

ANN ARBOR FARMERS MARKET

Infrastructure Improvement Project

Frequently Asked Questions

HOW DID THE IDEA FOR THIS PROJECT COME ABOUT? WHAT'S THE GOAL?

The need for improved market amenities, particularly to accommodate vendors during the winter months, has been a reoccurring theme among vendors, customers, PMAC and market staff for a number of years. Within the last three years PMAC and city staff have evaluated the level of need for such improvements. In April 2014 PMAC conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the market's physical infrastructure. Following that exercise, surveys were created to understand vendor and customer priorities for market improvements.



Survey responses from 350 market customers and 61 vendors identified two shared priority areas for desired improvements among both vendors and customers: winterization efforts and an increased capacity for covered vendor stall space at the market.

The proposed infrastructure improvements for the Ann Arbor Farmers Market focus on a new market structure to expand vendor stall capacity year-round. The project is intended to serve the market's vendors, customers and staff as the market evolves and continues to provide a critical outlet for local food in the community and serves as a central community gathering space throughout the year. In recent

years, innovative farming practices and increased demand for year-round local food sources have emphasized the importance of winter operations at the Ann Arbor Farmers Market. Farmers are in need of consistent retail outlets that provide adequate shelter and climate control for produce, even during the harshest months of winter. Furthermore there is a need to provide more equitable stall accommodations to the market's 120 vendors by providing additional covered stall spaces in the summer within the bounds of the existing market.

HOW WILL THE PROJECT BE FUNDED?

The Public Market Advisory Commission has supported the use of \$350,000.00 of the market's assigned available fund balance to be used in conjunction with \$100,000.00 in previously approved park millage funds and \$129,000.00 in developer park contributions earmarked in the developer agreement for 413 E. Huron. These three funding sources account for \$579,000 in currently available funds for the Market Infrastructure Improvement Project. Other funding partnerships and opportunities are being explored as estimates of the total project cost are still being developed.

WHEN WILL CONSTRUCTION TAKE PLACE?

This project is currently in the design review process. Once designs have been finalized, construction documents will be created. The construction contract will be put out for bid and then sent to City Council for approval. Depending on the timing of these steps, construction could start in 2016. The actual project construction schedule will be developed in such a way as to impose as little impact as possible on market operations. Construction will not take place on market days (Wednesdays or Saturdays) and is estimated to take several months for completion.

HOW MANY VENDORS WILL FIT INSIDE THE NEW SPACE?

Initial vendor stall layout options allow for 42 spaces during the months of April through December. The aisles can be narrowed during the months of January through March, when the building will function as an indoor market space. During these winter months, a layout of 58 vendor spaces has

been proposed.

WILL THIS BUILDING ACCOMMODATE MORE VENDORS AT THE MARKET?

Yes. The current configuration of the open air space where vendors setup tents at the market allows for 18 vendor spaces. Preliminary vendor layouts within the new structure would provide 24 additional spaces April through December for a total of 42 vendor spaces. On average, 30 vendors attend the market during the months of January through March. With the proposed indoor stall layout, 28 additional vendors could be accommodated in the indoor space, for a total of 58 vendor spaces during these winter months.



HOW WILL PARKING BE IMPACTED?

The current design for the project would reduce the number of available public parking spaces on non-market days by 15-20. It is estimated that there will be a reduction of 10-15 vendor parking spaces on market days.

City staff are evaluating transportation and parking concerns as an ongoing component of the public process for this project. Loading zones will be identified for several areas surrounding the market. Additional bike parking options will also be evaluated.

WHY NOT JUST WINTERIZE THE EXISTING STRUCTURE?

Several winterization options were considered in the initial evaluation for this project. One major complication of making adjustments to the existing structure is the inability of the existing vendor canopy steel structural system to handle the increased wind loads which would result from adding such features. This comes with an unknown cost for retrofitting the current structure, in addition to the cost of fabricating and installing winterized siding. Additionally, the winterization of the existing market structure would not increase the number of covered stall spaces available to market vendors throughout the year. The addition of a new structure provides both functional winter space as well as covered stall spaces for all vendors year-round.

WILL THE BUILDING BE USED AS RENTAL SPACE?

Yes, the building will be available for rental. Rentals are a supplementary form of revenue for the market budget and help offset the cost of market operations. However, the primary function of the space is to accommodate more farmers market vendors throughout the entire year. Therefore rentals will be limited to events and reservations happening outside of market hours.

WILL THE BUILDING BE HEATED?

The building will be heated on market days during the months of January through March when the market is held indoors. During the months of April through December, the large bifold and/or garage doors on the sides and ends of the new market structure will be opened to mirror the open-air environment of the existing market.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION OR PROVIDE FEEDBACK?

Project information is posted in the market office as well as online, www.a2gov.org/market. You can email your questions and comments to the Public Market Advisory Commission, pmac@a2gov.org. You may also fill out a comment card in the market office on Wednesdays and Saturdays (7 a.m. to 3 p.m.).