


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 21, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE HOURS OF OPERATION OF THE OLD TOWN FARMERS' MARKET

ISSUE: City Council requested a review of the hours of operation for the Old Town Farmers' Market.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council approve the amended Farmers' Market Regulations changing the hours of operation at the Old Town Farmers' Market at Market Square from 5:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. effective in May 2012.

BACKGROUND: The Old Town Farmers' Market is a tradition at Market Square since 1752, and it is recognized as the oldest continuously operating market in the country. The growth in numbers of vendors that occurred in the late 1980's culminated in the adoption of formal policies and regulations by City Council in May 1989, with policy amendments approved by City Council in February 1992. Policies and regulations serve to provide a framework for the composition, governance, and management of the Farmers' Market on Market Square.

In an attempt to maximize customer satisfaction and increase the operational efficiency of the Market, the Department of General Services assembled a working group consisting of departmental staff responsible for analyzing the current status of the Market. Staff developed and issued a poll of customers and vendors to understand the current needs and issues of stakeholders.

DISCUSSION: In response to a City Council request for a review of operating hours, staff developed a survey for vendors, customers and local businesses to collect feedback on preferences. Additionally, staff researched the operating hours of other major farmers' markets within the region for comparison. The Farmers' Market is currently held year round at Market Square, 301 King Street, on Saturdays from 5:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. The following is a summary of the survey methodology and results:

Survey:

1. Customer, Vendor and local businesses Poll and Online survey

- a. On October 15th & 22nd, 152 Farmers' Market Customers and 72 Vendors responded to a poll to determine their preference regarding the Market's hours of operation (the current hours/days of operation are Saturdays, 5:30a.m.-11:00a.m. year round).
- b. On November 11th, 153 Farmers' Market customers completed a detailed online survey designed to examine their views and preferences regarding the operation of the Market and to identify successful production and marketing practices.
- c. On November 14th, a poll of 62 local businesses along King Street was taken to determine their preference regarding the Market's hours of operation and to determine if the change of hours will have a positive, negative or no effect on the local businesses.

Survey Results:

- Of the customers and vendors surveyed on-site and online, 58% preferred changing/extending the hours of operation while 42% preferred keeping the same hours of operation. The results show a preference towards changing/extending the hours of operation.
- When examining the preference in starting and ending times for the percentage in favor of changing/extending the hours of operation, the results were as follows:
 - 68% of customers preferred changing the starting hours of operation to 7:00 or 8:00 a.m.
 - 73% of customers preferred changing the ending hours of operation to 12:00 or 1:00 p.m.
 - Alexandria business owners provided 62% of the 286 survey responses. Of those 77% preferred changing or extending the hours of operation. 23% preferred keeping the same hours of operation for the Farmers' Market.

2. Background Research and Analysis

A regional analysis of 45 Farmers' Markets in Arlington County, Fairfax County and Washington, D.C was conducted to investigate the hours and days of operation of these markets.

- **Days of Operation:** Of 45 markets investigated, 27 markets operated on Saturdays or Sundays.
- **Times of Operation :** Of the 27 markets operating on Saturdays/Sundays:

Starting time

- i. Only 1 market starts at 5:30 a.m., which is Alexandria's Market Square
- ii. 3 markets start at 7 a.m.
- iii. 11 markets start at 8 - 8:30 a.m.
- iv. 8 markets start at 9 a.m.
- v. 4 markets start at 10 a.m.

Ending Time

- i. Only 1 market ends at 11 a.m., which is Alexandria's Market Square
- ii. 8 markets end at 12 - 12:30 p.m.
- iii. 9 markets end at 1 p.m.
- iv. 4 markets end at 2 p.m.
- v. 2 markets end at 4 p.m.
- vi. 2 markets end at 5 p.m.
- vii. 1 market ends at 8 p.m.

3. Potential for conflicting events

Several major City events are held in Market Square on Saturdays during the year. They are as follows:

- a. National Tartan Day
- b. Armenian Festival
- c. Volunteer Arts & Crafts Show

Recommended Action: Change the Market Square Farmers' Market hours from 5:30 - 11 a.m. to 7 a.m. - 12 p.m.

During the review of the Market Square Farmers' Market staff identified several other areas of improvement based on survey responses as well as a review of procedures. The research identified five significant areas for improvement.

- 1) **Increase marketing of the Farmers' Market.**
- 2) **Enable the use of Credit Cards, Debit Cards and EBT Cards.**
- 3) **Eliminate Cash Payments by Vendors to the City for Farmers' Market Fees.**
- 4) **Standardize spaces allocated to vendors to maximize utilization of space and reduce inequality among vendors.**
- 5) **Increase the City's revenue and rates to support service efforts.**

CONCLUSION: Based on the survey results and the regional analysis conducted, staff recommends changing the hours of operation to 7 a.m. - 12 p.m. This change is reflected in the attached revised Farmers' Market Rules and Regulation for City Council consideration and adoption. Staff will proceed to review improvements in the five areas cited, including the potential rate increases and report back to City Council for further action.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact anticipated based on the change in hours of operation. Additional recommendations will be provided to City Council this Spring regarding potential rates changes as a result of this study.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Farmers' Market Rules and Regulations – Revised January 2012

Attachment 2: Farmers' Market Poll and Survey Result Presentation

STAFF:

Jeremy McPike, Director, General Services

Alfred Coleman, Acting Deputy Director

Rana Abu Ghazaleh, Project Manager

Jennifer Nettles, Portfolio Manager

Paul Sever, Support Services Supervisor

Lynda Barbieristrain, Account Clerk

FARMERS MARKET REGULATIONS*(Revised January 2012)***I. DEFINITIONS**

1. **Farmers Market.** The Farmers Market is the City operated market that is located on the Market Square Plaza at 301 King Street. The boundaries are defined by the Market Master depending upon the number of vendors present. In no case, however, will the Market occupy sidewalk or street right-of-way. During winter months the Market Master may move the Farmers Market into the covered parking garage below the Market Square. The Market hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. each Saturday. Hours and days are subject to change with notice by the Market Master.
2. **Farm or Domestic Products.** Included are products that are grown or produced on farms or in homes or gardens. These products are further defined as follows:
 - a. **Produce** – Vegetables, fruit, grains, eggs, plants, plant cuttings, flowers, seed, nuts, and herbs.
 - b. **Prepared Foods** – Foods that are processed in some way by the vendor and are approved by the Health Department. These items include, but are not limited to, cured meats, baked goods, preserves, pickles, juices, home canned products, and cheeses.
 - c. **Handicrafts** – Handcrafted products that are made in the home. The product may be made from manufactured materials provided that most of the products value results from the crafting of the vendor or the vendor's family.
3. **Vendors.** Persons who have paid their stall rent, agreed to comply with the Farmers Market regulations, and agreed to sell only "Farm or Domestic Products", defined above.
 - a. **Producer vendors** - Vendors who sell products which are grown or produced by themselves or members of their household at their own farms, homes, or gardens.
 - b. **Resale vendors** - Vendors who sell products which have been grown or produced by other than themselves or members of their households.
4. **Rules Committee.** The Rules Committee of the Farmers Market will consist of two vendor representatives who will be selected biennially in July by a vote of the vendors, the Market Master, the Director of the General Services Department, a representative of the Finance Director, and a representative of the Health Department. The Committee will meet to review rule changes vendor appeals, product eligibility issues, disciplinary actions/suspension, and issues that the City Manager wishes to resolve.

II. ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS

1. Only "Farm or Domestic Products" as defined above may be sold at the Farmers Market. Resale vendors must limit their items to farm and garden produce.
2. Fresh meats, fishery products, shellfish, shell stock and prepared foods (except those approved by the Health Department) are not eligible products for the Farmers Market for reasons of public health. All questions regarding eligibility for reasons of health shall be resolved by the Alexandria Health Department.
3. No foods shall be sold which could be classified as "potentially hazardous food" as defined by Section 11-2-5 (25) of the City Code. Vendors who wish to sell cheese, canned goods (fruits, vegetables, juices, etc), or baked goods shall first obtain the approval of the Alexandria Health Department, and have evidence of that product approval in their possession, whenever they are selling these products.
4. No products sold can be used or second hand.
5. To qualify a handcrafted product, an item must have acquired a substantial part of its value from the crafting of the vendor or the vendor's family.

III. MARKET MASTER

1. The Market Master is the person appointed by the Director of General Services to administer the Market and enforce the rules. Examples of the Market Master's authority are as follows:
 - Revoke a vendor's permit.
 - Assign display and selling areas to vendors.
 - Collect rent from vendors.
 - Direct the removal of ineligible products.
 - Direct vendors to comply with health and sanitation rules.
 - Receive vendor appeals of rules and regulations.
2. The Market Master shall make space assignments in a manner that best assures the good safety, management, and operation of the Market. With these facts considered, priority of assignments shall be based upon the length of time vendors have been continuous licensees of the Market, with the highest priority going to the vendor with the longest record of continuous history as a rent paying vendor. Priority also will be given to producer vendors over resale vendors.
3. No selling area will be permitted to use any fuel burning or electric devices to heat products, except for coffee/hot water urns when approved by the Market Master.
4. All eligible products except fresh produce, handicrafts, flowers, plants, and canned goods shall be wrapped.

5. No vendor shall be permitted to be licensed for more than one stall space at a time.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF VENDORS

1. Comply with these regulations as well as all other regulations, codes, and statutes that govern the growing, preparation, and sale of products defined in this regulation.
2. Cooperate with the Market Master regarding the assignment of space, use of City property, use of parking spaces, etc.
3. Maintain a clean vending area, dispose of all refuse and trash at the direction of the Market Master, and take care not to deface or damage City property.
4. Pay the rent timely and in advance to the Market Master.
5. Vendors who wish to register as "Producer Vendors" and be exempt from the City business tax must complete the attached certification, have it notarized, and submit it to the Market Master prior to selling as a Producer Vendor.
6. Vendors are responsible for the safety of the products being sold, and shall hold the City of Alexandria harmless from any liability whatsoever that results from their activities on Market Square.
7. Payment of Taxes. All vendors are responsible to the State of Virginia for collecting and reporting Virginia Sales Tax. In addition, resale vendors are responsible for obtaining business licenses from the City of Alexandria and submitting reports of revenue as required of City of Alexandria business.

VI. SUGGESTIONS/APPEALS OF VENDORS

1. Vendors may appeal the interpretations of these regulations or the decisions of the Market Master by submitting a written appeal to the Market Master. The appeal will be considered within three days by the Director of General Services and a written response returned to the appealing vendor.
2. In the event that the appealing vendor wishes to appeal the decision of the Director of General Services, he/she may ask for a meeting with the Rules Committee of the Farmers Market. The Rules Committee will hear the appeal and render a decision within one week. Decisions and recommendations of the Rules Committee must obtain the final review of the City Manager.

VII. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

1. In an emergency and in the interest of maintaining health and order, the Market Master may have vendor or customer removed from the Market. In exercising this authority, the Market Master is to

invite the assistance of the Police Department and will notify the Director General Services or his/her representative as soon as possible.

2. In the event that a vendor violates the rules of the Market and disregards the verbal warnings of the Market Master, the vendor may be suspended for a length of time that is dependent upon the severity of the offense. All suspension will be reviewed by the Rules Committee which will consider the suspension prior to its being implemented, if possible.

VIII. ALLOCATION OF VENDOR SPACES

1. Vendor spaces shall be allocated based upon three determining factors:
 - Position on the waiting list.
 - Priority of the vendor category.
 - Maximum numbers of vendors allowed by vendor category.
2. The Waiting List – To get onto the waiting list, a prospective vendor must submit a Vendor's License application and a notarized Producer Vendor Certificate (except for resale producer vendors) to the Market Master. The position on the waiting list is determined by the date that the Market Master receives these documents.
3. Priority of Vendor Category – Because of the scarcity of home grown produce vendors and the desire to preserve their traditional place in the Market, these vendors will be selected first from the waiting list regardless of the position of other vendors in other categories.
4. Maximum Allowances of Certain Vendor Categories – Certain vendor categories will be subject to maximum allowances in their number or percent. When the names of these vendors come to the top of the waiting list, they will be allocated a space at the Market only if the allowance for that vendor type has not already been reached. The following maximum allowances are established:
 - The total number of vendors in the handicraft category shall not exceed 45% of the total number of Market vendors, or 52 vendors, whichever is greater.
 - The total number of vendors selling jewelry shall not exceed 5% of the total number of Market vendors, or 7 vendors, whichever is greater.
 - The total number of vendors selling framed art shall not exceed 5 vendors.
 - The total number of vendors selling wearable art shall not exceed 5 vendors.
 - The total number of vendors selling wearable art shall not exceed 5 vendors.

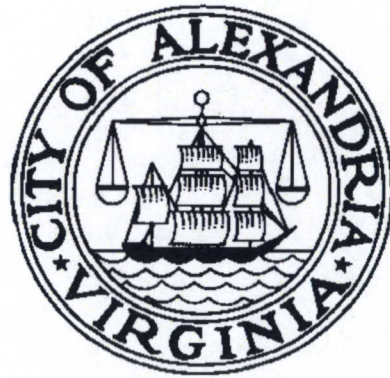
5. In addition to the above allocations, there shall be fifteen temporary (one calendar month at time) spaces that are to be reserved solely for produce vendors who have raised or grown the produce.

IX. RENT

1. The rental rate is established by the City Council.
2. Monthly rent is due no later than the first day of the month for each month of the Market season (March 1 through December 31).
3. Monthly rent is due for each month of the Market season (March 1 through December 31).
4. Vendors in good standing may continue to vend during the off-season, weather permitting.
5. Vendors may not sublet or "loan" their assigned space to another person, regardless of whether that person is already a Market vendor.
6. Vendors that are 30 days, or more, in arrears will have their licenses terminated.

