

An Exploration of Permanent Farmers' Market Structures

A comprehensive study of successful permanent farmers' markets, their strengths and the systems that support them.



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Contemporary Permanent Farmers' Markets:

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Executive Summary

This report explores one recommendation that came out of a four year study of the Northampton, MA food system, conducted by Keep Farming Northampton, a citizens' working group, in collaboration with the Sustainable Foods Concentration at Smith College. That study recommended that a permanent farmers' market location would strengthen the local food economy. Northampton businesses, consumers, and farmers all feel that a permanent farmers market would positively impact not only their own businesses, but the entire community. This report examines a variety of permanent farmers' markets, predominantly in New England, in order to learn about the potential costs and benefits that a permanent farmers' market could bring to Northampton.

Seven farmers' markets are examined closely in this report: the Ithaca Farmers' Market in Ithaca, NY; South Kingstown Farmers' Market in South Kingstown, RI; Marshfield Farmers' Market in Marshfield, MA; Green Harvest Organic Farmers' Market and Artisans' Fair in Falmouth, MA; Putnam Farmers' Market in Putnam, CT; Durham Farmers' Market in Durham, NC; and the Columbia

Farmers' Market in Columbia, MO. The startup and operational costs, physical and organizational structure, social and economic impacts, and relationship to the town of the markets, are all considered. Additional research expands on each of these topics.

Permanent farmers' market structures serve as sources of community and economic development. The markets create reliable sources of vendor income that can be depended upon year-round and are crucial to their business. In addition, the economic benefits of farmers' markets extend to the surrounding business community, because permanent farmers' markets tend to synergistically share and create a customer base for and with local business ventures, increasing sales for all parties. Permanent farmers markets can also revitalize the areas in which they are built, as can be seen in South Kingston—not only did the Wintertime Farmers' Market rescue the mill complex in which it is located, but it also serves as a small business incubator for the area. The Ithaca Farmers' Market serves a similar purpose for its community, and has also generated a thriving agricultural tourism trade.

The organizational and physical structures of the markets vary greatly. Markets predominantly have small organizational staffs of one manager and up to two employees, and occasionally a board of directors, a common organizational model for larger markets. Labor is generally provided on a volunteer basis, from employees or the vendors themselves. The three most common structures found are pavilions, which are rarely truly year-round structures and can be expensive construction projects, converted mills and industrial buildings, and structures on fairgrounds. Renovated buildings provide low construction costs and can help revitalize an area of a town, and fairgrounds can supply ample space for both vendors and parking. Fairgrounds, however, tend to be less centrally located in cities. Across the board, market managers generally prefer easily adaptable buildings that can be closed and heated in the winter, and opened up in the summer.

Sources for initial funding vary as much as the organizing and physical structures of the markets. These sources include state and federal grants and funding for agricultural projects, community fundraising efforts, previous years' vendor fees, and support from a nonprofit organization that runs the market. The majority of markets studied have little to no formal relationship with the town government in their location. Even in the case of a formal relationship between the municipalities, financial help is rarely involved from town government.

Common to all the markets studied, regardless of financial status, organization, and structure, are the economic and community building effects of permanent farmers' market structures. All exist in communities with strong commitments to local food, which Northampton has, and every market has created new business or community opportunities, from which Northampton can profit.



Introduction

This study is the continuation of years of research into the food system of Northampton, MA. Keep Farming Northampton (KFM), a citizen's group, conducted a 4-year study in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the local food system. Four surveys—of the producers (farmers), consumers, institutions, and restaurants in Northampton—and a synthesis of all findings were produced and submitted to the city Agricultural Commission. The study was completed through collaboration with students in the Sustainable Foods Concentration at Smith College. Students conducted the final survey of Northampton institutions and wrote the synthesis report of all surveys. An integral part of this synthesis was a list of recommendations intended to address barriers to local food use identified by KFM.

One recommendation to come out of the synthesis report was to build a permanent farmers' market structure in Northampton. A group of four Smith College students, in conjunction with Wayne Feiden, Northampton Director of Planning and Sustainability, researched farmer's markets to help inform any future plans for a permanent structure in the city. Specifically, this study focused on the capital and operation costs, organization, maintenance, and economic effect of permanent farmer's markets in cities about the same size as Northampton. It also explored the partnership between city government and farmers' market organizations, as well as the diversity of permanent farmers' market structures and their physical design.

Seven farmers' markets were examined closely for this study: the Ithaca Farmers' Market in Ithaca, NY; South Kingstown Farmers' Market in South Kingstown, RI; Marshfield Farmers' Market in Marshfield, MA; Green Harvest Organic Farmers' Market and Artisans' Fair in Falmouth, MA; Putnam Farmers' Market in Putnam, CT; Durham Farmers' Market in Durham, NC; and the Columbia Farmers' Market in Columbia, MO. Four of these markets have pavilion structures, two are located on city fairgrounds, and one is housed in an old mill building. Research was primarily conducted in the form of personal interviews with market managers, vendors, and city officials. Information was also collected from farmers' market websites, and from scholarly work in the field. Researchers conducted site visits in Ithaca, South Kingstown, and Marshfield. In this paper, four case studies address the particulars of the markets, focusing on fairgrounds structures, pavilion structures, and on the markets of Ithaca and South Kingston. Sections on funding, social impacts of farmers' markets, organization of markets, and winterized structures help expand and illuminate the information presented in the case studies. Finally, a conclusion summarizes the main lessons taken from the study.

Background Research

Market Organization

While most farmers' markets look the same from the outside, the organizational structure within differs greatly. One common model is that of an association of producers with a board of directors. Boards of directors take on a range of responsibilities with markets—some function as a final authoritative body for the market, while others take a more advisory approach (Stephenson, Lev, and Brewer 2007). They handle major regulatory infractions and set the rules of the market, or choose to focus on the long-term goals of the markets. Boards are often elected by the members of the market association, as is done at the Durham Farmers' Market. The board also hires a market manager, a figure of utmost importance to farmers' markets.

An alternative to a board-of-directors model is a municipally run market. City economic planning boards, chambers of commerce, parks departments, and similar municipal government branches can choose to begin a farmers' market. In these cases, market manager's report directly to the city. In some of these arrangements, such as in Putnam, CT, the city government only gets involved in market operations when logistical support is needed; they do not provide direct financial support. In these cases, the ultimate authority in operations is the market manager. For some markets, such as the Green Harvest Organic Farmers' Market & Artisans Fair, there is only a market manager, without a board of directors or formal relationship with municipal authority. Another model, used by both the South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market and Green Harvest Market, is that of solely volunteer labor. Married couples, interestingly, organize both these markets, with little outside help. In the case of the Green Harvest Market, a close working relationship with the fairgrounds that house the market make up for the small size of the market management.

Overall, the figure of the market manager is crucial to farmers' markets. They supervise staff, manage budgets, enforce rules, collect vendor fees, liaise with city officials, plan and coordinate advertising, and plan special events, just to list a few duties (Stephenson, Lev, and Brewer 2007). These duties increase as market size increases. The method of employment of market managers varies among markets. In a 1998 study of New Jersey farmers' markets, Govindasamy et al (1998) found that 29.2% of market managers were volunteers. Most managers, however, are paid at least some level of compensation for their time. The majority of market managers are present during market selling hours. A manager's performance is critical to the performance of the market. If a manager does not follow

through on administrative tasks, the vendors may not have a market to sell at.

Key to a market manager's success is clear market rules for them to follow and enforce. Market size is strongly related to what type of rule-format is used. Smaller markets tend to just have written rules, while the prevalence of market bylaws and boards of directors increases with market size (Stephenson, Lev, and Brewer 2007). This is clearly the case with the markets in Durham, Columbia, and Ithaca. All are large markets, and have boards of directors that function as the authoritative body of the market. The other markets in this study are smaller than Durham, Columbia, and Ithaca, and only have a market manager.

Market Structure

The type and style of the structure chosen to house a Farmers' Market has the potential to have a large impact on many aspects of the market, such as size, accessibility, atmosphere, and relationship with the town and customers. It is therefore important to consider first what you want the market to be like and then choose a building that supports these goals. This is especially true of winter markets, which require very different characteristics than a summer market would.

