight recommendations and evaluate the benefits and impacts of partnerships with community and allied organizations.
- Create a yearly appreciation strategy for market partners, donors, sponsors and volunteers.

OBJECTIVE 3B

Attract a broader range of vendors and consumers through diverse programming.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to partner with Reid Health to offer the SNAP Double Dollars Program in an effort to accommodate a larger customer base.
- Establish youth programs to encourage children to build a relationship with the market and the market's vendors. (Sprouts Program from Oxford)
- Increase interest in local food and healthy eating habits through demonstrations, shared recipes, meal planning tips, and food preparation skills.
- Provide mentorship and entrepreneur opportunities for emerging growers and makers.
- Increase the number of food trucks and ready-to-eat vendors at the Farmers Market.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING

CULTIVATING

NURTURING

SPROUTING

HARVESTING

MARKET GOALS

04

PARK PRIDE GOAL #4 - DIVERSIFY AND OPTIMIZE OUR RESOURCES

Maintain formal systems and practices to facilitate effective and efficient market operations.

OBJECTIVE 4A

Continue to evaluate and improve the organizational structure of the Richmond Farmers Market.

STRATEGIES

- Identify capacity-building and training opportunities, such as business management, marketing, technology, data collection, vendor management, and advocacy skills, for the market manager.
- Develop a long-term operating budget and recommended staffing plan for the future.
- Create a new Farmer Market Division within the current Park Department organizational structure to increase staffing capacity.

OBJECTIVE 4B

Advance the vitality and sustainability of the Richmond Farmers Market through diverse, stable revenue streams, data collection, and support programs.

STRATEGIES

- Utilize an online database to effectively track reservations, and program registrations and collect profile data for users.
- Begin requiring vendors to report their sales after each market.
- Explore the creation of a Market Bucks Program to relieve vendors from credit card fees and provide an administrative fee to the Department.
- Develop and promote a sponsorship program to encourage private donations to increase market funds.
- Implement incremental increases in vendor fees as the market continues to grow.
- Partner with local artisans to develop Market-specific merchandise that can be sold within the community and on market days.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING

CULTIVATING

NURTURING

SPROUTING

HARVESTING

MARKET GOALS

05

PARK PRIDE GOAL #5 - ENHANCE OUR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Continue to provide an inviting, safe market environment by investing in facility and infrastructure improvements.

OBJECTIVE 5A

Continue to provide a vibrant, active summer market at the Jack Elstro Plaza.

STRATEGIES

- Identify designated entry and exit points for tracking attendance.
- Improve Jack Elstro Plaza by completing the facility improvements identified within the Richmond Parks and Recreation Master Plan. (See page 83, 86-87)
- Provide a designated parking location for vendors that is off-site so that on-site parking spaces can be dedicated to customers.
- Provide additional opportunities for sitting by increasing the number of tables, chairs, and benches available at Elstro Plaza.

OBJECTIVE 5B

Continue utilizing the Starr Gennett facility to provide a year-round market.

STRATEGIES

- Identify designated entry and exit points for tracking attendance.
- Utilize the Richmond Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide investment and improvements to Starr Gennett. (See page 83 and 88)
- Utilize wayfinding signage to direct residents and visitors to the Starr Gennett building.
- Work with Parks and Recreation Department staff to identify a solution for making product and equipment loading /unloading easier for vendors.
- Explore the feasibility of heating the building through an HVAC system.
- Explore options to create a more acoustical environment that supports live music and programming that does not conflict with a vendor's ability to conduct business.
- Provide a designated parking location for vendors that is off-site so that on-site parking spaces can be dedicated to customers.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING

CULTIVATING

NURTURING

SPROUTING

HARVESTING



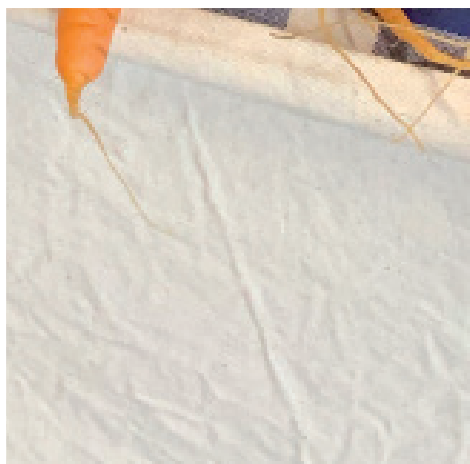
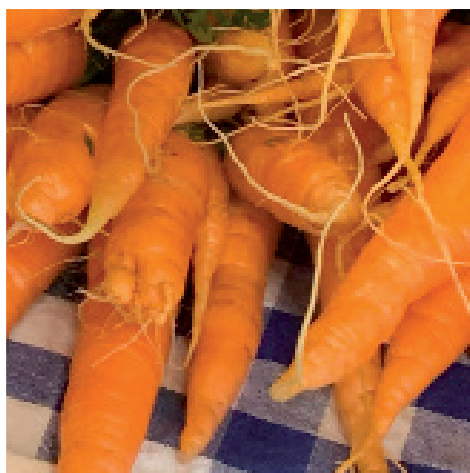
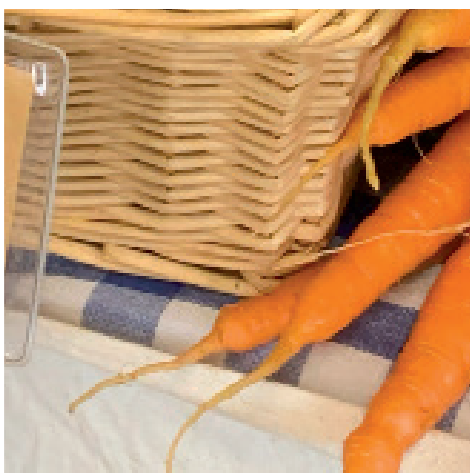
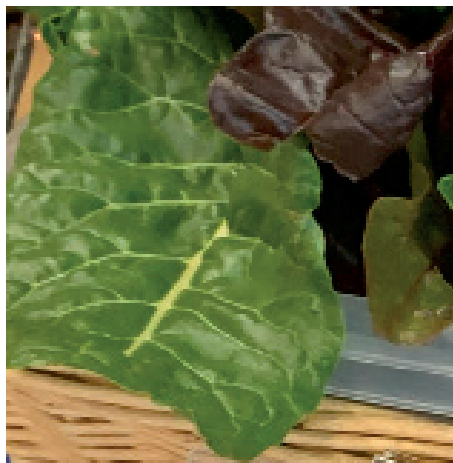


05

NEXT STEPS

As outlined in Chapter 3- The Market Today, the challenges and opportunities facing the Richmond Farmers Market team vary in scale and complexity. In order to leverage these opportunities and overcome known challenges, the proposed strategies included in Chapter 4- The Future Market, are equally as diverse, ranging from increased communication to large scale, capital improvement projects.

While there are multiple paths to improvement and enhancement available to the Richmond Farmers Market team, the primary hurdle holding each strategy back is available resources. More specifically, program funding and financial sustainability.



For the fiscal year 2022, the Market program has an estimated expense budget of \$73,902.72 which includes salaries, benefits, and training for program staff, as well as supplies and promotional expenses for the Market itself. To match the increase in program expenses, the Market program has a revenue budget, or goal, of \$83,643 for the fiscal year 2022. While revenue is generated from vendor passes, sponsorships and merchandise sales, the predominant source of funding comes from a grant provided by the City of Richmond. In 2022, 40% of the budgeted revenue was sources from City funds, leaving the program reliant on this supplemental income.