X. VENDOR ATTENDANCE

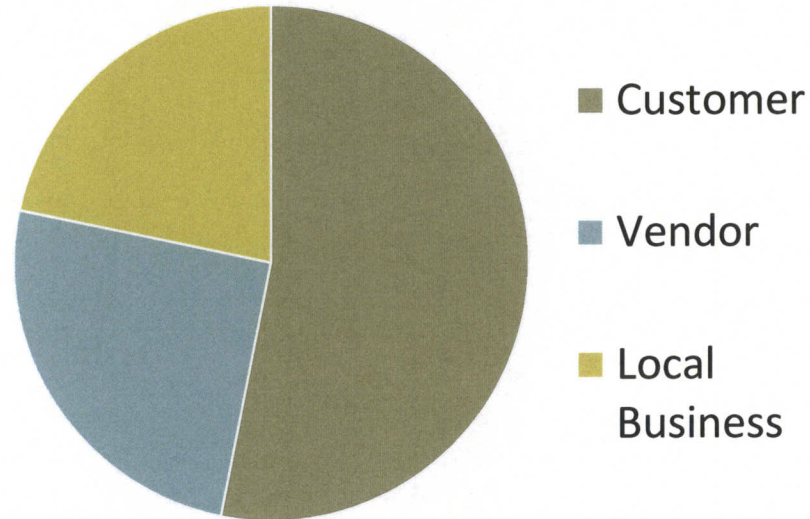
1. It is expected that vendors attend most of the Saturday Market dates. If a vendor is absent for four consecutive Saturdays between April 1 and December 31, the Market Master will send a letter by certified mail to advise the vendor to resume attendance within two weeks. If the vendor does not comply within that time, or does not respond with valid reasons such as illness or other extenuating circumstances, then that vendor's license will be terminated.
2. If a vendor receives two warnings during the nine month period of April 1 through December 31, the vendor's license will not be renewed for the following season.
3. If vendors are in arrears on their rent, they will be terminated after fourth Saturday of non-attendance.



Farmers' Market Potential Change of Hours: Poll and Online Survey Results

Demographic Data of Poll Respondents

- **286 Respondents**
 - 72 Vendors
 - 152 Customers
 - 62 Local Businesses

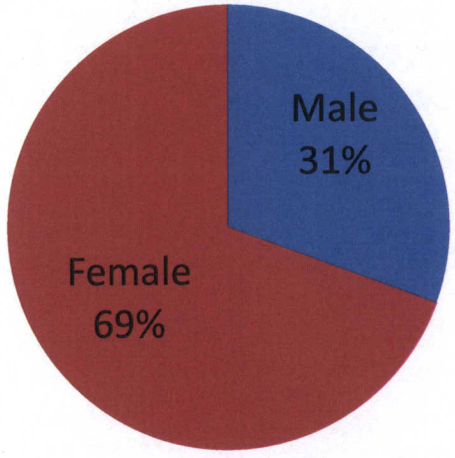


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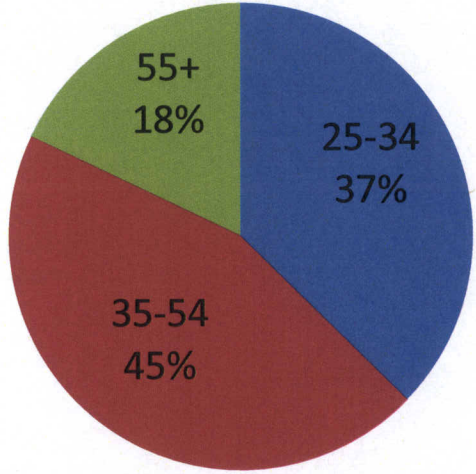
Demographic Data of Online Customer Survey Respondents

Total : 153 Respondents

Gender



Age

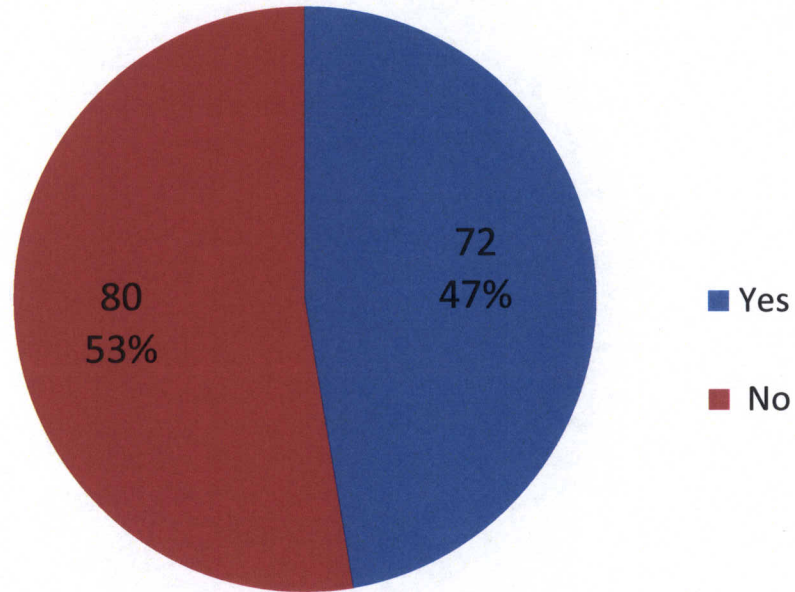


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(3)

Geographic Location of Customers (Poll Results)

Are you an Old Town Resident? (**Customer** Response)

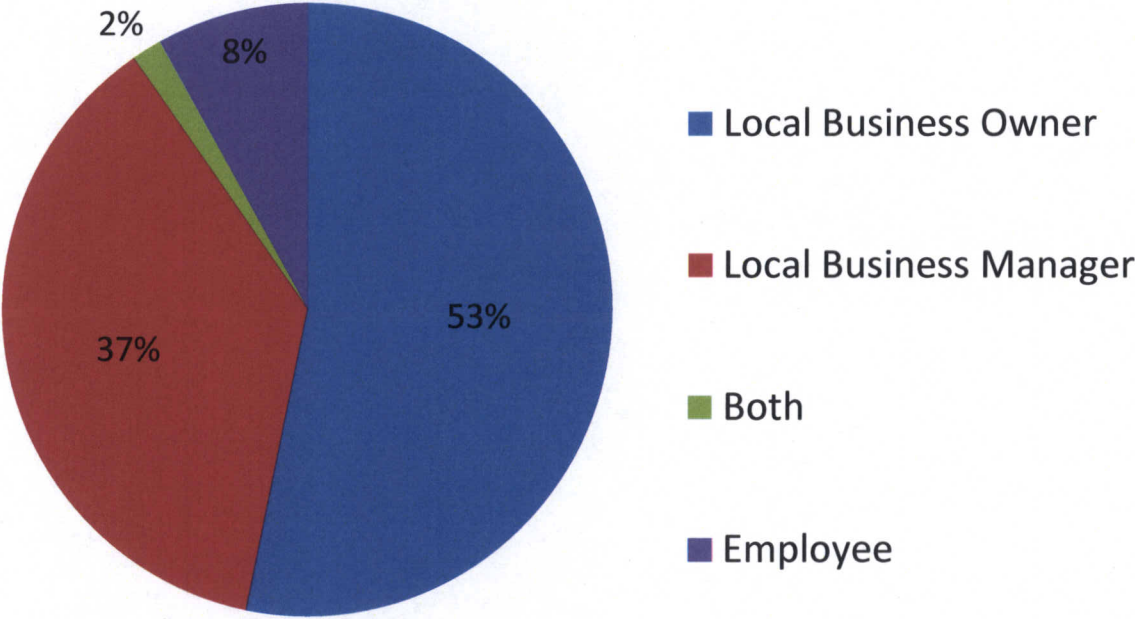


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(4)