When thinking about what sort of structure is best for a permanent Farmers' Market, one important consideration to keep in mind is the season of operation. In the summer, customers enjoy more open areas that allow them to enjoy the nice weather. These areas also generally give vendors easier access to their booths for set up and break down and allow for more vendors because of increased space. On the other hand, in the winter customers and vendors prefer enclosed spaces that stay warm enough to shop and sell comfortably. The majority of Farmers' Markets investigated in this report started originally as summer markets and expanded to include a winter season later on. Because of this, these markets have structures that are more suited to summer conditions. Generally, the markets have adopted one of two strategies: adapting the summer space to accommodate a winter market or renting a separate space for the winter market.

An example of a market that adapted their summer structure is the Marshfield Farmers' Market in Marshfield, MA. This market started as a summer market in 2006 and in 2010 they made the decision to extend their season with a winter market that runs November through May. The market was already held in and around a barn that could be sealed, so the winter market was held in the same building. Market managers have adapted the barns for winter use by using things like two kerosene heaters to warm the building, a sheet of plastic to cover the main door to keep as much cold air out as

possible and rugs for vendors to stand on to help them stay warmer for the hours they stand at their booths (See Fairgrounds Case Study for more information).

The Ithaca Farmers' Market in Ithaca, New York is a good example of a market that has rented a separate space for the winter market. The summer market structure is a beautiful, wooden, open pavilion on the waterfront, built more than 30 years ago by an amazing volunteer community effort. Because the structure was built for the sole purpose of housing the market there are many features that would normally not be present in a repurposed building; vendors were even able to customize their booths during construction. However, the structure was not designed to be winterized, so when the market expanded its season they chose to rent a building from the local food co-op. This building is small and limits the number of vendors able to participate, but is well sealed and heated and serves the small winter market well (See Ithaca Farmers' Market Case Study for more information).

There are some structure characteristics, however, that are generally desirable for any type of structure or season. For example, accessibility is an important issue. This encompasses both the ability of farmers to easily pull up to the structure to load and unload their goods, as well as the ability of customers to easily navigate the building, including making it handicap and stroller accessible. In both seasons size is a constraint to consider if there are a large number of vendors that wish to participate in the market. Another interesting idea that was brought forward by the Baltimore Farmers' Market was the consideration of the layout of the building and how it affects the vendors. For example, if the vendor is in the back of a long building fewer people will go past them than a vendor who is right by the door. The Baltimore Market is located in a round building with several entrances, which eliminates these placement issues and creates an egalitarian space, much like King Arthur's Round Table, created to give equal importance to each of his knights.

With all of these considerations in mind there are still a variety of building types that can serve as great structures to permanently house winter farmers' markets. The following is a list of common types of buildings/structures discussed in this report, some real life examples of these structures in use, and pros and cons that go along with the structures.

Fairgrounds:

Several farmers' markets have taken advantage of the fairgrounds many New England towns have that are left empty for the majority of the year. Fairground structures have the benefit of large doors that can be opened in the summer to allow airflow, but can be closed in the winter. They are also usually adjacent to open areas that can be used for parking, as well as to expand the area of the

markets in the summer if booths are added outdoors. Buildings on fairgrounds are also often already equipped with or laid out in a way to benefit vendors. One downfall of fairgrounds as sites for permanent Farmers' Markets is that they tend to be removed from the center of town and so receive less foot traffic and require more marketing to attract customers.



Permanent farmers market in fairgrounds building in Reading, PA.

Those markets that were located on fairground sites had close relationships with the fairgrounds, which provided financial and practical support to the market. In these cases the fairgrounds organization acted as the town might in a town-supported market, providing funding for the start-up costs, the space (usually rent free), insurance, and basic maintenance support (such as plowing and trash removal), which the market organization paid for using vendor fees.

Retrofitted mill buildings:

Another common structure for winterized markets is a privately owned, renovated building, such as an old mill or freight shed. The Pawtucket Wintertime Market is housed in the Hope Artiste Village, a converted mill building that now contains a variety of businesses, yoga studios and art studios. Bath Freight Shed Alliance is a non-profit alliance made up of volunteers from the community of Bath, ME dedicated to preserving and adapting a historic, waterfront freight shed built in the 19th century. The Bath Winter Farmers' Market moved to this location in 2012, allowing it to extend its season. The market now runs all year. South County, Rhode Island supports two winter markets hosted in retrofitted mill buildings, the Coastal Growers/Winter Farmers' Market in North Kingstown at the Lafayette Mill Complex and the South Kingstown Indoor Winter Farmers' Market in the Peace Dale Mill Complex. The Lafayette Mill Complex is a converted mill that now leases office space by the day, week or month. The Peace Dale Mill Complex is a revitalized mill that now provides working space for local artists and businesses, as well as fitness studios, recreational facilities and other retail

spaces.

One benefit of retrofitted buildings is the lower cost of construction. Tearing down old buildings no longer in use can often be more expensive than converting them, while using a pre existing building is usually less expensive than building a new structure. Developing a farmer's market in these buildings can breath new life into currently underutilized areas of town. The mill buildings have larger spaces with high ceilings and wider walkways and tend to be more centrally located than fairgrounds and are more walkable. . Reuse of existing structures is also much more environmentally friendly, by saving building materials and the waste produced by tearing down the old building. A study done by the Preservation Green Lab and the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2011 found that reuse of an existing building almost always has less impact on the environment than constructing a new building of similar size and functionality. Additionally, while energy efficiency in new buildings has made great strides, they found that reusing buildings with average levels of energy performance creates immediate climate change impact reductions (The Greenest Building, 2011).

Both of these structure types have been proven to be successful as winter market buildings (see South Kingstown Market and Fairgrounds Markets Case Studies). While pavilions can create wonderful spaces for summer markets and community spaces, they are not ideal for winter markets and, if used for that purpose, should be designed carefully to allow them to easily adapt to winter conditions. Whatever structure is chosen, the goals of the market should always be kept in mind in the designing process to ensure the best possible space is created for the market.



Pawtucket Farmers' Market in a retrofitted mill building.

Social Importance of Market

Of the many market managers and members of city government interviewed for this report, most of them mentioned the fact that their Farmers' Market was a vital source of regular community engagement. Almost every farmer's market has some sort of special activity planned for each weekend market day. Often there is live music, prepared food, face painting and other activities aimed specifically at children. This is an important social aspect of the market because it provides the community with a family-friendly gathering place where people can have fun and get their grocery shopping out of the way at the same time. The most important aspect of any market is, of course, the consumer base that is necessary to support it. When markets have special activities such as music or prepared food, people feel comfortable taking their time and enjoying the market because they are able to integrate their shopping with relaxed and fun socializing. If consumers can count on a festive atmosphere, they will make the effort to come to a farmers' market because it offers something a grocery store cannot. This sense of festivity seems to be key to success and is one of the many benefits that come along with a reliable and well organized market. The Ithaca market has live music, cooking competitions and an annual "rutabega curling" competition and has selected a beautiful waterfront location that draws hundreds of people to the city every weekend in the summer.

This being said, there are some farmers who decry the addition of prepared food, crafts and even musicians. Many farmers do not want to see the market become "diluted" by vendors who are not farmers. These "purist" farmers worry that the market will devolve into a tacky tourist trap and lose its original intention of supplying fresh produce and meat as an alternative to industrial, grocery store food. These concerns are legitimate but as of yet there is not proof of this happening. Many markets maintain a certain ratio of crafts to produce to meat products in order to maintain the integrity of their original motivation. Some markets also limit the amount of value added product that can be sold by vendors and maintain the balance in that way.

The popularity of a city or town's Farmers' Market can also be very directly linked the amount of agricultural tourism an area gets. The idea of agri-tourism is relatively new but already it has made a significant difference in towns such as Ithaca, New York where a hundreds of people flock to the market every weekend in order to experience the products of local craft-people, musicians and farmers. There are often tour buses in Ithaca that are parked by the market on their way between sightseeing ventures and even wine tastings. Because the market is located so close to downtown,

many market visitors also frequent restaurants and shops along the commons. A recent study of the benefits of farmers' markets to Upstate New York communities conducted by the Farmers' Market Federation of New York cites the fact that most farmers' market shoppers often spend \$9-17 dollars in the downtown area where the market is held. In some of the larger, better established markets, that could mean up to \$17,000 per market day in revenue for the local restaurants and shops located near farmers' markets. The beautiful waterfront of Cayuga Lake, where the IFM is located, provides a fun destination for many boaters, wind surfers and kayakers. The market acts as a huge tourist draw and helps boost the local economy while maintaining its original position as a small business incubator and fresh, local produce market.