With City funds stretched across multiple departments, community programs and capital projects, any increase in available revenue for Market expansion and enhancements will need to come from alternative financial sources. While additional, and more diverse, funding sources will allow the Market to grow and become financially independent, an increase in revenues will also support the Department of Parks and Recreation as well. The Market is currently one of the Department's primary sources of funding behind public tax dollars, program and rental fees, and revenues from Highland Golf Course. Like Highland Golf Course, the Market program is one of the few revenue sources that have the opportunity to keep collected funds based on the non-reverting budget format used by the program. This non-reverting fund is crucial, because it means that additional revenues earned by the Market, will stay with the Market program. Allowing the program to grow and fund enhancement projects that will also serve the broader Department's goals.

PROPOSED APPROACH

Financial independence from the City of Richmond will not happen overnight. Instead, small shifts and increases in revenues will need to occur, often with small adjustments being considered on a yearly basis. To guide the pace of revenue generation and diversification, the following budget model was created using past Market financial information which includes both actual and proposed expenses for fiscal years 2020, 2021 and 2022 respectfully. It should be noted that the 2020 fiscal year information is slightly skewed due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposed budget model assumes a yearly cost of living increase of 5%. This accounts for an increase in staff salaries, benefits and general program expenses. To move the Market towards financial independence, and a heftier program budget, the model also projects both a city match decrease and a revenue increase each year, with the additional revenues coming from existing categories such as merchandise, sponsorships, events and vendor fees.

The budget model assumes a 5% growth in annual revenue for the first 3 years, and then increasing in years 4-6 and again in years 7-10. This reinforces the thought that revenue growth and diversification may be slow to start, but as the Market makes program and infrastructure improvements, the growth momentum will continue to increase.

The budget model also assumes that as revenues increase, the City match decreases at a rate that allows the Market to reserve funds within the program's budget. This will allow the Market to both reduce their reliance on City funds, while also creating a potential revenue surplus. Since the Market uses a non-reverting fund, these surplus funds can be saved, and used for long-range, larger scaled capital improvements.

	ACTUAL BUDGET		PROPOSED BUDGET			
	2020	2021	2022	2025	2028	2031
REVENUES						
Farmers Market SNAP	\$1,911	\$701	\$2,350	\$2,902	\$4,295	\$7,057
Grant Match	\$28,483	\$34,483	\$36,143	\$29,357	\$20,212	\$12,413
Merchandise	\$5,807	\$3,735	\$2,000	\$2,602	\$3,851	\$6,328
Sponsorship	\$23,008	\$0	\$20,000	\$24,696	\$36,555	\$60,061
Vendor Fees	\$8,855	\$18,864	\$20,000	\$24,696	\$36,555	\$60,061
Sales Tax	\$0	\$8	\$150	\$185	\$274	\$450
Transfer In	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Misc.	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$3,704	\$5,483	\$9,009
TOTAL REVENUE	\$73,064	\$59,791	\$83,643	\$88,142	\$107,226	\$155,379

OPERATING EXPENSES						
Salaries and wages	\$26,330	\$33,527	\$36,143	\$42,440	\$49,835	\$58,519
Overtime	\$213	\$1,115	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Social Security	\$1,412	\$2,045	\$2,241	\$2,631	\$3,090	\$3,628
Medicare	\$330	\$478	\$524	\$615	\$723	\$849
PERF Contribution	\$2,973	\$3,880	\$4,048	\$4,753	\$5,582	\$6,554
Insurance Provision	\$13,655	\$15,193	\$17,000	\$19,962	\$23,440	\$27,525
Wellness	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
General Supplies	\$1,326	\$1,118	\$2,217	\$2,603	\$3,057	\$3,589
Contractual Services	\$1,787	\$2,202	\$4,000	\$4,697	\$5,515	\$6,476
Telephone and facsimile	\$360	\$360	\$360	\$423	\$496	\$583
Travel	\$191	\$115	\$260	\$305	\$358	\$421
Promotional Expense	\$6,130	\$3,781	\$6,700	\$7,867	\$9,238	\$10,848
Training	\$30	\$0	\$260	\$305	\$358	\$421
Sales Tax	\$253	\$25	\$150	\$176	\$207	\$243
Capital Improvement Facilities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Computer Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$54,989	\$63,839	\$73,903	\$86,780	\$101,900	\$119,655

NET OPERATING BUDGET	\$18,075	(\$4,048)	\$9,740	\$1,363	\$5,326	\$35,724
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Based on the information and input provided in this document, the primary goal of the Department of Parks and Recreation should be to advance the vitality and sustainability of the Richmond Farmers Market through diverse, stable revenue streams, data collection, and support programs.

