Central NY Regional Market Revitalization Strategy

April 4, 2025

J. Ryan McMahon, II
County Executive

Acknowledgements

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Oversight

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- Bill Fisher, Executive Director, CNYRMA

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Introduction

The Central New York Regional Market ("CNYRM" or "Regional Market") has played a vital role in supporting farmers and food producers in New York State since its opening in 1938, as well as providing a place for diverse community residents to mingle and access the freshest local foods at competitive prices. Today the Regional Market is home to one of the state's largest farmers' markets on Saturdays, regularly hosting nearly 200 farmers and other vendors, and up to 20,000 daily customers. The Regional Market is also home to wholesale food distributors, grocers, and other businesses that operate daily.

At its inception, the State of New York created the Central New York Regional Market Authority ("CNYRMA" or "Authority"), a quasi-independent state agency, to develop and operate the Regional Market. The executive leadership of the Authority changed in July 2024, following a critical report from the NYS Comptroller that called for stricter financial controls and oversight. The state legislature also passed (and the governor signed in December 2024) a bill that altered the CNYRMA board to increase representation from local government and mandated additional state oversight.

Figure 1. Bird's eye view of CNYRM

Financially, the Regional Market operates without public subsidy but has relied on occasional public funding to pay for capital improvements. The most recent major construction project occurred in 2013 when the new F Shed was built. Before that, investments were made in the historic facilities in 2001. In 2020, CNYRMA incurred substantial debt to purchase a warehouse at 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East next to the Regional Market. CNYRMA recently decided to sell the vacant warehouse, which will lower but not eliminate debt service. Debt payments and operating losses are straining the Regional Market's budget. While efforts are being made to lower operating expenses, the path to sustainability requires increased income.

The Regional Market needs significant investment to address physical deficiencies throughout the 50-acre campus, diversify its income sources, attract and maintain vendors, activate the campus throughout the week, better serve the local community, and take advantage of new opportunities that support the region's farmers. Chief among these opportunities is Executive Order 32 (EO32), a recent state mandate that requires all state agencies buying food to source at least 30% of their purchases with ingredients from NYS growers by 2027. The farmers and wholesalers located in the Regional Market are ideally positioned to take advantage of EO32 if improvements to the Regional Market's infrastructure and facilities are made. Portions of the Regional Market's property are also vacant and unproductive, providing opportunities for new facilities and additional operating income that also furthers the Regional Market's mission to support regional agriculture and the community.

In 2024, Onondaga County Executive J. Ryan McMahon spearheaded an initiative to revitalize the CNY Regional Farmers' Market by committing $4 million in local funds toward the necessary improvements to the Market. This commitment of County resources, and additional resources committed by partners in NYS government, is predicated on the creation of a well-considered plan, intended to identify a program of physical improvements to modernize the Regional Market, as well as a strategic financial plan for the Authority, ensuring that any new investments of public funds are well-considered and lead to a stable and sustainable operation for generations to come.

Onondaga County, with grant assistance via Empire State Development, enlisted a multi-talented consultant team, led by Market Ventures, Inc, and including leaders from Detroit Eastern Market and Rochester Public Market, as well as local design and engineering firms, to prepare the CNY Regional Market Revitalization Strategy. The revitalization strategy aims to identify the most effectual investments that will benefit farmers in the region and best serve the community while simultaneously improving the Regional Market's financial strength and long-term sustainability.

Operationally, the Regional Market Authority can learn from other similar public markets around the country by increasing its management capacity and partnerships to implement innovative programs that support entrepreneurship, address food access, and improve the local food system. This combination of capital and managerial investment will make the Regional Market more impactful while improving its financial situation.

This report summarizes the research, community engagement, analytic groundwork, and vision for revitalization, along with the management and financial plan, recommendations for program development, conceptual design, best uses for the property, and investments that will put the Regional Market onto the path of financial sustainability.

Food systems approach

The consultant team employed a food systems approach to its work, considering the various ways that the Regional Market currently has functions that fit within the six sectors of a food system, and exploring new ways that the Regional Market can positively influence the region's food system. These six sectors include:

- Production
- Distribution
- Processing
- Marketing
- Consumption
- Waste

This framework borrows from FoodPlan CNY,[1] a report that explores the region's food production, distribution, processing, marketing, consumption and waste/recycling sectors. The report identified the Regional Market as a critical asset of the regional food system and recommended investments in food production and distribution infrastructure.

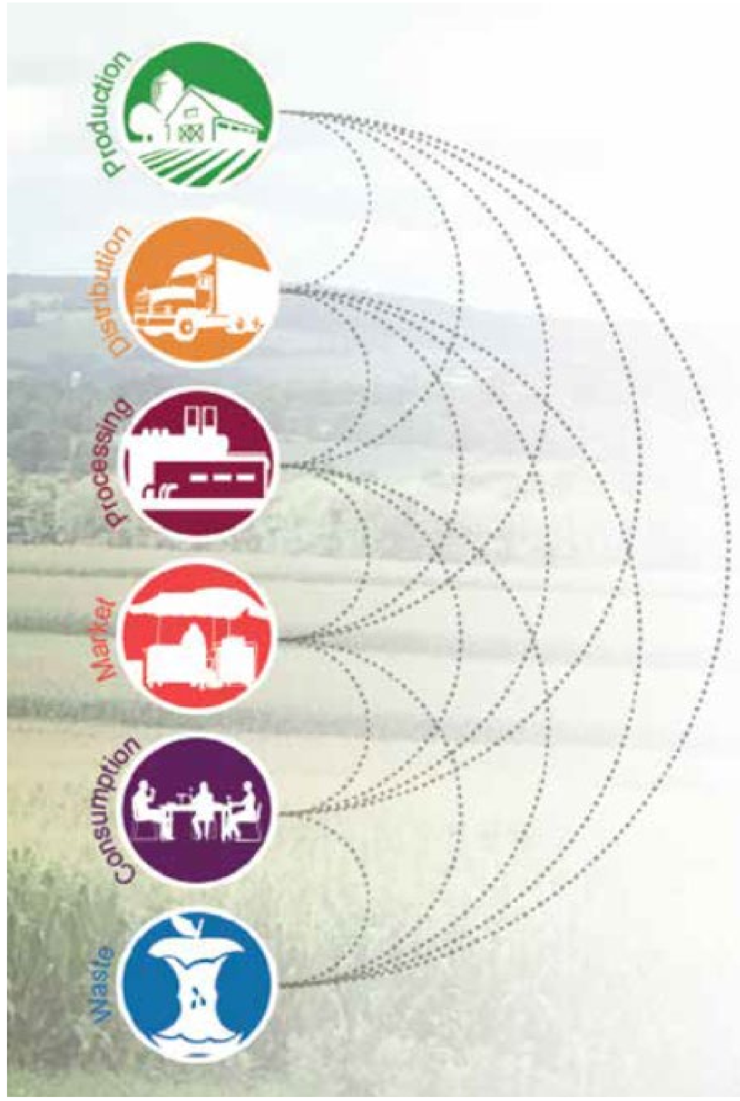

Figure 2 – Food Systems Approach, FoodPlan CNY

The proposed Regional Market revitalization strategy touches all elements of the food system and, once implemented, will vault the Regional Market to the forefront of the region's dynamic food sector.

Methods

A description of the research and planning methods employed for this work is found in Appendix A of the separately submitted appendix document. Appendix B includes a list of stakeholder interviews and findings.

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1 https://agriculture.ongov.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Food-Plan-CNY.pdf

CNY Regional Market Establishment and Evolution

The State of New York created the Central New York Regional Market Authority in 1935, an era that saw the establishment of numerous state-chartered, quasi-independent legal entities that had powerful capabilities, such as raising capital funds through their own bonding authority and land use control through eminent domain. Similar regional produce markets in New York were established around the same time in Buffalo, Albany, and Poughkeepsie. The Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority in Rochester, which serves a nine-county region in Western New York, was established sixteen years later in 1951.[2]

According to its establishing legislation, CNYRMA serves seven Central New York counties: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and the eastern portion of Wayne County.[3]

From the outset, the current site was determined to be the preferred location for the Regional Market, despite its swampy soil and some concern that it was far removed from the city center. Nearby Interstate 81, which today provides the Regional Market with a key locational advantage, did not yet exist (the interstate was largely constructed in the 1950s and 1960s as part of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956).

The Regional Market's groundbreaking took place in 1936. The project was heavily underwritten by the federal Public Works Administration, a New Deal agency created by the Roosevelt administration. Federal funding included a $450,000 loan and a grant of nearly $500,000, establishing at the outset an investment approach that blends substantial public support with private investment. Total project costs equaled $1.1 million (about $25 million in current dollars), with federal funds covering over 80% of the total. Operations commenced on April 1, 1938, and the Regional Market has operated continuously since then.[4]

As the figure labeled "Historic Aerial Photo of the Central New York Regional Market" shows, the three Commission Houses were served by rail spurs during an era when food commonly moved on trains. As the industry moved to refrigerated trucks almost exclusively, the rail lines were eventually removed, with the last of them taken out as part of renovations that started in 1998.

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2 The Genessee Valley Regional Market Authority serves Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties. Wayne County overlaps between this authority and CNYRMA. https://www.geneseevalleyregionalmarketauthority.com/

3 New York Public Authorities Law § 837 (2023) CNYRMA included only the part of Wayne County that lies east of the Pre-Emption Line, which was established in the Treaty of Hartford in 1786. In that treaty, Massachusetts had the pre-emptive right to negotiate with native sovereign tribes in western New York State while New York State would own all the territory east of the line.

4 Central New York Regional Market - Wikipedia


Figure 3. Historic Aerial Photo of the Central New York Regional Market

Most of the structures at the Regional Market date from its inception in 1938, including the three Commission Houses, sheds A, C, D, and E, and the Market Commons building. While the sheds have been altered over the years, the Commission Houses in particular are likely eligible for historic tax credits, which could be one of the financing mechanisms to fund their improvements.

The Regional Market campus has grown with various property acquisitions. Major changes over the last several decades have included:

- Construction of the Pioneer freezer plant on the northern edge of the property in 1994. Byrne Dairy took over the facility in 2021. Byrne now uses the facility to distribute its dairy products throughout the East Coast.
- Roadways in and around the Regional Market changed with the creation of NBT Bank Parkway and Tex Simone Drive, and alterations to Farmers Market Place adjacent to the Commission Houses, including a fence that separates the Commission Houses from the sheds.
- Renovations to the Regional Market's historic facilities began in 1998, following 13 years of study and lobbying. Principal funding came from an $8.4 million grant from the state legislature (equivalent to $16.4 million in 2024). Several dilapidated buildings were removed, along with rail spurs that had served the Commission Houses. By 2001, renovations were made to the A Shed, the Commission Houses, and the Market Commons building. These renovations did not address some of the core challenges facing produce distributors in the Commission Houses, including inefficient single-story facilities.
- The most recent major investment in the Regional Market was construction of the F

Shed, which opened in April 2013.

Several property acquisitions occurred over the years, including the purchase of parcels and structures along Hiawatha Boulevard East. In 2020, the Regional Market purchased 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East for $2.2 million, with the intention of leasing it to the Syracuse City School District for a centralized kitchen, storage, and processing facility. However, a leaky roof and other building deficiencies (known at the time of purchase but not addressed) led the school district to vacate the warehouse in 2023. The warehouse is currently empty and, according to a recent study, requires over $3 million to address physical deficiencies.[5] Following the consultant's team review of the facility and determination that it could not effectively serve the revitalization strategy, the CNYRMA decided to sell the warehouse.

The neighborhood around the Regional Market has changed substantially over time:

- Construction of I-81 adjacent to the Regional Market made it easily accessible by road from the entire region and beyond.
- Carousel Center Mall opened in 1990 and was rebranded as Destiny USA in 2012. With 2.4 million square feet over seven floors, Destiny USA is among the top ten largest malls in the country and drew 26 million visitors when it opened.[6] As with malls across the country, Destiny USA faces competition from online retailers and is exploring strategic changes.
- MacArthur Stadium, which opened in 1934 right before construction of the Regional Market, was demolished and NBT Bank Stadium opened in its place in 1997. The stadium is home to the Syracuse Mets baseball team and hosts other events.
- William F. Wash Regional Transportation Center opened in 1998, including an Amtrak passenger rail station and long-distance bus carrier service.
- The Northside neighborhood has become more diverse over time and has also experienced the effects of disinvestment and poverty. Recent revitalization efforts have included construction of more than 300 housing units in rehabilitated former commercial and manufacturing buildings.
- The Syracuse lakefront and inner harbor, a former industrial area that was home to the NYS barge canal, is being revitalized into a new mixed-use district with aquarium, housing, office, parks, and other water-side and visitor amenities, including the Onondaga Creekwalk.

5 VIP Architecture, "CNY Regional Market Building Conditions Assessment: 513 Hiawatha Boulevard," 1/3/2024
6 10 Largest Shopping Malls In America - WorldAtlas

Existing Conditions

Location & context

The Regional Market is located near the geographic center of Onondaga County (population 470,000) in the City of Syracuse. It is also within the Central New York Region and larger Syracuse Metropolitan Area that includes Onondaga, Madison, and Oswego counties (pop. 653,000).[7]

The Regional Market is adjacent to Interstate 81 ("I-81") and less than two miles from the New York State Thruway ("I-90"), providing excellent highway access to the entire region and beyond. The William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center, which provides Amtrak, intercity, and local public transit connecting services, is located next to the Regional Market. The

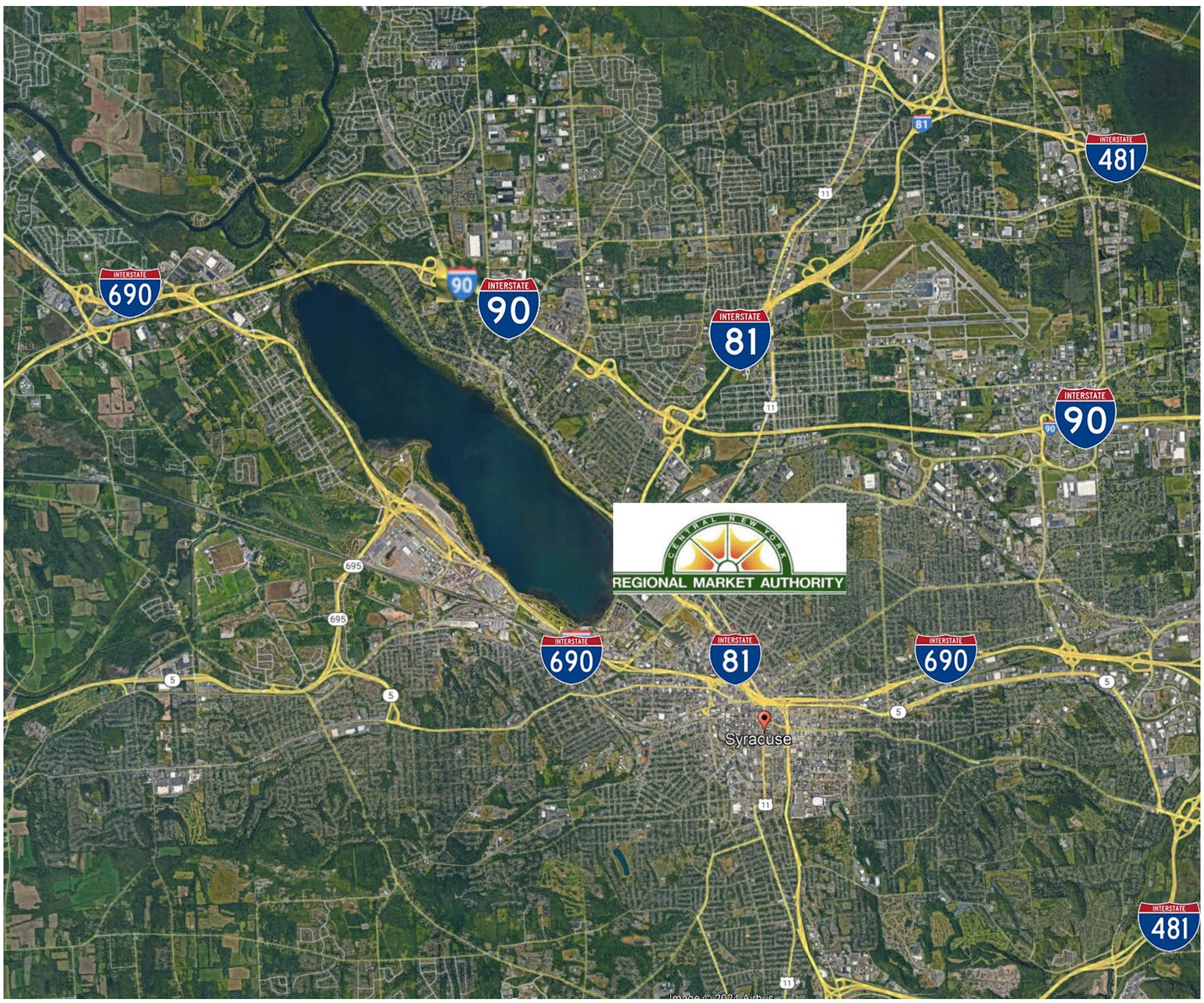

Figure 4. Location Map

7 https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/onondagacountynewyork/PST045224; https://www.newyorkfed.org/regional-economy/profiles/syracuse

Syracuse Hancock International Airport is located four miles to the north off of I-81.

A northbound exit ramp from I-81 leads directly into the Regional Market's most used entry point at Park Street. Park Street is a busy commercial thoroughfare. Across Park Street from the Regional Market, there is a recently constructed and popular Dunkin Donuts and nail salon, and a self-service car wash. Hiawatha Boulevard East, along the Regional Market's eastern edge, is a well-known, active corridor and the link to the adjacent residential Northside neighborhood and the Inner Harbor.

Major nearby attractions include Destiny USA mall, the New York State Fairgrounds, and the lakeside trail around Onondaga Lake. The Regional Market is two miles to Downtown Syracuse and three miles to Syracuse University.

Expected nearby development

Substantial development is expected at several sites near the Regional Market, which could increase customers from these areas:

- The area known as the Inner Harbor, easily accessible to the Regional Market via Hiawatha Boulevard, is changing rapidly, with new housing, offices, hotels, parkland and aquarium.
- The former Penfield Manufacturing Company building across Hiawatha Boulevard East at Park Street is being converted into 128 loft apartments. The development is named Moyer Carriage Lofts.[8] Across Park Street, the historic Wellington Ward building is being rehabilitated into 59 apartments and commercial space.
- The former Will & Baumer candle factory in Salina – immediately northwest of the Regional Market on Buckley Road – is being transformed into a mixed-use development that will include about 250 apartments. The old factory had 11 buildings with 179,000 sf and the developers intend to add up to three new buildings.[9]
- The City of Syracuse has identified $825,000 of state and federal funds that will help transform blighted buildings into mixed-use properties that include 184 mixed-income rental units in the neighborhood.[10]

If the region experiences substantial population growth, as anticipated with development of the new Micron semiconductor manufacturing facility in the Town of Clay to the north, other parcels around the Regional Market will likely continue to see infill or adaptive reuse housing. Physical upgrades to the Regional Market campus and additional retail businesses will likely encourage more nearby residential and other development.

8 Construction starts on loft apartments at Syracuse factory with house on top - syracuse.com
9 Rick Moriarty, "Will & Baumer candle factory gets new life, but what will happen to the smokestack?" Syracuse.com, 4/30/2021.
10 City of Syracuse Office of the Mayor, "Lakefront and Washington Square Neighborhood Investments," informational flyer, November 2024.