Since Farmers' Markets mostly require empty yet covered spaces, many markets are able to revitalize old, often industrial spaces for their purposes. In the case of the Pawtucket and Kingston markets in Rhode Island, abandoned mill buildings provide office space and winterized market space year-round. While the summer markets are hosted outside in various pavilions and parks, the winter market is possible only because of the re-vitalization of the old mills. The building has since experienced tremendous success as yoga studios, insurance companies, gyms and other businesses move into the renovated space. In Rhode Island, the Pawtucket Farmers' Market brings crowds of roughly 1600 people into the building every week in the winter. The exposure that the businesses get through that alone makes a huge difference. In the case of the Ithaca market, the lakeside plot where the pavilion currently stands was once an industrial waste dump lot. Now the city earns money in the form of lease payments on a once lost industrial space. The market has since restored the space into a beautifully landscaped lakefront that draws thousands of visitors every summer.

Many towns have old industrial sites that are too expensive to completely overhaul for new industry and instead sit unused, posing potential health issues as well as property devaluation. Historically significant spaces often face the same fate due to lack of funds and are lost to decay or vandalism. As such, these sites sit unused while valuable space is taken up by new buildings. Farmers' Markets are an affordable and effective way to begin the rehabilitation of old industrial spaces. There is a company that works closely with Farmers' Markets as well as other businesses to find and rehabilitate old industrial spaces for multiple uses. The company, Urban Smart Growth, helped the Pawtucket market find space in the mill building they are currently in and they have been there happily for four years. The decision to invest in an old site also preserves a historical site and keeps a piece of the town's history alive. They hope to expand their office and storage space to allow for more prepared food and winter market vendors.

Economic Impact

Throughout New England's agricultural history, public farmers' markets have emerged as an important outlet for local meats, produce and fibers. These markets provide farmers with the opportunity to sidestep wholesalers, distributors and retailers to market their goods directly to their customers, allowing them to sell at prices that are mutually beneficial to them and their customers. According to a survey conducted by Keep Farming Northampton in 2010, 30% of Northampton farmers sell some or all of their goods at farmers' markets or farm stands. (Keep Farming Northampton, 2010). Similarly, of the Ithaca Farmers' Market farmers, 25% say their farm business would be substantially smaller without the farmers' market, while 35% say their farms would not exist at all if not for the farmers' market. Permanent farmers' markets structures like the Ithaca Farmers' market pavilion can enhance sales potential by providing consistency in location from year to year, maintaining accessibility for people of all abilities and ages while offering comfortable shopping conditions rain or shine.

Spillover Effects

In addition to being an important source of farm revenues, farmers' markets serve as powerful engines of economic activity and growth for communities as a whole. As such, markets have become an excellent tool for rural development, drawing people into downtown business districts where local dollars circulate in a synergistic fashion. (Hilchey, 1995) A study commissioned by the Northampton Office of Planning and Sustainability explored the purchasing habits of visitors to the City's farmers' markets and found that the "majority of respondents also shop at nearby businesses when they shop at farmers' markets frequently (47%) or sometimes (40%)." (Northampton Farmers' Market Customer Survey, 2010)

This multiplier effect has been repeatedly observed in other towns and cities across the country where farmers' markets serve as a bridge to downtown business districts (Lee, 2013). In a Project for Public Spaces study lead by the State of New York, "60% of customers surveyed said they had or would visit other stores in the market area, and 60% of those customers said they only visit those stores on market day." (Farmers' Market Federation of New York, 2006). Respondents visiting the Syracuse Downtown Farmers' Market and Warwick Valley Farmers' Market reported spending an additional \$9 and \$17 downtown respectively." (Farmers' Market Federation of New York, 2006). Visitors to the Davis, California farmers' market reportedly spend an additional \$21 on average at local businesses when they come into the city for market (Lee, 2013).

The spillover effects of farmers' markets illustrated by an increase in consumer spending at local businesses extend into the labor market, where the introduction of farmers' markets has been linked to job creation. While farmers' market organizations may maintain a rather lean in-house staff (usually one to two market managers), these markets require a whole range of services, including facility maintenance, trash removal, plowing, advertising and construction work. Eastern Market of Detroit has fueled tremendous job growth as food processors, co-packers, distributors and restaurateurs opened businesses surrounding the market, which has become one of the City's foremost portals of fresh foods. In order to understand the connection between job growth and farmers' markets, the State of Arizona conducted a county-by-county study in 1994. Researchers "found that [on average] direct farm marketing supported 41 jobs at farm outlets and an additional 27 jobs elsewhere in the county's economy" (Gale, 1997).

Small Business Incubators

Farmers' markets have traditionally been an important resource for food and farming entrepreneurs as they grow and develop their enterprise. With vendor fees ranging from \$15-\$35 per week, Farmers' markets provide a flexible, low cost, low risk venue where new caterers, chefs, small farms and artisans can begin marketing their goods. "Vendors at farmers' markets can avoid exacting grading and packing standards common in many wholesale markets, and farmers' markets often eliminate non-local competition (Feenstra and Lewis 1999)." The South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' market has a strong reputation as a small business incubator, providing a space for farmers like Roberta and Bill Browning who stayed connected with local customers as they transitioned their multi-generational dairy farm over to meat production in 2010. When the Brownings chose to transition their product line from dairy to meat, the market provided them with the public interaction and repeated exposure necessary to promote their high quality products, generating enough demand to double their head count and expand into lamb and pork in just four years.

Agricultural Tourism

The idea of agrotourism is relatively new but already it has made a significant difference in towns such as Ithaca, New York where a huge number of people flock to the market in order to experience the agricultural connections and buy local products. There are often tour buses in Ithaca that are parked by the market on their way between sightseeing ventures and even wine tastings. Because the market is located so close to downtown, many market visitors also frequent restaurants and shops along the commons. Located on the waterfront of Cayuga Lake, the market also provides a fun destination for many boaters, wind surfers and kayakers. The market acts as a huge tourist draw

and helps boost the local economy while maintaining its original position as a small business incubator and fresh, local produce market.

Fred Gale is an economist with the USDA's Economic Research Service and conducts research through the Food and Rural Economics Division. Gale stresses the development potential connected with agricultural tourism. "By adding a recreational component to food consumption, many direct-marketing enterprises draw urban people to farm communities, where they may spend additional dollars on restaurant meals, shopping, or other services," he argues (Gale, 1997). The volume of economic activity generated by agricultural tourism was captured and quantified in a 1994 study conducted by the State of Arizona, which found that "agricultural tourists spent \$1 million per year, which led to additional economic activity of \$900,000 throughout the local economy (of each county studied)." (Gale, 1997) The city of Syracuse has used their farmers' market facilities to capitalize on the opportunity to attract agricultural tourists through "The Taste of Syracuse," a culinary festival that celebrates local farms and regional cuisine.

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources acknowledged the development potential associated with agrotourism and the range of "activities" that "merge the world of travel with experiences of food and farming production." (MDAR, 2014) To support the growth of agrotourism, MDAR has partnered with the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension and Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism (MOTT) to offer seminars for farmers interested in engaging in agrotourism. While these seminars are designed for farmers, the agencies that run them represent valuable resources for city government officials or market committees interested in using their farmers' market as a channel through which to expand agrotourism. As part of the MassGrown Program, MDAR has published an online guide to agricultural activities taking place across the state, including an interactive map identifying pick-your-own operations, farmers' markets, fairs and food festivals. According to this map, Northampton sits in the center of a dense cluster of small businesses, farms, restaurants and organizations offering agrotourism activities. By establishing a permanent farmers' market structure, the City has the potential to brand Northampton as a local food destination, while strengthening agrotourism and harnessing it as a tool for economic development.

