



# Dearborn Farmers and Artisans Market

## Rapid Market Assessment Report

*Friday, May 8, 2015*

### Assessment Team:

- Dru Montri, *MIFMA Director*
- Samantha Collins, *MIFMA Communications and Events Manager*
- Yadira Perez, *MIFMA Administrative Assistant*
- Marlene Epley, *Williamston Farmers Market Manager*
- Linda Kahler, *DeWitt DDA Coordinator and Farmers Market Manager*
- Christine Easley, *New Growth Associate*
- Teresa Putman, *Growing Hope*



## Introduction to Rapid Market Assessment Report

A Rapid Market Assessment is an intensive, one-time market-day snapshot of a farmers market. This Rapid Market Assessment was organized and led by the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA). MIFMA organized a team of farmers market experts to use simple, tested methods to count market customers, survey customers using the dot survey technique, and compile market observations and recommendations. This report summarizes the data collected during the assessment.

Rapid Market Assessments were developed by Larry Lev, Linda Brewer and Garry Stephenson of Oregon State University (see <http://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/oregon-small-farms-technical-reports>) and have been adapted for use in Michigan. The Dearborn Farmers and Artisans Market Rapid Market Assessment was held on Friday, May 8, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.



Rapid Market Assessment volunteer, Christine Easley, recruits market shoppers to participate in the dot survey.

## Dearborn Farmers & Artisans Market Information

The Dearborn Farmers and Artisans Market is located in Dearborn, Michigan, on Michigan Avenue between Mason and Howard. It was started in 2006 and is held on Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. from early May through the end of September. The market is managed by the Dearborn Area Chamber of Commerce with the intent to bring people together in the community, to strengthen and support local farmers, to support local entrepreneurs and small businesses, and to promote healthy living by providing quality, fresh and wholesome food.

On the day of the assessment, 39 vendors were present. Vendors can have a 10'x10' space (\$200 or \$250 seasonally or \$25 daily) or a 10'x20' space for \$500 per season.

Christina Werner is the market manager. She can be contacted at 313-584-6100 or [cwerner@dearbornareachamber.org](mailto:cwerner@dearbornareachamber.org). The market website is [www.dearbornfarmersartisansmarket.com](http://www.dearbornfarmersartisansmarket.com).



# Market Day Highlights for May 8, 2015

**Weather:** Sunny, clear skies, beautiful day for an opening market

**Number of Vendors Present:** 39

**Number of Community Partners Present:** 6

**Estimate of Farmers Market Sales:** \$9,035

**Estimate of Farmers Market Customer Attendance:** 1,050 adults and 150 children<sup>1</sup>

## Estimate of Farmers Market Customer Attendance

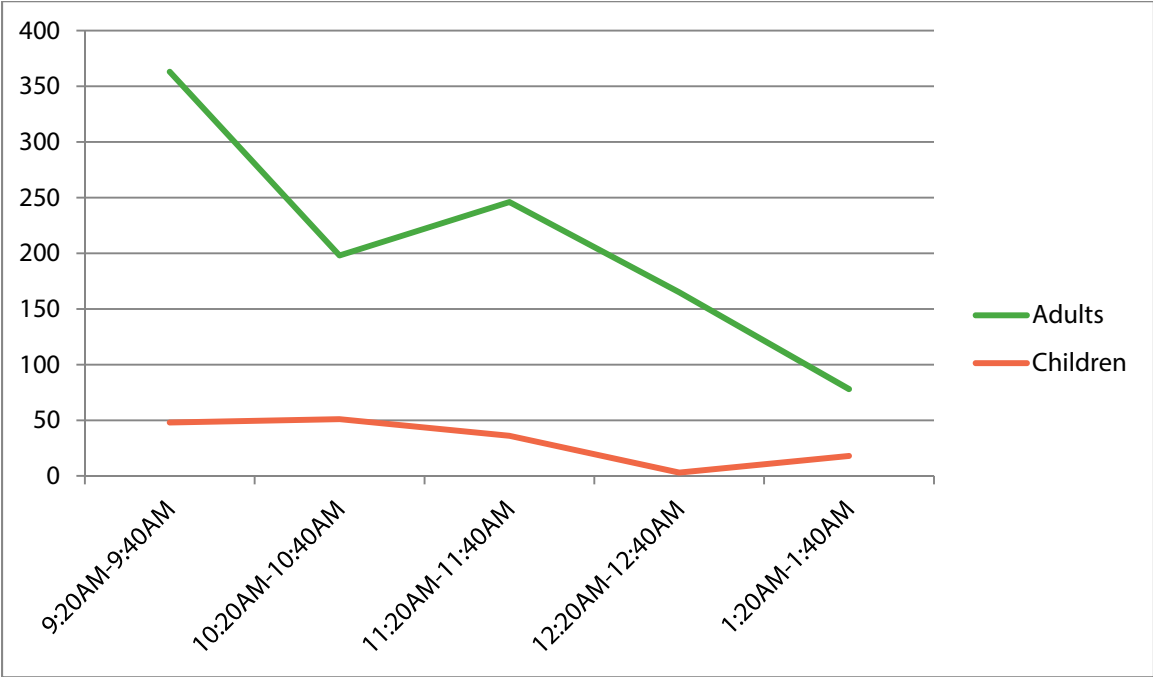
Attendance estimates were made by counting all adults and children entering the market during a specified 20-minute period from 20 minutes after the hour to 20 minutes till each hour. Four team members were assigned to four entrances. Team members only counted shoppers entering the market during the specified time. Estimates were made by multiplying the 20-minute per hour totals by three to achieve an hourly estimate. Hourly estimates were summed to estimate total farmers market customer attendance: 1,050 adults and 150 children (see footnote below).