Site analysis

Appendix C includes site maps that identify the site location and context, buildings, infrastructure, circulation, environmental resources, and amenities. Versions of these maps are inserted as figures, below.

Size

The black dotted lines in the figure labeled "Location and Context Map" show the boundaries

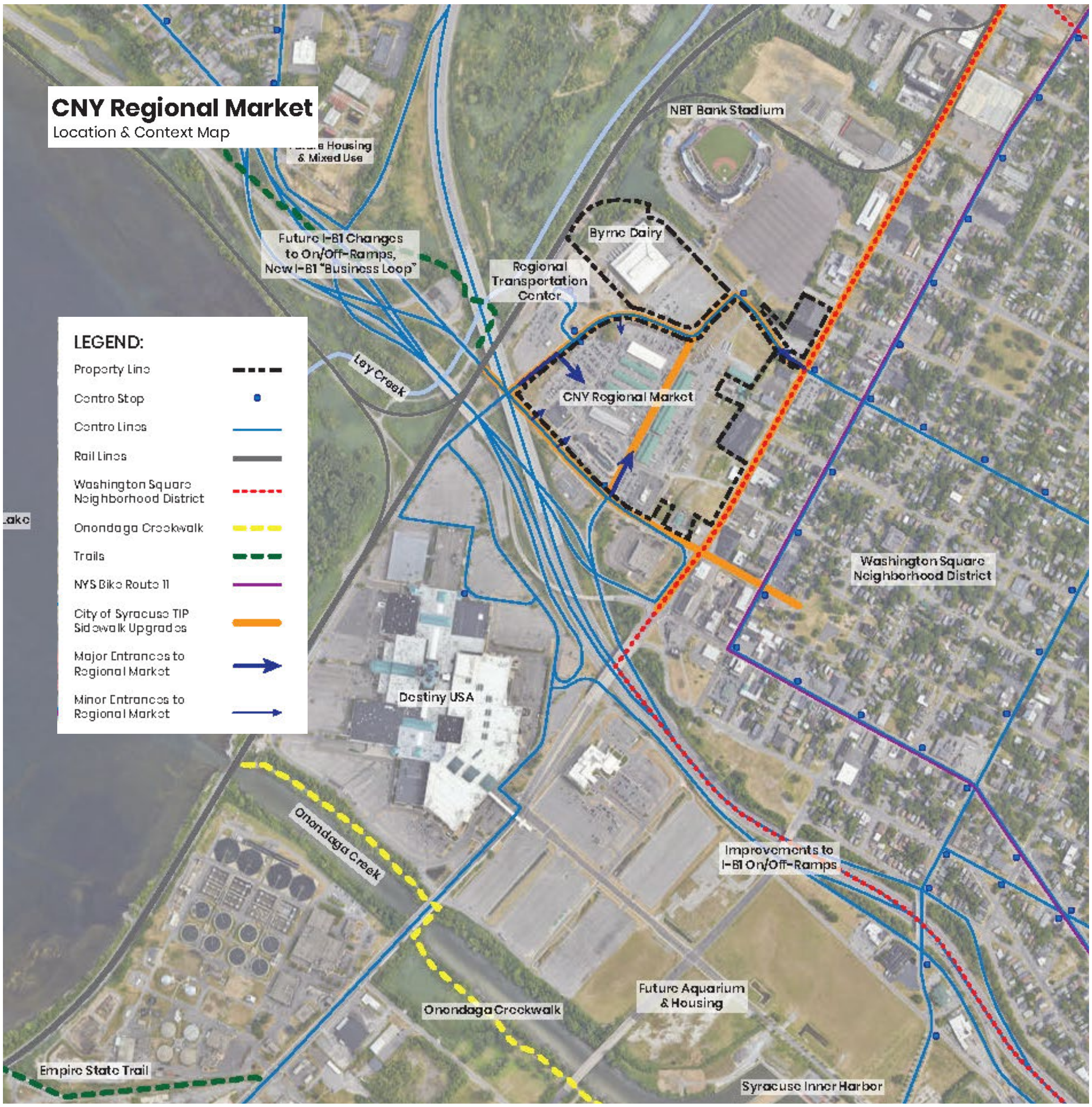

Figure 5 – Location and Context Map

of the Regional Market. The total size of the Regional Market campus is 50 acres. Park Street, NBT Bank Parkway Tex Simone Drive, and Hiawatha Boulevard East, all City streets, generally form a perimeter around the site (several properties fronting Hiawatha Boulevard East are not part of the Regional Market).

Regional access

According to the internet survey, stakeholders, and transit data, nearly all visitors arrive by car to the Regional Market, with a small number walking or taking alternative transportation. As a result, vehicular access, the entrance experience, car circulation within the campus, and parking are all critical issues that must be considered as part of the revitalization strategy. To encourage nearby residents to walk to the Regional Market and to expand bicycle and transit usage, pedestrian and bike access and pedestrian circulation are also important issues.

According to cellphone location data provided by Placer.ai, the most frequent visitor route to the Regional Market is via I-81 northbound, followed by Hiawatha Boulevard East northbound and I-81 southbound (see figure labeled "Visitor Journey Routes Map, Placer.ai"). This comports with stakeholder interviews who identified Park Street as the most used entrance, with cars coming directly off of the I-81 North exit ramp and into the Regional Market.

Figure 6.Visitor Journey Routes Map, Placer.ai

I-81 changes

Major changes to I-81 are underway. The section of I-81 from the Regional Market through Downtown Syracuse will become Business Loop 81 ("BL-81"). Many of the on-and-off ramps will change, with some being removed and others widened. Between I-690 and Hiawatha Boulevard, the northbound lanes of BL-81 will expand from three to four lanes, while the southbound lanes will remain as three lanes.[11] Since the northbound lanes of I-81 through downtown are the most frequent route to the Regional Market, this expansion should improve access although stakeholders did not identify traffic congestion as a problem, likely because there is little traffic on Saturdays when the Regional Market is busiest.

According to NYS Department of Transportation, BL-81 and I-81 improvements around Hiawatha Boulevard are expected to be completed in 2028.[12]

Public transit

CENTRO bus service provides the principal public transportation to the Regional Market. Several city bus routes reach the Regional Market, with bus stops on Park Street near the entrance across from the I-81 northbound exit ramp, and on NBT Bank Parkway across from the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center, which serves Amtrak and several intercity bus companies. There are additional nearby bus stops at the intersection of Tex Simone Drive and Hiawatha Boulevard East. These bus stops are marked by small posts and do not have shelters or benches. The bus stops do not have pull-outs to separate the buses from traffic.

CENTRO provided information about average daily boardings and alightings at the Park Street/I-81 (west bound) and NBT Bank Parkway/Walsh Circle (west and east bound) bus stops over the course of 2024 for the hours between 7 am and 3 pm. The table labeled “CENTRO Bus Boardings and Alightings” shows the average number of people who got on and off the bus on the three days that the retail market operates, for each of the noted bus stops, during the period from January through October 2024.

CENTRO Bus			Daily Average 2024	
Location	Direction	Day	Boardings	Alightings
Park/I-81	Westbound, Stop 9054	Thursdays	2.2	4.8
		Saturdays	2.6	5.5
		Sundays	0.5	1.9
NBT Bank Pkwy/Walsh Circle	Westbound, Stop 18035	Thursdays	0.2	2.6
		Saturdays	0.3	16.7
		Sundays	0.7	7.7
	Eastbound, Stop 18034	Thursdays	1.0	0.0
		Saturdays	3.2	0.2
		Sundays	1.2	0.0
		Total Thursdays	3.4	7.4
		Total Saturdays	6.1	22.4
		Total Sundays	2.4	9.6

Table 1 – CENTRO Bus Boardings and Alightings

CENTRO reported that ridership is higher in 2024 than in 2023, as the system continues to recover from decreased ridership during the COVID pandemic.

The highest usage occurs on Saturdays, with a combined 22.4 riders on average getting off the bus at all of the three stops. Since Market management estimates that up to 20,000 people visit the Regional Market on busy Saturdays, these bus riders represent a tiny fraction of visitors.[13] On Thursdays, an average of 7.4 people get off the bus while on Sundays the average

11 i-81-overview-butternut-street-to-hiawatha-boulevard.pdf
12 i-81-c3-open-house-2024.06.20-2.pdf
13 Coincidentally, this percentage is almost exactly the same as those who responded to the community internet survey, where nine out of 3,887 people said that they typically ride a bus to the Regional Market, or 0.23%.

is 9.6. Fewer than half that number get on the bus near the Regional Market.

While different bus routes serve the three stops next to the Regional Market, all originate at the Centro Transit Hub ("Hub") located in downtown Syracuse. The travel duration from the Hub is fairly short. On Saturday mornings, for example, the #16 bus takes only 10-15 minutes to reach the Regional Market from the Hub. However, the buses travel infrequently. On Saturday, the buses are currently scheduled to run approximately every one hour and 20 minutes, so the lack of frequency makes using the bus challenging. On Thursdays, the buses are more frequent, running every 20 to 40 minutes in the morning, but only an average of 7.4 riders disembarked from 7 am to 3 pm on Thursdays over the past year.

Syracuse University previously operated a free bus that visited the Regional Market, but that service has been suspended.

CENTRO bus fares are $1.00 per ride, with 50% discounts for children and seniors. In the community survey, almost no one mentioned the cost of ridership needing to change to increase their likelihood of taking a bus to the Regional Market.

In addition to its regular routes, CENTRO runs special shopper buses that serve senior centers. Currently, these travel to Wegmans and TOPS once per week and are subsidized by the supermarkets. CENTRO indicated that the Regional Market could potentially utilize this service.

The flip side of such low current ridership is the opportunity to grow the base of bus riders through a variety of improvements and incentives. While most respondents to the community internet survey (86%) said that nothing would make them more likely to ride the bus, a substantial fraction said they were more likely to use a bus if there was more frequent bus service (8%) or if a bus stop is closer to their home (7%). Respondents from lower income households expressed higher interest in taking a bus if these improvements were made, reflecting the importance of public transportation to serving lower income residents.

Pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation

Stakeholders identified concerns with pedestrian and bicycle access to the Regional Market, including the lack of sidewalks and crosswalks across Hiawatha Boulevard and the lack of safe bicycle routes and bike parking, which they believe discourages nearby residents from visiting the Regional Market. The figure labeled "CNYRM Site Circulation & Conflicts" identifies bus routes, vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow, and areas of conflict.

These challenges have been identified and studied by various agencies. The Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council ("SMTC") issued an extensive report in September 2020 called the "RTC-Market Area Mobility Study"[14] that addresses the Regional Transportation Center and the Regional Market. This study offered options for improving mobility across Hiawatha Boulevard and Park Street.

The City has secured $2.9 million in federal transportation funding to improve bicycle and pedestrian access on City streets bordering the Market. These improvements should benefit the Regional Market and improve access for the many nearby residents who currently or could walk to the Market. At the Market's entrances and within the campus, the Regional Market Authority

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14 https://smtcmpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/RTC-Market-Area.pdf

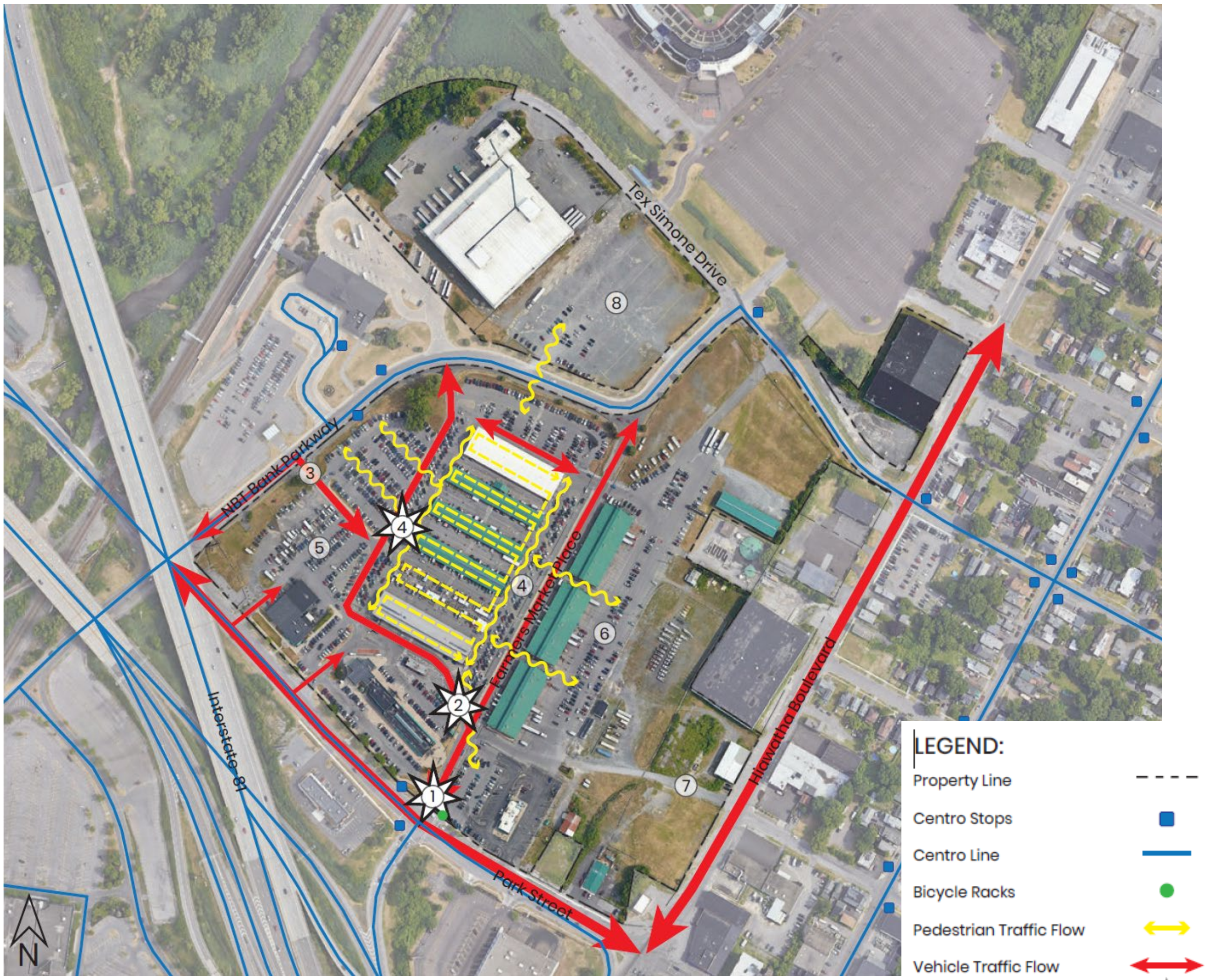

Figure 7. CNYRM Site Circulation & Conflicts

can take additional steps to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation.

Currently, the Regional Market does not identify bicycle pathways within the campus and offers only one bicycle rack, adjacent to the Market Commons building. Bicycling activity is increasing in the City of Syracuse, as well as motorized scooter use. Successful bicycle and scooter rental programs now occur in the city and are being expanded into neighboring towns and villages, and bicycle lanes and infrastructure are being added to city streets. These dynamics point to a need to consider improved bicycle and scooter accommodations in planning for the Regional Market campus. Bicycle, scooter and pedestrian access to the Market can be especially important to low-income and immigrant populations, which the Market is well-positioned to serve.

Based on a review of aerial drone footage, the most common walkway between the sheds occurs at the eastern entrances of the sheds, near Farmers Market Place. The sheds also have entrances at their center points and crosswalks painted on the pavement between the sheds, but few customers walk this way. Vendors identified a zipper pattern, where customers enter mainly on the east side of the sheds and then walk along one row of vendors and then return along vendors across the aisle, before exiting at the same place they entered and then heading to the next shed.

The survey research and stakeholders identified chaotic circulation patterns for both cars and pedestrians throughout the Regional Market as problematic, with concerns about pedestrian safety. Currently, sidewalks are limited to segments along Park Street and surrounding the Market Commons Building. Painted asphalt areas, which can easily fade, typically demarcate pedestrian pathways between the retail sheds and primary crossing locations. Otherwise, pedestrians are left to navigate to and within the site via shared spaces with vehicles.

Vehicular entrances and circulation

There are eight vehicular entrances to the Regional Market. The most commonly used entrance is at Farmers Market Place and Park Street, across from the northbound I-81 exit ramp. Stakeholders noted that this entrance can experience backups on peak summer Saturdays. The next most commonly used entrance is along NBT Bank Parkway. Several additional driveways on Park Street provide easy access to the M&T Bank drive-thru, the Market Diner, and the Middle Eastern Market.

From Hiawatha Boulevard East, cars can access the Regional Market via Tex Simone Drive but need to circulate onto NBT Bank Parkway to arrive at an open entrance since several potential entries are typically gated, including the one at Farmers Market Place. Another entrance from Hiawatha Boulevard East, at Carbon Street, is a gravel driveway that is sometimes gated.

As mentioned, survey respondents noted confusing circulation patterns within the Market campus, with potential vehicular and pedestrian conflict points occurring throughout the site. Customers driving along and between the retail sheds can make pedestrians feel unsafe during high-volume days.

Parking

Parking lots are located throughout the Regional Market. Based on a count by Market management, there are about 1,600 parking spaces in total on the campus.

Nearly every surface not occupied by a building is used for parking. Many of these areas are paved and striped. Some of the parking areas, such as the area at the corner of Park Street and NBT Bank Parkway, are unpaved and unstriped, reducing their efficiency and creating a chaotic-feeling environment.

The largest single parking area is the lot next to the Byrne Dairy warehouse at the northern end of the campus, with about 450 spaces. Market management calls this area the “swing lot.” The number of spaces is indefinite because the lot is not striped for circulation or parking. Problematically, there are no crosswalks across the four-lane NBT Bank Parkway to connect this lot with the sheds, so traversing the road can be challenging and potentially dangerous for visitors. Furthermore, the walkway from the swing lot to the sheds is impeded by a fence that has only one entry gate, which does not align with the entrance to the parking lot. As a result, this parking lot feels remote and unwelcoming.

The second largest cluster of customer parking (254 spaces) is the lot on the east side of the Commission Houses. This lot is closest to the entrance into the Regional Market from Hiawatha Boulevard East at Carbon Street, but the road is unpaved and the gate is not always open. This parking area is primarily designed for tractor-trailers serving the Commission Houses, not for cars or customer parking. Nearby, the consultant team observed that the landscaping was overgrown and trash was strewn about, including old tires, making the area feel unwelcoming. To reach the shed area, pedestrians walk between the Commission Houses but the route does not feel comfortable and trucks regularly use Farmers Market Place. Once across Farmers Market Place, the crosswalk dead-ends directly into parking spaces and there is no crosswalk to the sheds.

Figure 8 – Parking Lot Trolley

The Regional Market owns a trolley, pulled by a tractor, that sometimes circulates from this parking lot to the sheds. The figure labeled "Parking Lot Trolley" shows an image of the trolley in operation. Given the reasonably short distance from this parking area to the sheds, the cost of operating the trolley could potentially be reduced if the pedestrian routes could be make clearer and safer.

The community internet survey provides valuable information about customers' perceptions of parking. One group of respondents – those who had visited the Regional Market in the past two years – were asked about their recent experiences with parking:

- The majority of respondents (63%) said they found convenient parking within a reasonable period of time.
- Over a quarter of respondents (27%) said that parking was inconvenient because it took a long time to find a space.
- A small percentage of respondents (4%) said parking was inconvenient because the space they found was too far away from the Market.
- Less than 1% said they didn't find parking, so they left and did not attend the Market. Among this very small group (24 respondents out of nearly 5,000 who took the survey), nearly half had not visited the Regional Market in the past year and over a third had visited infrequently (1-3 times in the past year).