Farmers' Market Budgets

Start-Up Costs

Start up costs varied dramatically across the markets studied and depended mostly on market infrastructure. For the South Kingstown, Marshfield and Falmouth Farmers' Markets renting space in existing mill or fairgrounds enabled them to get their operation up and running with very little up-front investments or grant funding. Start-up costs were far greater for the Ithaca and Columbia farmers' markets, which run out of pavilions constructed by their respective market organizations. The Ithaca Farmers' Market required considerable support from the State of New York in the form of a \$50,000 grant (matched by vendor labor hours) that financed the construction of their pavilion. The Durham Farmers' Market pavilion cost considerably more to build, with construction costs nearing \$1 million. Of this amount, \$700,000 was dedicated to the construction of the main structure and \$200,000 spent on bathroom facilities, site work, power and lighting. These hefty construction budgets dwarf the modest \$1,000 grant used for promotional purposes when South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market opened at the Peacedale Mill Complex. This drastic variation in start-up costs highlights the considerable investments that are necessary for a newly constructed market pavilion, as well as the low-cost and ease of entry associated with markets held in privately owned spaces.

Operational Costs

The operating costs associated with running a public farmers' market vary greatly depending on market infrastructure, size, climate, organizational structure, location and the extent of the public-private partnership. For year-round permanent farmers' markets in the Northeast, expenses can include management salaries, rent or lease payments, insurance, maintenance and upkeep of market infrastructure, utilities and plowing services. While operating budgets differ in size and allocation, it is important to highlight the fact that the farmers' market organizations studied in this report are successfully operating without the financial support of the municipality.

Market Managers

- In 2002 the State of Oregon's Cooperative Extension conducted a study of 50 markets throughout the state (Stephenson, 2002). Researchers found that "the range of manager salaries in 2002 was \$650 to \$35,000" with four managers earning "less than \$1,500, placing them close to volunteer status," and the same number earning \$20,000 to \$35,000." Researchers at the USDA found that, like the South Kingstown, Green Harvest and Marshfield Markets, many markets (especially smaller markets) successfully operate under the leadership of a non-profit, volunteer manager or coordinator, avoiding the cost of salaried employees

altogether.

Upkeep & Maintenance

- For farmers' markets like the Ithaca Farmers' Market, that are independently responsible for their own facility, up-keep and maintenance costs are important to consider. In order to maintain their market pavilion in a cost-effective way, the Ithaca Farmers Market requires vendors to complete work hours as part of their membership in the organization, instead of hiring contractors, carpenters, maintenance personnel, landscapers or public relations staff. Alternatively, upkeep and maintenance costs were surprisingly lean for the South Kingstown, Marshfield and Falmouth markets, which benefit from up-keep, plowing, waste removal, and janitorial services as part of their lease agreements (heating oil is paid for by the markets, averaging roughly \$36 per day).

Insurance

- By operating under the insurance "umbrella" of another non-profit, business or municipality, farmers' markets can avoid the fees and deductibles associated with holding their own insurance policy. For those markets renting or leasing commercial space from a private business or non-profit, insurance coverage is often provided as part of their lease agreement. Examples of this type of arrangement include the Marshfield and Falmouth markets, which pay for their use of the fairgrounds according to a consignment agreement that includes insurance coverage. While the South Kingstown Wintertime Market falls under the umbrella of the Peacedale Mill Complex insurance policy, they do hold an additional, modest insurance policy on their own. Alternately, operating costs are greater for markets that own and operate their own facility, like the Ithaca Farmers' Market (IFM), which holds its own (costly) insurance policy, which remains independent of the City of Ithaca.

Rent

- Across each of the markets studied in this report, rental costs and lease payments represented the most significant operational expense. The South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market pays \$500 in rent each week for their use of the Peacedale Mill Complex in an agreement that does not require they pay when winter storms prevent them from opening. Their rental agreement includes access to bathrooms, water, heat, electricity, and maintenance services. The Ithaca Farmers' Market makes an annual lump sum lease payment of \$30,000 (roughly \$575 per week) to the City of Ithaca for their use of the Steamboat Landing property. This figure is dramatically higher than the rental payments made by the Durham Farmers' Market,

which pays the Department of City Parks just \$250 per month (just over \$60 per week) for their use of a market pavilion. Alternatively, the Green Harvest market operates on a consignment agreement with the owners of the Cape Cod Fairgrounds, in which vendor fees (usually totaling \$800-\$900/month) are split between both entities.

Administrative Revenue & Funding

Vendor fees are a strong source of revenue for operating and maintaining a farmers' market. However, vendors may not be in a position to provide all of the funding necessary to cover start-up costs associated with opening a farmers' market, especially those housed in their own pavilion like the Ithaca and Durham farmers' markets. In these cases, grants, donations, loans and fundraising initiatives are necessary to break ground. In order to finance the \$700,000 in construction costs associated with the Durham Farmers' Market pavilion, market leaders applied for and received \$300,000 in federal grant funding. In order to make up the difference, each column of the pavilion was "sold" for \$10,000. Local developers also offered considerable financial support to get the market up and running. In order to begin construction on their pavilion project, the Ithaca Farmers Market receiving a \$50,000 matching grant from the City of Ithaca. On a smaller scale, the South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers Market received grant funding on a micro scale from their local Historical Association, which offered \$1,000 to cover a promotional campaign designed to kick-start market traffic.

While grants and fundraising is key to starting a new market, operational expenses are typically supported through administrative revenues generated by vendor fees. Researchers at the State of Oregon's Cooperative Extension found that vendor fees ranged from \$0-\$35 across all 50 markets surveyed, with vendor fees depending heavily on market size (Stephenson, 2002). They found that "80 percent of markets in the large market size category (56-90 vendors) and 75 percent of markets in the Medium market size category (31-55 vendors) charge \$13 to \$35 per stall. Conversely, 88 percent of markets in the Micro market size category (5-8 vendors) and 65 percent of markets in the Small market size category (9-30 vendors) charge \$0 to \$12 per stall." (Stephenson, 2002) Administrative revenues ranged from \$0 to \$111,000 with 24% operating on \$1,000-\$4,999 and the majority (86%) operating on less than \$50,000 per year.¹ In some cases these administrative revenues are supplemented by donations, special events, grants and/or municipal support. It is essential to note that each of the farmers' markets studied in this report is financially independent and self-sustaining.

Federal Grant Programs

While financial independence and economic sustainability are strong indicators of a healthy organization, grants can play a transformative role in the growth and development of a vibrant Farmers' Market, especially at the outset. Although the organizations analyzed in this report, with the exception of the Ithaca Farmers' Market, relied on relatively minimal grant funding from private and public sources at the local and state level, federal grant programs should not be overlooked. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers a number of federal grant opportunities through the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Economic Development Administration and the Rural Development Department. The following programs are certainly worth consideration by city planners, Farmers' Market organizations or agriculturally oriented non-profits interested in establishing a permanent home for their community Farmers' Market.

Department of Rural Development: Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG)

- In 2013, “six recipients in four states received funding for farmers’ market projects with an average grant amount of \$38,853” through the Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program. These grants provided funding for structural updates designed to improve handicap accessibility, building renovations, as well as new construction projects. Through this innovative grant program, the City of Trenton, Missouri received a \$25,000 RBEG for the construction of a Farmers' Market pavilion in the heart of their downtown. These grants do not require matching investments or fundraising efforts on behalf of the recipient and are an ideal source of funding for up-front capital investments in physical infrastructure. Furthermore, grant recipients are eligible to reapply for funding.

Department of Commerce & Economic Development Administration: Public Works and Economic Assistance Programs

- The Economic Development Administration [EDA] offers cooperative agreement grants to city, county and state governments, non-profits and Native American tribal governments working to further the economic development and vitality of their community or region. According to the EDA, “grants made under these programs will leverage regional assets to support the implementation of regional economic development strategies designed to create jobs, leverage private capital, encourage economic development, and strengthen America's ability to compete in the global marketplace.”(Economic Development Administration, 2014) These grants require a cost sharing or matching contribution by partnering organizations or governments and can be used for projects (construction and non-construction) designed to support public

infrastructure. “While local and regional food systems development has not been an explicit focus in the past,” Farm Aid argues that the Administration “has made investments in rural food and agriculture infrastructure projects before, and...is interested in *any* proposal with significant job-creating potential, and with a focus on sustainable development.” (Farm Aid, 2014)

Agricultural Marketing Service: Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP):

- Introduced in 2002 as an amendment to the 1976 Farmer to Consumer Direct Marketing Act, the FMPP saw its funding triple with the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill, making \$30 million dollars in non-construction grants that “target improvements and expansion of domestic farmers’ markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agrotourism activities, and other direct producer to consumer market opportunities.” According to the USDA website, agricultural cooperatives, economic development corporations, local governments, non-profit organizations, producer associations and producer networks, public benefit corporations, regional Farmers' Market authorities, and Tribal governments are all eligible to apply for up to \$100,000 in funding for “market start-up, expansion and strategic planning” as well as “advertising and market promotion” through the Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA 2013).

