

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market Rapid Market Assessment

*Tuesday
September 29, 2009*



Assessment Team

Susan Smalley

Michigan State University

Cheryl Danley

Michigan State University

Joan Reed

Farmers & Artisans Market of Dearborn

John Hooper

Lansing City Market



Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Market Hours: June through mid-October
Thursdays 4:00 to 8:00 PM

Location: 15000 Southfield, Detroit
Bushnell Congregational Church parking lot

Web www.grdc.org

Market Sponsor: Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation

Market Staff: Pam Weinstein, Market Manager

Market Day Comments: Slightly overcast, light breeze, pleasant. Temperature in 70's.

Age of Market: Established in 2006

Fees: \$20/week or \$270 for 20 week season

Vendors:

Market Sales Estimate: \$6,656

Market Attendance Estimate: 600

RMA Team: Cheryl Danley, MSU
John Hooper, MIFMA
Joan Reed, MIFMA
Cheryl Danley, MSU

Introduction: This neighborhood market is located just off Detroit's Southfield freeway. Developed and supported by the Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation, it was developed to increase residents' access to good food and to provide a place for neighbors to gather and interact. The focus is on farmer-grown foods, with allowance for farmers to sell products that neighbors or family members grew. The market accepts Project FRESH coupons, Bridge Cards/EBT, credit and debit cards as well as cash. It hosts occasional special events and provides playground equipment and easy access parking.

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

I. Customer Counts

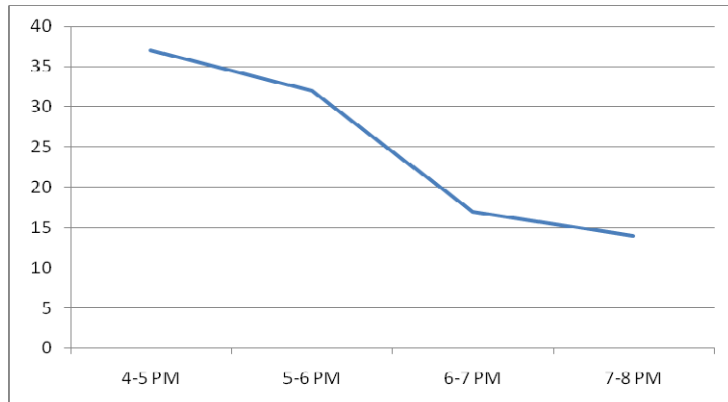
I. Estimated Attendance

1st Hour (4-5) count =37
 2nd Hour (5-6) count =32
 3rd Hour (6-7) count =17
 4th Hour (7-8) count =14

Total = 100

Estimated of total market
 customers = 600

Number of Customers Entering Market



Comments: Team members counted the number of adults entering the market for ten minutes of each hour. The total number of adult customers counted was multiplied by six to estimate total market attendance. This market starts strong with traffic slowing through the rest of the time. Over 2/3 of total customers entered the market during its first half.

Attendance by entrance and hour

	Tournier Street/ South		Church side/ North		Across sidewalk		Totals
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
4-5 PM	19	33%	5	38%	13	43%	37
5-6 PM	20	35%	3	35%	9	23%	32
6-7 PM	11	19%	3	23%	3	10%	17
7-8 PM	7	12%	2	15%	5	17%	14
Total	57		13		30		100

Comments: Over half the market customers entered the market from the south side, which is convenient for people parked in the lot as well as for those who may park on adjacent side streets.

Because most customers enter from the south and the information tent/table is located at the north end of the market, a sign at the south entrance might help more customers notice and take advantage of the information table.

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

II. Dot Surveys

Question 1: How many adults are in your shopping party today?

	4 – 5:20 p.m.		5:20 – 7:40 p.m.		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1	36	57%	56	64%	92	61%
2	19	30%	24	28%	43	29%
3	6	10%	3	3%	9	6%
4	2	3%	4	5%	6	4%
5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
6 or more	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Totals	63		87		150	

Mean: 1.5

Median: 1

Mode: 1

Comments: Nearly two-thirds of customers were shopping alone, or at least with no other adults. The mean or average number of adults in each shopping group was 1.5. The median and mode numbers of adults in each shopping group was 1.

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

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

	4 – 5:20 p.m.		5:20 – 7:40 p.m.		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	3	0.05	0		3	0.02
\$5	7	0.11	25	0.29	32	0.21
\$10	16	0.25	21	0.24	37	0.25
\$15	6	0.10	12	0.14	18	0.12
\$20	10	0.16	9	0.10	19	0.13
\$25	9	0.14	8	0.09	17	0.11
\$30	6	0.10	3	0.00	9	0.06
\$35	1	0.02	5	0.06	6	0.04
\$40	1	0.02	0	0.00	1	0.01
\$45	1	0.00	1	0.00	2	0.01
\$50 or more	3	0.05	2	0.00	5	0.03
Totals	63		86		149	

Mean: \$16.54

Median: \$15

Mode: \$10

Comments: People who walk through this market generally purchase something. Only three of those surveyed reported that they had bought or would buy nothing. The median or average expenditure was \$16.54. The median or middle expenditure was \$15, with half the expenditures more than this amount and half less than this amount. The modal or most frequent amount spent was \$10.

