

Eastern Market FY21 Update and Progress on Recommendations from the Strategic Plan

We began last fiscal year concentrating our efforts on steering the market through and out of the pandemic. As the year went on, we were able to shift focus to implementing systems that would set the stage for future success, many of which tied in with the Strategic Plan [noted with an (SP x.x) and listed at the bottom of the page]. The following data indicates that we are steadily moving toward our goals:

- The indoor market is seeing foot traffic of over 3,300 entries per weekend day;
- With increased revenues, support from the District of Columbia Government, and Federal COVID relief funds, Eastern Market was able to hit our budget target in FY21;
- The North Hall has \$66,000 in bookings so far for FY22;
- We have achieved consistently higher Google reviews over the past year than in previous years;
- Washington City Paper's Best of DC Reader's Poll ranked Eastern Market as #1 Shopping Center and #1 Food Market.

The success of the past year was thanks, in part, to:

- Increased, more consistent, and more coordinated communication with vendors;
- The implementation of Marketspread, a vendor management portal that we purchased just before the pandemic and implemented in April of 2020 (SP 8.1);
- The implementation of Tripleseat, an event management portal for the North Hall;

Outdoor Market: Much of the focus of the last fiscal year was on the operations of the outdoor market:

- Mapping the Market:
 - We can now dynamically change the map as vendors cancel or request space changes (SP 4.1 & 9.3) through Marketspread, the vendor management portal.
 - By increase communication with vendors in preparation for each weekend, the management team is now better prepared to grow or shrink the market dynamically and place vendors in such a way that the market always feels vibrant and full (SP 8.2);
 - A more robust management presence on weekends (SP 5.3) and more consistent, immediate, and detailed feedback to vendors has allowed us to manage placement more actively and immediately, helping us to ensure that the market maintains a feeling of energy and density, even when there are last minute cancellations. Vendors help by filling in gaps with tables, displays or racks so that absences are less noticeable to customers;
- Clarifying Expectations (SP 3.3):
 - In the past 4 months, the management team has visited the operations of six current farmers and one producer to discuss expectations, review farmer processes, and provide feedback regarding match between expectations and actual processes;

Outdoor Market Product Mix - Filling the Gaps: Having established more refined internal management processes relating to current outdoor vendors, we began looking more closely at the product types that are currently well-represented. We determined the gaps in our product mix and opened up the application process to vendors of products that would help us fill those gaps.

The primary focus has been on food sellers, with a secondary focus on ethno-specific products, antiques, vintage, and collectibles. We have taken a hands-on approach with our new farmers and producers and in the past 4 months - the management team has visited the farms of two new farmers and one new

producer, all of whom have subsequently been invited to the market (SP 7). More new farm visits are on the schedule for upcoming weeks.

Indoor Market - Capital Projects: In the past months we've made changes to more clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the management team. This has allowed the Market Manager to concentrate on the following capital projects, which were outlined in the Facilities Assessment Plan (SP 2.1):

- Completed the design Phase of the Signage Project. (Scoping for the manufacture and installation in progress - SP 12.5 & 12.9);
- HVAC system upgrade: A \$680,000 project that is currently in the Design Phase (In progress - SP 2.3)
- Security hardware for market doors: \$110,000 – Final DGS-PSD's specifications review was just completed. Scope includes Door strikes, card readers, etc.
- Pottery Studio Stonework: \$85,000 – Developing the Scope and the government estimate currently. This will involve replacement of brownstone and the application of restoration mortars.

Security: In order to increase safety and security at the market, the following steps have been taken in the past year:

- Implemented policy to distribute walkie-talkies every weekend morning to staff and strategically located vendors.
- Updated the Emergency Response Plan.
- \$330,000 is set aside to implement in FY22 a program for securing the weekend outdoor market through the installation of several types of bollards (some permanent, some temporary) (In progress – SP 12.7).

Strategic Plan Recommendations Highlighted Above:

- 2.1 Conduct a Facilities Assessment Plan.
- 2.3 Repair and upgrade HVAC systems with energy efficiency at the forefront.
- 3.3 Revisit and reinforce quality control criteria for outdoor vendor product mix already established in the legislation.
- 4.1 Include outdoor market map, vendor list, and vendor products on website. Auto-generate this data via outdoor market management software.
- 5.3 Regular presence of management at the market on weekends to more frequently interact with customers, vendors, and merchants.
- 7 Attract and retain more local farmers.
- 8.1 Adopt outdoor market management software to strategically and efficiently manage vendor layout ahead of time and facilitate the vendor application process.
- 8.2 Create multiple market layouts to accommodate the fluctuation in the amount of vendors while keeping the layout compact and dense.
- 9.3 Two market layouts will provide flexibility to offer more street parking on weekend with low vendor turnout.
- 12.5 Install distinctive signage around the market building that activates public space.
- 12.7 Streetscape improvements along upper 7th Street should improve the pedestrian experience, outdoor market layout and logistics, and help define the Eastern Market District through placemaking.

12.9 Improved wayfinding signs throughout the area and improved signage at Metro Plaza show customers the location and businesses of the Market District.

The Eastern Market Strategic Plan can be found on the Eastern Market website at:
<https://easternmarket-dc.org/about/eastern-market-strategic-plan/>