**Table 1. Actual Customer Attendance Counts**

	Parking Lot, North		Parking Lot, East		Parking Lot, South		Parking Lot, South	
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
9:20AM-9:40AM	28	2	24	5	53	6	16	3
10:20AM-10:40AM	17	4	25	7	13	4	11	2
11:20AM-11:40AM	45	4	19	7	10	0	8	1
12:20PM-12:40PM	25	0	15	1	7	0	8	0
1:20PM-1:40PM	9	0	9	1	3	0	5	5

<sup>1</sup> The estimate of children does NOT include children that arrived by bus as part of a school field trip. Based on conversations with the market managers, approximately 200 children attended the market for a school field trip.

**Figure 1. Customer Count Estimates**



## Dot Surveys

A dot survey is a simple data collection method in which five questions are posted on large posters. Market customers indicate their response to the survey questions using colorful, dot stickers – one “dot” or answer per question.

Question 1: How many ADULTS are in your shopping group today?				
	9:00AM-11:30AM	11:30AM-2:00PM	Overall Total	Overall Percentage
1	57	46	103	47%
2	60	30	90	40%
3	10	11	21	9%
4	0	6	6	3%
5+	2	1	3	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>100%</b>

On average, shopping groups included 1.7 adults. The most common response was 1 adult per shopping group, which is common for a weekday market during regular working hours. This data is important as it allows us to conservatively estimate market sales when combined with data collected on average market spending and estimated customer attendance.

Question 2: How much did you/will you spend at the farmers market today?				
	9:30AM-11:30AM	11:30AM-2:00 PM	Overall Total	Overall %
\$0	14	17	31	14%
\$5	20	21	41	19%
\$10	27	21	48	22%
\$15	13	7	20	9%
\$20	19	12	31	14%
\$25	14	7	21	10%
\$30	7	2	9	4%
\$35	1	2	3	1%
\$40	2	3	5	2%
\$45	0	0	0	0%
\$50+	8	2	10	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100%</b>

On average, customers spent \$14.63 at the market on May 8, 2015. A conservative estimate of total market day sales is calculated by dividing the estimated total number of adult customers (1,050) by the average number of adults per shopping group (1.7) and then multiplying that number (617.6) by the average amount customers indicated they spent at the market that day (\$14.63). This method conservatively estimates total market days sales of \$9,035.

**Question 3: How much will you spend at other downtown businesses or restaurants today?**

	9:30AM-11:30 AM	11:30AM-2:00 PM	Overall Total	Overall %
0	45	40	85	39%
5	20	12	32	15%
10	19	15	34	16%
15	10	6	16	7%
20	17	9	26	12%
25	5	4	9	4%
30	0	0	0	0%
35	1	2	3	1%
40	4	1	5	2%
45	2	0	2	1%
50+	4	2	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>100%</b>

On average, customers spent \$10 at other downtown businesses or restaurants in addition to the money they spent at the market. If we multiply this average amount by the estimated number of shopping groups (617.6), we can conservatively estimate that market shoppers spend approximately \$6,175 at downtown businesses during market hours.

**Question 4: What was the primary way you learned about our opening day?**

	9:00AM-11:30AM	11:30AM-2:00PM	Overall Total	Overall %
Social Media	31	14	45	20%
Our website	8	4	12	5%
Newspaper	12	1	13	6%
Radio/TV	0	1	1	0%
Chamber of Commerce	17	8	25	11%
A Friend(word of the mouth)	19	25	44	19%
Other	40	41	81	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100%</b>

The most common way that people learned about the market's opening day was "other." Through conversations with market shoppers, our team heard that many market shoppers "just knew" that the market was opening because they have been long-term customers. The other most effective methods to reach shoppers shopping at the market that day were through word of mouth and social media.