A separate group of respondents, those who had never visited or had not been to the Regional Market in two years, were asked why they had not visited. The most frequent response was "Parking difficult to find or inconvenient," selected by 45% of the respondents. As part of an open-ended question about what would make them more likely to visit the Regional Market in the future, parking issues were frequently mentioned, with suggestions for better parking options, more handicapped spaces, and improved traffic flow. Some suggest park-and-ride options from surrounding areas to ease accessibility

Since over a third of customers (those in the first group) found parking to be problematic and nearly a half of non-customers (those in the second group) identified parking as the biggest barrier to visiting the Regional Market, the revitalization strategy needs to address parking. The number of parking spaces in close proximity to the retail areas should be maximized, convenient handicap spaces should be added, and the circulation routes to access these spaces should be carefully designed for safety and ease. As improvements to parking and circulation are made, these changes will need to be communicated to both current and potential customers.

While the parking demand can generally be accommodated within the Regional Market's campus, future growth or large events might require more parking. NBT Bank Stadium, located adjacent to the Regional Market, has a parking lot with approximately 1,000 parking spaces. While the stadium has an agreement with the Regional Market to use the swing lot next to Byrne Dairy as an overflow space for stadium attendees, the reverse does not occur. The stadium and parking lot are owned by Onondaga County, which has expressed an initial willingness to enter into such an agreement if more parking is needed. To use the stadium lot effectively, there will need to be improvements to pedestrian circulation, such as protected sidewalks and crosswalks across Tex Simone Drive and NBT Bank Parkway, and perhaps expanded use of the Regional Market's trolley shuttle.

Utilities and infrastructure

The figure labeled "CNYRM Utilities" identifies drinking water, stormwater, wastewater sewer, electrical, and gas line on the property.

Preliminary conversations with City and County infrastructure providers did not uncover any unanticipated capacity constraints within municipally owned conveyances or treatment facilities. The City and County did not assess or provide information as to the condition of on-site conveyances.

- **Drinking water**

Drinking water service is provided by the City of Syracuse and no potential issues were noted by City representatives in providing service to the Regional Market.

- **Wastewater**

The County Department of Water Environment Protection, which oversees wastewater treatment facilities, will require plan submittal for any new buildings and land uses to ensure treatment capacity and may require offsets for proposed increases in wastewater flow coming from the campus. With the addition of food processing facilities, kitchens, and restaurants and other food service facilities, significant increases in flow may be anticipated over current levels.

- **Solid waste**

The Regional Market has minimal infrastructure related to solid waste management. Several small dumpsters are located near the guard shack, adjacent to the Market Commons. Retail market vendors are required to take unsold products back with them and the Regional Market's wholesalers and other leasehold businesses are responsible for their own waste management. Some of the produce wholesalers collect compostable waste.

Figure 9. CNYRM Utilities

- **Stormwater**

The City and County will require high-quality stormwater management to be incorporated into site improvements and will encourage efforts to mitigate stormwater flow with green infrastructure wherever possible. The site is, and will continue to be highly impervious, and with the volume of vehicles and activity on site, poorly managed stormwater may ultimately impact nearby waterways, including Ley Creek and Onondaga Lake. Reconfiguration of the parking areas and new structures provide the opportunity to enhance stormwater management and perhaps add rainwater capture.

- **Electricity**

National Grid provides electrical service to the Regional Market via a single feed to the small brick Welcome Center building between Market Commons and the A Shed. There are transformers in the Market Commons. The Regional Market is responsible for distributing power throughout the campus. Due to the age and type of system, National Grid describes the current situation as a "nonconforming service."

National Grid recommends a new system for electrical feeds and distribution, abandoning the current consolidation area and instead directly feeding buildings around the campus from electrical poles on the Regional Market's periphery. If implemented, this would free up the building that currently houses electrical equipment and allow an expanded Welcome Center or other use. In addition, if the utility provides power directly to each tenant, then CNYRMA would no longer be responsible for managing the electrical distribution equipment or collecting reimbursements from tenants for electrical usage each month. However, the rates charged for distributed power would likely be higher than a centralized system.

Other strategies are available to lower the cost of power. These include using smart technology and modern equipment that reduces periods of peak demand. The Regional Market can also expand its investments in power generation, such as solar and wind, and explore efficient technologies such as ground and air source heat pumps for heating and cooling.

National Grid has indicated that installation of electric car charging facilities at the Regional Market could trigger grant funding that would offset some costs of service upgrades. Since the Regional Market is located within a disadvantaged community, the subsidy could be substantial.

- **Internet**

Strong wireless internet service is important to vendors offering credit card sales and to visitors for web browsing. Some vendors mentioned spotty service around the Regional Market.

Environmental resources

The figure “Environmental Resource Map” identifies the soils on or near the site, as well as the 100-year floodplain. The soils generally consist of fill and are therefore unstable. Construction requires pilings or other means to create adequate stability.

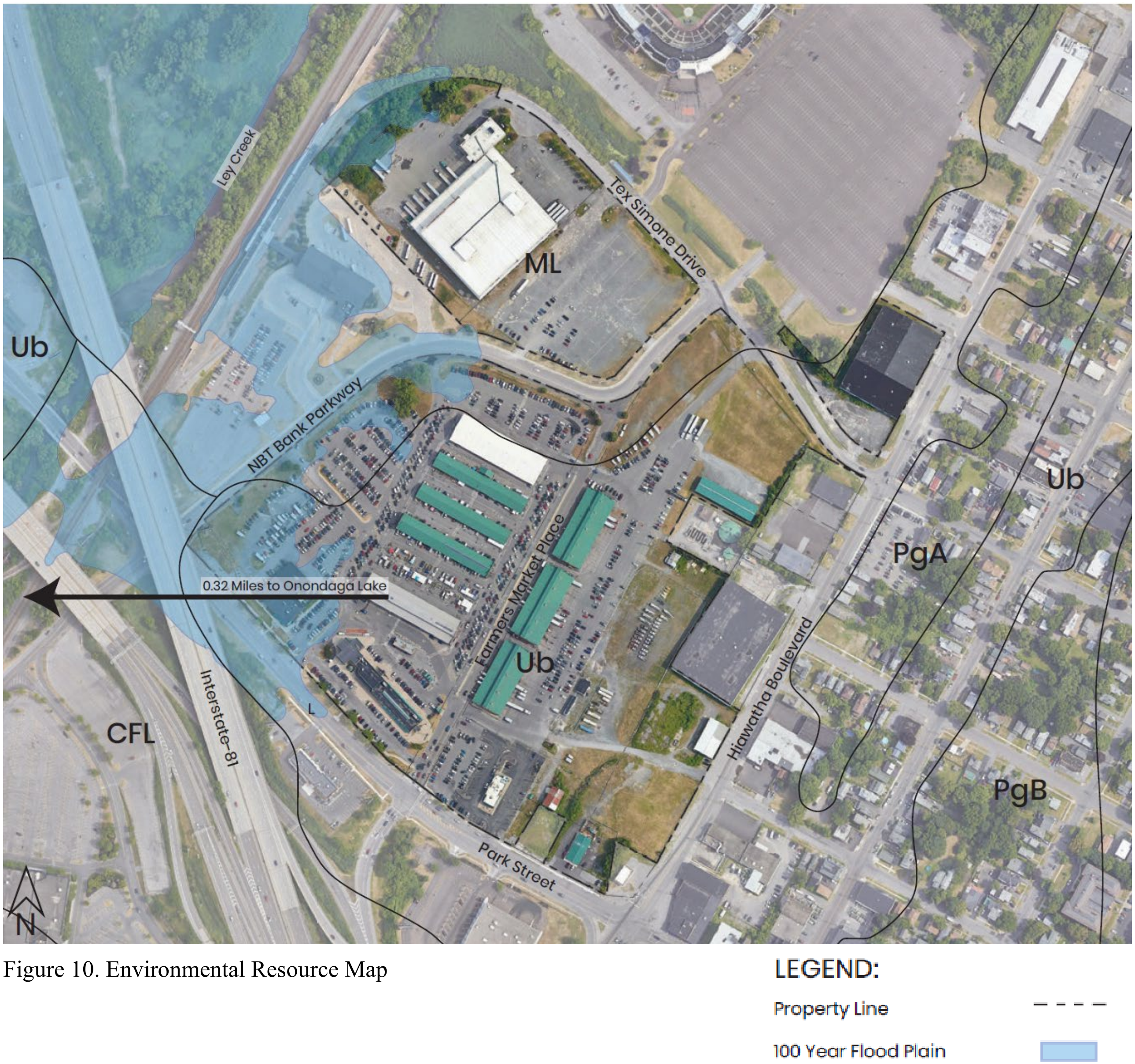

Figure 10. Environmental Resource Map

Site amenities

The figure labeled “Site Amenities Map” identifies current lighting, signage, seating, restrooms, and landscaping.

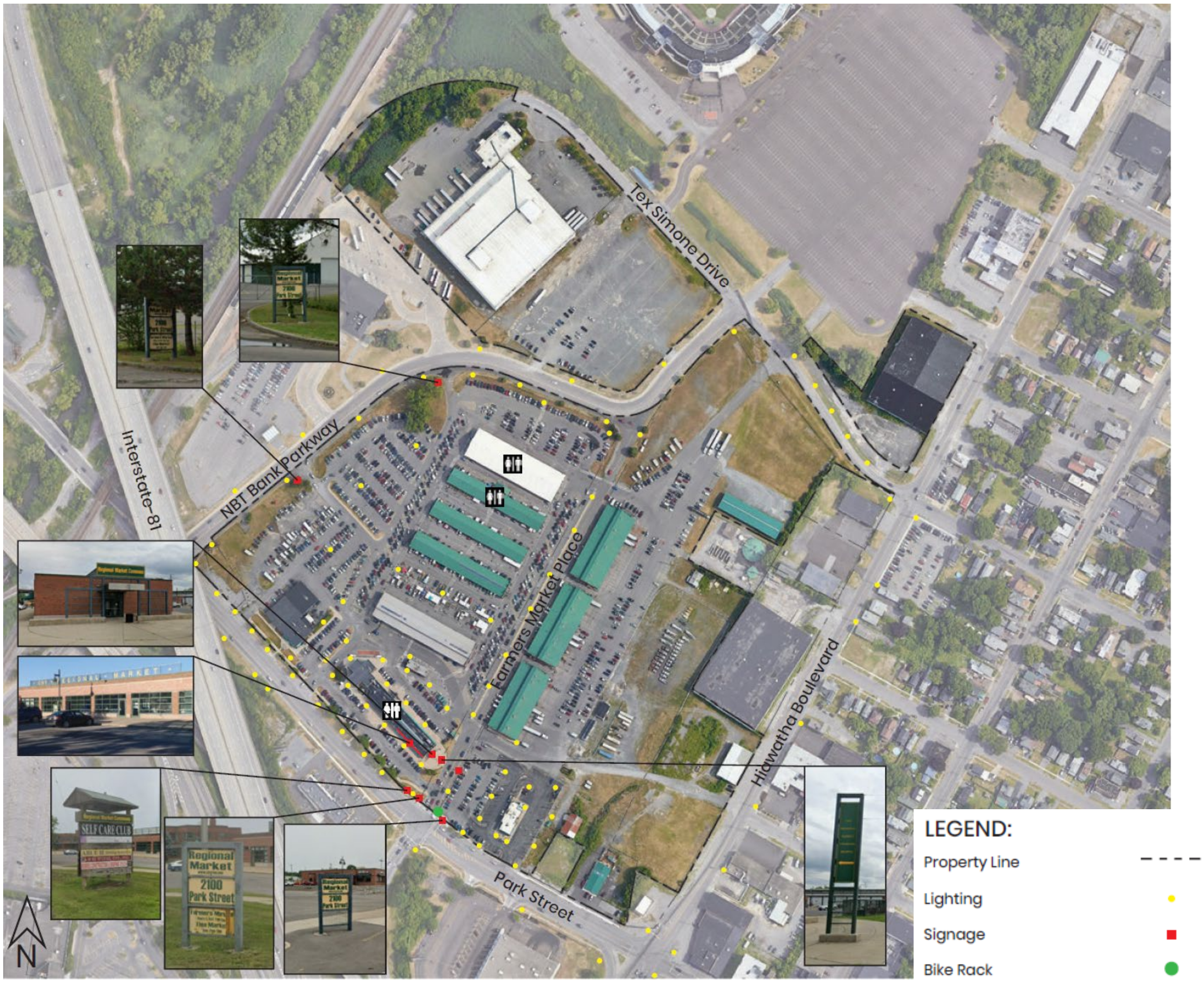

Figure 11. Site Amenities Map

➢ Seating

There is currently very limited seating around the Regional Market and no dedicated public places for eating. In the community internet survey, respondents were strongly in favor of adding tables and chairs to the Regional Market (the second most popular potential change to the Regional Market, following food truck events). In their open-ended final comments, respondents mentioned a variety of amenities, including wanting to see cafés, food courts, seating areas, and entertainment options.

- **Restrooms**

Public restrooms are located in the Market Commons and in the E and F Sheds. While heavily used, they were noted to be well maintained during multiple inspections by the consultant team. Neither customers nor vendors highlighted restrooms as problematic or needing improvements in the surveys or interviews.

- **Lighting**

There is a mix of area lighting around the campus. Some of the streetlights need to be upgraded with LED fixtures, which will substantially reduce power consumption.

- **Signage**

Signage at the entrances to the Regional Market can be described as basic. A roof sign on the Market Commons building is visible from Park Street and can be seen from the elevated I-81 overpass, but it is not prominent. At the Park Street entrance, there is a small yellow sign that says Regional Market but it is next to a larger green highway sign directing drivers to the bus and train station, stadium, and Destiny USA mall. The Regional Market would benefit from substantial signs at its major entrances, particularly at the Park Street and Farmers Market Place entrance.

A Market Commons directory ground sign, in fair condition, is located at the Farmers Market Place entrance. Modest business advertising signage for Regional Market commercial tenants is situated throughout the site.

A large I-81 billboard is located on Regional Market property on the unpaved parcel near Park Street and NBT Bank Parkway. The billboard owners pay rent to the Regional Market for this structure. Presumably the Regional Market could pay to advertise on this billboard if desired.

The Regional Market periodically uses an off-premise advertising billboard that is adjacent to the Market at 205 Hiawatha Boulevard East, in the block north of the Park Street intersection. See figure labeled “Off-premises sign on Hiawatha.”

Figure 12. I-81 Billboard on CNYRM property at Park St and NBT Bank Pkwy

Figure 13. Off premises sign on Hiawatha

➢ Landscaping

There is currently minimal landscaping around the Regional Market. Most of the site is pavement. There are small grassy areas and some mature trees along Park Street, around the Market Commons and the Market Diner, and along NBT Bank Parkway and Tex Simone Drive. The landscaping in some areas of the campus is overgrown and in disrepair. See the figure labeled "Park Street landscape near Wendy's."

Figure 14. Park Street landscape near Wendy's

Several concrete flower planters are located near the Welcome Center. While the flowers are attractive and provide welcome color, the planters have peeling paint. They are also interspersed with concrete barricades and sit atop faded crosswalks. See the figures labeled "Planters and barricades at Welcome Center" and "Flower planter."

Figure 15. Flower planter

Figure 16. Planters and barricades at Welcome Center

Security and fencing

Stakeholders identified some concerns with safety, including aggressive panhandlers and unhoused people sleeping on loading docks. Over the years, the Regional Market installed fences and gates throughout the property in an effort to enhance security. According to stakeholders, the fences do not prevent people from entering the property. Gaps in the bottom of gates can readily be breached. Some of the gates do not have locks.

Problematically, crosswalks and fences do not always align, particularly across Farmers Market Place, and limit access to parking across NBT Bank Parkway. One of the produce wholesalers noted that the fence along Farmers Market Place reduced the flow of customers and led to lower sales. As a result, the fences appear to divide spaces more than they provide security. See the figure labeled “Fence between sheds and Farmers Market Place.”

Figure 17. Fence between sheds and Farmers Market Place

Buildings assessment

The figure labeled "CNYRM Buildings" identifies the Regional Market's 20 distinct structures. The subsequent table labeled "CNYRM Building Inventory" includes each building's name, use, approximate year built (where known), gross and leased square footage:

Figure 18. CNYRM Buildings

Bldg #	Building ID	Use	Year Built (approx)	Gross SF	Leased SF
1	Commission-House-1	Food storage & distribution	1938	13,360	12,306
2	Commission-House-2	Food storage & distribution	1938	16,345	15,404
3	Commission-House-3	Food storage & distribution	1938	15,400	13,955
4	A-Shed	Vendor market	1938	21,350	-
5	C-Shed	Vendor market	1938	14,000	-
6	D-Shed	Vendor market	1938	12,685	-
7	E-Shed	Vendor market	1938	12,500	-
8	Admin/Retail	Offices, bank, and retail	1938	18,345	6,688
9	Service-Bldg	Welcome center & utilities service	1938	1,200	-
10	Diner/Retail-Bldg	Retaurant and grocery		11,300	11,052
11	F-Shed	Vendor market and events	2013	24,000	-
12	Commercial-Storage-Bldg	Storage	2001	8,800	5,328
13	301 Hiawatha	Office, community center, storage		5,000	5,000
14	Tractor-Barn	Storage		10,000	-
15	Guard-Shack	Vacant		212	-
16	Red-Storage-Bldg	Storage		1,000	-
17	513 Hiawatha	Warehouse	1955	50,500	-
A	Wendy's	Restaurant		3,086	3,086
B	Byrne	Food storage & distribution	1995	102,000	102,000
C	Regional_Poultry_Market	Halal poultry processing		3,200	3,200
Total				**344,283**	**178,019**

Table 2 – CNYRM Building Inventory

A member of the consultant team, Ryan Biggs Clark Davis, conducted an evaluation of the building structures and facades (their full report was provided to Onondaga County and CNYRMA under separate cover). The evaluation found that the buildings are generally in fair condition but require attention because there has been minimal maintenance over the years. If buildings change use, such as the Commission Houses, then they will likely require structural upgrades. Relevant information from their report is included in the sections that follow.

Retail sheds

Shed	Stalls
A	62
B	64
C	62
D	70
E	60
F	75
Total	**393**

The structural elements in the five sheds have some corrosion and many of the existing windows and doors are in poor condition. Recommended repairs include repairing damaged and cracked masonry, repointing the bricks, cleaning and coating street structures (particularly at their bases), and replacing doors and windows.

The five market sheds house the Farmers' Market and other retail market activity and operate three days per week. The F Shed is also used for private events. The total area of the five sheds is approximately 84,535 sf. Vendors also set up on the B Line, an open-air zone between the A and C sheds. The sheds provide a total of 393 stalls as summarized in the table and illustrated in the figure labeled "Shed Layouts."