Local Businesses Breakdown

Respondent Working Title

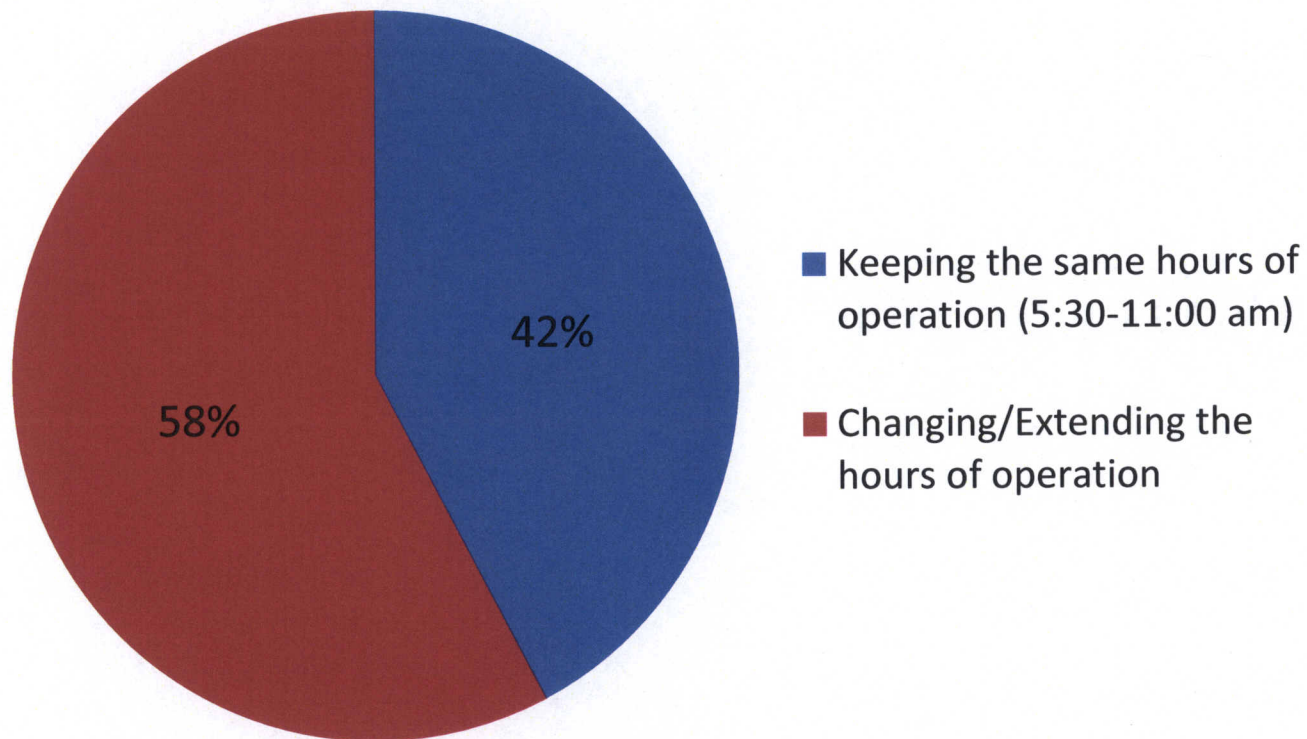


Hours of Operation: Total Responses

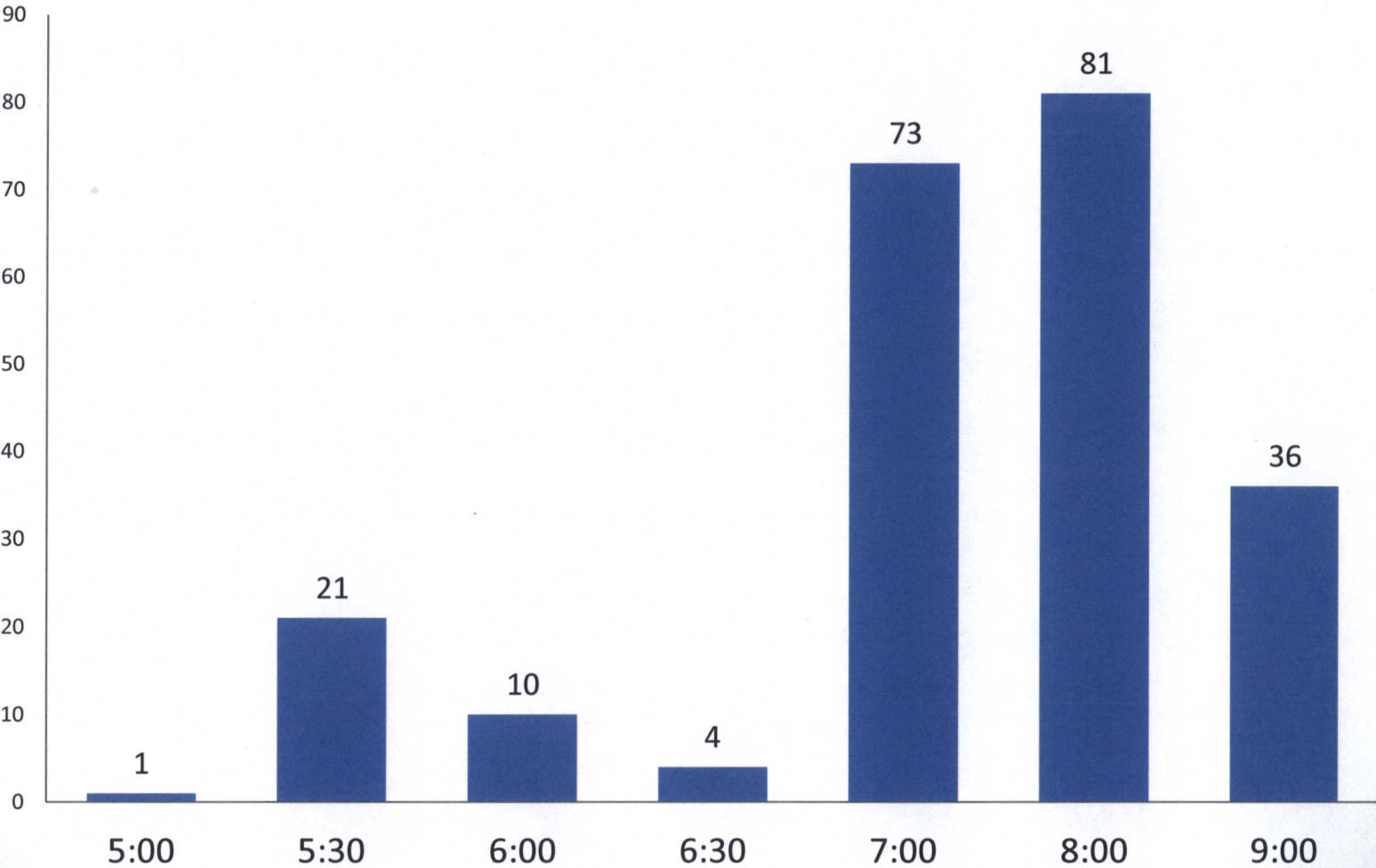
- **56%** of **Total Customers (from poll and online survey)** preferred changing/extending the hours of operation
- **44%** of **Total Customers** preferred keeping the same hours of operation.
- **82%** of **Vendors** preferred changing/extending the hours of operation.
- **18%** of **Vendors** preferred keeping the same hours of operation.
- **77%** of **Local Businesses** preferred changing/extending the hours of operation
- **23%** of **Local Businesses** preferred keeping the same hours of operation.