Farmers’ Market Failures

While this report focuses on several highly successful farmers markets, it is important to acknowledge the fact that not all farmers markets succeed in building a strong, sustainable market that remains viable over the long-term. Indeed, the Durham Farmers Market failed in its first attempt at raising funds through fundraising and municipal bonds to build a pavilion. By examining these types of market failures, shortcomings and struggles more closely, it becomes easier to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a new farmers market in your own community.

In 2006, researchers at Oregon State University completed a multiple-year study of fifty farmers markets in the state of Oregon in order to explore the successes and failures that accompanied the boom in new markets during the late 1990’s and early 2000’s. According to Larry Lev, a marketing economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource and one of the researchers involved in the study, “farmers’ markets are a great success story for Oregon Agriculture. They connect consumers with farmers and increases local food security. But underneath that success is the hidden story that says for every two markets that opened during the study period, one closed.”(Brown,

2007) While older markets did close during the relevant time period, researchers found that newer markets were more likely to fail. “Of the 32 markets that closed, 15 markets (nearly 47 percent) did so following their first season,” the study reports.

While this study does not focus solely on permanent farmers markets, Lev and his colleagues do identify a number of characteristics associated with market failure that are valuable for planners interested in starting up their own market, regardless of the prospective facility. In order to isolate the factors that might lead to market closure, researchers examined 9 of the initial markets that closed between 2001 and 2005, looking for commonalities between them. They identified five factors connected to market vulnerability and closure. These included: small size (few vendors), a lack of farm products and product variety, insufficient administrative revenue (insufficient vendor fees), poor management salaries and high manager turnover. All of the markets that failed between 2001 and 2005 had between 5-30 vendors and indicated a need for more fruits and vegetables. “Five of the seven markets that participated in the survey collected less than \$3,400 per year in administrative revenue.” (Stephenson, 2006) Of the seven failed markets lead by managers, “four were volunteers or were paid low wages.” (Stephenson, 2006) This discouragingly low compensation may be linked to the high rate of management turnover observed in this study, which revealed “all 9 markets experienced 12 manager changes during the 5-year period [and] five of the nine markets changed managers the majority of the years they operated.” (Stephenson, 2006)



Profile of the City of Northampton

For the sake of comparison, the following provides information on the city of Northampton with regard to the business, customer, and vendor climates in the city. Finally there are general findings that can be applied to Northampton with regard to farmers' markets and local food in general. The information below has been synthesized using four surveys conducted by the Northampton Farmers' Market Committee in 2011. The committee conducted three studies on local businesses, market vendors and market customers and synthesized these results into a list of recommendations and findings. For the purposes of this paper, only the most pertinent findings have been included.

Business Profile

Overall the businesses of downtown Northampton either feel a positive effect from the farmers market, especially the Saturday market, or no effect at all. Just under half of all businesses surveyed said that the Saturday market positively impacted their business. It is also important to note that the majority of businesses downtown believed that fewer farmer markets would *not* help their business. The general consensus is that businesses in Northampton are not at all worried about any negative effects of increased farmer's market hours and think of the market as a positive addition to the town.

Customer Profile

Farmers' market customers reported that they shop at the markets in order to eat fresh and local food and that the two most well-attended markets occur in downtown Northampton on Tuesday and Saturday each week. The customers are interested in seeing more vendors as well as more dairy options at all of the markets. In general, customers reported shopping at other vendors frequently after farmers markets because they can combine grocery and other shopping downtown. Most consumers in Northampton actively seek out local food and almost half shop at farmers markets.

Vendor Profile

Vendors appear to be satisfied with the markets in Northampton with the majority wanting to expand hours, space, and product diversity at markets. The two most popular markets for the vendors were the Saturday and Tuesday markets as well and most of the vendors sold vegetables, fruits, and/or other grown products like flowers and transplants.

General Findings

The average consumer of local food (and therefore farmers' market products) is a middle aged, college educated, woman, living in Northampton who earns roughly \$76,000 a year. Of this group, 70% go out of their way to purchase local food of any kind including local produce, eggs, and meat and they actively seek out local food at the markets. In general, 42% of Northampton residents that responded to the survey said that they shopped at farmers markets.

The importance of a permanent location for a farmer's market is that it will provide a stable and reliable location that consumers can rely on for their products. Nearly a third (30%) of consumers in Northampton feel it is difficult to access local food and that they would buy more food were it easier to access. This problem could be ameliorated by the addition of a permanent market space that consumers could rely on as a shopping location. It is also important to note that roughly 30% of Northampton farmers use the markets to sell either all or some of their agricultural products. By supporting local farmers we ensure that Northampton's own producers are protected and supported and that the city's food system is somewhat secure.



Entrance to the Ithaca Farmers' Market pavilion

Fresh baked bread for sale at the Ithaca winter market



Case Study: Ithaca Farmers' Markets

Ithaca, New York

The Ithaca Farmers' Market (IFM) in Ithaca, New York is one of the most well known markets in the northeast. Located on the waterfront of Cayuga Lake in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, over 80 vendors sell their wares under an open sided pavilion made of rough sawn lumber. Meat, dairy, organic and non-organic vegetables, fiber, fruits, wine and beer are just a few of the many products that are available from farms within only 30 miles of the city. Customers can sit at picnic tables or on the dock and enjoy the views of Cayuga Lake while eating lunch made by one of the many vendors selling prepared foods. The surrounding city acts as a creative mecca for artists and musicians, a number of whom are vendors at the weekend market. The pavilion in which the summer market takes place is accessible by boat, bike and car, though parking has become an issue as the market continues to grow in popularity. The market has a large parking lot that surrounds half the structure but there are still those who have to find alternative parking along the entrance road to the grounds.

The structure was built entirely by volunteer labor on land leased from the city and paid for by a \$50,000 matching

grant from the state of New York. Aaron Munzer, the IFM co-manager explains, “[t]hat’s the kind of direct government intervention that you need to start that engine of commerce. That \$50,000 turned into millions of dollars that come into this area every year, that stay in this area, that build jobs and a vibrant economy in this area.” The lease for Steamboat Landing, as the market property is now called, was negotiated in 1992 and renewed in 2013 after a bid from a hotel development company was dismissed. The market pays \$35,000 a year in taxes and brings in hundreds of thousands of tourist dollars each year. Tour buses, summer season lake residents, college parents, college students- all of these people frequent the market and consequently support the town as a whole.

“That \$50,000 turned into millions of dollars that come into this area every year, that stay in this area, that build jobs and a vibrant economy in this area.”

During the summer season (May through October), the market is open Saturdays and Sundays under the pavilion and on Dewitt Street downtown Tuesdays and Thursdays. November through March there is only one market a week on Saturdays in The Space at the Greenstar market, an indoor venue that accommodates roughly 30 vendors. The market is a producer only market and there is almost always a waiting list for vendors who wish to sell at Saturday and Sunday markets. Vendors pay a \$28 daily stall fee for each market day as well as a reserved stall fee if they are allotted a reserved stall. There is also a small fee, roughly \$2, for electricity and running water if vendors need those amenities. Vendors are required to complete around 16 (the number varies depending on how many markets each vendor attends) work hours per year on projects such as structure maintenance, landscaping, filing, site cleanup after market days and website upkeep. The market also offsets costs by renting their pavilion for weddings and other large celebratory events. This added income helps the market offset costs for larger maintenance or ground projects and provides a pleasing alternative public space for events.

The most unique feature of the IFM is that from the beginning it was intended to be a small business incubator. The fact that the market is not limited to produce and meat means that startup businesses have an opportunity to earn money and field-test their products on a large audience without the risk of investing heavily in any start-up infrastructure. This frustrates many “purists” because they feel that the market should contain only vendors selling produce, meat and some raw dairy. Munzer elaborates on this issue by saying, “The IFM is primarily an agricultural market – it’s pretty critical to have a lot of things to offer people. We’ve become a tourist attraction and you can’t say enough about

that. And there are some challenges that come along with that but overall it's an incredible benefit to become this destination." A key aspect of the market's roots is that farmers have always been the ones driving the market forward. From the beginning 35 years ago, local farmers have been orchestrating the development of the market. There has been no involvement of the city government in the planning or executing process of the market other than to obtain building permits, lease agreements and local grants.

