



Flint Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Thursday
August 27, 2009

Assessment Team



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Market Hours: Year Round. Tuesdays and Thursdays 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Location: 420 East Boulevard Drive

Market Staff: Dick Ramsdell (Market Manager), Nancy Campbell (Office Manager), Karianne Martus (Outreach Coordinator)

Market Day 56 degrees at 9 a.m., 65 at 11:30 a.m., 69 at 2:30 p.m.

Comments: Late summer, cool gray day, breezy but sunny and warmer in the afternoon.

Age of Market: A market was originally established in Flint in 1905. The current market was built in 1940.

Fees: \$180/month for outdoor vendor spaces; \$1.80/square foot/month for indoor vendor space

Vendors: 100 total vendors, 48 on the day of assessment

Market Sales

Estimate: \$25,936

Market

Attendance 2,764

Estimate:

Website: <http://www.flintfarmersmarket.com>

Introduction: The Flint Farmers Market is a year round public market with a mission “to help build community defined by the common goals of sustainable use of our environment and conscious awareness of what we eat.” The market offers a wide range of quality food and craft products.

In 2009, The Flint Farmers Market was voted “most LOVED farmers market in America.”

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I. Customer Counts

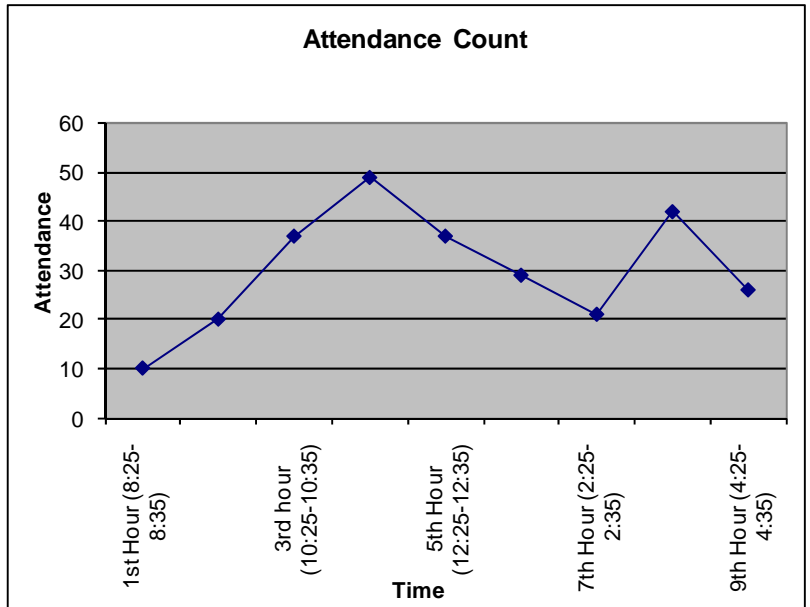
Attendance

1 st Hour (8:25-8:35)	10
2 nd Hour (9:25-9:35)	20
3 rd hour (10:25-10:35)	37
4 th Hour (11:25-11:35)	49
5 th Hour (12:25-12:35)	37
6 th Hour (1:25-1:35)	29
7 th Hour (2:25-2:35)	21
8 th Hour (3:25-3:35)	42
9 th Hour (4:25-4:35)	26

Total: 271

Estimated Total # of cars: 1,626

Estimated Total #
of Shoppers: 2,764



Comments: This attendance count represents the total number of cars entering the parking lot during a ten minute interval each hour. Cars were counted by standing on the roof of the market. We multiplied the estimated total number of cars by 1.7, a multiplier commonly used by the market, to estimate the total number of shoppers.

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II. Dot Surveys

Question 1: How many ADULTS are in your shopping party this afternoon?

	8 – 11 a.m.		11 – 1 p.m.		1 – 5 p.m.		Overall Total	Overall Percentage
1	44	46%	32	44%	32	39%	108	43%
2	38	40%	33	45%	33	40%	104	42%
3	9	9%	4	5%	13	16%	26	10%
4	4	4%	3	4%	2	2%	9	4%
5	0	0%	1	1%	2	2%	3	1%
6+	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	95	38%	73	29%	82	33%	250	100%

Mean: 1.8

Median: 2

Mode: 1

Comments: The mean or average number of adults per shopping party was 1.8. The median was 2 and mode, or most common response was one person.