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

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 (600) by the mean number of adults in each shopping party (1.5) and multiplying by the mean customer expenditure (\$16.54). This method very conservatively estimates total market sales for the day at \$6,656.

Question 3: What was the most important reason you came to the market today?

	4:00 - 5:20 PM		5:20 - 7:40 PM		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Saw flyer	5	8%	4	5%	9	6%
GRDC eblast	0	0%	2	2%	2	1%
GRDC newsletter	1	2%	2	2%	3	2%
Neighborhood association	8	13%	10	11%	18	12%
WIC Office list	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Regular shopper	35	56%	41	47%	76	51%
Other	14	22%	28	32%	42	28%
Total	63		87		150	

Comments: With just over half of those surveyed indicating that they are “regular customers”, it is clear that the market has established itself with and for area residents. Although the team did not ask people who indicated “other” as the reason that they came to the market, several people mentioned seeing tents and/or signs on the freeway that reminded them to stop. Involvement with the neighborhood association was important for 12% of those surveyed. Although the flyer (6%) GRDC newsletter (2%) and GRDC eblast (1%) were indicated by few shoppers as the primary reason for their visit on this day, they may well serve as good reminders for some of the “regular” shoppers. In addition, the flyer may reach new people who are not already involved with GRDC, depending on how it is distributed. The WIC Office list did not generate shoppers on this market day, but it is important to note that the RMA was in late September. WIC Project FRESH coupons are distributed starting in June. By September, it may be that most coupons have already been redeemed.

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Question 4: What was your primary form of payment at the market today?

	4:00 - 5:20 PM		5:20 - 7:40 PM		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cash	59	95%	77	84%	136	88%
Credit/Debit card	0	0%	6	7%	6	4%
EBT/Bridge card/ SNAP	2	3%	7	8%	9	6%
Project FRESH	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Mo-Bucks coupon	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Other	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
Total	62		92		154	

Comments: Most (88%) market customers used cash. Although the market offers several alternative forms of payment, it will likely take time for both established and new customers to realize that they can use those alternatives. This pattern has occurred at several Michigan markets, with a slow start for customers to use electronic payment, but steady increases over time. Also, the RMA was conducted in late September. It is likely that EBT/Bridge Card/SNAP sales would be higher early in the month, just after benefits are distributed. By late in the month, many households may have used most or all of their funds. And it is likely that most Project FRESH benefits were used earlier in the summer. So this pattern of payment is probably not representative of the season as a whole.

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Question 5: What was your primary reason for visiting the market today?

	4:00-5:20 PM		5:20 - 7:40 PM		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Food items	19	30%	33	37%	52	34%
Atmosphere & experience	10	16%	13	15%	23	15%
Support local farmers	29	45%	33	37%	62	41%
Purchase organic	6	9%	6	7%	12	8%
Other	0	0%	4	4%	4	3%
Total	64		89		153	

Comments: When forced to choose just one primary reason for visiting the market, 41% of those surveyed said it was to support local farmers! Second, with 34% was for food items, with atmosphere (15%) and organic (8%) in third and fourth places. Supporting farmers and fresh food are typically top choices. For this market, located in a part of the city where residents have limited grocery options nearby, the strength of the desire to support farmers was surprising. Possibly contributing to this response is the presence in the market of farmers who are growing food in the city of Detroit as well as farmers and vendors who are both black and white, as are the market's customers.

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

III. Constructive Comments/Observations

Physical Characteristics. What is working well?

Access:

- Easy for people to come into market
- Parking seemed adequate on this evening
- Even though market is on an expressway service drive, there are entrances from two streets
- One customer mentioned seeing market tents from expressway to remind him it was market day

Flow of people and traffic:

- Easy flow of people
- Steady market traffic; room to move
- Good flow; not too congested
- Traffic on service drive past market generally not too fast

Liability Issues:

- Parking lot is in good repair
- Good barriers on both sides of market to separate cars and pedestrians

Organization of market:

- The market is very organized
- Well done; good mix of variety of offerings
- Easy to see all vendors; easy to find market tent
- Stalls are organized logically with easy access between
- Good organization with adequate space; everyone seemed to understand where they were to go

Other:

- Tents are visible from the road and they attract the curious onlooker
- On-site storage pod a huge plus!
- Market provision of tents, tables, chairs another huge plus!

Physical Characteristics. What could be improved?

Access:

- Parking is limited
- Parking may limit market traffic at some points
- May want to designate a drop-off and/or handicap parking area

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

- Challenge for drive-by potential customers. As market grows, this will become more of an issue

Flow of people and traffic:

- Publicize market hours to encourage a “second wave” of market traffic.