To support that future vision, along with the Market Values and Goals outlined in Chapter 4, this action plan relies on three key fundamental guiding principles:

- 1. Organizational Structure** – We will continue to evaluate and improve the organizational structure of the Richmond Farmers Market.
- 2. Capacity Building** – We will ensure the Parks Department has the staff and resources available to increase awareness and participation in the Richmond Farmers Market.
- 3. Increasing Participation** – We will grow the types of partnerships, funding resources, and incentives utilized to support the Richmond Farmers Market programs.

These three guiding principles are intended to serve as long lasting evaluation criteria for Market leaders as they weigh critical decisions moving forward. While each principle speaks to a different topic, together, they reinforce the ways in which the Market can and should growth in an effort to continually expand the Market’s vendor and customer reach.

While additional opportunities for revenue generation and diversification will present themselves on a regular basis, using the data and input collected from this planning process, a series of short to mid-term action items have been developed to assist the Market in initiating minor changes to operations and program marketing. In total, the action items are organized into four key topics:

- Merchandise and Market
- Sponsorship and Fundraising
- Market Operations
- Investing in Market Improvements

Within each topic, a big idea is presented. The big idea is intended to capture the broadest action Department and Market staff can make towards the goal of financial independence. To support the ‘Big Idea’ a series of more specific recommendations are made to provide staff with a variety of options on how to work towards the proposed ‘Big Idea’. While any of the recommendations can be undertaken, there is also at least one catalyst initiative identified for each topic. Based on the data and input, the catalyst initiative is proposed as a short term priority for the Market Team because the initiative has the opportunity to advance revenue generation and diversification greatly. Where possible, detailed information and case studies for catalyst initiatives have been provided for reference.



MERCHANDISE AND MARKET

CURRENT APPROACH

Today, the RFM relies heavily on social media (Facebook and Instagram) and weekly newsletters to promote the market events and programs. Weekly newsletters are more frequent once the Tuesday Twilight Market begins in the summer. Serving as secondary tools, mainly for special events, the market broadens its reach by creating print materials or recording radio appearances.

Another common marketing tool used throughout the city are department or event specific websites. While the Richmond Farmers Market does not have their own website, basic information on the Market including location, dates and times is included on the City's website.

The current webpage and marketing tools provide a high-level overview of the Market but could be missing key target audiences across the city. By expanding the Market's communication platforms through the use of a consistent visual brand and supporting program messaging, the Market can continue to grow and evolve independently. Additionally, new value opportunities for vendors and sponsors can be developed and monetized to help support the Market program.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

CREATE A SET OF A STANDALONE RICHMOND FARMERS MARKET COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING TOOLS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF INFORMATION BEING SHARED.

NEXT STEPS

In order to increase merchandise sales by a minimum of 5 % each year, the Richmond Farmers Market could start by:

1. Establish an annual marketing budget that takes into consideration paid advertisements on social media, and printed publications. Ensure that this budget is gradually increased on an annual basis to accommodate new technologies and advertising opportunities.
2. Establish a consistent visual brand (logo, colors, type fonts etc.) that matches the values and goals of the Farmers Market program.
3. Utilize the visual brand to establish a marketing toolkit that includes social media, newsletters, email groups, and printed materials.
4. Establish a stand-alone website for the Richmond Farmers Market to reinforce that the Market is an independent entity.
5. Utilize the marketing platforms to promote season pass holders and Market sponsors.
6. Consider charging an administration fee to vendors wishing to use the web, digital and printed materials for online promotions, seasonal offerings and specialty sales.
7. Work with local designers and artisans to create and produce City and Market specific merchandise such as tote bags, t-shirts, hats, cups, and stickers.
8. Partner with Richmond Tourism to promote the Farmer's Market events, website, and specialty merchandise.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING