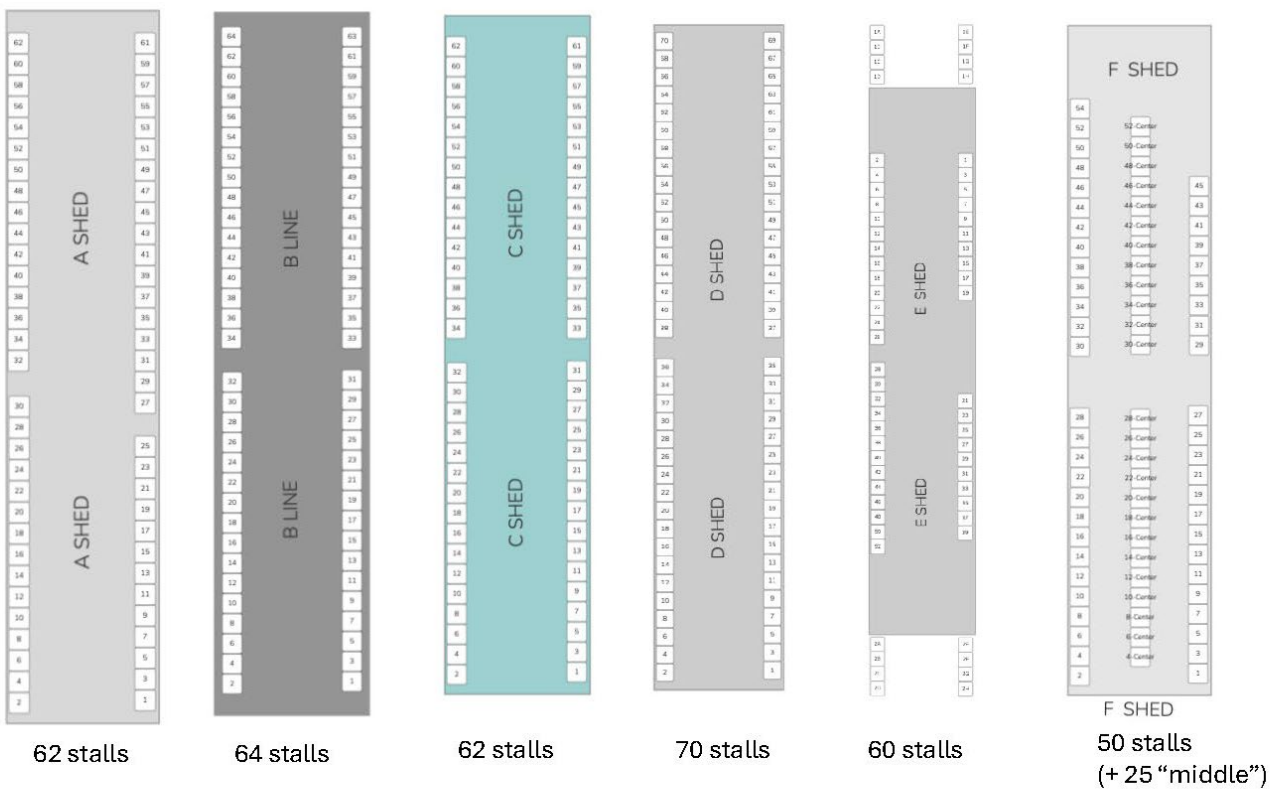

Figure 19. Shed Layouts

Discussions with Market staff, farmers and vendors, and respondents to the customer exit and community internet surveys identified various shortcomings of the sheds, including ADA accessibility, lack of heating, and inadequate lighting. Over time, the garage doors and entrance doors do not properly seal so the sheds feel drafty on cold days. The sheds do not have sufficient electrical capacity to meet the needs of vendors with electrical devices, so breakers are frequently tripped.

The table labeled “Shed Upgrades and Maintenance Needs,” developed collectively between Market management and the consultant team, identifies upgrade and maintenance needs for each of the sheds:

		Shed				
Category	Item	A	C	D	E	F
Structural	Brickwork, columns, foundations	Repair exterior brick & foundation; paint	Repair exterior brick & foundation; paint	n/a	Repair exterior brick & foundation	Treat columns for corrosion
Architectural	Doors & frames: entrance, garage/overhead	Replace entrance frames and doors; replace ALL overhead doors	Replace entrance frames and doors; explore roll-up garage doors with frames	n/a	Replace entrance frames and doors; replace ALL overhead doors	Repair overhead and entry doors
Architectural	Roof/gutters	Paint & re-seal roof				Determine plan for roof
Architectural	Slabs/foors	Reseal asphalt floor	Reseal asphalt floor	Reseal asphalt floor	Clean concrete floor	Paint concrete floor
Architectural	Restrooms, storage	n/a	n/a	n/a	Upgrade both bathrooms	Restore to original specs (2013)
Architectural	Painting	Paint all walls & beams	Paint all walls and steel structure	Paint all metal structures	Paint all interior and exterior	Interior painting
MEP	Electrical, solar, lighting	Repair & change lights	Upgrade lights as needed	Finish lighting upgrades, remove old lights	Upgrade lights as needed	Upgrade to LED lighting
MEP	AV/IT	Internet, cameras, audiospeakers, building control systems				
MEP	Fire protection/sprinkler	-	-	-	-	TBD
MEP	Heating/ventilation	Repair heating units; upgrade fans	Replace & repair existing heating units;	-	Repair as needed	Clean/repair heating units; address openings
Site	Resurfacing/striping	Restripe all floors				-
Identity	Signage	Design wayfinding system; install signage				

Table 3.Shed Upgrades and Maintenance Needs

Commission Houses

The three Commission Houses are original structures. In total, they have gross area of 45,105 sf, of which 41,665 sf (92%) is currently under lease to five tenants. All of the leases in the Commission Houses have one-year terms.

The buildings are rented by four produce distributors and one craft beer distributor. Due to their age and evolving food handling standards, regulatory requirements, and industry practices, the buildings have numerous deficiencies:

- Tenants have unconnected spaces in multiple buildings, sometimes requiring them to move products between buildings.
- There are multiple walk-in boxes within each space. Russo's Produce, for example, operates out of 16 different walk-ins, some as small as 200 sf.[15] Modern food safety rules require 18 inches of space around the cooler's perimeter, making these coolers even less efficient.
- Walk-in coolers are of inadequate height for modern racking systems and have wood elements, which is no longer permitted by food safety rules.
- Leaking roofs and windows.
- Sun through the clerestory windows creates excess heat and damages products.
- Inadequate electrical capacity leads to brownouts and challenges to adding more refrigeration or other equipment.

Figure 20. Commission House exterior and interior

15 Russo's total square footage for its 16 coolers is approximately 6,500 sf. The volume of this space, with eight food high ceilings, is 52,100 cubic ft. In a modern cooler with 25 foot high ceilings, the same volume is achieved with 2,100 sf or one-third of the area.

- Stormwater pools around the buildings.

This old infrastructure leads to various inefficiencies and food safety shortcomings. For example, the products within walk-ins sometimes must be fully emptied into unconditioned space when new deliveries arrive, adding to labor costs and breaks in the cold chain. Fulfilling customer orders can require retrieving products from various, non-contiguous locations, again driving up labor costs.

The produce wholesalers accommodate trucks of all sizes, from 53 ft trailers to vans and cars. Smaller buyers frequently pick up products from the front docks, while deliveries generally happen in the rear. The rear loading docks have been enclosed but are not fully cold chain compliant.

The wholesalers have improvised and adjusted their operations over the years to continue operating but the buildings create substantial liabilities, in some cases discouraging or preventing buyers from utilizing their services. The bottom line is that the produce wholesalers need new buildings if they are to remain on site.

Several independent produce distributors in Syracuse formerly operated at the Regional Market but departed because of inadequate facilities. The consultant team visited Andy's Produce and Syracuse Banana, which are located within blocks of the Regional Market and have more modern facilities, including cold-chain compliant docks and high ceiling, storage rack systems.

Market Commons

The Market Commons building includes ground floor retail spaces and public restrooms, and upper-level offices, including the CNYRMA offices. The gross area of Market Commons is 18,345 sf and about 6,700 sf is under lease.

Use of the Market Commons has changed over time. The produce wholesalers recall that a produce company operated out of the building for many years. The eastern side of the building was until recently a Mediterranean grocery store and café, which was the largest retail area at 3,200 sf. The space is currently vacant and being used by Market management for meetings and events.

The Market Commons has two long-time tenants: M&T Bank and a driving school. The bank has lease options that extend until October 31, 2035. Rents are fixed within each five-year term, without CPI or other annual increases. The leases for the cat café and the candy maker commenced on June 1, 2024 and extend for one year, without option terms.

The western side of the building is two stories high, with offices on the upper level. A portion of the building (the area over M&T Bank and the central lobby) was designed to accommodate an additional second story.

The retail spine of the building has skylights over the central hall. The skylights are leaking and require repair. The Ryan Biggs analysis found the need for brick repointing and replacement of doors and windows. The windows are original, single pane glass which do not meet modern performance standards.

Welcome Center/Electrical hub

The 1,200 sf Welcome Center building has two primary but unrelated purposes: customer service on the building's west side and the electrical hub for the entire campus on the east side. When Market management staff are in the Welcome Center, both customers and vendors can seek information there and interact with Market management.

The center is sometimes used for the distribution of Market tokens, which are used to facilitate the use of SNAP benefits by low-income customers (the role of SNAP and other food assistance programs are discussed in detail in the Demand Analysis section, below). Market management has found that the space does not function well, with SNAP recipients needing to queue outside, so this function is sometimes shifted to the F Shed or to vacant space in the Market Commons.

As discussed above, National Grid recommends replacing the existing and outdated electrical service, which currently feeds into the welcome center before being distributed around the campus, with direct feeds from various points on the periphery of the campus.

Diner/Grocery

This building contains the 3,500 sf Market Diner, which opened in 1974 and operates daily. The current lease commenced in November 2021 and option terms extend through October 2041. Rents increase annually by the consumer price index.

Next to the Market Diner is the Middle East Grocer, which opened in 2024 and occupies 7,800 sf. This store replaced a longtime tenant named Buba's Meat & Produce. The lease extends for ten years and has two five-year renewal terms, stretching to May 31, 2044. Rents increase by the CPI each year.

Regional Poultry Market

Halal Regional Fresh Poultry Market operates a 3,200 sf halal slaughtering and butchering facility at the Regional Market. Customers can select live poultry (chicken, turkey, ducks) and small ruminants (lamb, goats) and they are processed while the customer waits. The business principally serves the region's diverse Muslim population.

The lease began on June 1, 2018 and runs for ten years, with two five-year option terms. The rent schedule includes annual increases (although at decreasing amounts) between years one and five, no increase between years five and six, and then a substantial decrease between years six and seven.

The owner of the Poultry Market has proposed a plan to expand the facility to include a Middle Eastern grocery and café with an additional 8,000 sf, plus an adjacent parking lot of 50 spaces.

301 Hiawatha Boulevard East

301 Hiawatha Boulevard East houses the offices of Morris Construction, an independent contractor, and a 3,655 sf community center/event space that is operated by the owner of Morris Construction for the benefit of the community. The Regional Market does not collect rent on the community center space. In turn, the space is provided without charge to community groups for

meetings and at nominal cost for parties and events. The lower level of this structure has storage space that is used by the Regional Market.

Commercial and CNYRM storage

The Regional Market built an 8,800 sf storage building as part of renovations in 2001 in the northeast corner of the campus, next to the County's water treatment facility. The Regional Market currently leases about 5,200 square feet to eight tenants and uses some of the space for its own storage.

Several other small storage structures appear to date from the Regional Market's founding and are deteriorated and well beyond their useful life.

Byrne Dairy warehouse

The Byrne Dairy frozen warehouse facility is located on the northern edge of the Regional Market campus, with a footprint of about 102,000 sf. The building was constructed in the 1990s and the land lease is held by the New York Job Development Authority, which in turn leases it to Byrne Dairy. The tenant conducts its own maintenance and operating activities.

According to the facility manager, the warehouse can hold over 11,000 pallets and items are stored on seven-high racks. From Mondays through Thursdays, approximately 1,500 pallets move through the facility each day (each semi delivers 18 to 24 pallets). Up to 60 semi-trailer trucks arrive on Mondays, sometimes leading to back-ups along Tex Simone Drive.

The site is separated from the main Regional Market campus by NBT Bank Parkway. Operationally, the warehouse does not interact with any of the other functions of the Regional Market. As seen in the figure labeled "Byrne Dairy Freezer View from NBT Bank Pkwy," the warehouse does not have any signage or windows facing the Regional Market, making it feel completely unrelated even though it plays an important role in distributing food from agricultural sources in the region.

Figure 21. Byrne Dairy Freezer View from NBT Bank Pkwy

513 Hiawatha Boulevard East warehouse

CYNRMA purchased this 50,500 square foot warehouse at 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East in 2020. An interior wall separates the space into two areas, plus an office zone. The building site and layout make truck access difficult. The building has been vacant since 2022 following the departure of Syracuse Public Schools because of the leaking roof.

According to a detailed study by VIP Architectural Associates in January 2024, the warehouse was likely built in the 1950s. Based on their cost estimating, VIP identified repairs that total $3.2 million, not including soft costs.

Wendy's

The Wendy's fast-food chain is located next to the Regional Market's entrance on Park Street. The building occupies about 3,100 sf. Their current lease commenced in 2002 and its option terms extend to 2047.

Governance and Operations Review

The governance and operations review describes how the Regional Market Authority currently functions and identifies key areas for improvement.

Mission

The mission statement is meant to provide high-level guidance to CNYRMA board and staff members as they set strategic directions, determine policies, and operate the Regional Market each day. To be effective, the mission statement must be clear to both the Regional Market's leaders and to its stakeholders, including vendors, tenants, shoppers, and the community. The mission statement is also important to potential donors, including foundations, who want to know if the organization's purpose aligns with their funding priorities.

CNYRMA's establishing legislation does not directly identify the purpose of the organization. Under Section 828 Powers of the board, the statute states that the board may exercise the power of the authority "to the end that there may be constructed, equipped and operated adequate regional marketing facilities within the district for the buying and selling of farm produce and any and all other businesses which reasonably tend to serve the public in connection with that business or make it more convenient, efficient, profitable or successful."[16] This sentence suggests that the primary purpose of the CNY Regional Market is to operate marketing facilities for farmers within the seven-county district.

As stated on the Regional Market's website: "The mission of the Authority is to provide facilities, programs and services to promote opportunities for Agriculture and commerce in Central New York and to specifically serve the counties of Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and Wayne County."[17]

The existing mission statement includes the Regional Market's important role in serving regional agriculture but does not mention its roles in supporting the community, particularly for food access, as a welcoming public gathering space, and a center of entrepreneurship.

The consultant team recommends a more expansive mission to include a focus on both agriculture and community.

> **"The mission of the Central New York Regional Market is to support the distribution, production, and marketing of foods from Central New York while preserving a unique and vibrant public space that welcomes and serves the entire community."**

The Regional Market's leadership and key stakeholders should grapple with the mission statement, rewording as needed to ensure it meets their vision and needs, while also being both useful and inspirational. Once the CNYRMA Board has adopted a mission statement, it should

16 https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/PBA/828
17 https://www.cnyregionalmarket.org/about-the-market

be utilized to inform decision-making at all levels of the organization. Facility investments, leasing, programs, and partnerships should all align with the mission. Activities that do not align with the mission should generally not be pursued.

Vision statement

The vision statement is intended to offer an aspirational idea of what the Regional Market can be following implementation of the revitalization strategies. Under the guidance of the consulting team, the following vision was jointly created by the participants at the Regional Market Summit in October 2024. A detailed report about the summit is found in Appendix D.

> **"We envision a thriving community destination where people of all backgrounds connect through food, celebrate cultural diversity, and support a circular food system. By empowering farmers, expanding access to fresh, affordable products, and fostering a healthy environment, we aim to set a new standard for community-centered, sustainable market spaces."**

Governance

The Regional Market's governance structure and its capabilities impact the ability to make changes to the Regional Market and raise capital for improvements.[18] According to the state public authorities law, the CNYRMA is governed by a 13-member board of directors.[19] One member is the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (or the commissioner's representative) and the other twelve are selected by the board of supervisors of each participating county, according to the following schedule:

- Onondaga County: three members
- Oswego County: two members
- Madison County: two members
- Cayuga County: two members
- Cortland County: one member
- Oneida County: one member
- Wayne County: one member

According to the consultants' reading of the legislation, the first member appointed from each county does not need to be a farmer, while any others from that county are required to derive the greater part of their income from farming and sell at least part of their produce at the Regional Market. This means that at least five of the thirteen members are required to be farmers selling at the Regional Market.

Board members do not have terms but rather serve as long as determined by their appointing body. Following a hearing, the governor may remove any member for "inefficiency, neglect of duty or misconduct in office." Members do not receive any compensation but may be reimbursed

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18 This review and analysis of the governance structure of CNYRMA are based on the consultants' reading of the legislation and do not constitute a legal opinion or determination of the organization's legal powers and limitations.
19 New York Public Authorities Law Title 2 – Central New York Regional Market Authority

for expenses they incur.

Key elements of the legislation include:

- Perpetual existence.
- The power to acquire real estate through eminent domain or otherwise.
- The ability to incur debts, liabilities and obligations.
- The ability to issue bonds with up to 30-year terms, with up to six percent annual interest.
- To determine the location, type, size, construction and equipment of regional marketing facilities within the district for the buying and selling of farm produce and any and all other businesses which reasonably tend to serve the public.
- Exemption from all property taxation.
- The ability to exercise all powers reasonably necessary for accomplishing its purposes.

In June 2024, the State Legislature passed amendments to the authorizing legislation which expanded the Board of Directors by four seats to 17 members, required enhanced reporting and oversight by the State Comptroller and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and included a code of ethics. Two of the four new board members are appointed by the County Executive of Onondaga County and two by the Mayor of Syracuse. The legislation was signed by the Governor in December 2024.

The board meets monthly. Minutes from each board meeting are posted on the Regional Market's web site.

Board committees include:

- Executive
- Ethics
- Personnel/Nominating
- Finance
- Governance
- Audit

Vendor markets

Wholesale farmers' market

For much of its history, the Regional Market had a wholesale farmers' market, where regional farmers sold directly to wholesale buyers in the early morning hours. Many of these buyers were independent farmstand operators (who supplemented what their farm might harvest with other local farmers' products), independent grocers, and the produce distributors operating from the Commission Houses.

According to a CNYRMA board member, the wholesale farmers' market operated on the B Line but ceased operations in the 1990s. Several factors likely contributed to the disbandment of the wholesale farmers' market at the Regional Market. Stakeholders identified a drop in the number of farmstands throughout the region, as well as the growth of well-run produce auctions. As discussed in the Competitive and Trend Analysis section below, the recent Economic Census found that Onondaga County has only 23 specialty food stores with aggregate sales under $20 million, a much smaller fraction of total sales compared to the national average, so there are few independent retail businesses that might buy from a wholesale farmers' market.

Around the country, restaurateurs have become increasingly interested in sourcing locally grown foods for their menus and some chefs regularly purchase directly from farmers at farmers' markets. While it is important to encourage and facilitate restaurant buyers to purchase local foods, the consultant team did not find evidence of sufficient demand to reinstate the early morning, wholesale farmers' market at the Regional Market.

Retail markets

The retail farmers' market operates year-round at the Regional Market but the number of vendors fluctuates substantially during the year. To address these fluctuations, the Regional Market divides the year into three different retail vendor seasons:

- **Growers Season, May – October**
- **Holiday Season, November – December**
- **Winter Season, January – April**

Retail vendor markets operate on Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 7 am to 2 pm as follows:

- **Saturday Farmers' Market** operates during all three seasons (year-round). During the Winter Season, when there are fewer participating farmers and other food vendors, the Regional Market adds flea market vendors and a community garage sale on Saturdays to the E and F sheds since space is available.
- **Sunday Flea Market** operates during the Growers and Holiday Seasons.
- **Thursday Farmers' Market** operates only during the Growers Season.

