

EASTERN MARKET 2025 STRATEGIC PLANNING STUDY
PUBLIC WORKSHOP KEY TAKEAWAYS
JULY 15, 2015

1. GEOGRAPHY

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY OF THE PUBLIC CORE?

- **Locals have a different view** of the market boundary that is a broader definition than less frequent visitors who come on Saturdays.
- **There are two different markets:** corned beef v. veggies

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY OF THE MARKET DISTRICT?

- It includes **all businesses that support the market**
- There is a **big barrier between the Sheds and Gratiot Central Market** and the businesses south of Gratiot. But for locals, Gratiot is a part of the Market.
- The **transition points between major roads into the Market district are important and need some work**, including Gratiot and connections with Brush Park and I-75. Intersections need improvements and the Market needs clearer access points. Capture both sides of Gratiot for the Market brand and fix freeway entrance.
- The market district has an influence over the surrounding areas.
- Visual district cues: graffiti, food based businesses and smells (e.g. Milano's).
- The area to the northeast should be integrated into the district.
- Walkability to other nearby neighborhoods (Midtown/Downtown) needs to be strengthened.
- **The Market district includes vacancy, industry and warehouses that feel authentically Detroit.**

WHEN DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU'VE ARRIVED AT THE MARKET?

- It's a feeling: when you are in the Sheds, **when you see Bert's, when you see** people carrying groceries, **when you see** people, street art, etc.
- Arrival should be much easier.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Consider walkability and **wayfinding**/clusters of activity.
- Interest in greater identity, "more than just cheap cucumbers," needs murals and district art
- **Protect green space and consider more places to sit and gather**
- Need greater integration with Dequindre Cut
- Need to work around the trucks, they are an essential part of the Market.

2. VISITING THE MARKET

WHAT ELEMENTS OF THE MARKET ARE AUTHENTIC?

- Food processing/packaging businesses, the pedestrian bridge, Gratiot Central Market, Vivio's
- **"Vendors are the heartbeat of Eastern Market"**
- Cleanliness is an improvement
- The people: farmers, vendors, retailers, patrons, melting pot atmosphere, mix between the old and new, diversity and inclusiveness is unique, ability to talk to farmers
- Some confusion and parking mess adds to authenticity

WHAT IS MISSING FROM THE MARKET?

- Late night food, **more diverse/ethnic cuisine, more entertainment**, greater safety presence
- **More benches and seating**, green space, pocket parks, places for children to play, shade.

- **Wayfinding to help people move beyond the core, clearer circulation routes**
- “What’s new?” – specials, information about the market on screens

WHERE DO YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE IN THE MARKET?

- Wide variety for different people = different experiences
- Perception of safety is an issue

WHERE DO YOU GO WHEN YOU COME TO THE MARKET? WHY?

- Sheds: farmers, growers, beekeepers, pastry-makers actual stakeholders peddling their products

HOW COULD THE MARKET IMPROVE?

- Clean up the market, alleys in particular
- **Increase the variety of vendors to match/attract variety of customers**
- **Focused seating area with entertainment**
- **Protected bike lanes, more walkability, less internal vehicular traffic, pedestrian management**
- Business directory to help people navigate the entire Market
- Russell street cars divide the market experience, close off for foot traffic on Saturdays?
- Expanded Shed days/hours
- More benches, outdoor seating to sit back and relax, people watch, and take in the Market

3. GETTING AROUND

WHAT ARE THE BEST & WORST STREETS FOR WALKING?

- **Approach from surrounding neighborhoods needs work:** not a good route from Lafayette Park, the route from Midtown feels safer since Brewster was razed, few people walk from Midtown
- Corner at St. Aubin is really dangerous, as is the fast traffic at 75 and Gratiot
- Consider downtown worker walking up Gratiot and pedestrian traffic from all directions.
- Need better access to Gratiot Market, bridge too crowded with vendors

WHICH STREETS DO TRUCKS USE?

- Trucks block traffic flow and truck parking is disorganized, use signage to designate truck/car parking, trucks treat streets like a parking lot, which is dangerous and causes damage to streets
- Would hate to see any more restrictions on the trucks, trucks are part of the market.

IF YOU WERE TO BIKE TO THE MARKET, HOW WOULD YOU GET THERE?

- Biking through Eastern Market does not feel safe, Russell is unfriendly, biking on Mack and Woodward is scary
- “It’s more dangerous riding to Eastern Market than anywhere else”

WHERE DO YOU PARK? & OTHER CIRCULATION CONCERNS...

- **Use placemaking to make garage a destination**
- Need more clearly defined and better organized **vendor parking areas** and regulations to avoid blocking others, related education

HOW COULD GETTING TO THE MARKET BE IMPROVED?

- **Put up signs to direct auto parking and truck parking**
- **Need for a traffic plan for the Market, clear trucks from certain roads**
- **Need to support vendor parking, circulation and safety**
- Keep mix of businesses, including wholesale, retail etc. – makes Market vibrant
- Use technology for wayfinding (kiosks, web-based, etc.)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- **Clearly define vendor areas to prevent “vendor sprawl”**
- Truck parking in the middle of the street during public market hours is problematic
- Need to think about how Market shoppers coexist with Market tourists
- **Eastern Market needs more signage about hours, events, etc.**

4. ECONOMY & JOBS

WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE MARKET?

- For businesses: opportunity for development

WHICH STREETS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESS?

- What are we talking about when we say “business” – all different scales in the market district with distinct traffic, customer, product flows (three groups: growers, processors and retail)
- Gratiot for wholesale and distribution and Russell for retail
- Streets that will bring people in and out efficiently around the nucleus, the Sheds.
- **The entirety of the market process is important: keep selling, producing, manufacturing, packaging as local as possible**

WHAT EXISTING CONDITIONS ARE NEEDED FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS?

- Security, support services, customer base beyond Saturday, better everyday advertising throughout the state, focus on food (rather than flowers), promote special events
- **Support new business incubation in the Market**
- **Streamline process for business to locate here.**
- **EMC should participate in development of the area and work to prevent gentrification.**
- Site control and loan acquisition, connections to lenders, business accelerator for Eastern Market with capital loan
- **Cacophony of businesses (types, sizes, ages)**
- **Different sector opportunities: IT, R&D, small business, food incubation – “Food Tech”**

WHAT NEW CONDITIONS ARE NEEDED FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS?

- **Growth assistance and a retention program for existing businesses**
- Incentive programs for new potential businesses
- Help get site control and stimulate other kinds of development
- Consider how/where/who when it comes to housing
- Consider growing that is close to processors and new technologies for growers (irrigation)
- Incubate new and emerging food entrepreneurs and pop-ups in the neighborhoods
- **Outreach to ethnic (Latino, Arab American, African, etc.) communities to draw visitors and attract new vendors, businesses, residents**
- **Expanding entrepreneurial support and resources plus raising awareness of current resources and fostering connections to them**
- Expand employment opportunities for entrepreneurs, small businesses, and large businesses to be a viable employment district for young, experienced, and older employees and businesses
- Help repair the infrastructure of the market so that existing businesses can operate more efficiently and safely. “Plug and play” sites and facilities.

DO YOU SEE THE MARKET AS A JOB CENTER? WHY/WHY NOT?

- Continue to brand, educate and market the *new* Eastern Market across S.E. Michigan
- Health, wellness, nutrition, ancillary sectors (massage, yoga)