Hours of Operation: Customer and Vendor Preferences

Customer and Vendor Preferences Regarding the Market Hours of Operation



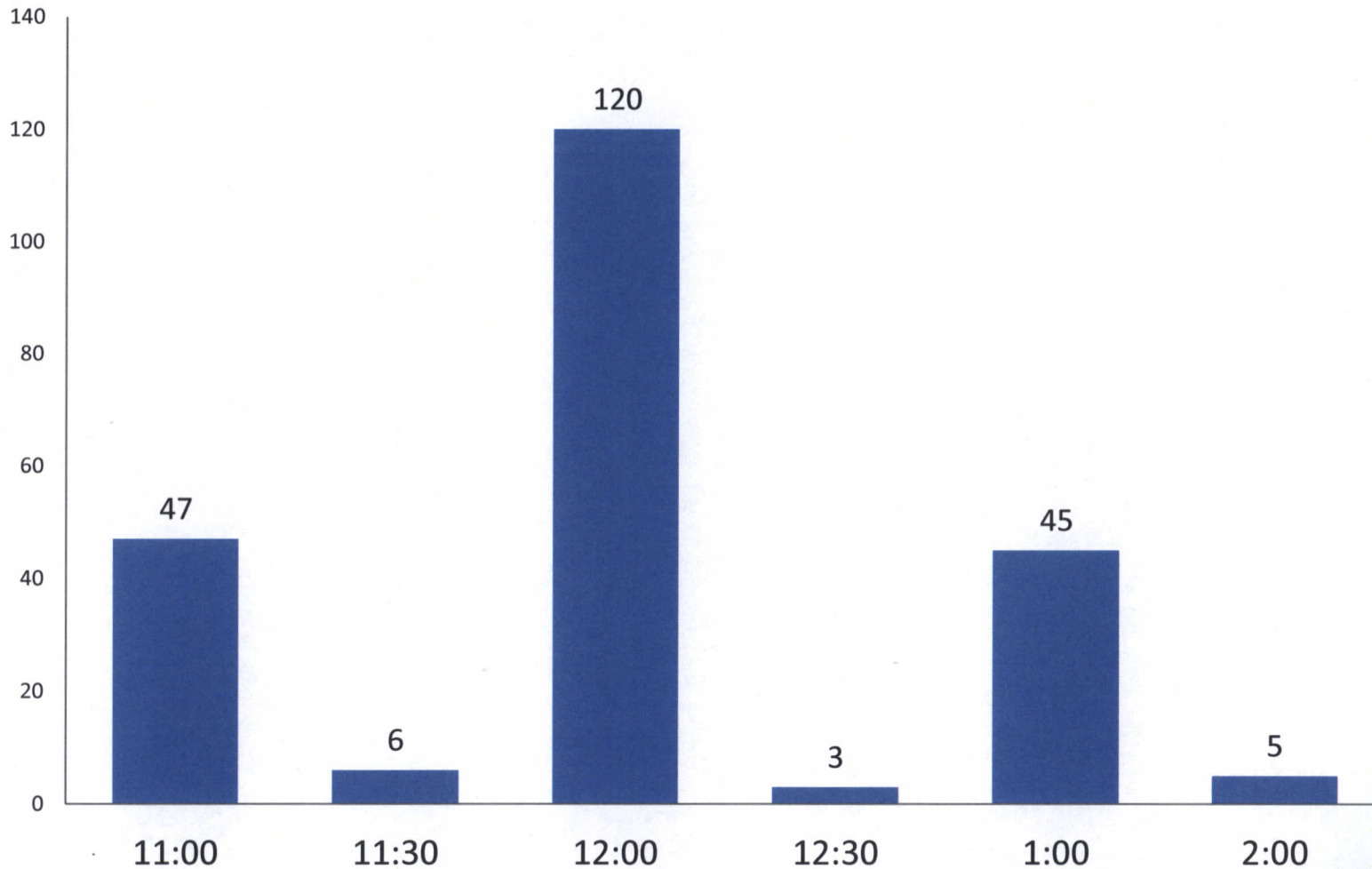
Hours of Operation: Customers' and Vendors' **START** Time Preference



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(8)

Hours of Operation: Customers' and Vendors' **END** Time Preference

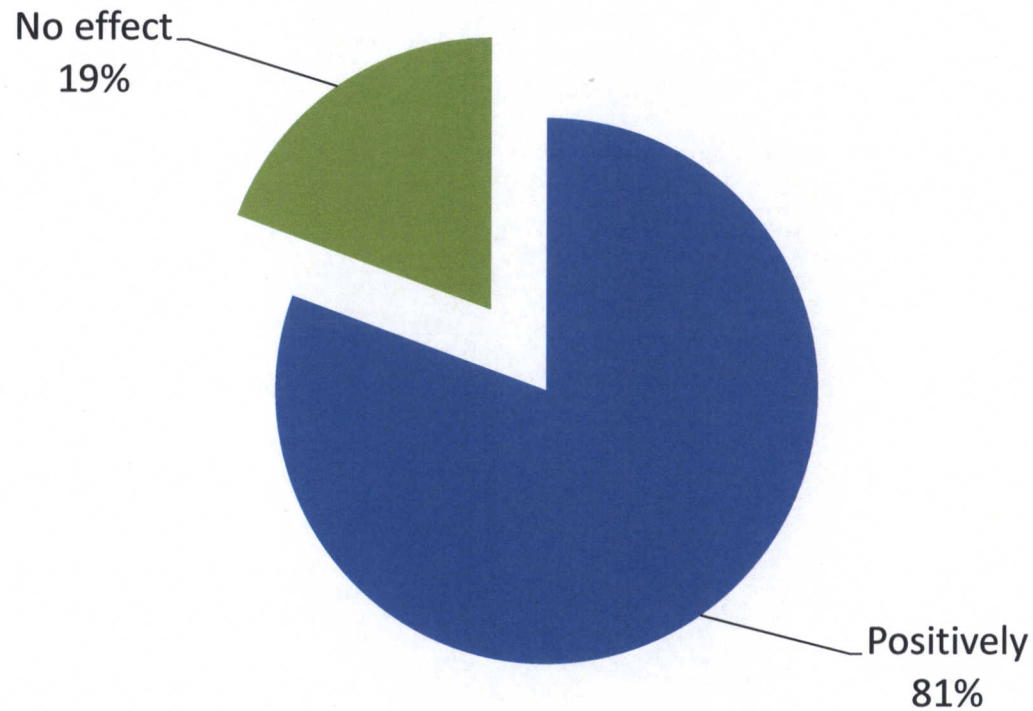


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(9)

Projected Impact of Farmers' Market's Operation Hours on Businesses?

How do you think the change in the Farmers' Market's operation hours would affect your business?