CULTIVATING

NURTURING

SPROUTING

HARVESTING



MERCHANDISE AND MARKET



CATALYST PROJECT: STAND-ALONE WEBSITE

A STAND-ALONE WEBSITE WILL ESTABLISH THE RICHMOND FARMERS MARKET AS AN INDEPENDENT, SELF-SUSTAINING PROGRAM THAT SERVES THE LARGER WAYNE COUNTY REGION.

The Richmond Farmers Market can stand out by having a website that looks good and clearly communicates quality information to vendors, sponsors and customers. Without a website, people may question the value of the Market and the offerings it provides to local residents. Having a new RFM website provides an opportunity to make a great first impression and give people comfort that you're a valuable and reliable program year-round.



MERCHANDISE AND MARKET



Case Study

Vermont Farmers Market Annual T-shirt Design Contest | Rutland, Vermont

<https://vtfarmersmarket.org/1st-annual-t-shirt-design-contest/>

CATALYST PROJECT: BRANDED MERCHANDISE

BRANDED MERCHANDISE OFTEN DRIVES CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND IT CREATES ADDITIONAL REVENUE.

Creating branded merchandise, would allow the RFM to use specialty products to promote the program by selling it at the Market, in local storefronts, an online store, promoting it on social media, and more. Market merchandise can also make a great prize for social media giveaways and free gifts for Market vendors, sponsors or even visitors.



SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

CURRENT APPROACH

One of the most popular ways that Richmond citizens, businesses, and organizations are supporting the market is through donations. Over the last five years, the Richmond Parks Department has received donations from over 25 community partners. One of the market's primary partners is Reid Health who, as part of its mission to improve the health of the community, partners with the Richmond Parks Department to fund the SNAP Double Dollars Program.

While sponsorships support the Market's programs, existing events also provide supplemental income on a seasonal and annual basis. There is an opportunity to utilize existing Department and Market programs to increase the frequency and types of events offered at the winter and summer market.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING A SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM AND A SET OF SPECIALTY EVENTS TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE DONATIONS AND ATTENDANCE FEES TO INCREASE MARKET FUNDS.

NEXT STEPS

In order to increase merchandise sales by a minimum of 5 % each year, the Richmond Farmers Market could start by:

1. Create a Richmond Farmers Market sponsorship program that provides multiple tiers of support that accommodate the resources of residents, local businesses, organizations and municipal organizations. Ensure that the sponsorship program offers quantifiable value to potential sponsors.
2. Steward donor relationships year round to show support and appreciation to Market donors large and small.
3. Grow the capacity of specialty events such as the Farm to Fork Fundraising Dinner through additional event tickets, program marketing and unique attendee experience opportunities. As needed, gradually increase the price of tickets to allow for greater profit margins.
4. Grow the Tuesday Twilight Market program through vendor participation. Consider establishing a separate application and approval process for the Tuesday Twilight Market to ensure vendor availability and attendance. Do not necessarily restrict the number of similar products initially to bolster vendor participation.
5. Consider establishing a fee structure for specialty RFM classes and demonstrations.
6. Using collected data and metrics, create a yearly appreciation strategy and associated publication materials for market partners, donors, sponsors and volunteers. Include this information in the annual Sponsorship Package to reinforce the value Sponsors will receive.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING | CULTIVATING | NURTURING | SPROUTING | HARVESTING



SPONSORSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

MARKET DAY SPONSOR \$500	Booth space at one market day.	Name and logo in 1 social media post with sponsor link. Name and logo on RFM newsletter and website.	
NEIGHBORHOOD SPONSOR \$1,00	Booth space at two market days. Booth space at additional market days can be purchased for \$150 ea.	Name and logo in 2 social media posts with a sponsor link. Name and logo on RFM newsletter, website and market signage.	
SEASONAL SPONSOR \$5,000	Booth space at all market days (excluding Tuesday Twilight Markets). Booth space at additional market days can be purchased for \$150 ea.	Name and logo in 8 social media posts with a sponsor link. Name and logo on RFM newsletter, website and market signage.	
PRESENTING SPONSOR \$10,000	Booth space at all market days (including Tuesday Twilight Markets).	Name and logo in 12 social media posts with a sponsor link. Name and logo on RFM newsletter, website and market signage.	Sponsor mentioned at all special events held throughout the year. Opportunity to host a special event at the market of their choosing.

