

Farmers Market on Historic North First Street Community Survey Results

Spring/Summer 2010

For the North First Street Association

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Graduate students from the Department of Urban & Regional Planning at the University of Illinois surveyed 85 people about the North First Street Farmers Market during the spring and early summer of 2010. The students surveyed people in-person as well as through an on-line survey.

Twenty-seven of the respondents were from the neighborhood east of the Historic North First Street Farmers Market area and the remaining 58 people completed the on-line survey. A little over half of the on-line respondents work near the market. The rest of the respondents neither live nor work near the market.

A special thank you to the Historic North First Street Business Association who helped with survey design and the in-person survey, as well as to the Downtown Champaign Business Association helped distribute the on-line survey to local businesses via email.

The following summarize the results for each question asked on the survey.

Have you heard of the North First Street Farmers Market?

The majority of those who participated in the in-person and on-line survey have heard of the farmers market. Only 10 of the 85 people surveyed had not heard of the North First Street Farmers Market (5 from the in-person neighborhood survey and 5 from the on-line survey).

How did you hear about the Farmers Market?

People find out about the market in a variety of ways including the newspaper, radio, advertising on buses, banners, driving by it, facebook and through family and friends. For those who participate in the in-person survey, family and friends/word of mouth was the most common way of learning the market, and for those who took the on-line survey, newspaper and banners were listed most frequently.

How often did you go to the Farmers Market last summer?

Over half of survey respondents actually attended the market last summer (2009). Few people attended the market consistently (weekly). Some of those who did not go to the North First Street Farmers Market, including nearby neighborhood residents, shopped at Urbana market instead.

How satisfied were you with each of the following: Live music, Socializing, Fun for the kids, Quality of food, Variety of food?

(1 = "not very satisfied" through 5 = "very satisfied")

Responses varied between the surveys: overall, the online respondents had low to moderate satisfaction with the various aspects of the market, while in-person respondents reported moderate to high satisfaction.

For the in-person survey, Quality of food ranked the highest (average score 4.4) closely followed by Fun for the kids (4.3) and Socializing (4.1), Variety of Foods (3.8) and Live music scored the lowest (3.1).

For those completing the on-line survey, Quality of food also ranked the highest but with a lower satisfaction level than in the in-person survey (3.4). Quality of food and Variety of food both scored the same (2.7), Socializing (2.6), Live music (2.5) and Fun for the Kids scored the lowest (2.1).

Is there anything that you would purchase at the Farmers Market if it was available?

Respondents would be willing to purchase a variety of goods. The most categories are vegetables, followed by fruits, dairy, and meat.

Those completing the in-person survey expressed interest in the following items (in order of frequency): Vegetables: tomatoes, corn, green beans, variety of greens (collard, spinach, lettuce), okra, squash, beets, cabbage, onions; Fruits: watermelon and strawberries; Dairy: milk, butter, eggs; Meat: hamburger, pork chops, ribs, oxtails; and Prepared Foods: jam, cookies, bread, BBQ, croissants, miracle whip, ranch dressing, salsa, soy products, baby food, diet products, and tea.

Those completing the on-line survey expressed interest in the following items: Vegetables: Tomatoes, corn, greens, green beans, eggplant, peppers, broccoli, herbs, leeks, onions, squash, garlic; Fruits: berries (blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries), apples, peaches, pears, grapes, cherries, plums; Dairy: cheese (local, goat, artisan) and eggs; Meat: organically fed, free range, grass-fed meats, beef, bison, pork, chicken, bacon, lamb; Other Food items: honey, jams/preserves, nuts; Prepared foods: breads, bagels, muffins, cookies; snow cones, crepes, chocolate, and

Non-food items: flowers, plants, jewelry, arts & crafts, clothing, antiques/flea market stuff clothing and home décor.

Could we improve any of the following to make it easier for you to go to the Farmers Market?

Many of the online respondents indicated that the time of the market could be improved. A couple of these respondents were interested in the market being open during the lunch hour. For the in-person survey, affordability was the main concern, followed by time. However, many other online respondents and residents alike thought that the market was accessible, a number of people suggested bike racks.

To what extent would the following draw you to the Farmers Market: Recipe instructions at food vendors' tables, Cooking demonstrations, Nutritional information at food vendors' tables, Activities for kids, Social Gathering Place, Community garden in a nearby lot, Gardening tips and demonstrations, Live music, Double value for LINK card purchases, Other community services, such as a dental clinic or bike safety information?

(1= "This interests me the least" through 5= "This interests me the most")

The suggested attractions at the market elicited a variety of responses.

For the in-person survey, the community garden (average 3.4), gardening tips (3.4), recipe instructions (3.3) and cooking demonstrations (3.2) were of most of interest.

For the on-line respondents, the most attractive activities included Live Music (3.8), a social gathering place (3.8), gardening tips/demonstrations (3.7), cooking demonstrations (3.7) and recipe instructions (3.7).

A few people talked about how to improve the market as a social gathering place, such as having cold food that could be eaten there and having more shade and tables, and a grassy.

Residents with children were enthusiastic about children's activities.

How important is it to buy food that is grown locally and/or organically?

More than half of the in-person respondents and most of the online respondents said that buying local and/or organic food was important or very important to them.