**Eastern Market Update for FY22 through January**

**and**

**Progress on Recommendations from the Strategic Plan**

In November and December we focused on ensuring a strong, successful holiday season. The Strategic Plan devotes a significant amount of attention to the holiday season since holiday sales account for a large percentage of our merchant/vendor annual income. In January, on the other hand, we focused on our contracting goals and updating our market’s footprint to allow for a consistently compact and shoppable outdoor market. As in the past report, many of our activities tied in with the Strategic Plan [noted with an (SP x.x) and listed at the bottom of the page]. As you can see from the data available below, the holiday season was a success:

* Weekly high customer counts for 2021 of over 12,000 visitors during the weeks of both 11/7 and 11/14;
* Consistently high Google reviews: An average of 4.8 stars over the last 3 months in comparison to our overall average of 4.5;
* Three craft vendors reported running out of product and others who said that it was one of their best years ever;
* Only nine vendors leaving Eastern Market for other holiday options, less than any prior year;
* Two mentions in the Washington Post, one in Afar Magazine, and a merchant interview for France 2.

The success above was due to a number of key activities:

* Social Media: The 246 Instagram and Facebook posts (combined total) of the past three months had a reach of 251,495 followers. Almost 1,000 new Instagram followers in the last three months, bringing us from 9,050 followers to 10,007. Facebook followers are at 49,100.
* Partnerships: Deepened partnership with Eastern Market Main Street and created links with influencers like @hillishome, @niarenteria, @yankeefrenchie, and @bananasoverbananas; (SP3.1)
* Activities: A series of holiday markets and holiday-focused events posted on social media (11.4.1), including:
  + Weekday Holiday Market
  + Not-So-Silent Night Market
  + Stand decorating contest;
  + Social media contests for gift baskets;
  + Visits by Santa Claus and “Grump”

**Outdoor Market:** As the seasons changed from our busiest to our slowest, the market changed with it:

* The outdoor market footprint changed to ensure that Eastern Market remained a customer-friendly, shoppable market, as envisioned in the Strategic Plan (SP 8.2). This was achieved through increased communication with vendors, increased management presence (SP 5.3), and our vendor management portal, Marketspread (SP 4.1 & 9.3)
* Introduction of new vendors to fill gaps: In the past three months, the management team has visited the operations of two new farmers (SP 7) and one producer to ensure adherence to requirements;
* Communication and reinforcement of expectations (SP 3.3): New farmers were reminded of our expectations of them.

**Indoor Market - Capital Projects:** Once the holidays were over, we were able to again provide focused attention on the capital projects, which were outlined in the Facilities Assessment Plan (SP 2.1). As always, the EMCAC, a key partner, played an important role:

* Signage Project: Scope of Work developed and with Capital Construction Division for execution. (SP 12.5 & 12.9);
* HVAC system upgrade: Analysis phase of HVAC project is complete and DGS assessing next steps (In progress - SP 2.3)
* Security hardware for market doors: $110,000 – Scope of Work developed.
* Pottery Studio Stonework: $85,000 – Scope of Work developed and with Contracting and Procurement for next steps. This will involve replacement of brownstone and the application of restoration mortars.

**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.

3.1 Use partnerships to help business thrive

3.3 Revisit and reinforce quality control criteria for outdoor vendor product mix already established in the legislation.

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.

8.2 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.

11.4.1 Introduce a winter holiday market.

12.5 Install distinctive signage around the market building that activates public space.

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/>