CATALYST PROJECT: SPONSORSHIP PACKAGE

SPONSORS MAKE UP A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF AN EVENT'S BUDGET – BUT THEY ALSO WANT TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE GETTING A RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT.

The Richmond Farmers Market can make a more concerted pitch to potential sponsors by identifying options that are flexible, enticing and most importantly valuable to individuals and local businesses and organizations. Sponsorship can be a win-win situation by aligning private company and public organization goals with local Market values. In the end the Market receives additional revenue and the sponsor receives a broader reach, new and engaged customers, and the ability to support the community where they run their business.

Case Study

Woodinville Farmers Market Sponsorship Package

<https://woodinvillefarmersmarket.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-WFM-Sponsorship-Brochure-digital.pdf>



OPERATIONS

CURRENT APPROACH

The market fees are used to support the promotion and operations of the market. Approved vendors can choose to pay a booth fee seasonally or per market. If a vendor chooses to pay per market, the cost of a booth is \$15. For season pass holders, there are three options to choose from ranging from \$200 to \$300 on a seasonal basis.

While the existing market vendor pass options provide flexibility, the daily pass can create unnecessary competition for season pass holders when it comes to a peak, seasonal produce including tomatoes and sweet corn. This unintended vendor competition puts those seasons pass holders, who provided limited offerings in early market months, at a disadvantage during the peak of the market season.

Vendor fees for the Market are projected to account for 24% of the program's revenue. This percentage has remained consistent since 2020. As the Market's popularity continues to increase, the opportunity to capitalize on the growth through additional vendor revenue also increases. To capture this additional revenue, small monetary adjustments, process improvements will need to be made on an annual basis. As vendor fees are increased, the benefits available to vendors through seasonal passes and specialty vending opportunities need to be considered and developed to ensure that the value of attendance and participation remains high.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ADJUST THE VENDOR FEES AND APPLICATION PROGRAM OF THE RICHMOND FARMERS MARKET TO INCREASE PROGRAM REVENUE ANNUALLY.

NEXT STEPS

In order to increase merchandise sales by a minimum of 5 % each year, the Richmond Farmers Market could start by:

1. Annually connect with vendors to determine what (if any) benefits they feel could enhance their participation in the Market program. Depending on their feedback, adjust the seasonal pass holder benefits accordingly.
2. Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the day passes in generating additional revenue and impacts on season pass holders. Day passes for Saturday markets should always be more costly, with less benefits, than season pass fees.
3. Adjust the Tuesday Twilight market process to allow for the purchase of daily vendor passes. Encourage local businesses to participate if they offer goods and services.
4. Increase the Vendor Seasonal Pass costs by 5% following this planning process, and assess the need to increase fees at least every other year. As fees increase, identify new benefits and value offerings to vendors.
5. Work with vendors to identify the barriers to accepting credit card payments. Work with vendors who do use credit cards payments to educate and encourage other vendors to do the same.
6. If warranted, explore the creation of a Market Bucks Program to relieve vendors from credit card fees while also providing an administrative fee to the Market program.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING | CULTIVATING | NURTURING | SPROUTING | HARVESTING



