



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
**Economic Development Division**

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**TO:** Madison Local Food Committee

**FROM:** Matthew B. Mikolajewski, Office of Business Resources Manager *MM*

**SUBJECT:** Madison Public Market – Committee Next Steps

**DATE:** September 6, 2012

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As discussed at the July 23<sup>rd</sup> Committee meeting, two questions regarding the proposed Madison Public Market (“Market”) that still must be addressed are:

- Who are the customers that we are trying to support through the Market and what do they want?
- Who are the vendors that we are trying to support through the Market and what do they want?

Based on a review of previous Market reports and materials, the last significant effort to reach-out to prospective vendors for a Market was the 2004 Feasibility Study prepared in partnership with the UW Center for Cooperatives. As the number, type, and needs of vendors will play an important role in shaping the physical design, location, and operation of a Market, a renewed effort to engage prospective vendors is warranted.

Economic Development Division staff recommends that the Committee focus its Market efforts for the remainder of 2012 on identifying local vendors potentially interested in locating within the Market. Once specific vendors are identified, the Committee can lead an effort to survey/interview cohorts (farmers, producers, etc.) of prospective vendors. This can be done in cooperation with a team of consultants that may be hired to complete additional business planning work for the Market. A timeline, with additional detail below, of this approach is as follows:

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|------------------------------------|--|
| (Task 1) September 2012:           | With Committee input, staff prepares outreach materials to identify interested local vendors                             |
| (Task 2) October – November 2012:  | Committee and staff outreach to community soliciting individuals interested in vending within the Market                 |
| (Task 3) November – December 2012: | Committee and staff analyze initial interest; and, prepare additional outreach materials to follow-up with these vendors |
| (Task 4) January – February 2013:  | Committee and staff complete a more thorough outreach to vendors who had expressed interest in the Market                |

- (Task 5) December – February 2013: An RFP is prepared, issued, and firm(s) hired to complete a business plan considering both vendor and customer needs, capital costs, operating plan, etc.
- (Task 6) February – July 2013: Committee and staff work with selected consultant(s) to complete vendor and customer outreach work related to the business plan preparation as appropriate
- (Task 7) August – November 2013: Community and policy-maker discussion; and, budget for a future Market

### **Task 1 – Preparation of Outreach Materials to Gauge Initial Interest in a Market from Vendors**

City staff envisions the preparation of a simple introduction of the Market concept and brief survey that would enable potential vendors to express their initial interest in the Market. The introduction would provide a very conceptual overview of what a Market could look like, where it could be located, how it could be run, etc.

The survey would provide an opportunity for local vendors to express their potential interest in locating within a Market, and would include questions, such as:

- Basic contact information (name, address, email, etc.)
- What they are interested in selling (fresh produce, prepared foods, food products, crafts, etc.)
- Whether or not this would be an expansion of an existing local business enterprise; or, something new
- Whether or not they have experience running their own business; or, if they would be a new entrepreneur
- Whether or not they would be interested in participating in future focus groups and more detailed surveys
- What their primary questions or concerns are regarding the Market at this time

There are many other questions that we could and should ask; however, the purpose of this initial survey is primarily to gauge a baseline of interest in the Market from potential vendors. We would follow-up with interested individuals at a later date with more in-depth focus group meetings and surveys.

Staff will work with City IT to make this introduction and survey available online. We will also have paper versions available for individuals to drop-off, fax, or mail to us. We will have multi-lingual (likely Spanish and Hmong) versions of the information and survey available as well.

Drafts of materials would be forwarded to Committee members prior to launching the campaign to incorporate Committee feedback.

### **Task 2 – Soliciting Market Interest**

Once the aforementioned outreach materials are prepared, the City and Committee will work to insure that all interested individuals are aware of the survey, and encourage interested individuals to complete it. There would likely be a press release and media push on the part of the City. Committee members would be asked to

forward the information and survey to various organizations and groups where local vendors may be identified. These include, but are not limited to:

- Dane County Farmer's Market vendors
- Dane County Food Council
- Farming-related organizations
- Locally-based restaurateurs
- Existing street vendors
- Local food producers and processors
- Local food retailers
- Neighborhood business associations/organizations
- Madison Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Madison Black Chamber of Commerce
- Others identified by staff and the Committee

The aforementioned organizations will likely be divided between multiple Committee members, with the assigned Committee members responsible for encouraging interested individuals connected to these organizations to complete and return the survey.

### **Task 3 – Review Survey Results and Prepare Materials for Next Round of Outreach**

Based on returned surveys, the Committee will have a better understanding of what type and how many vendors are interested in the Market. The Committee and Staff will review these results and draw conclusions on how best to next proceed. For example, are there consistent questions raised by individuals that the Committee, staff, or a hired consultant(s) will need to answer prior to an individual willing to consider committing to a Market?

With the long-term goal being a robust, affordable, and accessible Market, the Committee will need to work further with prospective vendors on identifying their needs and articulating a vision for a Market that they can support. This additional outreach could include focus groups and/or more detailed surveys to follow-up with the initial interest expressed by individuals regarding the Market. This is outlined in Task 4 above.

The work outlined in the remaining tasks will be better defined as the City and Committee begin making progress toward completion of the earlier tasks.