Liability Issues:

- Could be a problem if people have to park at a distance and walk to market
- Parking lot ingress and egress could be issue
- Licensing and/or product liability insurance

Access to electricity, phone line:

- Seems to be only at one end. As market grows, may need to explore ways to expand
- Market needed to buy wireless to provide EBT

Other:

- Lights would be nice for last part of market and pack-up, but electricity is a challenge

Market Atmosphere. What is working well?

Market feel:

- Warm, friendly
- Very friendly
- Warm, friendly
- Great atmosphere! Friendly vendors and customers

Shopper Demographics:

- Great cross-section; younger people and seniors; black and white; various income levels
- Diverse ages; great mix of races, incomes
- Diverse in age, race, ability; representing the neighborhood population well
- Seems to represent neighborhood well

Interactions, Conversations:

- Lots of people talking with neighbors; all friendly
- Many people stayed in market for quite a while
- Lots of conversations among all
- I was impressed with the number of people who said they wanted to support local farmers. In the survey there were those who wanted to list more than one reason for visiting the market

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

- Lively! Volunteers do a wonderful job. It is good to see citizens taking ownership

Educational or Entertainment Activities:

- Although no activities on this evening, the market often does have special activities.
- Information table very well done
- Market central booth makes it easy to ask questions

Other:

- Volunteers welcoming people, providing information
- Market volunteers who help with setup set the tone for great mutual support among vendors, market management, volunteers
- Great neighborhood market! The ideal market to be emulated in every proactive neighborhood community

Market Atmosphere. What could be improved upon?

Educational/Entertainment Activities:

- Having music or children's activities would work well
- Some music, entertainment or education might attract more families
- Music in general could give some more visibility if the neighbors would not mind

Vendors and Products. What is working well?

Product Mix:

- Good variety of foods
- Nice variety of vendors
- Great variety – produce, bakery, meat, eggs, honey, spices, coffee, etc.
- Good mix of produce and baked goods; some fish

Product Quality:

- Good overall
- Appears very good
- Most items appeared to be of excellent quality
- Appeared good. I did not sample, but some people said they came for "fresh" or "organic" food

Signs:

- Some vendor signs are very good; others need some work
- Some nice signs

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

Display:

- Uniformity of tents and tables give market an organized feel
- Most vendor displays are inviting
- Some very attractive displays
- Most tabletops covered

Customer Service:

- Excellent
- Many vendors talk with customers and educate them
- Observed one vendor carrying out a melon for a customer
- Friendly

Food Safety:

- Generally display and packaging was good

Other

- Newsletter/flyer gives description of the vendors – good idea

Vendors and Products. What could be improved?

Product Mix:

- Is there interest in organic food
- Not much in the way of fish, meat, eggs, cheese

Product Quality:

Signs:

- Vendor signs could use some improvements
- Some vendors did not post prices; some did not have a sign indicating their name or the name of their farm or business
- Many vendors lack signs identifying their business
- Some vendors lack price signs
- Vendor signs lacking. Shoppers can't tell which farms are selling. Existing signs are too small. Banners on the tents would be helpful

Display:

- Vendors should work to have display up and ready by the market's opening time

Customer Service:

- Although most vendors were friendly, a couple were less so

Food Safety:

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

- Sampling – do all vendors use certified kitchen or approved process?
- Vendors should be sure that all food items are off the ground

Other:

- Maybe larger signs with vendor information
- Vendor leaving early

Food Assistance Programs. What is working well?

Project FRESH

- Signage at entrance
- Prominent signage at vendor booths good for project
- Is available, but some people were not aware

SNAP Program (EBT, Bridge Cards)

- Good infrastructure
- Fair information dissemination
- Available. Market is offering it because it is the right thing to do, even though it is a lot of work

Alternative Redemption Systems

- Offering “ Mo’Bucks” through support from Fair Food Network– excellent!

Signage

- Market signage outside market – good
- Large banners on bridge overpass – excellent
- Many people said the signs over the Southfield freeway attracted them to the market

Other

Food Assistance Programs. What could be improved?

Project FRESH

- Information table is great, but customers need to be directed to it
- This RMA in late September may be a little late in the year for much Project FRESH activity

SNAP Program (EBT, Bridge Cards)

- Market point-of-sale terminal had to be replaced three times; possibly hardwire?

Northwest Detroit Farmers Market

Rapid Market Assessment

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

- One vendor (eggs and meats) has trouble dealing with items that are not in \$1 increments; can't give change

Alternative Redemption Systems

- Needs to be more widely promoted within the market

Signage

- Individual vendor signs could be improved
- If signs over freeway are challenged, perhaps there could be a higher sign on the service drive, next to the parking lot.
- Potential for permanent banners on light posts?
- Need to find somewhere for a sign that can be up all through the market season, not just on market days

Other

- Generally people are not aware that checks and other non-cash payment methods are possible. Maybe more promotion and more visible signage.
- Recordkeeping and accounting for various food assistance programs is onerous. Possibly MIFMA or someone could develop a spreadsheet or other software program to streamline the process

Summary: This is a vibrant, well-managed neighborhood market with many strengths.