



**Ypsilanti Farmer's Market
Rapid Market Assessment**

Tuesday, September 18, 2007

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Market Hours: Mid-May - October 30
Tuesday 2:00 – 6:00 pm

Location: Key Bank Center parking lot,
corner of Michigan Avenue and Hamilton

Website: www.growinghope.net

Market Staff: Tracy Patterson, Market Manager; Amanda Edmonds, Executive Director of Growing Hope; Growing Hope staff; and Americorps VISTA volunteers

Market Day Comments: Late summer, beautiful sunny day, temperature in the mid-eighties.

The market's daily report is included as an Appendix.

Age of Market: Open since 2006, an offshoot of the Depot Town Ypsilanti Farmer's Market

Fees: \$7 per day or \$140 for the entire season

Vendors: 13 on average

Market Sales Estimate: \$4,075

Market Attendance Estimate: 546

RMA Team: Cheryl Danley, C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at Michigan State University; Dru Montri, Michigan Farmers Market Association; Scott Stevenson, Farmington Farmers and Artisans Market

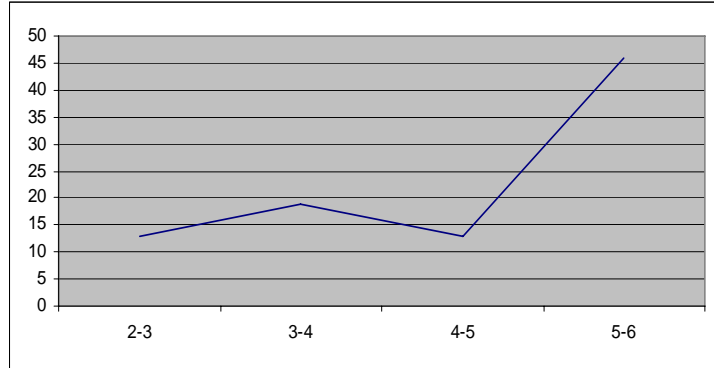
Introduction:

The Downtown Ypsilanti Farmer's Market is held in the parking lot of the Key Bank Building at the corner of Hamilton Street and Michigan Avenue. The market is open to vendors of local products with an emphasis on fresh produce. Product selection includes seasonal produce such as fruits and vegetables, bakery goods, meats, and some handmade crafts. The market is managed by Growing Hope, a local non-profit organization. The market is under the leadership of an executive committee that includes vendors, MSUE, the County Public Health Department, and the Ypsilanti Food Coop.

I. Estimated Attendance: 546 Adults

1 st Hour (2-3) count =	13
2 nd Hour (3-4) count =	19
3 rd Hour (4-5) count =	13
4 th Hour (5-6) count =	46
Total count =	91

Estimated of total market customers = 546



Comments: Team members counted the numbers of adults entering the market for ten minutes of every hour. That total was multiplied by six to estimate total market attendance for that hour period. Perhaps the increase in people entering the market between 5 and 6 PM was related to the Tour de Fresh, which met at the market site. If so, the dramatic increase is not representative of a normal weekday market.

Market management indicated that approximately 400 people attend the market each week. Their exact count for attendants is included in the appendix.

Attendance by entrance and hour

<u>Time</u>	<u>Ferris Street</u>		<u>Parking lot</u>		<u>Hamilton Ave</u>		<u>Total/ Percentage</u>	
2-3	1	11%	8	12%	4	31%	13	14%
3-4	3	33%	13	19%	3	23%	19	21%
4-5	5	56%	4	6%	4	31%	13	14%
5-6	0	0%	44	64%	2	15%	46	50%
Total	9		69		13		91	

Comments: The parking lot seems to have been very accessible and a safer area from which the customers could enter the market. Possibly consider having a crossing guard to help the senior citizens that live nearby cross the street. This may increase their likelihood to attend the market.

II. Dot Survey Questions

Question 1: Do you visit downtown Ypsilanti businesses and restaurants on your way to or from the market?

	<u>Number/Percentage</u>	
Yes	49	49%
No	51	51%
Total	100	

Comments: Nearly half of all attendees visit other downtown businesses and restaurants on their way to or from the market. Half of attendees attend only the farmers market.

Question 2: What one change would you recommend to improve the market?

	<u>Number/Percentage</u>	
Location	0	0%
Parking	0	0%
Market layout	0	0%
Product mix	17	17%
Day/Time	3	3%
More organic	22	22%
No change	35	36%
Other	21	21%
Total	98	

Comments: Over one-third (36%) of surveyed customers are satisfied with the market and recommend no change is needed. However, 22% of those surveyed indicated that more organic produce/vendors are needed and 21% would recommend a change to improve the market that was not available as a choice. A suggestion would be to have a commentary box for customers to place their opinion inside on regular market days. This could be available at the community tent.

Question 3: How much have you / will you spend today at the farmers market today?