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Question 2: How much did you/will you spend at the farmers market TODAY?

	8 – 11 a.m.		11 – 1 p.m.		1 – 5 p.m.		Overall Total	Overall Percentage
\$0	1	1%	2	3%	0	0%	3	1%
\$5	7	7%	9	13%	13	15%	29	12%
\$10	18	19%	14	19%	19	23%	51	20%
\$15	18	19%	13	18%	6	7%	37	15%
\$20	22	23%	19	26%	20	24%	61	24%
\$25	13	14%	1	1%	9	11%	23	9%
\$30	5	5%	6	8%	9	11%	20	8%
\$35	4	4%	3	4%	2	2%	9	4%
\$40	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
\$45	1	1%	2	3%	1	1%	4	2%
\$50+	4	4%	3	4%	5	6%	12	5%
Total	95	38%	72	29%	84	33%	251	100%

Mean: \$16.89

Median: \$20

Mode: \$20

Comments: The mean or average expenditure of shoppers was \$16.89. The median was \$20, meaning that half of the shoppers spent less than \$20 and half spent more than \$20. More shoppers spent \$20 than any other single amount.

Estimated Market Day Sales: A conservative estimate of total market sales for the day is developed by dividing the estimated total number of adult customers (2,764) by the mean number of people customers were shopping for (1.8) and multiplying by the mean customer expenditure (\$16.89). This method very conservatively estimates total market sales for the day at \$25,936.

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Question 3: What is your PRIMARY form of payment at the farmers market today?

	8 – 11 a.m.		11 – 1 p.m.		1 – 5 p.m.		Overall Total	Overall Percentage
Cash	86	91%	62	85%	75	88%	223	88%
Check	0	0%	2	3%	0	0%	2	1%
Credit	1	1%	2	3%	2	2%	5	2%
Debit	0	0%	2	3%	0	0%	2	1%
Bridge Card	4	4%	1	1%	4	5%	9	4%
Project FRESH	4	4%	3	4%	4	5%	11	4%
Other	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	1	0%
Total	95	38%	73	29%	85	33%	253	100%

Comments: The majority of shoppers use cash as their primary form of payment. Less than 10% of shoppers use either Project FRESH or a Bridge Card. This may be due to the fact that the assessment is late in the month and SNAP benefits become available between the 2nd and 9th of each month. Team members did hear a number of people talk about using multiple forms of payment (e.g. cash and their Bridge Card).

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Question 4: How useful do you find the Flint Farmers Market's weekly e-mail blasts?

	8 – 11 a.m.		11 – 1 p.m.		1 – 5 p.m.		Overall Total	Overall Percentage
Use to plan market visits and purchases	2	2%	0	0%	1	1%	3	1%
Always read	2	2%	2	3%	1	1%	5	2%
Usually read	0	0%	2	3%	5	6%	7	3%
Receive but seldom read	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%
Do not receive	80	88%	54	76%	65	77%	199	81%
Other	7	8%	13	18%	11	13%	31	13%
Total	91	37%	71	29%	84	34%	246	100%

Comments: About an hour into the assessment, we turned the other category into “I don’t have email” because a number of people expressed this question did not pertain to them. The vast majority (81%) of participants did not receive the weekly e-mail blast. We began collecting e-mail addresses for those that were interested and have shared them with market management.

Market management was surprised by these results. There are more than 3,000 people on their e-mail blast list and they would have thought more people at the market would be familiar with it. Team members suggested that the market have a sign-up sheet somewhere on-site.

In November or December, the market will be holding a customer appreciation event. They will capture e-mail addresses at this event.

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Question 5: How often do you shop at this market?