Question 5: Where do you live?				
	9:00AM-11:30AM	11:30AM-2:00PM	Overall Total	Overall %
< 5 Miles	79	56	135	61%
5-10 Miles	23	5	28	13%
11-15 Miles	12	17	29	13%
16-20 Miles	5	6	11	5%
> 20 Miles	7	11	18	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100%</b>

As expected the majority (61%) of market shoppers live fewer than five miles from the farmers market.

## Constructive Comments and Observations

The Rapid Market Assessment team focused on market strengths and suggested changes and improvements for four key areas: physical characteristics, vendors and products, market atmosphere, and food assistance programs. The following comments were recorded throughout the day:

### Physical Characteristics:

#### What is working well?

##### Market Access:

- Great location (3)<sup>2</sup> near the library
- Good amount of free parking
- Bus stop right in front of market on Michigan Avenue
- Many entrances with ramps
- Several entrances, easy to unload for vendors

##### Organization of Market:

- Very spread out which makes it seem bigger
- Great shade trees available for customers and vendors (3)

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<sup>2</sup> Any comment that includes a number indicates that multiple team members mentioned this. For example, here the (2) indicates that two members mentioned that the market is in a great location.



### **Flow of People:**

- Busiest time from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- People came from their respective workplaces-indicated by employer name badges
- Plenty of room in walk ways for customers to get around even with strollers and bikes, easy to walk
- Great flow of people



### **Flow of Traffic**

- Good amount of free parking

### **Additional Comments**

- Great to be across from shopping and part of downtown
- Nice to have some tables with umbrellas for sitting to eat
- Saw several people carrying yoga mats
- Good availability of yellow trash cans, easy to see (3)

### **What could be improved?**

#### **Market Access:**

- Consider adding a welcome sign at entrance and increase signage around the market directing people to it (2)
- The alley through the middle of market is a safety hazard, vehicles would back up to turn around where customers were seated to eat

#### **Organization of Market:**

- The market feels disconnected between the clock tower area and parking lot area. These pieces of the market could be connected with vendors especially if the alley can be closed (2)
- Move trash cans throughout pedestrian locations
- Make fresh produce a main focal point of the market

#### **Liability issues**

- Many tents/canopies not weighted. Tents/canopies must be properly weighted (5)
- Close the alley at start of market (2)<sup>3</sup>
- One vendor pulled his vehicle in after he should have, around 9:00 a.m.
- Enforce no dogs in the market, if this is a market rule
- Kids were climbing the trees
- No one at the booth next to the road

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<sup>3</sup> Note that there was another event in Dearborn on the day of the Rapid Market Assessment that was using the street pole banners and other signage.

### **Flow of People:**

- Very slow from 1-2 p.m., the market loses momentum (2) – see customer count data. You may consider surveying vendors to identify if there is interest in adjusting market hours from 9 am to 1 p.m.
- I would suggest creating a square layout in the parking lot to create a circular traffic flow
- Customers are not getting out to the area next to Michigan Ave. They are walking around the parking lot, and then leaving the market, have signage to direct customers
- Wide aisles are nice for strollers, but you lose intimacy

### **Flow of Traffic:**

- Not safe to have cars driving through the alley with kids coming back and forth

### **Additional Comments:**

- Does the market logo have an orange? How does that fit with the market mission?
- Add recycling containers next to trash cans (2)
- Lots of sample cups on the ground everywhere from the POP activity. Encourage children to recycle containers and provide a space for them to do so
- Parking lot was very hot
- Need signage for bathrooms
- Taking down tents during market hours next to the road makes it appear to be closed to those driving by
- No signs with rules about smoking - saw four people smoking in the market
- Deli truck generator is very loud

## **Vendors and Products:**

### **What is working well?**

#### **Product Mix:**

- Great variety of value added products and ready to eat options for the lunch crowd (3)
- Nice to see a variety of ready to eat options
- Friendly vendors
- Good diversity of vendors - culturally and by age
- Great to have wine tasting at market
- Vendor with butter was awesome

#### **Product Quality:**



- Overall, good quality by local vendors
- Butter was great
- Scottish honey was great
- Cake pops were delicious
- Granola was great at labeling their product

**Signage:**

- Love the sandwich boards for music at the market, activities, etc. (3)
- Great POP club set up and banner
- Great cake pop tent and display

**Display:**

- English Gardens, bath soap and cake pops all had great displays

**Customer Service:**

- Most vendors were very friendly (3)
  - The butter vendor and cake pop vendor were both very friendly
  - The cheese guy was nice
- The market manager was mostly available onsite
- Oakwood Community Health blood pressure screening was a nice addition

**Food Safety:**

- Pretzels sampling with gloves is a good practice

**Vendor Feedback:**

- Overall, a good group
- UP Pasties said it was the best market around

**What could be changed or improved?**

**Product Mix:**

- Need greater diversity of fresh fruits and vegetables (5)
- Add hanging baskets
- Saw a vendor pack up at 1:00 p.m. - not yet sold out