	<u>Number/Percentage</u>	
\$0	15	15%
\$5	31	31%
\$10	25	25%
\$15	10	10%
\$20	14	14%
\$25	2	2%
\$30	1	1%
\$35	0	0%
\$40	1	1%
\$45	0	0%
\$50 or more	2	2%
Total	101	
Mean	\$10.45	
Median	\$10	
Mode	\$5	

Comments: The mean or average expenditure that shoppers reported was \$10.45. The median was \$10, meaning that half the shoppers spent less than \$10 and half spent more than \$10. More shoppers spent \$5 than any other single amount. The vast majority (94%) of shoppers spent \$20 or less at the farmers market. More than half spent either \$5 or \$10. It is also interesting that 15% of shoppers spent nothing at the market. This could be related to the observation that many customers appear to enjoy and come to the market specifically for the social interaction (as opposed to buying produce or other items available). It is also possible that customers did not find the item that they were looking for as 17% recommended improving the product mix (see Question 2 above) or that individuals were attending the market for another reason, such as attending the Tour de Fresh that met at the market before departing on the tour.

Question 4: How many adults are in your shopping party today?

	<u>Number/Percentage</u>	
1	70	69%
2	27	26%
3	5	5%
4	0	0%
5	0	0%
6+	0	0%
Total	102	
Mean	1.4	
Median	1	
Mode	1	

Comments: The mean or average number of people each customer was shopping for was 1.4, with the median or middle 1, and the mode or most common also 1. It is likely that these figures were impacted by the number of people coming to the market for the Tour de Fresh, and that a typical weekday market would have fewer single person shopping parties. Nonetheless, no groups with more than three adults in their shopping party completed the dot survey, indicating that many market customers are shopping independently, or as small families. Vendors may want to be sure that they package products appropriately for one and two-person households. There were no special children's activities at the market on the day of this assessment. It may be that more family groups come to the market when such activities are scheduled.

Question 5: How did you hear about the market?

	<u>Number/Percentage</u>	
Flyer	5	5%
Email	2	2%
Newspaper	6	6%
Sign	4	4%
Passing by	38	41%
Word of mouth	38	41%
Total	93	

Comments: Customers are finding the market on their own either by passing by or through others. Promoting the market by advertising with flyers, e-mail, newspapers, and signs has made little impact on bringing people to the market as indicated by the very small percentage of individuals that heard about the market through each. Determining how flyers, e-mail, newspaper and signage can be used more effectively to reach a broader audience and bring them to the market should be useful in attracting more people to the market. This will also increase the chances of better sales for the vendors. In addition, since 41% of participants found out about the market by passing by, it may be helpful for the market to focus on signage near the market including days

and hours of operation so that more individuals passing by will also stop and shop at the market.

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 (546) by the mean number of people customers were shopping for (1.4) and multiplying by the mean customer expenditure (\$10.45). This method very conservatively estimates total market sales for the day at \$4,075.

Vendors also self reported their sales for the day to market management indicating that total market sales for the day were \$1400. See attached daily market report.

III. Constructive Comments/Observations

Physical Site

What team members appreciated about the physical site:

Access:

- ❖ Proximity to parking
- ❖ Parking lot and bus stop - great location
- ❖ Accessible to wheel chairs and amigos
- ❖ Very convenient parking
- ❖ Bus stop across the street

Flow of people and traffic:

- ❖ OK
- ❖ Wide aisles

Organization of market:

- ❖ OK
- ❖ Organization makes sense: simple, easy to navigate layout

Access to electricity:

- ❖ Using wireless for debit/credit/EBT

Improvements and Questions

Access:

- ❖ Need better access for senior home
- ❖ Access between senior center/apartments and market - maybe taxi service or crossing guard

Flow of people and traffic:

- ❖ More open layout
- ❖ Slow market - work on advertising and promotion to increase number of customers

Liability Issues:

- ❖ Parking lot - potential accidents

Access to electricity, phone line:

- ❖ No visible access
- ❖ None apparent

Other:

- ❖ Vendors should be encouraged to stay until market closes
- ❖ Could have sign or name tag indicating Tracy is the market manager

Atmosphere

What team members appreciate about the market atmosphere

Market feel:

- ❖ Quiet, leisurely
- ❖ There are some regulars
- ❖ Friendly

Shopper Demographics:

- ❖ Age 35-60, 50-50 African American and Caucasian
- ❖ Product selection appeals to older adult population
- ❖ Diversity is there
- ❖ Good racial mix/diversity of shoppers at market and also of vendors

Interactions, Conversations:

- ❖ Friendly
- ❖ Many customers appear to enjoy and come to the market specifically for the social interaction

Educational or Entertainment Activities:

- ❖ None
- ❖ Educational series at 4 p.m. - preserving and canning
- ❖ Also, Tour de Fresh participants met at the market at 5 p.m.