	8 – 11 a.m.		11 – 1 p.m.		1 – 5 p.m.		Overall Total	Overall Percentage
Regularly Year round	30	30%	27	38%	25	30%	82	32%
Regularly in the summer	37	37%	25	35%	27	32%	89	35%
Few Times/year	24	24%	14	20%	25	30%	63	25%
1st time and I'll return	7	7%	4	6%	4	5%	15	6%
Today only (Just visiting)	1	1%	1	1%	3	4%	5	2%
Total	99	39%	71	28%	84	33%	254	100%

Comments: The Flint Farmers Market draws a substantial amount of regular shoppers. Results were in line with what market management expected. Their winter business is typically 1/3 of their summer business.

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III. Constructive Comments/Observations

Physical Characteristics. What is working well?

Market Access

- Adequate parking
- Three entrances
- Extremely easy to find, well marked off highway
- Excellent accessibility, handicap accessible
- There are many entry points to the stall areas inside and outside. The main entry areas are well marked and visible.
- Easy, plenty of parking
- Good location with the number of people that were at the market

Flow of People and Traffic

- Steady flow of people, but somewhat slow
- Plenty of parking
- Also good control of traffic
- Entries to parking area are clear
- Circulation in the market seems to work
- Well doubled sided stalls in most places.
- Regular flow of traffic starting around 9:30 a.m.
- Great to see the number of senior citizen buses dropping off shoppers
- Very easy for customers to get around, must be crazy on the weekends

Liability Issues

- Permanent structures and built in stalls would seem to reduce any liability issues
- Walkways and edges are clearly marked
- None seen

Organization of the Market

- The market is nicely organized, although it might be nice to have all artisans located in the same area.
- Indoor and outdoor vendors seem to be mixed with local/wholesale/craft. Inside vendors seem to have anchors. Aisles are wide. There is a map in the main building.
- Great organization
- Very well organized and signed

Access to Electricity and Telephone Line

- Run to individual vendor spaces as needed

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- It appeared that there was electricity available in the inside shed for the cooler, etc; several outlets in the outside shed as well.
- Not a problem for indoor vendors, many outside vendors have lights. *During follow-up conversations, team members learned that electricity is a major issue for the market which currently operates at its electrical capacity.*
- Good

Additional comments

- Wi-Fi is available, lots of seating inside and outside
- Good access for vendors at stalls.
- Good lighting in outdoor pavilion
- Great to see the surrounding community's senior center buses that stopped.
- Wonderful green space and areas for customers to sit at picnic tables or benches.

Physical Characteristics. What could be improved?

Market Access

- 1st time- drove past the first entrance. Went through bank entrance and entered market off the back
- A better crosswalk from the bike trail/sidewalk across the street. *Following the assessment, a curb was cut in this location. The crosswalk is now used regularly.*

Flow of People and Traffic

- Somewhat of a problem with cars driving between the two sections. Also, some vendors left early and pulled out in the middle of traffic. The drive should be barricaded so that only vendors can enter/exit.
- Are there bike racks? I didn't see anyone using them.

Liability Issues

- Not apparent

Organization of the Market

- In inclement weather, it might be helpful to have a covered walkway between the two sections.

Access to Electricity and Telephone Line

- Food vendor used generator

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Market Atmosphere. What is working well?

Market "Feel"

- GREAT smells- basil and cinnamon doughnuts in different locations
- Cooking food smells wonderful!
- Great market feel
- Pleasant atmosphere. Vendors are friendly, laid-back, and happy to carry on a conversation.
- Good market, customers seem to enjoy themselves

Shopper demographics

- Average age was between 40 and 50 in the morning with some children, looked like a lot of retirees. Younger people came at lunch.
- Lots of racial/ethnic diversity
- Great diversity on all counts
- Very diverse, elderly, young mothers with strollers, many different ethnic groups, affluent as well as apparent low income.
- Market attendees were mostly over 55 years old, Caucasian and middle class.

Interactions, Conversations

- People conversing in groups with vendors
- Vendors were friendly and engaging with shoppers. There seemed to be some people who came to tour and hangout with friends.
- Not much interactions among shoppers
- Many families shopping together, conversations taking place between vendors and customers
- Vendors were calling people by name, good relationships

Educational or Entertainment Activities

- Music in year-round market building - mostly oldies from a radio station
- None today (Thursday), but local music groups are scheduled every Saturday

Other

- Very relaxed

Market Atmosphere. What could be improved upon?