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(10)

Sample comments by **Poll Vendors** on How to Improve the Farmers' Market :

"This is well run! We could use flyers to distribute to increase attendance, plus advertising especially in hotels would be helpful"

"Setup a better market page on the City's website with pictures and vendor information"

"Maybe the spaces could be more equal. Maybe seniors could get a discount"

"Possibly allow for more hot food vendors. Allow for more signage and allow the vendors to use both umbrellas and canopies."

"Staying opened later hours will give a chance to many couples and families with children"

"Parking should be free till market ends."

"Looks great. I would stop by on my next visit to Alexandria."

Sample Comments by **Poll Customers** on How to Improve the Farmers' Market :

"We love the market. Maybe could use some entertainment for the kids. Puppet show, music, a little show same time each week"

" Children activities. Music."

"If the vendors/ Farmers would indicate on a sign the location of their farm, it would be easier to try to "buy local". Thank you!"

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"This is a true asset of Old Town and should be open later in the day"

" This is a fabulous Farmer's Market! A huge draw for the town in every way! (will write a letter).

"Signage showing which stands are organic and pesticide free. I have been coming for years and love this market. Area where omelets are cooked to order, gourmet coffee with real cream and little tables and chairs."

"More food vendors offering different things. There are a lot of cafes here."

" Bacon and egg rolls. Fresh coffee stand."

"Visitors want to sleep in a bit and it's too early at closure."

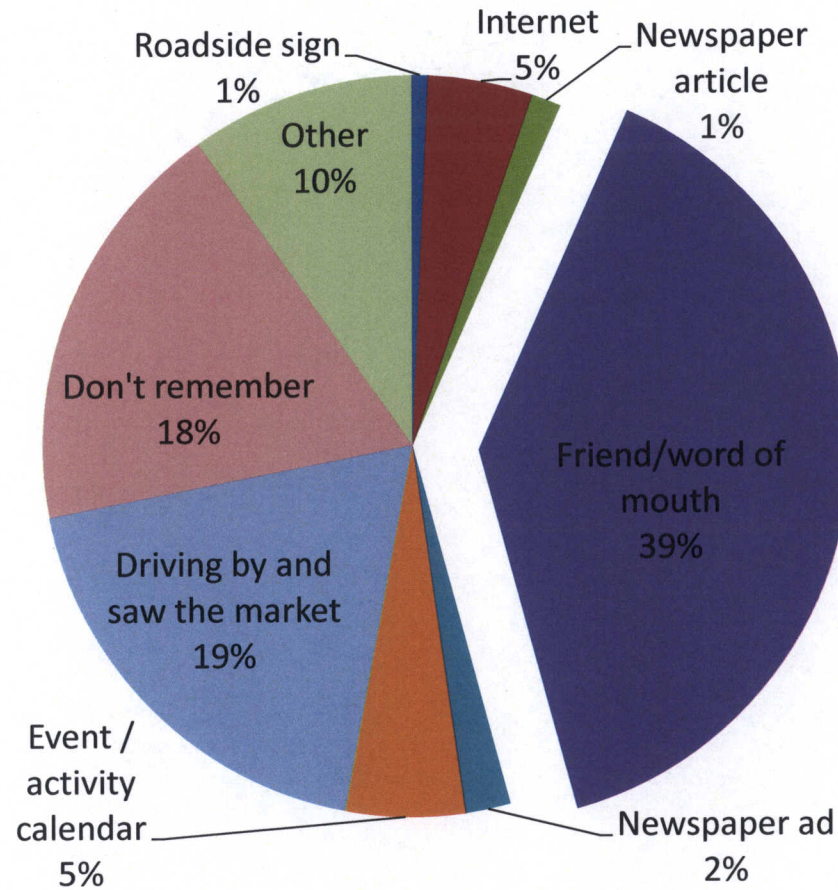
" Love the Farmers' Market – Just hate when I sleep in and miss it! Keep up the great work."

(12)

**Farmers' Market Online Customer
Survey Results
November 2011**

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First Source of Knowledge about Old Town Farmers' Market



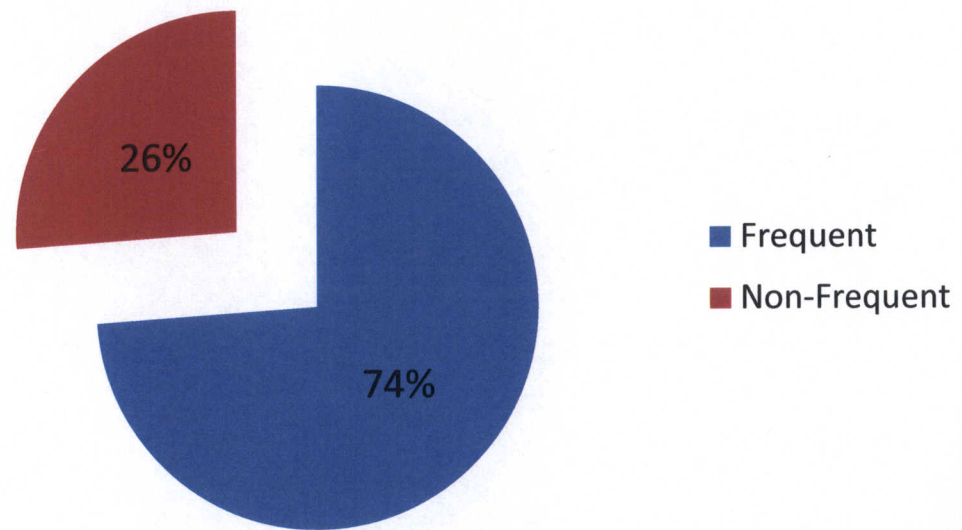
23

(14)

How Often Do you Visit the Old Town Farmers' Market?

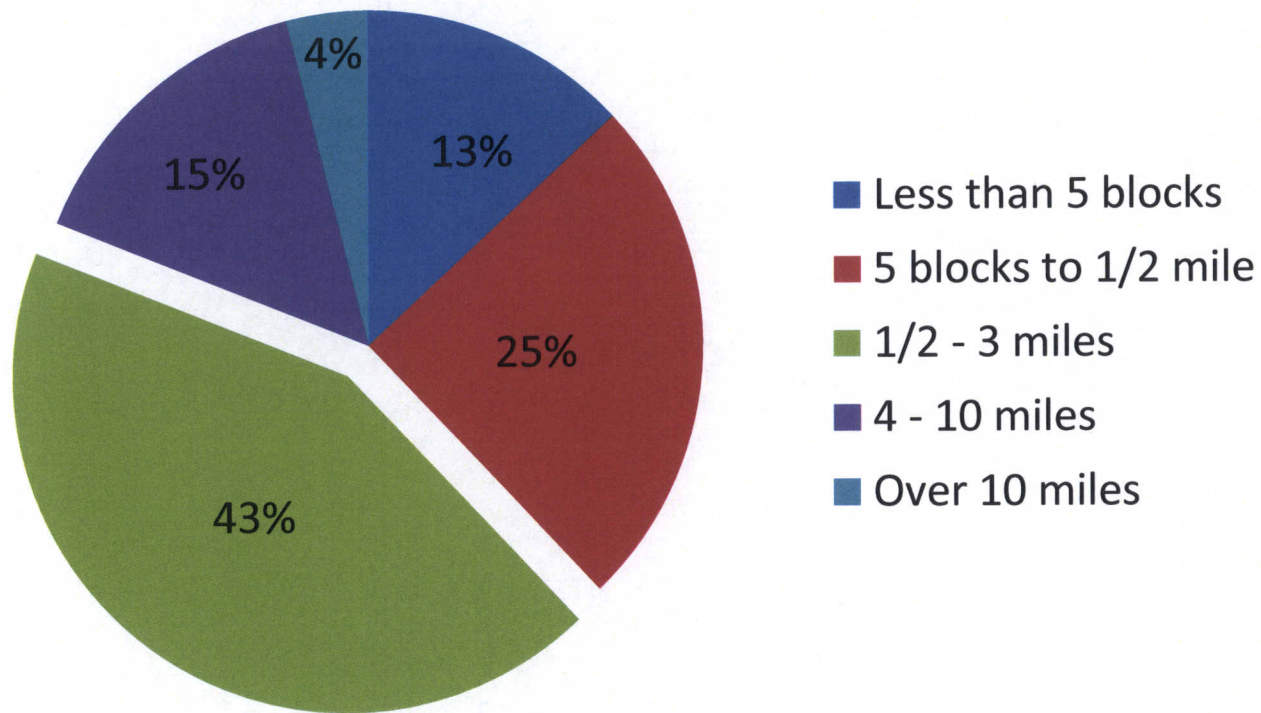
- **74%** of Customer visits are **frequent visits**, ranging from weekly to monthly visits.
- **26%** of customer visits are **none-frequent**, ranging from 2-3 times a year to first time visits.