Other:

- ❖ Paid market manager
- ❖ Community tent with educational event

Improvements and Questions

Market feel:

- ❖ Market feels too small
- ❖ Try music - live or other (something Fresh CD) to create a more lively atmosphere
- ❖ Need to attract more vendors - create some excitement

Shopper Demographics:

- ❖ More to draw kids/families
- ❖ Need to have a nearby port-a-john for the seniors
- ❖ Could try to appeal to individuals working in nearby businesses - bank, library, post office, U of M building
- ❖ Many people come with children so there should be a special attraction to keep them coming back

Interactions Conversations:

- ❖ Provide space for customer interaction - benches, picnic tables, etc.
- ❖ People suggested publicity (e.g. website with pictures of vendors/products)
- ❖ Offer a free gift if they learned about the market from the website (printable coupon)

Educational/Entertainment Activities:

- ❖ Music could be added
- ❖ Could consider children's events or activities
- ❖ Continue to partner with library for story hour
- ❖ More needed
- ❖ Arts and crafts
- ❖ Contests
- ❖ Things to educate and entertain children (face painting, veg/fruit drawing contests)
- ❖ Advertised educational class not held (or not seen)

Other:

- ❖ Farmington does weekly gift basket drawing of things contributed by vendors, this could be tried here

Vendors and Products

What team members appreciate about vendors and products

Product Mix:

- ❖ Produce, baked goods
- ❖ Variety seems to be good
- ❖ Good mix of vegetables for the number of customers
- ❖ Includes meat and prepared foods vendor

Signs:

- ❖ Banners, pre-printed signs

Display:

- ❖ Displays are clear

Customer Service:

- ❖ Friendly
- ❖ Good community stall
- ❖ Project Fresh, credit card, EBT available
- ❖ Many friendly and helpful vendors

Food Safety:

- ❖ Very limited number of samples-just coop's bread

Other:

- ❖ Promotion/publicity
- ❖ Market used as first site on the Growing Hope tour, brought more than 40 first-time visitors to the market

Improvements and Questions

Product Mix:

- ❖ More crafts/art, floral/plants
- ❖ People requested more fruit, others wanted more flowers
- ❖ Many people requested organic
- ❖ Could include cheese
- ❖ Customer "More fruits, flowers, bananas"

Product Quality:

- ❖ More organic
- ❖ Quality really varies by vendor

Signs:

- ❖ More signs on streets
- ❖ Larger signs
- ❖ Need signs in the area around the parking lot
- ❖ Vendor should use signs to indicate prices
- ❖ Because there are a large number of people that drive by and stop-signage near the road could be improved, banners, etc.
- ❖ Nearby public services, possible places to advertise and make partnerships
 - Library
 - Post Office
 - Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Customer commented on the need of more advertising

Display:

- ❖ Needs better, more colorful display

- ❖ Consistency
- ❖ Individual vendors could be more festive
- ❖ Again, varies by vendor
- ❖ Table cloths, price clearly indicated
- ❖ Clean the veggies
- ❖ Get banner across the street and/or flags and banners on sign posts on Michigan Ave. (Similar to Williamston)

Customer Service:

- ❖ Manager should mingle more, talk to customers
- ❖ Could use a greeter to publicize community stall, drinking water availability
- ❖ I heard one woman say she would love a cart

Food Safety:

- ❖ Baked goods packaging could be better
- ❖ Wash area for prepared food vendors
- ❖ Do they have proper temporary food establishment licenses?

Other:

- ❖ Since market is located close to public service, it could be used more as a community resource
- ❖ Could use this location to organize other community events or co-sponsor music or craft events to draw more people to the area
- ❖ Could also be a venue for bicycle/walking clubs to assemble
- ❖ Customers demand for more farmers/growers involvement and artisans too

Appendix 1: Market Daily Report

Ypsilanti Downtown Farmers' Market Daily Report

Your name: Tracy Patterson

Today's date: 09/18/07

Weather conditions:

1. Market Successes

In this section please describe what went well at the market today, especially things that should be repeated on subsequent days. Please address all phases of the market:

- *Preparation (set-up, etc.)*

Great—the Community tent and the GH booth look very nice today.

- *The actual market*

Dru Montri from the Michigan Farmers Market Association was here to conduct a Rapid Market Assessment—a five-question customer survey. It was very interactive and engaging for customers and vendors. It was a lively market day due to the survey and Tour de Fresh. The tour brought a lot of new folks to the market.

- *Clean-up*

Jenna helped a ton—thank you!

- *Volunteer/management participation*

- *Publicity/Signage*

We have the sign from the Freighthouse. Also Dru brought the EBT banner. No smoking and EBT signs were posted.

2. Market Challenges

In this section please describe what challenges or difficulties were faced in all phases of the market today. Be sure to offer ways that these challenges could be overcome, or avoided in the future.

- *Preparation (set-up, etc.)*

- *The actual market*

One vendor said that he will stop coming to the Downtown Market if his sales don't increase.

- *Clean-up*

It seemed like a lot of stuff to haul.

- *Volunteer/management participation*

- *Publicity/Signage*

We still need more signs to attract passersby.

3. Vendors

a. # of vendors present today 16

b. Vendors Present (see attached form)

c. Vendor Notes (are vendors having a slow/busy day & other observations)

4. Finances

- a. How much did each vendor make?**

