



Support for the Madison Public Market

To: City of Madison Alders

From: Sarah Lloyd, Secretary of the Board, Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative,
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On behalf of the board and members of the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative I wish to express our support for funding for the Madison Public Market. The Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative (WFHC) is a farmer-led cooperative, owned by the producers and the Wisconsin Farmers Union. The co-op was a direct result of the important Dane County Food Hub Feasibility Study. The WFHC was incorporated in October 2012 with 11 founding farmer members. We have grown to 27 farmer members and are just finishing our second season of production and sales. The WFHC helps local farmers by providing them with the opportunity, through marketing, sales, and logistics, to access wholesale markets they could not access easily before. The co-op makes it easy for the retail, institutional, and foodservice sectors to buy locally.

The WFHC is interested in establishing a space for aggregation and sales in the Madison area and are hopeful that we can continue to develop these plans in tandem with the City of Madison's plans for a Public Market. We see the Public Market as an essential part of the local and regional food infrastructure to support family farmers and healthy eaters. This infrastructure will help support all the farm small-businesses and also allow for restaurants, institutions, and grocery stores to have better access to the local food that they want and their customers are demanding. By providing the Public Market infrastructure, the City of Madison is helping to keep more dollars in a tighter orbit, strengthening all of the businesses in the supply chain and the larger economy.

The WFHC has been in conversation with the City and participated in the public process envisioning the Public Market. We are quite interested in the possibilities of being a tenant in the Market. We hope that the City of Madison Alders will support the funding budgeted to move the planning and implementation of the Public Market to the next level. The WFHC was recently awarded a USDA Local Food Promotion Program grant, specifically to assist our development of our production, aggregation and sales channels in Madison and the southern part of the state. We bring this grant support to the table, as well as the business assets that we are building together as a cooperative.

Again, thank you for this opportunity. We look forward to working with the City of Madison in building this key infrastructure for a vibrant local and regional food system.