One success story that can be attributed to the small business incubator model is the Piggery Butcher Shop that exists in downtown Ithaca. The owners of the butcher business wanted to expand and began selling at the markets on weekends, than on weekdays and finally had enough money and enough of a customer base that they could move into a store in downtown where they are currently a thriving business.



Findings:

- 1 The market is an important economic and social asset to the city.
- 2 Work hours and volunteer labor cover the market's day-to-day maintenance and landscaping needs.
- 3 The market is unique in its organizational structure and provides a useful example of a functioning, board-heavy organization.
- 4 The market provides a stable source of income to local farmers and small businesses, thus encouraging and enabling them to grow.

Ithaca, NY	
Town Population	30,331
Median Income	\$29,985
Area (square miles)	6.1
Name of market	Ithaca Farmers' Market
Type of structure	Pavilion
Distance from town center	1 mile
Winterized	No, rents separate building in winter
Number of winter/summer vendors	35/85-90
Organization of market	Board of Directors (12)
Relationship with town	City Governance Liaison
Source of initial funding	Vendor fees, New York State grant
Source of maintenance cost	Vendor fees





Case Study: South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market

South Kingstown, RI

Founded in November of 2009 by Pat and Steve Gardiner, the South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market (SKWFM) is a fantastic community market located in the refurbished Peace Dale Mill Complex. The market is open Saturdays from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. November to April, offering a broad selection of fresh produce, meats, seafood, prepared foods and artisanal goods produced by over 35 vendors growing, cooking or crafting their products within 400 miles of South Kingstown. While the wintertime market is relatively new, South Kingstown's vibrant, summer outdoor Farmers' Market is entering its 32nd year, the longest continually operated market in Rhode Island.

Unlike many Farmers' Markets led by a paid market manager, the South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market is led entirely by volunteers. As farmers themselves, the Gardiners saw the value of maintaining a relationship with their customers through the winter months and were willing to dedicate some of their time and energy to growing and managing a winter market in their own community. The Gardiners, along with a treasurer and public relations manager, work together in an unusually small team to keep the market running smoothly. By maintaining such a lean leadership team, the SKWFM minimizes overhead costs and avoids the bureaucratic complexities of board-heavy organizational structures.

The South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market operates



as a registered non-profit built off the creative Farmers' Market model established by Farm Fresh Rhode Island. Once a thriving textile operation, the newly repurposed Peace Dale Mill Complex is privately owned and operated. The Gardiners pool vendor fees to pay \$500 in rent each week in an agreement that does not require they pay when winter storms prevent them from opening. The Complex features a large parking lot maintained by the owner, handicap accessible entrances and

bathrooms, onsite storage space and convenient loading and unloading points for vendors. The Complex provides all water, heat, electricity, garbage disposal, janitorial services, and plowing.

While the SKWFM has been an excellent source of income for the Complex, its value as a generator of economic activity goes well beyond rent. When the market opened for business five years ago, the Complex was nearly vacant, waiting to be sold off in a tough recessionary market. This picture was dramatically transformed once the market entered its second and third years, attracting approximately 2-3,000 people to the Complex each weekend; expanding the building's commercial potential. Gardiner explains that "since this market has been in here [the owner] has been able to rent almost this entire mill out because of the exposure from the Farmers' Market." Today this historic 1800's building has become a hub for local businesses, including a tool sharpener, caterer, airsoft arena, distillery, personal fitness studio and indoor soccer facility. Even the basement has been leased for antique car storage. Customers pass from their weekend workout at the crossfit training gym into the market across the hall for groceries where families pick up lunch before their child's soccer game. This synergetic relationship between the Farmers' Market and these small businesses has been a fantastic way of developing a stronger local economy, while protecting and revitalizing an important part of South Kingstown's history.





“Since this market has been in here [the owner] has been able to rent almost this entire mill out because of the exposure from the Farmers' Market.” – Pat Gardiner, Founder & Manager SKWFM

Pat and Steve Gardiner, founders and managers of the South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers Market

Findings

South Kingstown, RI	
Town Population	8,468
Median Income	\$50,313
Area (square miles)	5.1
Name of market	South Kingstown Wintertime Farmers' Market
Type of structure	Converted mill building
Distance from town center	5 miles
Winterized	Yes
Number of winter vendors	34
Organization of market	One market manager, no other employees
Relationship with town	None
Source of initial funding	Non-profit organization
Administrative Revenue Source	Vendor fees

- 1 Repurposed buildings, including industrial spaces or historical buildings, are optimal for use by year-round farmers markets
- 2 Farmers markets can provide considerable public exposure to underused commercial spaces, creating synergistic opportunities for small businesses and property owners.
- 3 By maintaining a lean, volunteer driven leadership team, farmers markets can minimize overhead costs and avoid the bureaucratic complexities of board-heavy organizational structures.



Durham, NC Farmers' Market

Source:
durhamcentralpark.org



Putnam, CT Farmers' Market

Source:
putnamfarmersmarket.org

Case Study: Pavilion Farmers' Markets

Columbia Farmers' Market, Durham Farmers' Market, Putnam Farmers' Market

A recent trend among farmers' markets is to build a pavilion structure. These buildings are not winterized, and provide some protection for the elements and a centering force for communities. The Durham Farmers' Market, of Durham, North Carolina, and Columbia Farmers' Market, of Columbia, Missouri, are two markets that recently embarked on projects to build pavilions. The Durham Farmers' Market benefitted greatly from pavilion erected in the Durham Central Park in 2007, just 9 years after the market was initiated. In Columbia, the market is just waiting on additional funding to begin construction on their "shovel ready" pavilion.

Columbia Farmers' Market

Gaining the funding for a pavilion project can be difficult. This is especially true in Columbia, where the construction of a market pavilion was the sole responsibility of Sustainable Farms and Communities (SF&C), a group started expressly for this purpose. The city council of Columbia decided not to lease the property that the pavilion will stand on to the Farmers' Market Association. Although officially deemed a non-profit, the market association was considered to be a for profit entity, as the producers sell at the market to make money. Founding SF&C also allowed the farmers to focus their



Sketch of the planned pavilion in Columbia, MO

Source: farmersmarketpavilion.org

energies on their own businesses. SF&C works closely with the city of Columbia and is even considered to be a quasi-public arm of city council. This is not by accident, as the board itself, the city council, and the Columbia Farmers' Market appoint SF&C's board of directors jointly. Despite such a high level of directorial involvement, the city government provides no financial assistance to the pavilion project.

SF&C is currently engaged in a third attempt to secure funding for the pavilion. In 2005, bond issues failed to raise requisite funds. Since that failure, \$300,000 was raised to finance architectural drawings and a professional fund raising expert's assistance. About half of those funds were raised from several private donors, and the rest came from

small events and personal donations. Kenneth Figg, director of SF&C, credits the recession for playing a role in the difficulty the group is having in finding funding sources. Despite such obstacles, SF&C are continuing their efforts through organized events, sales of coffee, corn, and t-shirts, pledges from individuals as well as organizations in the city, and grants from outside organizations.

Although the pavilion is still on hold, SF&C currently works as an intermediary between the city and the Market Association, allowing the market to continue operating on the same property. SF&C leases the property from the city for \$2100 annually, and in turn charges the market association \$3100. The differential in charge covers the lease fee as well as requisite insurance costs.



Left: Durham, NC
Pavilion
Source:

Challenges arise between differing objectives of city officials, pavilion planners, and market vendors. The city imagines the pavilion as a multipurpose space, which can cause tensions, as the vendors understand the pavilion as a project for them. SF&C often finds itself caught in the middle of these variant goals. As the market uses the space of the city's old fairgrounds--the original buildings of which have been demolished-- which is leased from public land, it is likely that the city's aims will carry weight when the project finally breaks ground.

The market itself is enormously successful. The market currently is comprised of 84 members, with a waiting list of 25, and weekend visitor counts during the high season can reach 4000. The market is producer-only, and vendors must live within 50 miles of the city of Columbia. The market's authoritative body is the Board of Directors, which hires two separate managers to handle the market's business. The Senior Market Manager's duties include writing grants for funding and coordinating advertising, taking on a more administrative role than the Market Manager, who oversees the daily running of the market. Markets are held on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday in the summer, but only on Saturdays in the winter.

