

## **Phinney Farmers Market**

### **History**

The Phinney Farmers Market was established in 2007 and operated by the Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance (NFMA), a community-based non-profit organization developed in response to the growing popularity and public support of the neighborhood Farmers Markets in Seattle. NFMA is committed to supporting and strengthening Washington's small family farm businesses by creating and operating vibrant, successful neighborhood farmers Markets. The Phinney Farmers Market is one of seven markets in the NFMA.

The Phinney Neighborhood Association (PNA) expressed interest in hosting a Farmers Market on their site as early as 2004 and also supported NFMA's mission and felt our organization would provide the best management practices for a weekly market that also met their community goals.

In late 2006 they emailed their constituency about the possibility of hosting a Farmers Market in 2007. They received the biggest positive email response in the history of any PNA communication. Over 2,000 shoppers turned out on opening day.

### **Location**

The market is located with the Phinney Neighborhood Association, 6532 Phinney Avenue North, Seattle, 98103. PNA will own both buildings and grounds by the end of July 2009.

While the market is in a centralized location with businesses and other community activity around the site, visibility is an issue. People cannot see the market from a distance. The market is visible and accessible to customers, including handicapped access (but challenging to get to the restrooms), and there is sufficient parking for both vendors and customers, although upper and lower parking lots fill quickly. However, space is tight. To maximize vendor participation, 80% of the market is load-off space. 20% of farm vendors are allowed their vehicles on site. There is not enough space for vendors to set up displays. Most farmers have 10-15 feet of frontage and depth of stalls varies from 10 to 30 feet. Local highway access makes it easy for farmers to get to.

Public facilities, bathrooms and telephones, are available. There is water available to wash and cool produce. There is shade/shelter from the weather.

It is expensive to use the space. PNA charges \$10 per vendor per market day. NFMA covers this cost which will be approximately \$5,500 in 2009. This rent represents 20% of total revenue budgeted for the Phinney Farmers Market. This rent is too high given

the revenue capacity of the market. Total market revenues projected for 2009 are \$26,312 while total expenses are projected to be \$25,307. Phinney market revenues could not support a stand-alone market. The Phinney Farmers Market is subsidized by the overall market operations of the NFMA and public and private grant support.

**Characteristics**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
Number farm vendors:	25	28	29
Number crafters:	0	0	0
Number other food vendors:	10	10	10
Gross market sales:		\$331,328	\$292,782
Gross Farm vendor sales:		\$250,000	\$220,000
Number of customers:		20,819	20,734

Approximately 95% of the farmers are returning vendors and average 2 years selling at the market.

Product makeup. A variety of fruits and vegetables, flowers, plant starts, beef, lamb, shellfish, goat and cow cheese, jams, ciders, wines, baked goods, pasta, homemade ice cream and hot prepared foods.

Customer makeup. Most customers are families from the surrounding neighborhood. Some young and old people attend, but primarily 30-50 year old adults with or without small children. There is very little ethnic diversity and seemingly little economic diversity.

**IV. Organization**

How is the market organized, managed and staffed (e.g. board of directors, volunteer management, paid staff, etc)? NFMA is responsible for overall management of the market and is governed by an 11 member board. NFMA staff include the Executive Director, Director of Operations, Office Manager and Bookkeeper. The Phinney Farmers Market staff consist of an on-site Market Manager and Market Assistant. Additional contracts may be held with event on-site security and others as appropriate.

Are management and staff full or part-time? How many paid and part-time staff per market season? All on-site staff are part-time. The market manager is a 25/hour/week employee who is partially responsible for one other market and other small projects. There is always one other employee (a market assistant) on-site from early afternoon until approximately an hour or hour and a half after the market ends. Market assistants generally work only on market days and don't assist with off-site preparation.

For the market manager, what are the average hours worked per week in-season? Approximately 8.5 hours on-site each week during the market season. 5-10 additional hours may be spent off-site each week doing market preparation.

Does the market:

Have bylaws? Yes

Have a budget and plan for annual business operations? No

Seek sponsorships? Yes

NFMA receives public and private grant funds that cover general administrative overhead, promotions and special event costs at all 7 markets.

Have short- and long-range plans? No

NFMA board has conducted several short- and long-range planning retreats over the last 8 years and has recommended that we build internal capacity before we develop new markets.