**Signage:**

- Vendors should be required to have signage for their business name and location (2)
- Vendor signage should include price of their products (3)
- Some vendor signage is messy
- Increase market signage on the main street – Michigan Avenue

### **Display:**

- Don't like to see containers of produce sitting on the ground – they should be 18 inches off the ground
- Some vendors could hide trash better
- The jewelry vendor have a very small umbrella which made it look out of place compared to other vendor set-ups

### **Customer Service:**

- One vendor in parking lot was on his cell phone a lot making it difficult for interaction with customers
- One vendor closed down at about 1:15 p.m.

### **Food Safety:**

- One vendor was not using gloves for sampling. Consider distributing safe food sampling guidelines available at [www.michigan.gov/farmersmarkets](http://www.michigan.gov/farmersmarkets) to all vendors
- Check cottage food vendors for proper product and proper labeling
- Check that honey is labeled properly
- Requiring canopies for food vendors may help with maintaining proper temperatures

### **Vendor Feedback:**

- May consider requiring vendors to have a canopy for consistency in market set-up and food safety implications

## **Market Atmosphere**

### **What is working well?**

#### **Market "Feel":**

- Good mix of music and activities to compliment the market
- Friendly and family oriented
- It smells good throughout the market, makes me want to buy something and eat
- Loved the energy and flow of people. No one was standing around. In fact, they were sticking around for hours
- Music was wonderful, a good mix
- Large variety and display of seating



### **Diversity of Shoppers:**

- Very diverse! Perhaps add vendors that have products that cater to Middle Eastern populations and other culturally appropriate options
- Great diversity, many adults and children
- A lot of people came during their lunch hour
- Many different groups families, couples, individuals, groups of friends and people with their dogs

### **Interactions and Conversations:**

- Benches, tables create spaces and opportunities to have conversations
- This market is so picturesque
- Customers were approachable for dot surveys, this is a technique you could use again the future to get customer feedback

### **Educational and Entertainment Activities**

- Love the music and seating area near ready to eat food items
- Excellent! Cooking demos, kids' activities, MSUE, POP
- Plenty of tables for the kids craft activities
- Awesome amount of kids activities which were very engaging for them
- DJ was great, music was not too loud but loud enough to hear
- Ribbon cutting ceremony was great!

### **Other**

- Wonderful to have Chamber board and members come out to support

## **What could be changed or improved?**

### **Market "Feel":**

- Aisles are very wide and lose intimacy
- Live music? Band? Instead of DJ
- Feels like a craft show due to lack of fresh fruit and vegetable options

### **Diversity of Shoppers:**

- Could recruit from downtown employers
- Seemed like mostly women

### **Interactions and Conversations:**

- Always have someone staffing the market manager booth to respond to questions and distribute SNAP
- Parents of kid group said it was hard to have kindergarteners with 4<sup>th</sup> graders, it was hard for them to see with the big kids in front
- No produce for the POP club tokens, had to get doughnuts

### **Educational and Entertainment Activities:**

- No sign or chalk board sign for pottery
- Dorsey booth all by himself at end of market and now that kids activities are done, there isn't anyone to interact with him, therefore he walked around with samples
- Vendors not clear if they could take POP club tokens or not

### **Other:**

- Police stopped by
- Other local businesses could advertise the market especially given the fact that customers also indicate they shop at other local businesses when shopping at the market

## **Food Assistance Programs:**

### **What is working well?**

#### **WIC Project and Market FRESH:**

- Seem to run smoothly

#### **SNAP and DUFB:**

- Bridge Card banner was visible at Market Manager tent

#### **Power of Produce Program:**

- Looks like it draws a good crowd
- Great program to get kids involved and to try produce
- Good branding



#### **Signage:**

- Large sign at market manager booth otherwise no indication that food assistance was available

#### **Other:**

- At the time of assessment only SNAP available for markets

## **What could be improved?**

### **SNAP and DUFB:**

- Increase vendor signage

### **Power of Produce Program<sup>4</sup>:**

- Some chaperones commented that there wasn't enough at market to keep the kids busy the whole time, may need to have more scheduled activities or help the schools better understand how much time they should spend on the market
- Not many items to get with tokens, was supposed to be produce, but seasonally not much yet, I heard many complaints about them having to use them for other items including cake pops and doughnuts

### **Signage:**

- More signage on applicable products
- Vendors need to display signage (4)
- Babcia's Boy was the only vendor I saw with a sign that said they were accepting SNAP

### **Other:**

- I personally would have spent at least \$15 more today if you had credit card tokens-something to consider in the future

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<sup>4</sup> New program at the farmers market this year. This was the first day the program was implemented.