Findings

- 1 The construction of a pavilion structure is an expensive undertaking, and is most effective with diversified funding sources.
- 2 Building projects involve many different stakeholders, who often hold a range of priorities. Coordinating differing opinions and goals may be time consuming, but offers rich space for coalition.
- 3 While all three pavilion projects are closely connected with city government, this connection need not be financial in order to be successful.
- 4 A permanent market structure helps *create* demand for farmers' markets.

Every Saturday a different band provides live music. The Columbia Farmers' Market is a community hub, and will no doubt continue to be so once the pavilion is built.

Durham Farmers' Market

The market of Durham, North Carolina, similarly serves as a gathering point for the community. Housed under a pavilion in Durham Central Park (DCP), the Durham Farmers' Market (DFM) seeks to provide community education, as well as local, quality food. Program series such as *Quick Dinners* from the Market bring in local chefs to demonstrate a quick, simple meal made exclusively from ingredients available that day at the market. Annual competitions between local chefs further strengthen the relationship between the Durham Farmers' market and local restaurants, and many buy their ingredients from the market. The DFM brings in crowds that are good for the surrounding businesses, as well as the vendors. The market has incredibly strong ties to the community, and market manager Erin Kauffman cites community support, as well as the relationship between the market and the DCP, as the greatest assets of the market. The market is producer-only, featuring 70 vendors all from no more than 70 miles away from Durham city center. Some vendors sell crafts and prepared food as well as produce. Like the CFM, the market in Durham operates on city owned land. The DCP



Durham Farmers' Market

Source: commons.wikimedia.org

Putnam Farmers' Market

Source:
putnamfarmermarket.org



owns the pavilion and leases it out to the DFM for \$250 per month.

Costs for the construction of the pavilion totaled just under \$1 million—around \$700,000 for the main structure and \$200,000 for bathroom, site work, power and lighting. Of the total cost, \$300,000 of the funds came from a federal grant. The rest came from various local developers, and each column of the pavilion was “sold” for \$10,000. The pavilion officially opened in 2007, just 9 years after the Durham Farmers’ Market was founded. The DFM needed a home, and the community was invested in the success of the market. Because the DCP is committed to community growth, partnership with the DFM was particularly attractive, and added an incentive for the project. Local Durham architect and longtime DCP board member Ellen Cassilly designed the pavilion. Unlike in Columbia, DFM has no administrative role in the DCP board. The members of the market—the vendors, elect the market board. The market board of directors hires a market manager. The DCP is a separate entity that has its own



management agreement with the city.

Putnam Farmers' Market

The need to shelter vendors and customers, as well as a stable, central location, drove the construction of a pavilion in Putnam, CT. Originally built as a space for the Northeast Connecticut Farmers’ Coop in 2009, the space soon housed other possibilities. In 2011, the Putnam Farmers’ Market was founded by the Economic and Community Development Department of the city of Putnam, because the city

did not have its own market, yet had a pavilion. After an initial grant, the market is run exclusively off of vendor fees. There are currently 10 farmers and 3 artisan vendors, and the market is operating near to the capacity of their space. The market is currently seeking to expand their vendor diversity to include more protein vendors, as there is a marked demand for local meat. The Putnam Farmers' Market has earned a good reputation among vendors, and more vendors are would like to join the market. Attendance of the market is also on the rise, averaging around 350 people each market day. This is an achievement given that the market is barely 3 years old, and having survived some early administrative hiccups. The pavilion has enabled solid growth for the Putnam Farmers' Market, which also receives support from the town. The market manager works mainly by herself in the day-to-day running of the market and advertising, but the town steps in to assist with official endeavors, such as obtaining a machine to process SNAP benefits. Located near several other markets, the Putnam Farmers' Market demonstrates that a pavilion or other permanent structure can *create* more business, as well as support existing market business.

	Columbia, MO	Durham, NC
Town Population	113,225	233,252
Median Income	\$33,729	\$47,394
Area (square miles)	60.4	94.9
Name of market	Columbia's Farmers' Market	The Durham Farmers' Market
Type of structure of market	Pavilion (in process)	Pavilion
Distance from town center	2.4 miles	0.7 mile
Winterized	No	No
Number of winter vendors	40	~45
Organization of market	Board of Directors	Board of Directors
Relationship with town	Supportive but non-financial	Minimal
Source of initial funding	Non-profit organization/fundraising	Non-profit organization
Source of maintenance cost	Vendor fees	Vendor fees



Top picture:
Marshfield winter
farmers' market, held
in the barn at the
Marshfield
Fairgrounds.
Bottom picture:
Green Harvest
Organic winter
farmers' market held
in the sheep barn at
the Cape Cod
Fairgrounds.

Case Study: Fairground Farmers' Markets

Marshfield Farmers Market Green Harvest Organic Farmers' Market

The Marshfield Farmers' Market is located in Marshfield, MA. It was started as a summer market in 2006, and expanded to include a winter season in 2010. The market runs every Saturday during the summer and the third Saturday of every month through the winter. Running only once a month is key to supporting the winter market; the market manager reports 200-400 people shop at the market per day if they only run once a month, but if they ran every week during the winter they would only get about 100 people each day.

The Marshfield Fairgrounds are located on Main Street, about a mile from the town center. The market is held here all year round, except for the few weeks in the summer the fair is running, when the market is held on the town green so shoppers don't have to pay the \$10 entrance fee to the fair. While the fairground location provides ample parking and a good building for the market, it is out of the way and creates issues with attracting customers. They have a marquee sign on site, where they post the dates of the next market in the winter so customers can keep it in mind while shopping. They also post signs downtown a few days before the market to remind old customers and draw in new customers. Because it is in the same location as the

summer market, a good way to draw more customers is to make sure summer shoppers know that it is open for the winter season as well, with limited dates.

The market runs year-round out of a single, large barn that has been owned by the fairgrounds since 1867. The market provides each vendor with a 10-foot long booth. The building has several big double doors that can be opened during the summer to allow airflow. In the summer vendors also set up outdoors around the building, allowing more vendors to participate. When the doors are open farmers located in the building can open the doors and pull right up to their booths to set up. In the winter they must park in the parking lot and carry their things in, though they can pull up to the back door at the end of the market to pack up. In the winter, all doors are kept shut except the front door, which is covered with plastic to keep the heat in while people move in and out. The building is heated during the winter by two kerosene heaters, and the vendors are encouraged to bring rugs to stand on to help them stay warm. The building is handicap and stroller accessible, with wide aisles and no stairs. There is ample parking in the field next to the market.

The Marshfield Market has a total of 65 vendors during the summer season that rotate, with around 50 vendors present every week. In the winter season space is limited because all vendors must be in the building, which can only



A vendor with a customer at the Marshfield winter market.

support 35 vendors. During the winter they have a waiting list, usually 4 or 5 vendors long. The market includes a mixture of farmers, prepared food vendors and craft vendors. Generally in the winter they have 7 or 8 smaller farms and 2 large farms. The market tries to limit products sold to local, high quality products made from natural materials. In the winter the market also hosts kid's activities to draw in families looking for something to do on a Saturday morning.

A non-profit group started in 1867 called The Marshfield Agricultural and Horticultural Society (MAHS) owns the fairgrounds. In 2006 Karen Biagini, then MAHS director, started the market pursuant to their goal of promoting agriculture. A board of directors runs the non-profit, one of whom helps with organization of the market. Otherwise, the market is run by one manager, currently Lorrie Dahlen. Volunteers do the rest of the labor. Because the market is a non-profit, volunteer hours can be granted for work,

and the market has a relationship with the local high school for volunteers.

The market has no formal relationship with the town. During the operation of the fair in the summer the market must gain permission to relocate to the town green, but it is not a town regulated market and the town has put no money into the market. The Board of Health of Marshfield has been involved with the certification of vendors. The market instead relies on its relationship with the fairgrounds, which bought the heaters for the winter market, and provides insurance, clean up and plowing. The market uses vendor fees to pay for heating and bathrooms.