Market "feel"

- Music playing in main shed (not necessarily live music)
- Music playing to create an exciting atmosphere

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Shopper demographics

- More African-Americans considering the demographics of Flint.

Interactions, conversations

- A good number of people were unwilling to do dot survey. This could be due to people hurrying during their lunch hour or due to the fact that we were conducting the assessment directly across from the spinal check group.
- Quite a few people in a hurry (on their lunch break)
- Didn't appear that people were spending a lot of time at the market, not necessarily a gathering place.

Educational or Entertainment Activities

- There aren't any intentional entertainment opportunities or educational displays
- Live music would be nice
- Bring back the winter cooking competitions

Other

- A long market day!

Vendors and Products. What is working well?

Product mix

- Lots of variety - meat, dairy, floral, vegetables, and fruits
- Lots of vendors with large stalls
- Super product mix
- Wonderful mix of product. Besides paper products, I could do my weekly grocery shopping here.

Product Quality

- Everything looks delicious
- Great
- Products seemed fresh
- Seemed good

Signage

- Every vendor has a sign with name and product or location.
- Very visible signage
- The vendor signs are uniform and attractively displayed.
- Some vendors have good signs

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Display

- Vendors all make a great effort to display their produce to good effect. Cut fruit was on display. Many vendors had table cloths and well made price signs.
- Good displays
- Products neatly displayed
- Clean, neat, and some were sharp

Customer Service

- Vendors are very friendly but not pushy
- Good customer service. Vendors are engaging.
- Seemed good

Food Safety

- Samples were available to customers. Cut fruit on display. Prep. Food stalls all had sinks and hand washing stations.
- Meat and cheese are refrigerated, etc.
- Seemed good

Other, Including Vendor Comments

- Sales have picked up from last year. More EBT and Project FRESH coupons are being used.

Vendors and Products. What could be improved?

Product mix

- Not clear whether or not the vendors grow their own product or if all products are grown in Michigan.
- Maybe offer more value added products, i.e. sauces, jams and jellies, dips, and salsas, etc.
- No "greens" for African- American culture, could be a money maker

Product Quality

- Difficulty to distinguish what product is grown in Michigan/not
- One vendor had bruised product and did a good job labeling it that way

Signage

- Need to get rid of paper plate signs and get better ones

Display

- Sometimes there were stalls that were a bit busy
- Lack of originality

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Customer Service

- What is the key purpose of markets' Market Master? Not immediately visible

Food Safety

- Watermelons were being halved and quartered in the market stall outside with no gloves.
- Handheld bacteria dispensers for the customers could be an addition.
- Is food safety information available to customers?

Other, Including Vendor comments

- One terminal for the market to cut down cost, could discuss with vendor in off season.

Food Assistance Programs. What is working well?

Project FRESH

- Bright yellow signs so people know what they're looking for
- Signs for Project FRESH are very visible, customers very appreciative!
- Great number of vendors accepting Project FRESH and Bridge Cards

SNAP Program (EBT, Bridge Cards)

- Lots of signs at vendors. Use not observed.
- Vendors signs to indicate that they accept Bridge Cards

Alternative Redemption Systems

- N/A
- Several vendors offering credit and debit

Signage

- Good signs for Project FRESH and EBT at individual vendors
- Project FRESH signs displayed prominently
- Produce grown in MI or not were clearly marked
- Very visible signage for Project FRESH program and EBT
- Great signage at and around the market.
- There were signs off of the 475 highway that made it easy to find for the first time.

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Food Assistance Programs. What could be improved?

SNAP Program (EBT, Bridge Cards)

- Uniform signage- bright orange or blue
- Central EBT station with wooden tokens

Alternative Redemption Systems

- Could consider central POSD and tokens
- Comment from respondent, didn't know about alternatives

Other

- It's difficult to access this because it is decentralized
- The EBT program