Stalls are assigned to vendors based on seniority and may be rented as follows:

- **Seasonal vendors rent space for an entire Market season.**
- **Day vendors rent space by the day if available.**

Vendors fall within five categories, as described in this text from the 2024 Vendor Handbook:[20]

- **Farmers shall mean any person who, as principal or agent, is actually engaged in the business of growing, raising and/or making products,[21] and selling only those products grown or produced themselves.**
- **Dealers shall mean any person who buys New York State and out-of-state products and commodities for resale on the Market.**

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20 2024 Vendor Handbook

21 Products are defined as any and all fruits, vegetables, poultry, meats and meat products, eggs, general dairy products, plants, cut flowers, pets, food products and/or crafts, ice products, grown, raised and/or made in New York State only.

- **Commercial shall mean any person selling products that they did not solely produce, with the exclusion of agricultural or agriculturally related items, on the Saturday/Thursday Farmers' Market.**
- **Prepared food vendor shall mean any person selling prepared food for consumption on the Market.**
- **Flea Market vendor shall mean any person selling only non-consumable items on the Sunday Flea Market.**

Customers who participated in the exit survey expressed frustration that they could not identify which vendors were bona fide farmers and which were dealers. The Regional Market used to have signs that hung above each stall and indicated which vendor fell into which category. Some farmers provide their own signage.

The Regional Market has begun to utilize Marketspread software for site management. Fully implemented, the program includes stall location and allows customers to find where vendors are located in the Regional Market. It also provides the opportunity for vendor descriptions. This software is also used by Rochester Public Market and Detroit Eastern Market.

Saturday Farmers' Market

The Saturday Farmers' Market is the most popular retail market. During the Growers Season in 2024, 327 of the 393 stalls within the sheds and outdoor B Line were rented by seasonal vendors. Most of these stalls (73%) were used by farmers.

Most of the vendors selling on Saturdays during the Growers Season are farmers. Farmers represent 130 of the 167 (78%) licensed vendors, while dealers and commercial vendors each represent 11%.

Vendors typically rent either one stall (97 or 58%) or two stalls (36 or 22%). There were 30 vendors who rented three to six stalls. Four vendors rented more than six stalls (one each renting 7, 9, 12, and 16 stalls).

There is limited prepared food available under the sheds. The Market rents two in-place shipping containers for prepared food sales (essentially stationary food trucks) in the C Shed and there are two wooden structures with prepared foods in the D Shed. See the figure labeled "Food service container," which shows a hot

Figure 22. Food service container

dog vendor. Customers and vendors both mentioned the need for more prepared foods in the Regional Market, as well as tables and chairs for eating.

Sunday Flea Market

The Sunday Flea Market, which operates throughout the year, includes predominantly used and mass merchandise items, with a small amount of fresh food sold by produce dealers.

Most of the vendors selling on Sundays in 2024 during the Growers Season were classified as flea vendors, representing 39 of the 49 (80%) licensed vendors. There were eight commercial vendors, one dealer, and one information vendor.

Seasonal vendors on Sundays rent between one and four stalls, with the vast majority (84%) renting one stall.

Thursday Farmers' Market

The Thursday Farmers' Market, which only operates during the Growers Season, is much less busy than the Saturday Farmers' Market. In 2024, 16 farmers with seasonal permits used a total of 52 stalls, and seven dealers and one commercial vendor used a total of 30 stalls.

Vendors who sell on both Saturdays and Thursdays believe it is important that they occupy the same stalls on both days so their customers know where to find them. Because fewer vendors sell on Thursdays, the vendors are spread out throughout the sheds with many empty stalls between them. These large gaps diminish the shopping experience for customers.

Vendor referral program

The Regional Market recently launched a vendor referral program to encourage current vendors to recruit additional vendors. Referrals lead to a $25 credit toward a Holiday License.

Site management

The Market is operated by a professional staff including executive, administrative, marketing, maintenance, and buildings and grounds personnel. The Market contracts with Onondaga County for security services. According to information provided by Market management about reporting relationships, the figure labeled "CNYRMA Organizational Chart" show the organizational structure, although the two buildings and grounds staff and the night watchman currently report to both the Market Manager and the CEO.

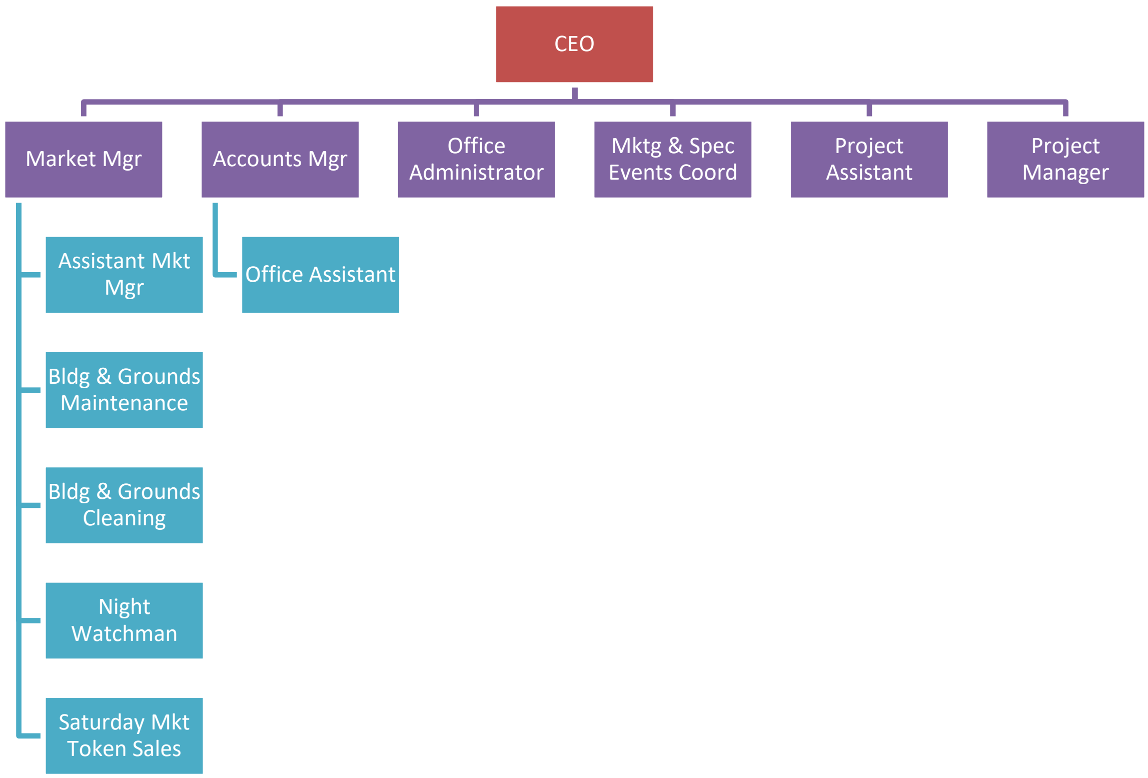

Figure 23. CNYRMA Organizational Chart

Marketing

The Regional Market employs a full-time marketing & special events coordinator.

The marketing budget for FY25 is $50,000. The largest expenses are advertising on Spectrum TV ($24,000), digital ads on Meta ($6,600), and sponsorship of the Onondaga County Agriculture Council's On Farm Fest ($2,500). Musicians for four events are budgeted at $2,000 and signage is $1,500. As of September 2024, nearly $12,000 of the fiscal year's budget had not yet been allocated.

The Regional Market recently initiated a monthly newsletter called The Market Messenger.

The customer exit survey and other recent research and studies provide valuable baseline data to understand current and potential customers. As part of the dot voting exercise with

Regional Market vendors (described in the "Vendor input on strategies" section, below), vendors who participated on Saturday ranked enhanced marketing as their second highest priority, while Sunday vendors ranked marketing in the top five among the twelve strategies.

Tenant brand identity

The consultant team analyzed the Regional Market's leasehold businesses from a financial perspective and in terms of how their function and brand identity either supports or detracts from the Regional Market's brand identity as a fresh food market and its mission to support regional farming and the community. For this analysis, each existing use was considered based on the following four categories:

1. The tenant directly reflects the Regional Market's mission and brand identify.
2. The tenant provides goods or services useful for the core, mission-related businesses at the Regional Market.
3. The tenant does not have a direct brand relationship but its brand or its visibility does not conflict or undermine the Regional Market's brand.
4. The tenant has a conflicting brand identity.

The table labeled "Brand Identity Analysis" summarizes the review. The only business that has a conflicting brand identity is Wendy's, since a corporate, fast-food restaurant undermines the Regional Market's brand as a place for healthy, local foods. Since Wendy's has a long term lease, strategies will be considered for isolating this property from the Regional Market both physically and from a marketing perspective to minimize this conflict.

Tenant	Location	Reinforces brand	Serves core businesses	Does not undermine	Conflicting brand
Community center	301 Hiawatha Blvd E		X		
Food distributors	Commission Houses	X			
Middle East Grocer	Diner/Retail Building	X			
Market Diner	Diner/Retail Building		X		
Bank	Market Commons		X		
Candy producer	Market Commons	X			
Coffee/tea	Market Commons	X			
Driving school	Market Commons			X	
Wendy's	Stand alone				X
Regional Poultry Market	Stand alone	X			
Byrne Dairy Warehouse	Stand alone	X			

Table 4. Brand Identity Analysis

Mobile market

The Regional Market operates a mobile market, which entails buying fresh produce from Regional Market farmers and transporting it via a van to the Syracuse Downtown Farmers' Market and the Northeast Community Center where it is offered for sale.

Financial Analysis of Current Operations

Income

The consultant team reviewed the Regional Market's 2023 Audit, which included financial information for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023 (FY23) and the previous fiscal year (FY22), as well as unaudited information provided by Market management for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024 (FY24) and projections for FY25. Besides the FY25 projections, this financial information pre-dates the change in executive leadership, which occurred on July 1, 2024.

Most of the Regional Market's income comes from rents (87% for FY24), split between commercial rents on buildings & land and fees paid by vendors for the retail markets. Other sources of income include reimbursements for utilities and other items, and interest income.

The table labeled "CNYRMA Revenue FY22-FY24" shows income over three fiscal years and the change in income between FY22 and FY24. Total income in FY24 equaled $1.77 million, a drop by 10% (over $200,000) from FY22. Rent revenue from the retail markets stayed very stable during this three-year period, with a (positive) fluctuation of only 1.0%. The largest change by far between the two years was the substantial drop in commercial rents, which fell over 28%. Another substantial change occurred with interest income, which grew from about $29,000 to over $76,000.

Revenue CNYRMA	FY2022		FY2023		FY2024		FY24-FY22	
	FY2022	% income	FY2023	% income	FY2024	% Income	Delta $	Delta %
Rent Revenue - Buildings & Land	929,268	47%	733,458	40%	666,085	38%	(263,183)	-28.3%
Rent Revenue - Retail Market	856,984	43%	862,518	47%	865,846	49%	8,862	1.0%
Utilities	82,755	4%	60,549	3%	73,511	4%	(9,244)	-11.2%
Interest Income	29,091	1%	37,069	2%	76,313	4%	47,222	162.3%
Truck Delivery	13,411	1%	12,605	1%	8,515	0%	(4,896)	-36.5%
Promotional Leases & Sales	12,904	1%	65,813	4%	23,853	1%	10,949	84.8%
Reimbursements	31,113	2%	39,105	2%	31,592	2%	479	1.5%
Miscellaneous	15,502	1%	16,059	1%	22,263	1%	6,761	43.6%
Total income	1,971,028	100%	1,827,176	100%	1,767,978	100%	(203,050)	-10.3%

Table 5. CNYRMA Revenue FY22-FY24

Commercial buildings & land rents

In FY22, commercial rents on buildings and land were the largest contributor to income, with 47% of the total income at $929,268. By FY24, commercial rents had dropped by over $260,000 to $666,085, or 38% of total income. This decrease was principally due to the departure of Syracuse Public Schools renting the warehouse at 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East and the departure of the Mediterranean grocer & cafe from Market Commons. The warehouse remains empty and is being sold, while the grocer & cafe space has been refurbished and is leasable or can be put to other income producing use.

Market management expects commercial rents to be higher in FY25 but still well below the FY22 level. According to information provided by Market management, the commercial rent roll as of November 2024 is $799,210, a 20% increase from FY24. About one-quarter of this is income from land leases and three-quarters from commercial leases.

Annual commercial rents per square foot across the campus range from $5.63 for storage buildings to nearly $21 for prime space in the Market Commons.

The Regional Market leases 41,655 sf in the Commission Houses to produce wholesalers and one specialty food business. Russo Produce occupies the most area, with 13,212 sf, followed by Guinta Produce with 12,800 sf.

Rents in the Commission Houses are set at $7.00 per sf. Based on a review of available warehouses in and near Syracuse, area warehouse rents range from about $6.00 to $14.00 per sf.[22] There is large variation in the age, size, condition, location, and functionality of these properties.

Rents in Market Commons range from about $13.00 to $21.00 per sf and average $16.50.

Two businesses (Byrne Dairy and Wendy's) have land leases, with those tenants required to maintain their own buildings and pay all associated costs. CNYRMA classifies the Regional Fresh Poultry Market as a land lease although the landlord is required to maintain the building's shell, which makes it more like a typical commercial lease. Annual rents from these three leases in FY25 equal $208,540.

As a public authority, the Regional Market's property is exempt from property tax, providing significant value to businesses located on the Regional Market.

Retail market rents

The figure labeled "CNYRM Retail Markets Income FY15-FY25" shows rental income from the Saturday, Thursday, and Sunday Markets and Food & Beverage ("F&B") vendors for each year from FY15 through FY25.

Income from the Saturday Market held fairly steady between FY15 and FY21, averaging about $530,000 per year. In the following four years, annual income averaged $651,000. Over the full 11-year period, revenue from Saturday operations increased at a compound annual rate of 2.7%, rising from $520,543 in FY15 to expected gross revenue of $699,396 in FY25. Inflation over this period is also 2.7%, so revenue for Saturday operations at the Regional Market has essentially kept up with inflation, neither growing nor shrinking.

The Sunday Flea Market and Thursday Farmers' Market, by contrast, experienced a substantial drop in revenue during the pandemic (FY21). In the six years prior to the pandemic, Sunday Flea Market annual rent revenue to the Regional Market was essentially flat, with average annual rent at $247,500. Income plummeted by 39% in FY21 and rebounded somewhat the next year but has stayed flat at an average of $192,000 per year in the four years between FY22 and FY25. Flea market vendors told the consultant team that there are fewer customers, sales have dropped, and therefore a number of vendors have stopped coming to the Regional

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22 Syracuse, NY Industrial Space For Lease - CityFeet accessed on 11/27/2024

Market. Flea market vendors expressed concern about the rental rates considering decreased sales.

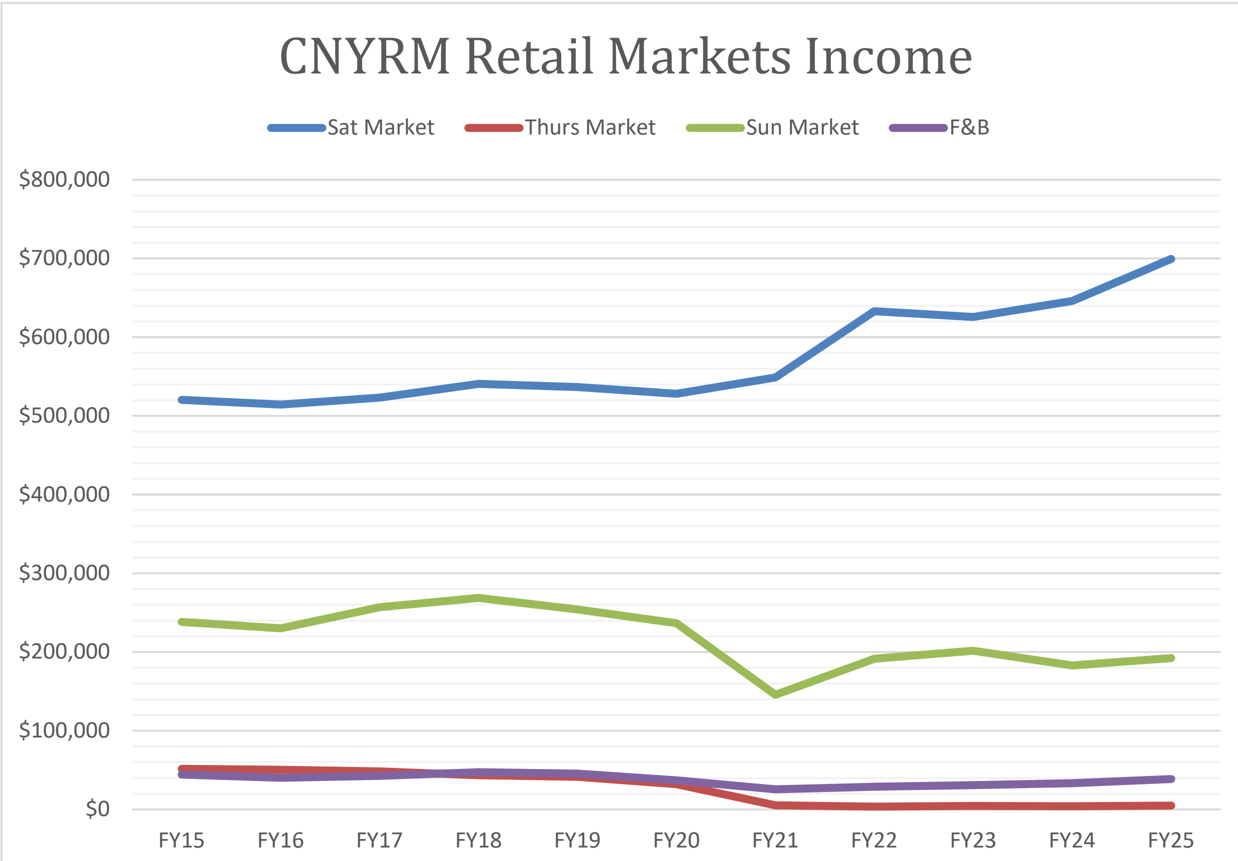

Figure 24. CNYRM Retail Markets Income FY15-FY25

Income from the Thursday Farmers' Market has almost disappeared. Between FY15 and FY20, Thursdays provided CNYRMA with revenue of about $45,000 per year. This was less than 9% of Saturday revenues but still a meaningful albeit small contribution to income. Since then, revenue has averaged less than $4,500 per year. The drop in revenue coincides with CNYRMA's decision to make Thursdays free for vendors who purchase seasonal Saturday licenses, so the number of vendors is not necessarily as weak as the revenue, but the Thursday Farmers' Market is still a small fraction of the Saturday operation.

F&B income has grown at a nearly 9% rate in the past five years but has averaged only about $31,500 during this period, after peaking at $47,309 in FY18.

As shown in the table labeled "Vendor Rents FY24," farmers represented the largest share of rents in FY24, at 42%, followed by dealers at 26% and flea market vendors at 21%. The food vendors represent only 4% of income.

Stall fees vary between the market, season, and vendor type. The table labeled "Seasonal Rates per Stall FY25 by Vendor Type" shows the rates charged in FY25 for vendors who rent a space for the season.