Frequency of Visits to Old Town Farmers' Market



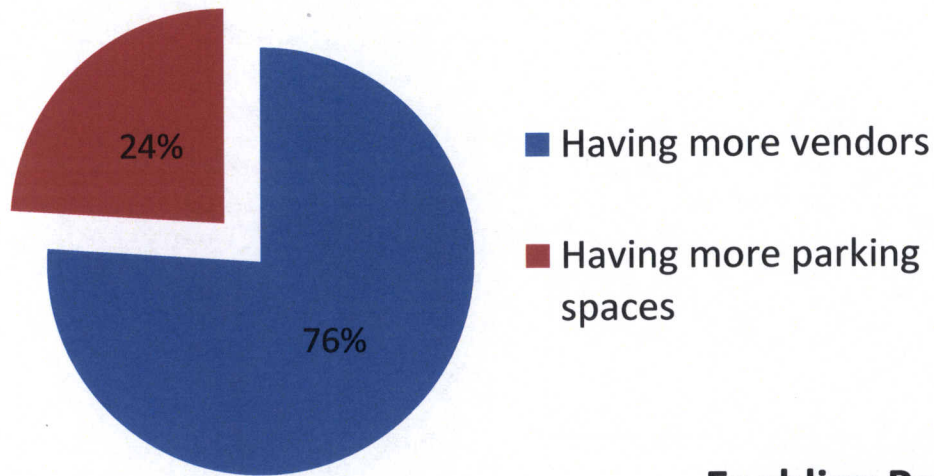
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How Far Do you Live from Old Town Farmers' Market?

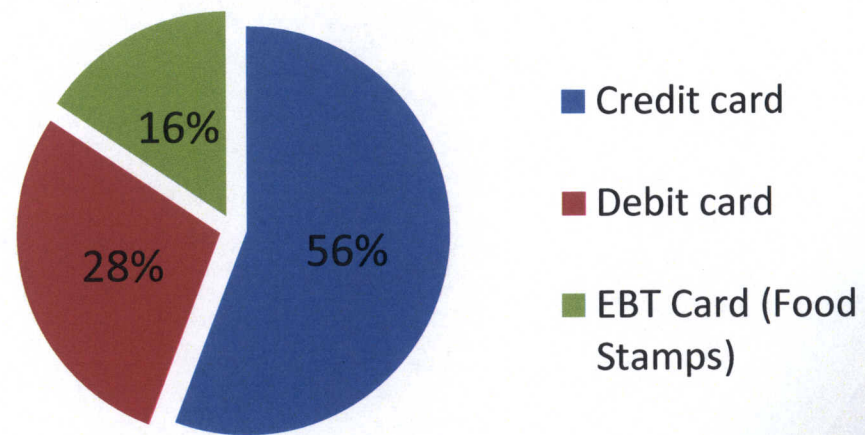


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Improving the Farmers' Market By.....



Enabling Payment By



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(17)

Sample Comments by **Online Survey Customers** on How to Improve the Farmers' Market :

"A little more organized, hard to find some items. Wish I had a map!"

"encourage greater variety of fruit, vegetables and goods."

"Leave some room to play. A lot of folks come with kids. In the past we could have them play near the stage and the raised areas on the sides. Now there is almost no room left and it feels over crowded. Doesn't make for the same family outing that many of us have enjoyed."

"Need more food vendors and less what I call Junk vendors. Overpriced junk vendors. junk vendors are trinket jewelry, cheap t-shirts, self-published books about boring stuff. I once was a regular attendee at farmers market, but i need my morning sleep, on Saturdays, I won't get up until 9 am. I suspect the hours are to get the locals out of the way before the tourists show up."

"The aisles get very congested and it's hard to get through at the height of the market. Also, we need cheaper flower vendors!"

"The reason I don't go to the market every Saturday is because it closes too early."

"some vendors show up late, when I am ready to leave."

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Recommendations/Actions

- Changing the hours of operation from (7:00-12:00).

Challenges: Extending the hours of operation conflicts with some special events at Market Square (National Tartan Day, Armenian Festival and Volunteer Arts & Crafts Show). 3 out of 110 scheduled events in 2011 occurred between 12:00-1:00 pm (2.7% of total activities).

Actions: City Council adopt the revised Farmers' Market Rules and Regulations with new hours.

Actions: Mitigating impact on special events by coordinating with Special Events Committee.

- Better Marketing of the Farmers' Market (through the City's website, using signs and other informative and social media tools)

Challenges: Limited financial resources for marketing, which requires generating more revenue from the Farmers' Market in order to cover.

Actions: Start with low/no cost marketing activities like:

- Work with Communications Department to create a distinct, easy to remember web link for the Farmers' Market that contains vendor types, rules and regulations, maps, etc.
- Advertising the Farmers' Market on social media domains like City's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Leverage Marketing of other Alexandria farmers' markets.

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Recommendations/Actions

- Enable the use of Credit Cards, Debit Cards and EBT cards:

Challenges: Cost of technology for enabling electronic payment.

Need to train vendors on the use of this technology.

Actions: Partner with SNAP program to acquire EBT equipment that also read Debit /Credit Cards

- Eliminate cash payments by Vendors to the City:

Challenges: Transition of duties and coordination with Finance for vendors that have paid .

Buy-in from vendors and coordination of transition to new payment method.

Actions: Transition vendor fee payments to Finance and eliminate cash payments to City.

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Recommendations/Actions

- Standardize the spaces allocated for vendors to maximize utilization of space and reduce inequality among vendors.

Challenges: Buy-in from vendors on how standardizing the spaces allocated reflects on cost.

Actions: Farmers' Market Committee to revise and update the Market policies and procedures.

Actions: Improve marketing techniques and maximize the utilization of Market Square to accommodate as many vendors as possible while maintaining a smooth circulation of customers.

