



Recommendations for Supporting Farmers Markets

DC Food Policy Council Public Meeting

August 7, 2024




DC has 48 independently operated markets that operate across all eight wards.

- **FMs are “Direct to Consumer” markets** - FMs are the primary direct producer-to-consumer channel for locally produced foods, thus an important asset for the region’s small- and mid-size farms and food businesses (other DTC include farm-direct CSAs and on-farm stores)
- **FMs transform city streets into lively community spaces** - FMs are active partners to the city across a variety of programs and initiatives, while building community, driving foot traffic, enhancing brick-and-mortar sales, and improving public safety in the areas where they operate
- **FMs are proven to be popular among residents of all incomes, races, and neighborhoods of DC**
- While FMs are often inaccurately perceived as exclusive to or favored by wealthy residents, almost all of DC’s farmers markets host shoppers that use federal and local food assistance programs



Farmers markets drive neighborhood economic activity, support the regional food economy, and foster community through placemaking.

The Sustainable Supply Chain Working Group has developed four recommendations for how the city can better support vibrant farmers markets:



1. Create a legal definition of a farmers market, inclusive of a special FM permit and streamlined process for establishing, renewing, and vending at a market.



2. Provide some direct financial support to farmers market operators.

Farmers markets advance DC priorities, like supporting small businesses, downtown revitalization, food access, food recovery, and waste management.

However, markets are rarely compensated for their externalized benefit to the neighborhood or the city.

Providing grants to support general operations will help advance the city's placemaking, sustainability, and equity goals.



3. Support placemaking, visibility, and awareness:

Unlike brick-and-mortar stores, farmers markets are not visible to the public outside of their operating hours. Their outdoor presence also means they're exposed to the good, the bad, and the elements!

In order to drive resident awareness and traffic to the farmers market, the District should support with marketing, promotion, and allow farmers markets to install semi-permanent signage at the site of the market. Placemaking support can also include funding or in-kind support for safe-keeping efforts, such as Clean Teams and Peace Teams.



4. Maintain funding and extend season for Produce Plus.

Produce Plus is a locally funded program that provides qualifying residents with \$40 per month to spend on fresh produce with participating farmers. The program is a proven way to support farmers markets in lower-income neighborhoods. Ensuring Produce Plus funds are both secured and expanded will help enable residents with low purchasing power to access fresh produce, particularly in areas of the city with low food access.



RECAP!

- 1. Create a legal definition of, and permit for, farmers markets**
- 2. Provide direct financial support to farmers market operators**
- 3. Support placemaking, visibility, and awareness**
- 4. Expand funding and season length for Produce Plus**



Questions / Comments:

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