OPERATIONS: JACK ELSTRO PLAZA



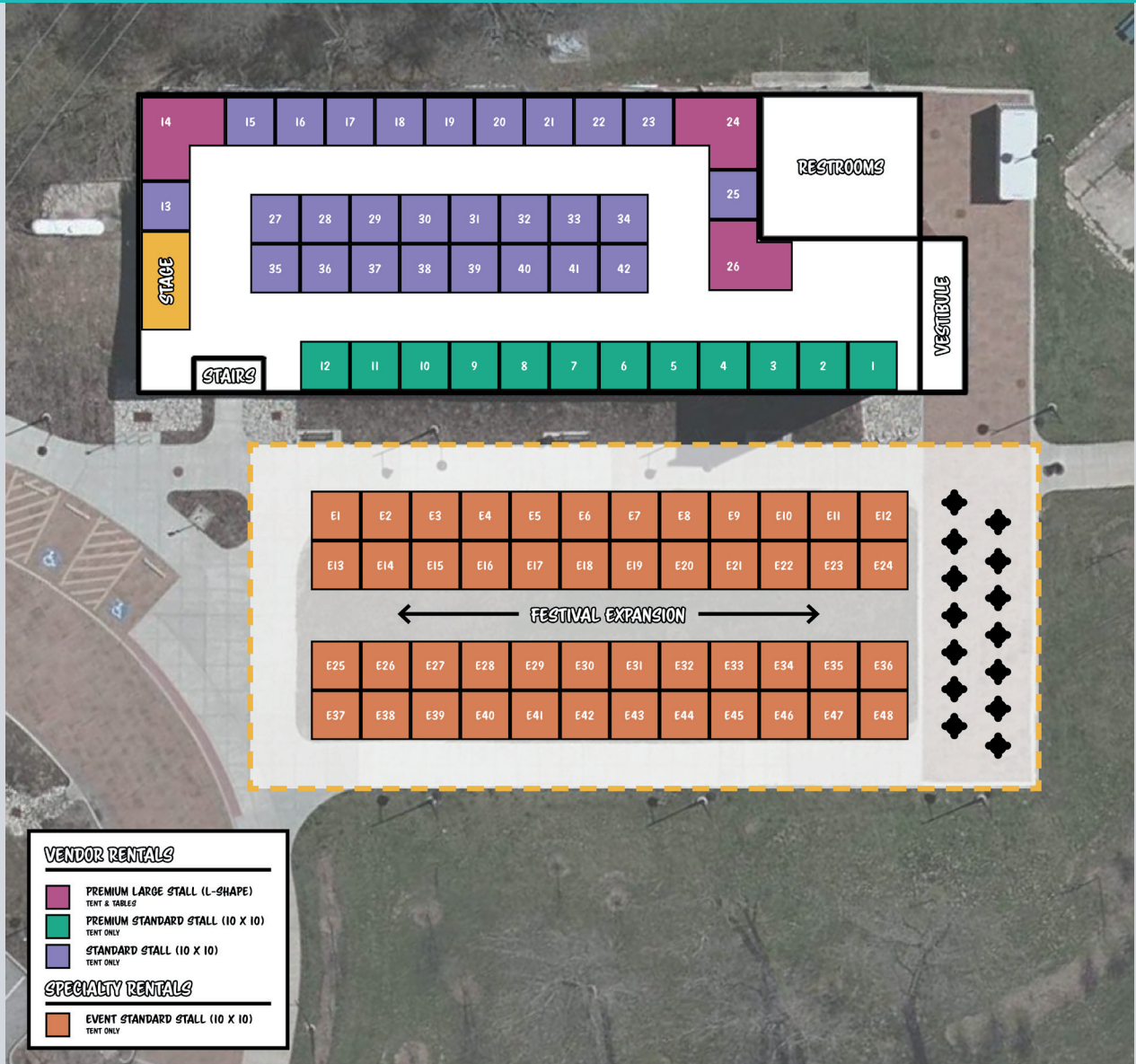
CATALYST PROJECT: INCREASE VENDOR PARTICIPATION

INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES CAN YIELD INCREASED REVENUES, BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS HAVE TO MEAN VENDORS ARE PAYING MORE.