Row Labels	Sum of FY24 $	Sum of FY24 %
Commercial	67,987	7.9%
Dealer	221,794	25.6%
Farmer	360,160	41.6%
Flea	182,739	21.1%
Food	33,166	3.8%
Grand Total	**865,846**	**100.0%**

Table 6. Vendor Rents FY24

Seasonal Rates per Stall							
Retail Market	Season	Farmers	Commercial	Dealers	Prep food	Flea Market	Food Truck
Saturday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	$ 1,035	$ 1,515	$ 2,353	$ 5,535	$ -	$ 3,300
	Holiday (Nov-Dec)*	$ 220	$ 385	$ 540	$ 1,730	$ -	$ 1,100
	Winter (Jan-Apr)*	$ 441	$ 763	$ 992	$ 1,392	$ -	$ 2,200
Sunday Flea Market	Growers (May-Oct)					$ 1,110	$ 2,200
	Holiday (Nov-Dec)*					$ 271	$ 650
	Winter (Jan-Apr)*					$ 372	
Thursday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	$ 405	$ 540	$ 945	$ 1,785	$ -	$ 1,650
	Rates vary by location for holiday and winter markets; averages shown						

Table 7. Seasonal Rates per Stall FY25 by Vendor Type

Farmers pay the lowest rates, reflecting their centrality to the Regional Market's mission to support regional agriculture. For example, during the Growers Season, farmers pay $1,035 for a stall while dealers pay more than twice that amount ($2,353) and prepared food vendors pay more than five times more ($5,535). Since there are typically 26 Saturdays in the six-month Growers Season, the seasonal fee reflects $39.81 per stall per day for farmers and $90.50 per stall per day for dealers.

During the Growers Season, stall rates are the same for each of the sheds. During the other two seasons, the rates vary by shed, with the A and F sheds commanding higher fees. To reduce the complexity of these various charges for presentation purposes, the seasonal rates per stall in the table shows the average stall fee among the various locations.

For farmers, annual fees at the Regional Market are about the same as fees paid at the Rochester Public Market. If a farmer rents a stall year-round (all three seasons), the fee at the Regional Market is about $1,700. In FY24, the fee for a year-round stall for farmers at the Rochester Public Market was $1,600.

The table labeled “CNYRM Growers Season Stall Rate Differentials FY24” shows how much more the other vendors pay during the Saturday and Thursday Farmers’ Markets compared to the farmers. For example, commercial vendors pay 46% more than farmers during the Growers Season, while dealers pay 127% more.

Differential compared to farmers as base							
Seasonal Rates per Stall							
Retail Market	Season	Farmers	Commercial	Dealers	Prep food	Flea Market	Food Truck
Saturday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	0%	46%	127%	435%		219%
	Holiday (Nov-Dec)*	0%	75%	145%	686%		400%
	Winter (Jan-Apr)*	0%	73%	125%	216%		399%
Thursday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	0%	33%	133%	341%		307%

Table 8. CNYRM Growers Season Stall Rate Differentials FY24

The table labeled “CNYRM Daily Rates per Stall FY25” show the rates charged in FY25 for day vendors. For example, farmers pay $80 per day while dealers pay $90. While farmers still pay the lowest daily rate, there is a much smaller differential compared to the other vendors. As shown in the table labeled “CNYRM Daily Stall Rates Differentials,” commercial vendors pay only 6% more during the Growers Season, while dealers pay 13% more.

Daily Rates per Stall							
Retail Market	Season	Farmers	Commercial	Dealers	Prep food	Flea Market	Food Truck
Saturday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	$ 80	$ 85	$ 90	$ -	$ -	$ 165
	Holiday (Nov-Dec)*	$ 60	$ 70	$ 75	$ -	$ -	$ 155
	Winter (Jan-Apr)*	$ 60	$ 70	$ 75	$ -	$ -	$ 155
Sunday Flea Market	Growers (May-Oct)					$ 65	$ 75
	Holiday (Nov-Dec)*					$ 63	$ 35
	Winter (Jan-Apr)*					$ 44	
Sunday Community Garage Sale	Growers (May-Oct)					$ 80	
Thursday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	$ 55	$ 65	$ 70	$ -	$ -	$ 75
	Rates vary by location for holiday and winter markets; averages shown						

Table 9. CNYRM Daily Stall Rates FY25

Differential compared to farmers as base							
Daily Rates per Stall							
Retail Market	Season	Farmers	Commercial	Dealers	Prep food	Flea Market	Food Truck
Saturday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	0%	6%	13%			106%
	Holiday (Nov-Dec)*	0%	17%	25%			158%
	Winter (Jan-Apr)*	0%	17%	25%			158%
Thursday Farmers' Market	Growers (May-Oct)	0%	18%	27%			36%

Table 10. CNYRM Daily Stall Rates Differentials

As CNYRMA considers changes to stall fees in the future, it should explore a more consistent method for differentiating between fees paid by farmers and the other groups. At present, the amount paid by dealers for a single day ($90) is less than the average amount they pay on a seasonal basis ($90.50), where typically there is a premium for paying for a single day.

Fees increase each year, although not consistently. The figure labeled "CNYRM Seasonal Fees By Vendor Category FY16-FY25" shows that during the ten-year period between FY15 and FY24 fees increased at an average rate of 5.0% per year for farmers, 5.1% for commercial, 6.0% for dealers, and 3.7% for food vendors. As a benchmark, annual inflation during this period was 3.24%.

The chart labeled "% Change in Rents from Previous Year FY16-FY25" shows a spike in rates that occurred in FY21 and then a number of substantial increases in the past three years.

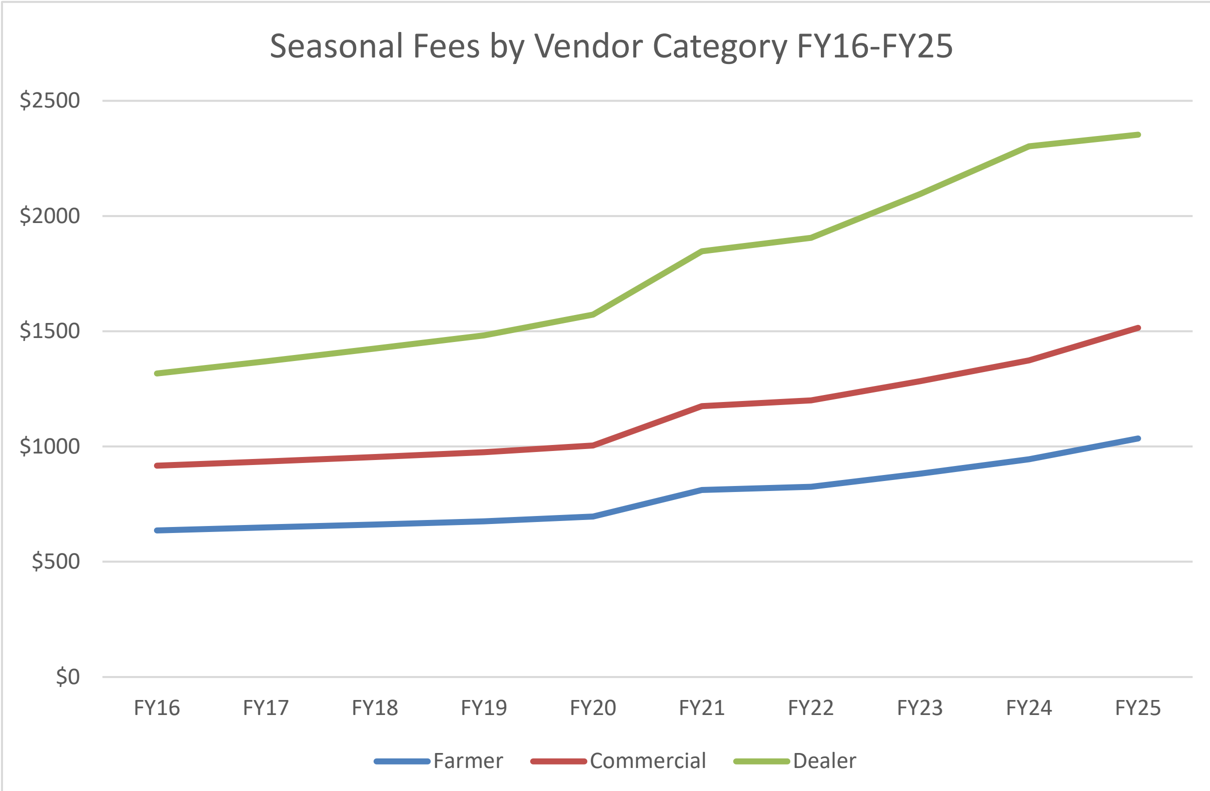

Figure 25. CNYRM Seasonal Fees by Vendor Category FY16 – FY25

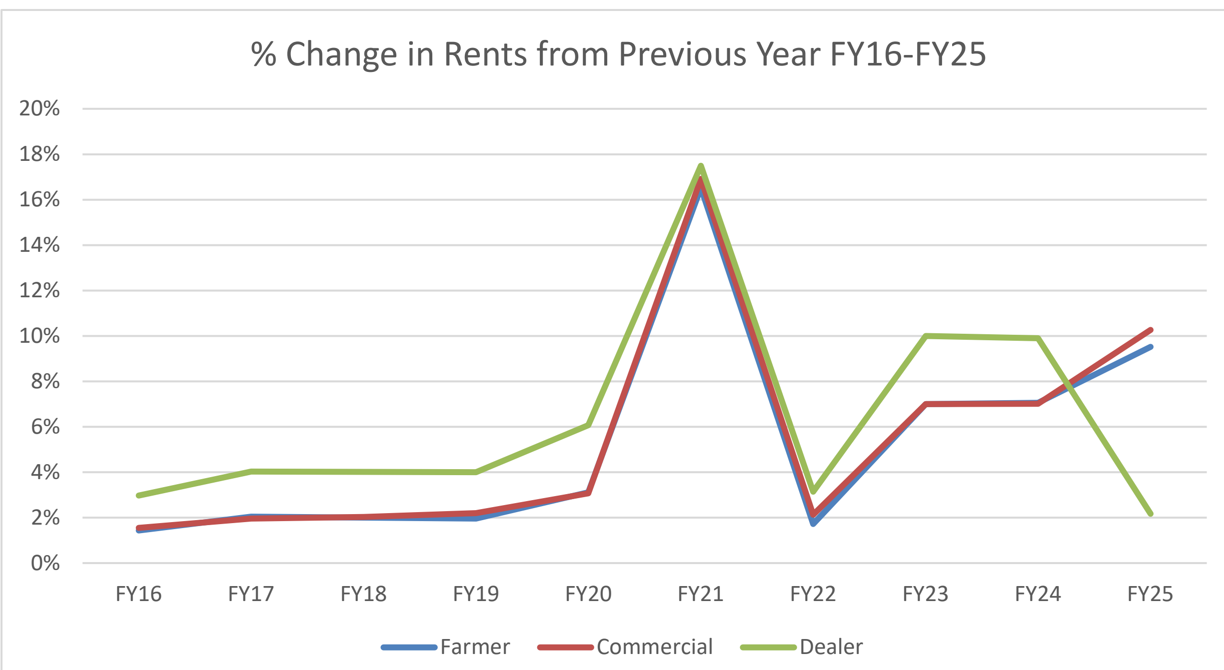

Figure 26. CNYRM % Change in Rents by Vendor Category FY16 – FY25

Other income sources

Other income sources in FY24 include interest income ($76,313 or 4%), utility reimbursements ($73,511 or 4%), and fees collected for promotional activities (about $23,853 or 1%).

Expenses

As is typical with public markets, the Regional Market's largest operating expense is labor. As shown on the table labeled "CNYRM FY22 & FY24 Operating Statement," in FY24 payroll and benefits equaled $1.37 million or 77% of total income. Payroll costs increased nearly 37% between FY22 and FY24. Based on current estimates, the change in leadership at CNRYM in July 2024 is expected to result in a 21% decrease in labor costs for FY25. The decrease includes both fewer staff positions and a temporary reduction in the executive director's compensation.

The second highest operating expense is utilities, at 10% of income or about $171,000. Netting the cost of utilities and utility reimbursement revenue, the total cost to the Regional Market was $132,276 in FY22 and $97,618 in FY24, an improvement of 28% over this two-year period. Market management believes there is opportunity to recapture more utility costs from tenants who are obligated to reimburse the Regional Market for utilities as part of their leases. If the Regional Market changes the system for electrical distribution on campus, with leasehold tenants having their own direct accounts with the power company, then both electrical expenses and reimbursements will be reduced. Utilities will still be a substantial amount, though, because of large amounts of common areas.

Other substantial operating expenses include security at 8% of income or $134,000 in FY24, followed by insurance at 7% or $126,217. Insurance increased 56% across the three fiscal years. The Regional Market spent $42,037 on advertising, or 2% of income.

The financial statements include interest expenses and depreciation and amortization, which reflect the cost of capital and not direct operating expenses. Interest expense jumped dramatically between FY22 and FY24, from about $73,000 to $402,000. This likely reflects the debt burden assumed by purchasing the 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East warehouse and borrowing on a line of credit to offset operating losses.

Net income

The operating statement shows the bottom line for FY22 and FY24 in two ways: as net income that includes the costs of capital (interest and depreciation/amortization) and as EBITDA, which excludes interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization.

In FY22, net income was negative $163,303, representing 8% of income. By FY24, net income dropped precariously to negative $1,090,259, which represents 62% of income. On an EBITDA basis, net income was positive in FY22 (at $212,625) but was negative in FY24 at more than $340,000.

Operating Statement	FY2022		FY2024		FY24-FY22	
Revenue	**FY2022**	**% income**	**FY2024**	**% Income**	**Delta $**	**Delta %**
Rent Revenue - Buildings & Land	929,268	47%	666,085	38%	(263,183)	-28.3%
Rent Revenue - Retail Market	856,984	43%	865,846	49%	8,862	1.0%
Utilities	82,755	4%	73,511	4%	(9,244)	-11.2%
Interest Income	29,091	1%	76,313	4%	47,222	162.3%
Truck Delivery	13,411	1%	8,515	0%	(4,896)	-36.5%
Promotional Leases & Sales	12,904	1%	23,853	1%	10,949	84.8%
Reimbursements	31,113	2%	31,592	2%	479	1.5%
Miscellaneous	15,502	1%	22,263	1%	6,761	43.6%
Total income	1,971,028	100%	1,767,978	100%	(203,050)	-10.3%
Expenses						
Payroll and Related Benefits	1,001,329	51%	1,370,062	77%	368,733	36.8%
Repairs and Maintenance	118,926	6%	127,280	7%	8,354	7.0%
Office Expense	32,271	2%	30,336	2%	(1,935)	-6.0%
Utilities	215,031	11%	171,129	10%	(43,902)	-20.4%
Legal and Professional	43,760	2%	50,681	3%	6,921	15.8%
Security	130,261	7%	133,913	8%	3,652	2.8%
Operating Insurance	81,119	4%	126,217	7%	45,098	55.6%
Advertising	48,979	2%	42,037	2%	(6,942)	-14.2%
Bad Debt Expense	24,634	1%	8,752	0%	(15,882)	-64.5%
Reimbursements	763	0%	641	0%	(122)	-16.0%
Other Operating Expenses	61,330	3%	49,358	3%	(11,972)	-19.5%
Interest Expense	72,899	4%	402,023	23%	329,124	451.5%
Depreciation and Amortization	304,029	15%	345,808	20%	41,779	13.7%
Total expenses	2,135,331	108%	2,858,237	162%	722,906	33.9%
Net Income	(164,303)	-8%	(1,090,259)	-62%	(925,956)	563.6%
EBITDA	212,625	11%	(342,428)	-19%	(555,053)	-261.0%

Table 11. CNYRM FY22 & FY24 Operating Statement

These large operating losses are not sustainable. Market management is taking steps to address these losses, including substantial reductions in labor and selling 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East to reduce the debt burden. This revitalization strategy proposes ways to increase revenue over time and bring expenses in line with income.

Debt

CNYRMA has recently incurred substantial debt. As of March 2020, the Authority's debt was $763,205, incurred primarily for a loan to construct the F Shed. As of September 2024, the debt has ballooned to nearly $5.3 million.

In 2020, the Authority borrowed $2.3M to purchase 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East, a building that had been appraised for $2.0 million and which was known to require substantial improvements, including a new roof. Since 2020, interest on the variable rate note increased from its original 2.75% to an effective annual interest rate of 6.5%. The building has been vacant since 2022.[23] In early 2023, the Authority borrowed another $2 million, ostensibly for construction but some of these funds were allocated to cover operating expenses.

Due to operating losses, the Authority has been forced to use funds from a line of credit to pay long-term debt and is now racking up interest expenses.

23 CNYRMA Board of Directors Meeting, 10/08/2024, accessed at Board of Directors — CNY Regional Market

Demand Analysis

The demand analysis explores both current and potential demand for products sold at the Regional Market, identifying and segmenting current and potential future customers and quantifying potential demand, where possible. The demand is analyzed in two parts: retail and wholesale. This analysis informs the strategies around new and improved facilities as well as leasing opportunities, and can help the Regional Market grow its customer base by providing valuable insight for the tenant mix strategy and future marketing campaigns.

Retail demand

To identify and describe current customers, the consultant team spoke with vendors and tenants to hear from them about their customers and how the customer base has changed over time. The consultant team also conducted two types of surveys: an exit survey of customers at the Regional Market and a community internet survey. A full analysis of each survey is found in the appendices, including the surveys' limitations.[24] The following summarizes the findings.

Customer exit survey

The on-site customer exit survey was conducted in October 2024 during a Saturday Farmers' Market and a Sunday Flea Market. A full description of methods and findings is found in Appendix E and summarized here.

The survey found substantial variation in the demographic profile of customers on each day, as well as their purchasing behavior. There were also many more customers on Saturday, allowing the surveyors to complete 195 surveys on Saturday compared to 70 on Sunday.

On Saturday, the largest group of survey respondents were aged 60-69, followed by those 70 or older. On Sunday, the largest group of survey respondents was also aged 60-69, while the second most populous group was 20-29. Household incomes of respondents on Saturdays far surpassed those on Sundays and the region's population, while the Sunday market attracted many people from lower income households.

Respondents came from throughout the region: the participants reported living in 55 different zip codes. On Saturday, the most frequent zip code was 13210, which includes the neighborhoods around Syracuse University. On Sunday, the most frequent zip code was 13204, which borders the Regional Market's location and includes the Near Westside and Far Westside neighborhoods. Only four respondents provided zip codes outside of Central New York, suggesting that the Regional Market attracted few tourists on either Saturday or Sunday.

Few respondents live within a five-minute drive of the Regional Market. On both Saturday and Sunday, the largest cohort drove 5-15 minutes. On Sunday, nearly a quarter traveled for

24 Exit surveys rely on the respondents' willful participation and do not reflect a random selection. The survey also represents a moment in time. Therefore, the findings many not represent the views or experiences of all customers or community members. While it is important to understand these limitations, the results are still useful in understanding who shops at the Regional Market and the community's experiences and preferences.

more than 30 minutes compared to only 10% on Saturday.

Nearly everyone surveyed had been to the Regional Market before. Nearly half on each day said they had been to the Regional Market the previous week, suggesting that the Market has mainly consistent, loyal customers.

Nearly everyone on Saturday made a purchase and they bought from an average of four vendors. Few participants purchased food to eat in the Regional Market, likely reflecting the limited offerings of prepared foods.

On Saturday, participants reported spending between $1 and $260, with an average of $48.53 for all purchases. Among those who made purchases, they reported an average of $15.25 for food to eat in the Market, $42.28 for food to take home, and $15.88 for nonfood items or services.