In what manner and how frequently does the market manager communicate with vendors? The market manager primarily communicates over the phone in the days leading up to the market and occasionally through email. NFMA direct mails quarterly newsletters to all market vendors, holds an annual vendor meeting in winter, and has established a vendor task force to address specific market issues.

## **V. Rules & Regulations**

What are the rules and regulations governing market operations and vendors? For example, how are stalls assigned? Stall assignments are based on available space, need for specific product, and number of spaces vendor requires.

Is product sampling allowed? Yes

Does the market accept Food Stamps? Yes

What are stall fees and basis for fees? Yearly application fee of \$20, and daily base stall fee of \$30 or required 6-7% of gross sales to the NFMA at the end of each market day, whichever is greater (percentage rate based on amount of frontage sales space). The PNA also collects \$10 per stall per market day user fee. Half of this fee is paid by the NFMA and the other half collected from vendors.

Who may sell in the market? Only Washington State farmers, producers and businesses can sell at NFMA markets. All products must be grown or produced in Washington State.

What products may be sold? Vendors may only sell what they grow or make themselves, including fresh farm products, value-added farm foods, dried flowers and crafted farm products, processed foods, and prepared foods.

Is the market producer-only or is resale allowed? Producer only.

Prohibited items? No crafts, flea markets and wholesalers, or farm produce not grown in Washington, fresh farm products not grown, produced, or foraged by the farmer/vendor and products not listed on vendor application.

Pets allowed? No

## **VI. Advertising, Promotion & Outreach**

Who controls development and implementation of advertising and promotion for the market? NFMA Executive Director supervises annual marketing and promotion campaign, develops budget, marketing materials, writes releases, supervises graphic design, and develops print campaign. Other staff manage website and coordinate neighborhood outreach. Also employ a graphic designer and market managers and assistants to distribute and display materials.

What is the annual budget for advertising and promotion? \$5,116 in 2009

Does the market currently have specific marketing goals and strategies? Yes

If yes, please describe. Print ads, radio ads, posters, direct mail newsletters, on-site signage, neighborhood signage, public directional signs, website, neighborhood outreach (organizational memberships), and graphic design.

What types of advertising does the market conduct? Radio (\$857), Print ads (\$857), Market newsletter (direct mail) (\$1,142), Graphic design (\$428)

What types of promotion does the market conduct? Please include things like posters, signs, banners, flyers, special events, chef demonstrations, etc. Copies (\$85), Flyers/posters (\$500), On-site signage (\$285), Special events/chef demos (\$1,940)

Approximately how many events are held each year? In 2008, 4 chef demos and produce tastings, Zucchini 500 races, and weekly live music.

Have these been successful in attracting customers to the market? No  
Special events have been very limited and attendance has stayed stagnant over the past 2 years. It is very hard to determine if there is a direct link between special events and attracting and keeping new customers or whether it contributes positively to the overall shopping experience. Events can draw new customers but we have not been able to provide evidence of keeping them.

Does the market actively work with other community groups? Yes

If yes, what types of groups does the market work with (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, restaurants and other businesses, etc). Phinney Chamber of Commerce, Phinney Neighborhood Association

Is the market open to other community group participation (e.g. tabling)? Yes

If yes, what types of organizations participate? How frequently? Every week, PNA staffs a 10x10 tent and does organizational outreach. Other neighborhood non-profits are also provided weekly booth space.

## **VII. Challenges & Opportunities**

Please describe what you feel are the biggest challenges to the long-term viability of the market. What opportunities do you see for the success of the market?

Challenges: More neighborhood markets every year negatively impacting year over year sales. Sluggish economy. Shoppers trading quality and freshness for straight dollar value deals. Both the time and location of the market are challenging for its long-term viability. Friday is a difficult day for many farmers to add a market because they are busy preparing for weekend markets. There are also several popular weekend markets nearby that compete heavily with Phinney (e.g. University District and Ballard). The location of the market is not easily accessible or visible from the main roads and is confined within a fenced area that inhibits any kind of growth. The market does not sustain itself financially. Farm vendors are experiencing stagnant sales and have expressed concern about the popularity and perceived proliferation of more prepared and processed food vendors at the markets. It has become a "pizza" market, less about farmers and more about a Friday night pizza party.

Opportunities: Lots growing year over year business by driving frequency of shopper visits and increasing shopper average sales.