Green Harvest Organic Farmers' Market & Artisans Fair

The Green Harvest Organic Farmers' Market and Artisans Fair, located in Falmouth, Massachusetts, has been running since the summer of 2011 with two seasons of operation. In the summer (June-mid October) it is open once a week on Tuesdays, 12 to 4 p.m., and in the autumn (mid-October to mid-December) it is open Sundays, and 12 to 3 p.m.

The Cape Cod Fairgrounds are located on Route 151 on the Falmouth/Mashpee city line. This location is 5 miles from downtown Falmouth, but is connected to town by a bike path. During the summer another market is held

on Thursdays in downtown Falmouth and in a local garden center during the winter. While the location of this market is more central, the market manager of Green Harvest Market, Terrell, feels that locals are hesitant to go downtown during the summer because it's so crowded by tourists.

These tourists are generally only looking for a few items they can easily carry away with them (such as berries, artisan items or pastries), and do very little "grocery shopping". He feels that his location outside of town attracts locals from Falmouth, Mashpee and Sandwich who are shopping for the week and will buy more, while still drawing some tourists with the inclusion of artisan goods.



The summer outdoor (above) and autumn/winter indoor (below).

This market has three options for location throughout the year. In the summer and fall when the weather is nice the market is held outdoors on the fairgrounds. Under rainy conditions, the market is moved to an indoor/outdoor sheep barn with open sides that allow airflow but a roof that keeps the vendors and customers dry. In cold weather the market moves indoors to an enclosed exhibit hall, heated by 2 kerosene heaters. All of these locations are part of the fairgrounds' property. There is also ample parking for vendors and customers in empty fields at the fairgrounds.

The market generally includes 20-22 vendors. All of the products sold at the farmers' market are organic, though not all are sourced from the Cape. In the fall the market concentrates on local handmade crafted items, such as wool sweaters, wool scarves, beauty products, and arts and crafts. The market also features fishcakes, jams and jellies, soups and pizza (made in a trailer brick oven), and hopes to bring in food trucks next season. There is live music every week. Terrell encourages the participation of all different types of vendors, including 'mom and pop' vendors, even those bringing produce from their backyard garden. This

method has proven very successful for the vendors; Terrell told a story of an older woman who brought several large fruit tarts and sold out well before the market ended.

Stanton Terrell and his wife run the market on a volunteer basis as a certified non-profit. They also own the "Falmouth Visitor," a publication that provides advertising for businesses all over the Cape. Terrell was inspired to start the market because he noticed message boards online were often filled with visitors asking where they could buy organic goods. He focuses on keeping the organization of the market simple, with no board of directors, employee, or formal relationship with the town of Falmouth.

While this market operates independently of

	Falmouth, MA	Marshfield, MA
Town Population	32,660	24,324
Median Income	\$31,868	\$65,731
Area (square miles)	54.4	31.7
Name of market	Green Harvest Organic Farmers' Market & Artisans Fair	Marshfield Farmers' Market
Type of structure of market	Barn/Fairgrounds	Barn/Fairgrounds
Distance from town center	5 miles	1 mile
Winterized	Minimally (enclosed, kerosene heaters)	Minimally (enclosed, kerosene heaters)
Number of winter vendors	20-22	35
Organization of market	One market manager, no other employees	One market manager, one other employee
Relationship with town	None	None
Source of initial funding	Non-profit organization	Non-profit organization
Source of maintenance cost	Vendor fees	Vendor fees

the municipality, it benefits from a strong business relationship with the Cape Cod Fairgrounds. Maintenance, trash removal, generators, plowing, insurance, commercial certifications, parking, electricity, water, stage for performances, advertisement and 120 acres of land are all provided by the fairgrounds. Terrell also runs advertisements in local newspapers, his own publication, and the local calendar of events, which is organized by the Falmouth Chamber of Commerce. All revenue is derived from vendor fees, which is split 50/50 by the market and the fairgrounds. Vendors are charged \$20 a day and can choose to come on a week-to-week or regular basis. This generates an average of \$800-900 a month, or \$400-450 for the market, which is reinvested in the business for incidentals, marketing and supplies. There are no employees, so the only additional cost is heating, which Terrell estimated to be \$280 upfront for the two heaters and \$36 a day for fuel. If the Farmers' Market needs to be cancelled for any reason the fairgrounds does not charge.

Findings:

Provided by Lorrie Dahlen

Saturday is the best day for a market

- 1 The best location is a busy site that people can see driving by. If not, signage is key.
- 2 Accessibility is important- there should be minimal or no stairs and walkways should be broad and
- 3 Heating is important. Rugs under the booths are also very helpful for keeping vendors warmer, especially on cement floors.
- 4 It is helpful to tie the market to a tourist attraction or coordinate with tourist advertisement.
- 5 SNAP and debit machines are a good way to increase sales for vendors.
- 6 Having prepared food brings more people into the market, and farmers will get more total sales. Vendors shouldn't be separated by type; mixing them makes shoppers walk past all.
- 7 Switching vendors' spots every 6 months or so forces customers to walk around the market again and discover new vendors.
- 8 Having more than one person to run the market. One employee per task: overseeing employees, marketing and advertising, onsite manager, budgeting, and vendor manager.



Conclusion

Permanent farmers markets offer a consistent location for local produce, prepared food and crafts that customers know they can rely upon year-round, rain or shine. This creates a more stable customer base that farmers and other vendors can count on, as well as numerous social and economic benefits for the town. However, there are many different considerations that go into creating a successful permanent farmers' market. While some of these considerations are site specific or vary depending on the desired type of market, much can be learned from the study of existing successful and unsuccessful permanent farmers' market models.

The majority of markets investigated for this study had no formal relationship with and received minimal to no financial support from the town in which they were located. Sources for the initial funding included state and federal funding for agricultural ventures, community fundraising, vendor fees from previous years, and support from the non-profit running the market. Most of these markets are able to cover the cost of rent and any building maintenance fees solely with money earned through vendor fees. Organization structure varied some, but was generally kept small, with one market manager and 0 to 2 employees, occasionally with a moderately sized board of directors. The most variable aspect in the cases studied was the type of structure that housed the market. The three most common structures were pavilions, which generally cannot support winter markets; converted mill or industrial buildings; and barns or other structures at local fairgrounds. Each of these structure types had their own strengths and weaknesses, but overall market managers expressed a preference for buildings that could be entirely enclosed and heated in the winter, but could still be opened up in the summer.

Once established, these markets have had tremendous impacts on their communities, as well

as on the income of farmers and vendors. Many of the farmers and vendors interviewed said the farmers' market made up the majority or all of their sales. The markets have also supported both existing businesses nearby and new businesses by drawing additional customers and increasing revenue on market days and supplying a low risk venue to begin marketing new products. Some markets have even turned their town into a local agricultural tourism destination, drawing additional customers from around the state and region for the market itself and for other businesses downtown. They have also served as important meeting and socializing locations for the town, as well as for local farmers. These findings show that, if planned carefully and implemented properly, a permanent farmers' market can be a powerful tool for increasing the stability of the local food community within a town, as well as increasing revenue of nearby businesses and providing a local center for socialization and recreation.

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Summary Table of Case Studies

	Falmouth, MA	Marshfield, MA	South Kingston, RI	Columbia, MO	Durham, NC	Ithaca, NY
Population	32660	24324	8468	113225	233252	30331
Median Income	31868	65731	50313	\$33729	\$47394	\$29985
Area (sq miles)	54.4	31.7	5.1	60.4	94.9	6.1
Type of structure	Barn	Barn	Mill Building	Pavilion (in process)	Pavilion	Pavillion
Winterized?	Minimally-kerosene heaters, enclosed	Minimally-kerosene heaters, enclosed	Yes	No	No	No, separate rental space for winter market
Number of vendors (winter)	20-22	35	34	40	~45	Summer-80-90 winter- 35
Number of customers-estimated (winter)	Unknown	200-400	1000-2000	3000	Unknown	Unknown
Board of directors?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of employees	0	1	0	2	1	1 full time & 1 part time
Sell produce?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
Prepared food?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (vendor produced only)	Yes	yes
Arts/crafts?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes
Source of initial funding?	Non-profit	Non-profit	Non-Profit	Non-Profit/fundraising		Grants, vendor fees
Source of Administrative Revenue	Vendor fees	Vendor fees	Vendor Fees	Vendor Fees		volunteer labor
Relationship with town?	None	None	None	Supportive but non-financial	Very small	City Govt Liason