On Sunday, participants reported spending between $1 and $500, with an average of $44.87 for all purchases. Among those who made purchases, they reported an average of $7.89 for food to eat in the Market, $13.50 for food to take home, and $43.84 for nonfood items or services.

Average expenditures varied considerably by gender, age, travel time, last visit, and household income. Women spent more than men. As shown in the figure labeled "Customer Exit Survey: Average Spending by Age," respondents in the middle age brackets generally spent more than younger or older shoppers.

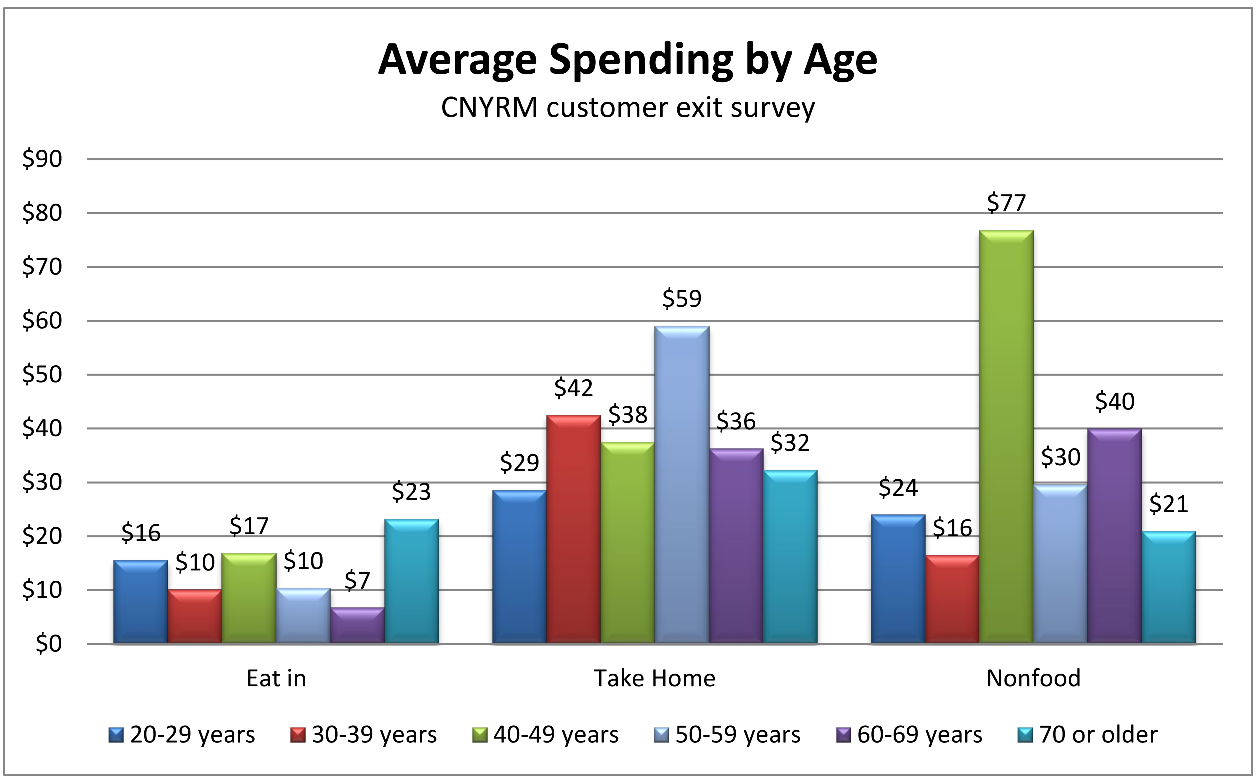

Figure 27. Customer Exit Survey: Average Spending by Age

As is typical, there is a significant correlation between customers' household income and how much they spent, with wealthier customers spending more. The highest spending group was respondents reporting household income above $150,000 per year, whose total spending averaged $78. The lowest spending group were those having household income less than $25,000, who averaged $28.

Respondents traveling from further away generally spent more, although the group living the furthest away (travel for more than one hour, who therefore likely live outside the region) spent much less.

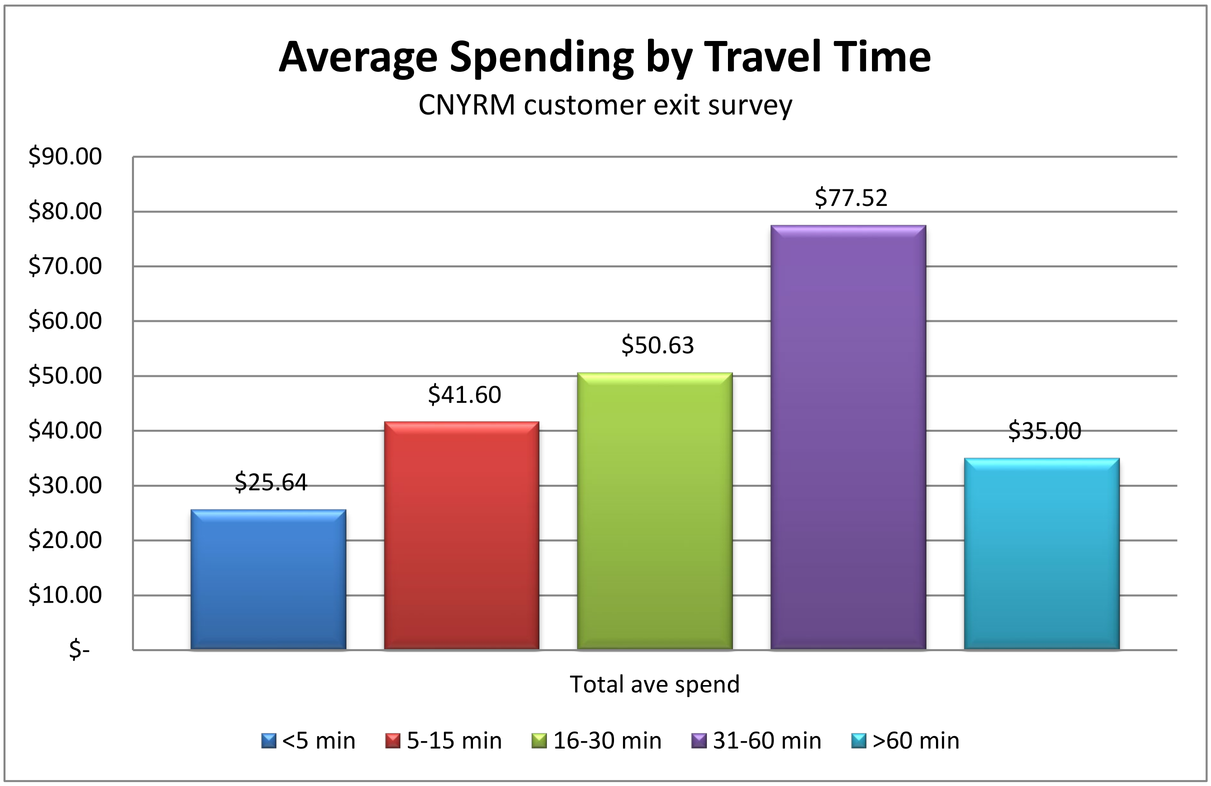

Figure 28. Customer Exit Survey: Average Spending by Travel Time

First time visitors had lower average expenditures for food to eat in the Market and food to take away, but by far the highest averages for nonfood items. This average is skewed by several participants making large purchases and only a few people being in this category. However, it points to the importance of having first-time customers at a flea market.

The respondents who had been at the Regional Market within the past week are particularly important because they are likely the Market's most loyal customers and their sales over the course of a year far exceed those who come less frequently.

- Assuming the respondents who came within the past week regularly visit once per week from May through October (26 times), then their average annual expenditures at the Regional Market are $1,206 (calculated as 26 times the average for all of this group's expenditures at the Regional Market that day).

- By comparison, a customer who came within the past month (estimated to visit six times per year) has annual expenditures of $282, less than a quarter of annual purchases by frequent shoppers.
- A customer who last visited more than a month ago (estimated to visit the Market four times a year) has annual expenditures of $175.

Respondents were asked to rate the Regional Market in terms of quality, selection and prices. Respondents on Saturday generally rated the Regional Market highly, while Sunday respondents ranked the Regional Market more critically.

When asked what they like best about the Regional Market, the most frequent response was the variety of products, followed by the Market's social qualities, and then the freshness/quality of the offerings.

In terms of changes, participants were most interested in parking improvements, followed by facility upgrades and improvements. They also want to see better circulation and access, the potholes fixed, and better traffic control.

Community internet survey

The community internet survey was completed by over 4,600 respondents. A detailed report on the survey's methods and findings is found in Appendix F and highlights are summarized here. Survey results were compared with demographics about the Syracuse Metropolitan Area (the "region") using data from the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau.

The vast majority of respondents (96%) self-identified as the primary shoppers for fresh food in their households. Nearly the same percentage of women took the online survey as the customer survey (59%). Compared to the region's population, substantially more middle-aged and older adults took the survey, particularly those in the 60-69 age bracket.

The community internet survey skewed toward white respondents (92%), compared to 82% of the total population comprised of whites within the region. Black respondents made up 2% compared to 8.5% in the region while Hispanic/Latino made up about 1% compared to 5% in the region.

Respondents live throughout the region and beyond, representing 188 different zip codes, with the two largest groups living in 13090 (Liverpool) and 13027 (Baldwinsville), which are suburban village areas that are situated 5-15 minutes to the north of Syracuse and the Regional Market.

Respondents skewed heavily toward upper income households. The highest income category ($150,000+) represented 28% of survey respondents, compared to 19% of the region's households. In terms of educational attainment, a large majority of respondents (70%) reported having a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 36% of regional residents. While 34% of regional residents have, at most, a high school education, only 9% of survey respondents fall within this category.

Nearly all of the respondents had been to the Regional Market at least once (98%) and most first visited more than 10 years ago (78%). Nearly all had been to the Regional Market in the past two years (89%).

To reach the Regional Market, the largest group (57%) travels for 11-30 minutes, followed by those traveling 5-10 minutes (28%). Interestingly, the number of visits per year is not related to travel time. About the same proportion of people who visit the Regional Market frequently are those living nearby as well as those who live further away.

The survey asked several questions about transportation to the Regional Market and parking.

- Cars and parking: Nearly 100% of respondents typically drive to the Regional Market. The majority of respondents (63%) said they found convenient parking within a reasonable period of time. Over a quarter of respondents (27%) said that parking was inconvenient because it took a long time to find a space. A small percentage of respondents (4%) said parking was inconvenient because the space they found was too far away from the Market.
- Bicycle: Only 2% had *ever* ridden a bicycle to the Regional Market. While the vast majority (86%) said nothing would make it more likely for them to ride a bike, 11% said they would ride a bike if there were dedicated bike lanes and 7% said they would ride if there was bike parking.
- Bus: A slightly smaller number of respondents had *ever* ridden a bus to the Regional Market. Nearly 8% said they were more likely to take a bus if there was more frequent service and 7% said they were more likely to take a bus if there was a bus stop closer to their home.

Nearly all (98%) of respondents have visited the CNY Regional Market. Respondents who had never visited the Regional Market or had not visited for more than two years (representing less than 100 of the 4,600 respondents) were asked why they had not visited. The most frequent response was "Parking difficult to find or inconvenient," selected by 45% of the respondents, followed by "Inconvenient hours or days of operation" (38%), "Too crowded" (37%), and "Too far away," (32%). A smaller group (10%) said they do not come because of safety concerns. When asked what would make them more likely to visit the Regional Market in the future, the responses include:

- Improved facilities and layout
- Extended hours and days
- Enhanced parking and accessibility
- Greater variety and quality of vendors
- Enhanced marketing and visibility
- Improved safety
- Additional events

When all of the respondents were asked what they like best about the Regional Market, by far the most frequent response was "Buying directly from local farmers and food producers," selected by 72% of the respondents. This was followed by "Freshness or quality of products" at 39%. These findings point to the importance of keeping the Regional Market a place that centers local farmers and food producers, and promoting the farmers to current and potential customers.

Respondents were asked about a range of potential improvements or changes to the Regional Market. The highest scoring responses were:

- Food truck events
- Adding tables and chairs
- Extending the hours of operations
- Adding an evening market
- Having more restaurants or a brew pub

Having more dining options was of particular interest to higher income respondents. Younger respondents expressed strong interest in having an evening market and in creating a facility for cooking demonstrations and classes.

When asked about potential changes in the operating schedule, respondents clearly favored Saturday operation (95%), followed by Sunday (67%) and then Friday (41%).

The additional products most desired by respondents included more fruits and vegetables, breads and other savory baked goods, flowers, cheese, and sweet baked goods.

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to share any additional comments or ideas. Responses were made by 1,770 participants. Based on an analysis by ChatGPT, the following themes were most prevalent:

- **Infrastructure and accessibility**: Many respondents emphasized the need for better facilities, such as cleaner and more accessible restrooms, improved parking (including more handicapped spots), better traffic flow, and smoother pedestrian pathways. Wider aisles, improved lighting, and accessible entrances/exits were also recommended.
- **Vendor organization and offerings**: There is a strong desire for clearer vendor labeling and signage, especially to distinguish local farmers from resellers. Suggestions include organizing vendors by product type, creating a directory or app for vendor locations, and increasing diversity in products, including organic and locally sourced items.
- **Amenities and attractions**: Respondents suggested adding cafes, food courts, seating areas, and entertainment options (like live music and events) to make the market a more enjoyable social destination. Ideas included brew pubs, food trucks, and expanded food and drink options.
- **Hours and days of operation**: Many requested extended hours, including evening options, to make the market accessible to more people. Additional days, especially for produce vendors, were also recommended.
- **Enhanced aesthetics and cleanliness**: Improvements in cleanliness, general maintenance, and appearance were suggested, with ideas to add greenery, covered areas, and seating. Many called for a more modernized and appealing atmosphere.
- **Safety and security**: Suggestions included increased security, designated crosswalks, enforcement of no-smoking areas, and dedicated pedestrian zones to ensure a safe environment for all visitors.

The community's feedback reflects a desire to balance improvements to the Regional Market while maintaining its traditional charm and focus on local products.

Regional Market Summit

To engage diverse stakeholders in dialogue and collaboration around the Regional Market's future, the consultant team conducted a Regional Market Summit, which took place at the Regional Market in October 2024. Participants shared current insights about the Market, drew inspiration from exemplary markets nationwide, and brainstormed ways to better serve farmers and the community. Together, they prioritized strategic investments and identified key areas for further research, setting the stage for a vibrant, sustainable marketplace that will meet the needs of all. A report on the Regional Market Summit is found in Appendix D.

A visioning session included three activities: identifying the Market's current identity, envisioning the Market's impacts over the next 20 years, and prioritizing the themes that emerged from the visioning exercise. An example of the visioning exercise is found in the figure labeled "CNYRM Summit Cover Story example."

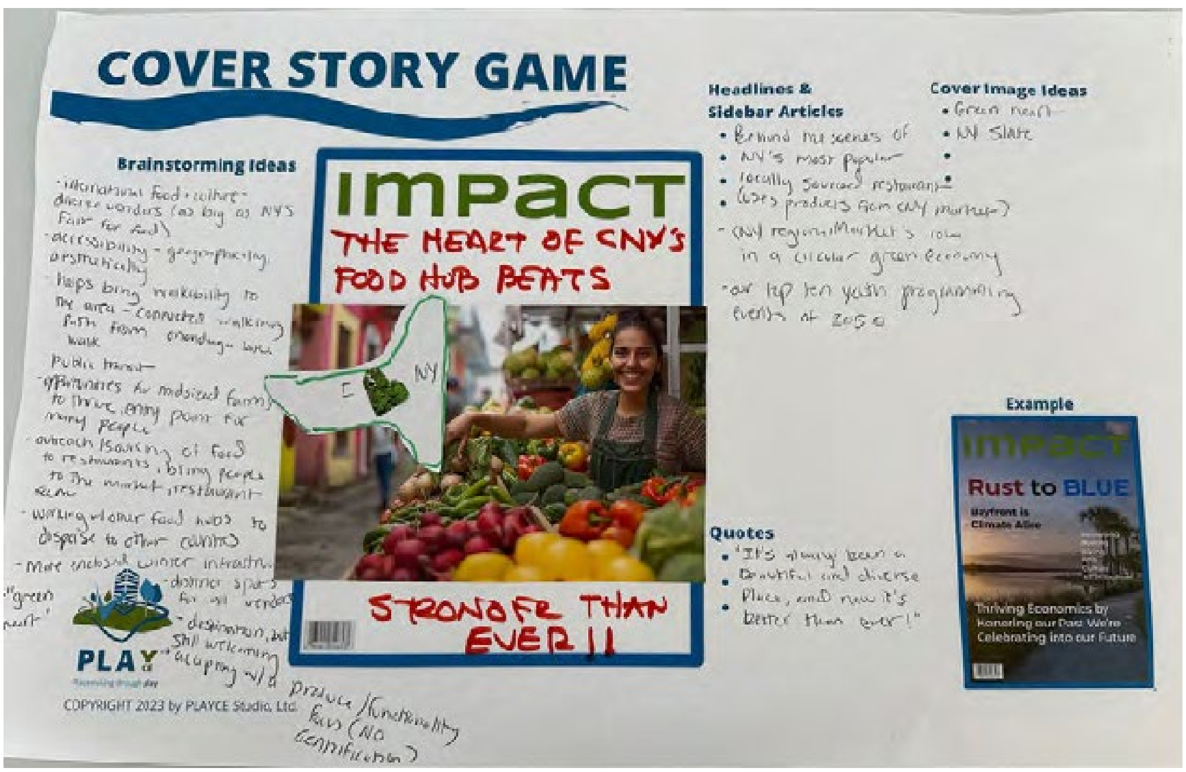

Figure 29. CNYRM Summit Cover Story example

Summit participants determined that the current identity of the Regional Market includes:

- Diversity
- Community
- Rich history worth preserving
- Needing physical and identity updates
- Beautiful gathering space

A 20-year vision for the Regional Market includes:

- Increased accessibility (physical and food access)
- Farm to school capital
- Increased aggregating, branding, and distributing of local products
- Community engagement and education
- "The Regional Market should be a hub of agriculture, food, gathering, transit, events & education"

Outcomes from the summit significantly informed the proposed vision and mission for the Regional Market.

SNAP, Fresh Connect and coupon programs

As at many farmers' markets around the country, farmers do not accept SNAP EBT directly but rely on a system run by market management to convert SNAP EBT into a scrip that can only be sold and redeemed at the market.[25] At the Regional Market, management sells metal tokens in $1.00 and $5.00 denominations to eligible customers from customer service booths in the Welcome Center near the A Shed or from the office in the F Shed. Once a customer has spent the tokens with an eligible vendor, the vendor submits the tokens back to Market management, who then reimburses the vendor with standard currency.

The Regional Market also participates in the Fresh Connect coupon program funded by New York State, which provides an extra $2.00 for every $5.00 that a SNAP participant converts to market tokens. This helps make fresh produce even more affordable for recipients and increases sales for Regional Market vendors. The figure labeled "CNYRM Tokens and Fresh Connect Coupon" provides examples of the tokens and coupon.

Figure 30. CNYRM Tokens and Fresh Connect Coupon

Tokens represent substantial sales. According to information provided by Market management, annual token sales peaked in 2020 at $425,000, including SNAP and Fresh Connect. The 2022 data represent a partial year (see the figure below labeled "CNYRM Token Sales FY18-FY22").