Increasing vendor participation can and should occur through improvements in market attendance, overall market capacity and adjustments to fee structures. By adjusting the layout of vendor booths, both market venues can increase their total capacity or prioritize booth space, allowing more vendors to participate and in some cases encourage them to pay a higher rate.



OPERATIONS: STARR GENNETT



CATALYST PROJECT: INCREASE VENDOR PARTICIPATION

INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES CAN YIELD INCREASED REVENUES, BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS HAVE TO MEAN VENDORS ARE PAYING MORE.

Increasing vendor participation can and should occur through improvements in market attendance, overall market capacity and adjustments to fee structures. By adjusting the layout of vendor booths, both market venues can increase their total capacity or prioritize booth space, allowing more vendors to participate and in some cases encourage them to pay a higher rate.



INVESTING IN IMPROVEMENTS

CURRENT APPROACH

The Richmond Farmers Market rotates between two facilities depending on the season. Summer markets (May - October) are held at the Jack Elstro Plaza on Sixth Street in downtown Richmond.

While it's a good problem to have, as the market continues to grow and become more successful, it will require additional space in terms of product and equipment loading and unloading, vendor booth space, and parking for customers.

Additionally, according to the 2022 community and vendors survey results, participants have expressed the desire for facility improvements including, additional seating, and covered structure at Jack Elstro Plaza, and building improvements including heat, enhanced acoustics, additional on-site parking and an enhanced drop off for vendors to use at Starr-Gennett.

While the Department of Parks and Recreation is also proactively planning for capital expenses, additional revenues and budget surpluses within the Market fund can allow for physical improvements to happen at a quicker pace.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

STRATEGICALLY PLANNING FOR PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ENHANCEMENT MARKET VENUES.

NEXT STEPS

In order to increase merchandise sales by a minimum of 5 % each year, the Richmond Farmers Market could start by:

Priority Projects- Jack Elstro Plaza

1. Install in-ground bollards to control parking on site.
2. Install electric monument signage.
3. Add and upgrade utility services to allow for public Wi-Fi, and adequate electricity and security for community events.
4. Construct a shade structure.
5. Construct a permanent Farmers Market enclosure.
6. Transition the management and oversight of the adjacent parking lot to the Department of Parks and Recreation.
7. Explore the addition of on-site social interaction opportunities including fitness equipment and interactive seating elements.
8. Renovate the existing pavilion to address current and future maintenance needs.

Priority Projects- Starr Gennett

1. Improve building heating and electrical systems to provide a comfortable winter setting.
2. Adjust the vendor layout within the building to maximize the number of vendors that can participate.
3. Clear overgrown vegetation in designated areas to establish a Riverwalk for park patrons to enjoy, increase visibility and discourage vandalism and other criminal activities.
4. Construct an outdoor event space.
5. Provide a historical marker on-site that provides information on the previous site uses and buildings.
6. Utilize the Winter Market as an opportunity to promote the historical site to the community.

How does this goal support the market values?

ROOTING | CULTIVATING | NURTURING | SPROUTING | HARVESTING



INVESTING IN IMPROVEMENTS



RESULTS: ACTIVATED AND SUCCESSFUL MARKETS

HAPPY CUSTOMERS, SATISFIED VENDORS AND VALUED SPONSORS WILL RESULT IN ACTIVE SEASONAL MARKETS AND INCREASED REVENUES.

As Market revenues increase, additional funds can be set aside for physical improvements at varying scales. While there are varying grant programs and funding mechanisms available to the City, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Richmond Farmers Market, having the ability to fund items without grant assistance will allow the program to grow exponentially.

The images (opposite page and following pages) illustrate how proposed physical improvements can facilitate and enhance Market programs in the future.

FUTURE JACK ELSTRO PLAZA SUMMER MARKET EVENTS





FUTURE JACK ELSTRO PLAZA SUMMER MARKET EVENTS





FUTURE STARR GENNETT WINTER MARKET EVENTS









Richmond Farmers
MARKET



TAYLOR
SIEFKER
WILLIAMS
design group