- Increase the City's revenue and rates supportive of efforts.

Challenges: Buy-in from vendors.

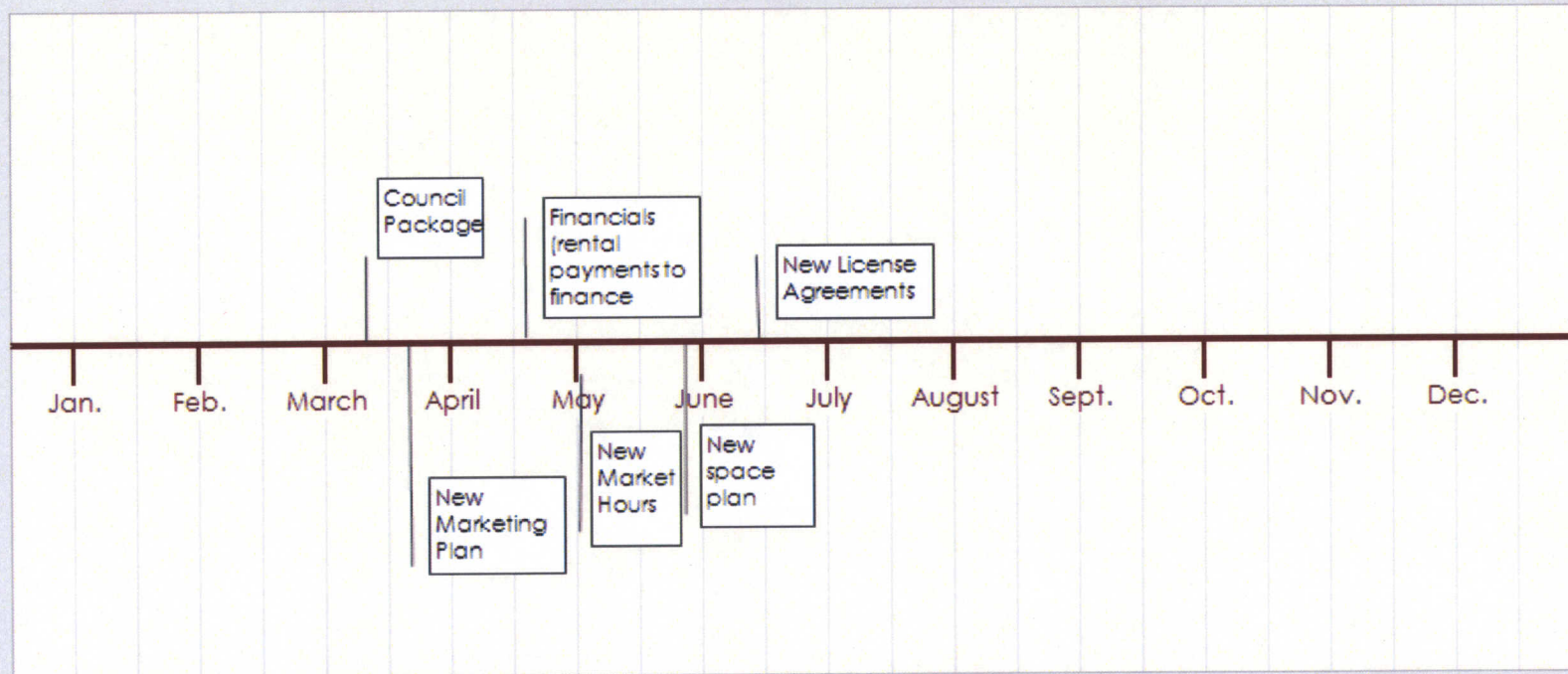
Actions: City Council to receive recommendations to establish revised rates reflective of regional market rates and supportive of the level of effort.

Actions: Update the Farmers' Market Lease agreements

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Timeline for Implementation

Farmers' Market Timeline



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THANK YOU!
Questions?

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(23)

17
3-27-12

Jackie Henderson

From: Hugh Moore <hughathma@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 27, 2012 4:52 PM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones
Subject: COA Contact Us: New Hours of Farmers Market
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Tue Mar 27, 2012 16:51:37] **Message ID:** [38065]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Hugh
Last Name: Moore
Street Address: 1923 Belfield Road
City: Alexandria
State: Virginia
Zip: 22307
Phone:
Email Address: hughathma@gmail.com
Subject: New Hours of Farmers Market
Comments: I like the new hours of the Old Town Farmers Market. 7 til Noon

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3-27-12

Jackie Henderson

From: Patricia Palermino <patpalermino@cox.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 27, 2012 4:02 PM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones
Subject: COA Contact Us: Farmers' Market hours
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Tue Mar 27, 2012 16:02:28] **Message ID:** [38060]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Patricia
Last Name: Palermino
Street Address: 9029 Greylock Street
City: Alexandria
State: VA
Zip: 22308
Phone: 703 360-4757
Email Address: patpalermino@cox.net
Subject: Farmers' Market hours

Good afternoon,

I am a vendor at the Farmers' Market and I am requesting

the Council to vote to extend the market hours to
7:00 am-12:00 pm.

Comments: Visitors who are staying in town or driving in for the day have been asking
us to extend
the hours so that they can shop without rushing.

Thank

you,

Pat Palermino

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3-27-12

Jackie Henderson

From: Betsey Rosenbaum <brrosenbaum@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 27, 2012 11:54 AM
To: William Euille; Frank Fannon; Kerry Donley; Alicia Hughes; Del Pepper; Paul Smedberg; Rose Boyd; Jackie Henderson; Rob Krupicka; Linda Owens; Elizabeth Jones
Subject: COA Contact Us: Farmers' Market - Docket Item 17
Attachments: ATT00001.txt

COA Contact Us: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members

Time: [Tue Mar 27, 2012 11:53:58] Message ID: [38053]

Issue Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council Members
First Name: Betsey
Last Name: Rosenbaum
Street Address: 421 North Saint Asaph Street
City: Alexandria
State: Virginia
Zip: 22314
Phone: 703-836-7877
Email Address: brrosenbaum@comcast.net
Subject: Farmers' Market - Docket Item 17

As oral testimony is not allowed on this legislative item tonight, I am submitting my comments in this form.

I write to strongly support the extended market hours until noon. I also wish to support the City Hall garage extending its free parking until noon. We have the oldest market, but we have not kept up with the greatly increased competition from other farmers markets in the area that offer better hours for vendors and customers - an a greater selection of farm goods.

I am a 35 year resident and home owner of Old Town and a longtime customer at the City Hall farmers' market. As an interested citizen I have worked with General Services to enhance the operations of the market. With my husband, we spent time working with a committee under Mr. Dotson's leadership to make

improvements. Unfortunately, with Mr. Dotson's retirement, these efforts ceased.

I support an improved marketing plan. This must focus on attracting new vendors and producers as well as customers. There are sufficient handicraft vendors.

I support a thorough review of the Farmers' Market rules. In particular: 1) the Rules Committee (which never has met), 2) vendor's attendance requirements and 3) eligible products.

I believe that the current custodial function by General Services is inadequate to run a competitive, highly desirable market.

The Market Master's position needs to be one that can recruit quality vendors and make a lively market.