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25 SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is the federal government's principal program to address hunger and was formerly known as food stamps. SNAP funds are provided to program recipients via EBT, or Electronic Benefits Transfer, which is like a credit card that stores the SNAP allocation and can be spent at grocery stores or other redemption sites.

One challenge with the tokens is that participants do not spend them all and take them home, so the supply decreases and the Regional Market needs to purchase more of the coins. During the consultant team's visit to the Regional Market in October 2024, management ran out of tokens, leading to frustrated customers.

Eligible vendors also participate in other food security programs, including WIC and Senior Nutrition programs. These are paper based scrip which are redeemed by government agencies, not Regional Market management. As a result, the Regional Market has less data on redemption among its vendors.

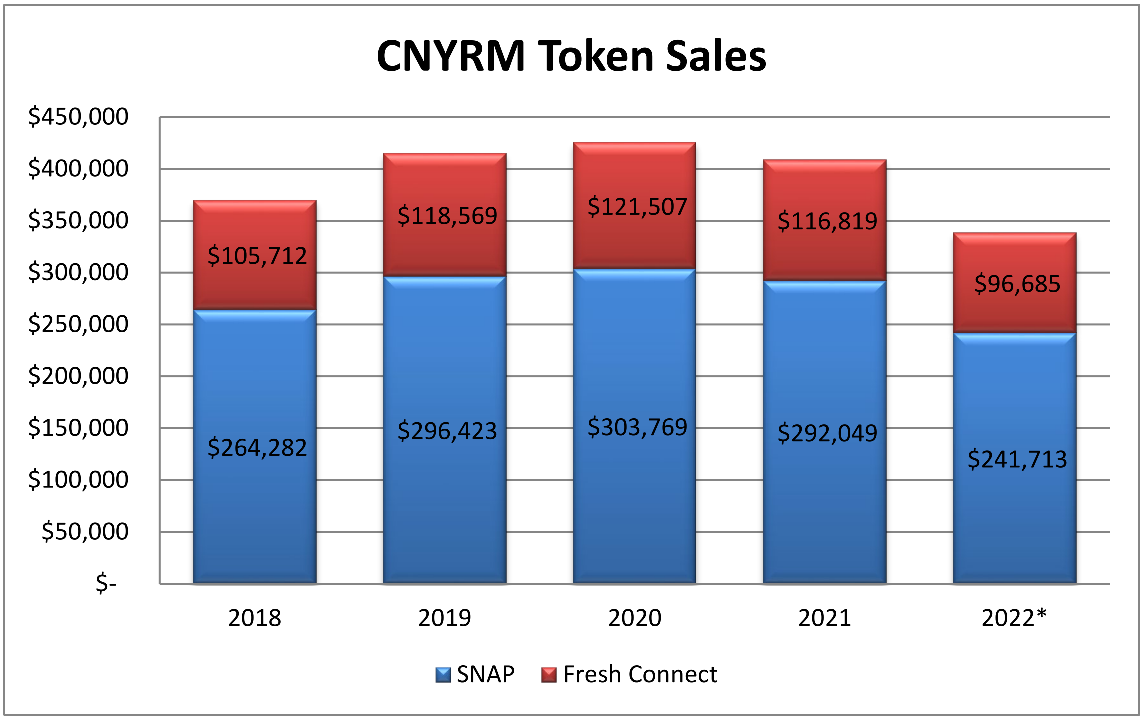

Figure 31. CNYRM Token Sales FY18-FY22

Placer.ai

Another indicator of the Regional Market's draw is information provided by Placer.ai, which uses cell phone location data and other sources to track visitors to a particular place. Two reports from Placer.ai have data about who visited the Regional Market during the year from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. These data include all visits to the Regional Market, including the days when the retail farmers' and flea markets are not operating.

By tracking cell phones, Placer.ai identified nearly a million visits to the Regional Market from 311,300 unique people. Dividing total visits by unique visitors, these data suggest annual visit frequency averaging 3.06 visits per person, which seems low since people working at the Regional Market come daily and many customers are frequent (weekly) visitors.

According to Placer.ai, Saturdays are the most popular day and represent about 400,000 visits, followed by Sundays with about 160,000 visits. Since the Saturday market operates every week year-round, dividing 400,000 annual visitors by 52 Saturdays per year results in average visitation of about 7,700 people per day. This is well below the estimate made by Market management of 20,000 daily visitors on Saturdays, recognizing however that 20,000 is a peak estimate and there is substantial variation at different times of the year.

In terms of visit duration, the average stay was 44 minutes while the median stay was 26 minutes.

Visitation peaked at the end of May and stayed elevated through September. Median household income of these visitors is $52.3k. In terms of race, non-white visitors equaled 31%, which is substantially higher the region’s nonwhite population of 18%.

Visitors come from throughout Central New York with clusters further afield in Albany and Rochester. As shown in the figure labeled “CNYRM Origin of Visitors, Placer.ai Data,” the most intense concentration of visitors approximates the Syracuse Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which encompasses Onondaga, Oswego, and Madison counties.

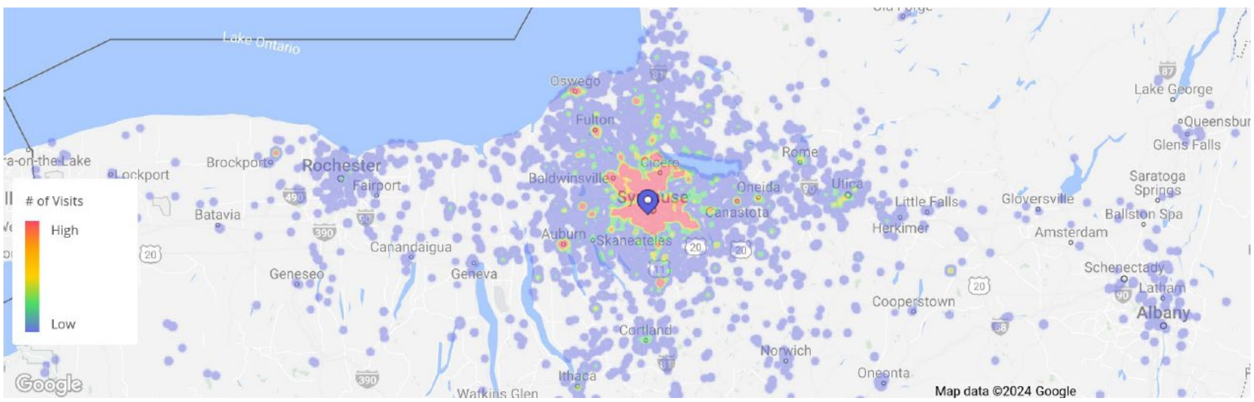

Figure 32. CNYRM Origin of Visitors, Placer.ai Data

Placer.ai found that the most frequent visitors over the course of the year came from the Regional Market’s zip code 13208 (Syracuse), which encompasses the Washington Square, Northside, and Court Woodlawn neighborhoods, with over 113,000 visitors representing 11.9% of total visitation. This was followed by zip code 13088 (Liverpool) with 57,000 visits and 13204 (Syracuse lakefront and west side neighborhoods) with 46,000 visits.

NBT Bank Stadium

The Regional Market is adjacent to NBT Bank Stadium, which is home to the AAA Syracuse Mets. The stadium has a seating capacity of nearly 11,000. In 2025, the Mets are scheduled to have 73 home games, not including any playoff games. According to BaseballAmerica.com, the Mets averaged 5,022 attendees per game in 2022. This totals over 366,000 attendees over the season.

Given the close proximity to the Regional Market, visitors to the stadium represent a valuable potential audience for pre- or post-game food and beverage sales. Except for April, all of the Saturday games start at 6:35 pm while Sunday games typically start at 1:05 pm. The stadium also hosts some events, including movie nights and a Craft Beer Festival, which could have tie-ins with the Regional Market.

Although the Regional Market is adjacent to the baseball stadium, the roads and fences create barriers between the two facilities. The revitalization strategy proposes ways to improve connectivity and recommends changes that make the Regional Market a desirable destination for stadium attendees.

Potential customers

The survey findings at the Regional Market generally mirror the research findings that MVI has found at other large scale, successful urban public markets. Customers typically come from a wide geographic area, often up to 30-45 minutes away. Unlike supermarkets, which seek to dominate food retailing within a small geographic zone, public markets attract a small percentage of people from a wide area who appreciate the product selection, atmosphere, and interaction with farmers and independent vendors.

The highest spending customers are generally well educated, higher income, middle aged women, who travel from a wide area. The surveys found these results at the Regional Market. Nearly everyone currently drives to the Regional Market, and while there are valuable opportunities to increase use of public transit and alternative transportation, most customers will continue to drive there. Hence it is critical to offer easy vehicular accessibility and convenient parking.

A major variance in the survey findings is that public markets often attract many tourists. Surprisingly, almost no tourists were interviewed as part of the customer exit survey. Market management indicates that the Regional Market attracts many tourists during the summer and when parents are visiting their students at local universities. Tourists are often a substantial component of a public market's customer base because they find that markets offer a window into local culture and provide an authentic and unique visitor experience.

Syracuse and Central New York are recently seeing more tourism activity and are making investments into tourism infrastructure to attract visitors. Near the Regional Market, the Syracuse Inner Harbor is being revitalized with a new large-scale public aquarium, parks, docking facilities, and other entertainment uses, as well as over 1,000 new housing units. The neighboring Destiny USA mall regularly attracts tourists and customers from Canada and out-of-state. The Empire State Trail, part of the state-wide system, abuts the Regional Market and sees millions of users annually. Syracuse is also a hub for sporting events and conferences, and is home to the NYS Fairgrounds. These findings suggest that the Regional Market could attract more tourists, particularly if the Market offers more restaurants and retail on a daily basis.

Public markets typically attract consumers representing a broad demographic profile, including recent immigrants familiar with markets from their native countries. Some public markets, because of their accessible urban locations and social mission, have become major redemption points for SNAP benefits and farmers' market scrip. Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia, for example, is one of the city's largest SNAP redemption sites, while the Rochester Public Market is the country's largest redemption site for farmers' market tokens, with over $2 million in token redemptions annually. This is more than four times the amount of the Regional Market, in a metropolitan area that is about 50% larger than Syracuse. This experience indicates that there is substantial room to grow the Regional Market's token program.

The Regional Market serves as an important source of food and low-cost merchandise for low-income households. The customer exit survey found that nearly 25% of customers surveyed reported 2023 household income under $50,000 per year on Saturday, while 42% of customers reported household incomes in this bracket on Sunday. Placer.ai found that median household income among visitors to the Regional Market was $52.3k, far below the Onondaga County median income of nearly $74.7k.[26]

According to the Federal Reserve, 65,000 residents of Onondaga County received SNAP benefits in 2021, a number that has more than doubled since 2020.[27] The Regional Market provides an accessible location via public transit and can play a significant role in addressing food security for area residents.

The USDA Economic Research Service provides an online atlas that identifies areas with limited access to grocery stores, areas often referred to as "food deserts." As seen in the figure labeled "USDA Food Access Map," The Regional Market (located at the red square) is adjacent to low income neighborhoods with low access to food stores, and therefore can play an important role improving food access for nearby residents.

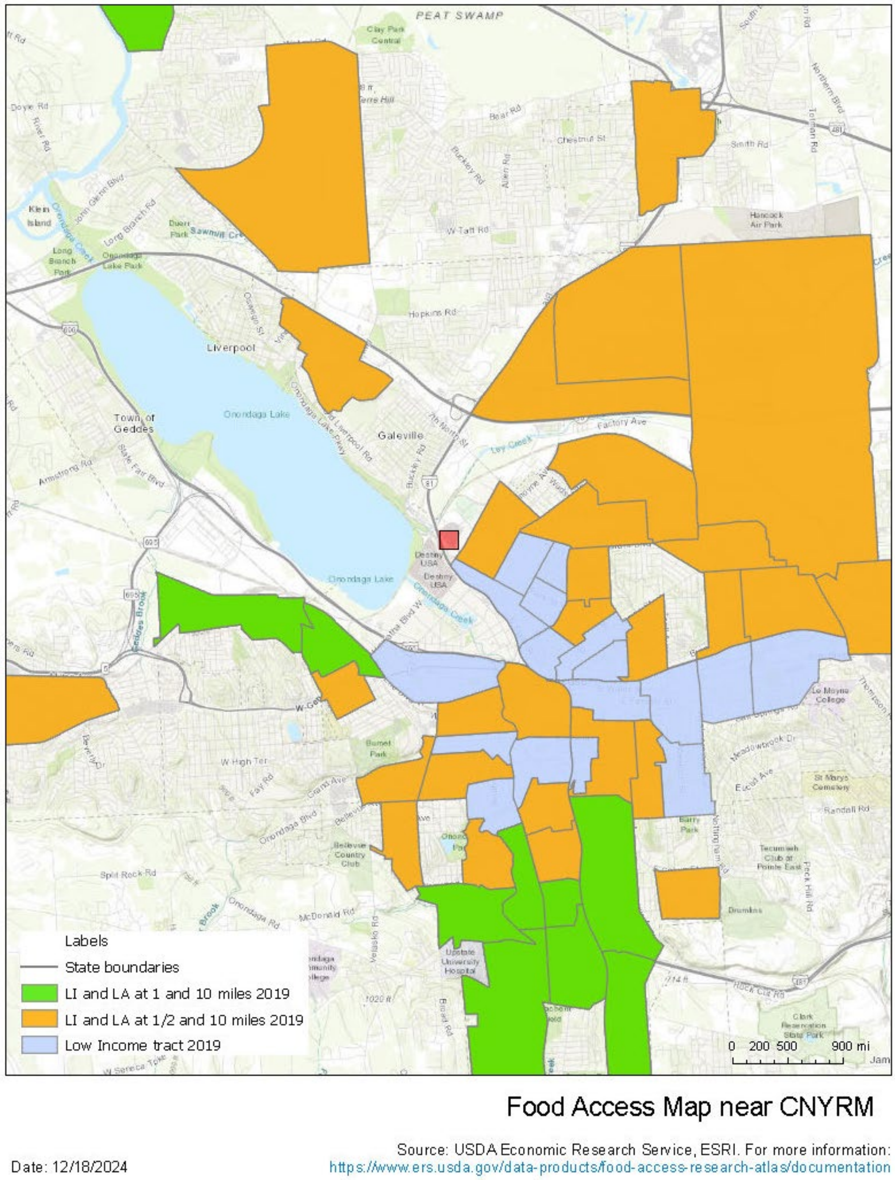

Figure 33. USDA Food Access Map

Syracuse has a diverse population, including many different refugee groups. According to a

26 [Median income Onondaga County ... - Census Bureau Search]
27 [SNAP Benefits Recipients in Onondaga County, NY (CBR36067NYA647NCEN) | FRED | St. Louis Fed]

stakeholder, Syracuse has the greatest number of refugees per capita in the country. Immigrant groups include Congolese, Somali, Afghani, Ukrainian, Serbs, Bosnians, Vietnamese, and Bhutanese. At Detroit Eastern Market, recent immigrants played an important role in the Market's rebirth, as new, independent ethnic groceries became wholesale buyers from farmers and distributors at the Market and brought new foods to consumers in the retail market.

Trade area analysis

Trade area analysis is used to understand the demographic characteristics of people living in proximity to the Regional Market, explore how these populations are changing, and assess the potential for attracting more shoppers to the Market. A detailed analysis of the trade areas is found in Appendix G.

Three separate trade areas were defined for the Regional Market, based on the data collected in the customer exit and community surveys: a five-minute drive time, 5-15 minute drive time, and 15-30 minute drive time. Demographic data about the three trade areas were acquired from Nielsen-Claritas, a national market research data company. Customers living outside of these trade areas are considered visitors.

Trade area 1

The population of the first trade area is fairly small (5,697 households in 2024) and is expected to decline, is ethnically diverse, has lower household incomes, and is younger than the other trade areas. Many households in this area do not have vehicles and are likely to qualify for SNAP and other food assistance programs, presenting sales opportunities for fresh food and grocery products in the Regional Market. The first trade area provides an important customer base because the Regional Market is highly convenient to these residents and there is almost no competition from supermarkets and other food stores located as conveniently as the Regional Market.

Trade area 2

The band between five- and fifteen-minute drive time has twenty times more residents than the first trade area, with 116,344 households in 2024. This band is estimated to have lost about 2.4% of its population between 2020 and 2024 and is expected to lose another 2,400 residents by 2029, although this could change when the new Micron semiconductor factory is constructed and attracts an expected 50,000 new residents to the region. Median household income in this area is well above the first trade area but still relatively low at $59,899 compared to the national median of $80,610.

Trade Area 2 has a substantial but stagnant population with small household size, modest average income, and modest educational attainment. While there are supermarkets throughout the trade area that are likely more convenient than the Regional Market, the Market is reasonably convenient to this population and offers a unique shopping experience.

Trade area 3

The band between fifteen- and thirty-minute drive time has about 86,600 households. The population is projected to contract slightly, although again this could change when the new

Micron semiconductor factory opens. The area has the largest average household size (2.44), is the wealthiest with median household income of $69,133, and has the highest educational attainment. Given these demographic characteristics, it is not surprising that customers from this area reported the highest average spending at the Regional Market. However, the Regional Market is not convenient for residents of this area since there are many more convenient places nearby for them to buy fresh or prepared food. The Regional Market's large size, the lack of competition from other farmers' markets (discussed below), and its recognition in the region offers the opportunity to expand sales from residents of this trade area.

Visitors

According to the customer exit survey, out-of-region visitors represent a small portion of current customers at the Regional Market, with 10% of survey participants reporting that they travel for more than 30 minutes to visit the Regional Market and with nearly no one residing outside of Central New York (the Placer.ai data, presented above, indicates a small portion of customers coming from outside Central New York, including clusters from areas around Albany and Rochester). Customers traveling 31-60 minutes reported the highest total expenditures on both Saturday and Sunday, although the cell count for some of these variables is less than five so the results cannot be considered reliable.

Typically, visitors are attracted to public markets because they are unique places, offering a window into the culture of the region where they are located. Based on MVI's research at other public markets, tourists are generally more interested in buying prepared foods and craft items than fresh foods.

According to local tourism professionals, the convention business in Syracuse has grown dramatically and now represents $1.3 billion in spending, up 50% since 2017. Much of it is driven by universities and the medical community. There is also substantial leisure travel, mainly focused on outdoor recreation and attractions such as the zoo. Local festivals and events draw many visitors, including the popular Rhythm and Blues Festival. Local farmers, due in part to recent funding assistance from Onondaga County, are making significant investments in agritourism. The Regional Market can position itself to benefit from these visitors through a variety of marketing initiatives, programs, and events, as well as strategic partnerships with organizations such as universities and medical providers.

Sales potential

The sales potential analysis is found in Appendix H and summarized here.

Based on the demographic profile of area residents and typical expenditure patterns as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey, Nielsen-Claritas estimates the retail sales potential for consumer goods. Using their estimated per capita expenditures for various food items, Nielsen-Claritas creates a Food Purchasing Index that compares local expected purchases to national averages on the household level. Based on their formula, the Regional Market's three trade areas index below national averages in nearly every food category.

In the first trade area, total demand for fresh and specialty foods is estimated at $20.5 million and is expected to grow by 6.1% by 2029. In the second trade area, the demand is $486.0 million and expected to grow by 4.5% to $507.7 million. In the third trade area, the demand is $436.9 million and expected to grow by 5.9% to $462.6 million. To be successful, vendors and retailers at the Regional Market need only capture a tiny fraction of the nearly $1 billion in demand from residents in the three trade areas.

Nielsen-Claritas projects that sales for foods purchased outside of the home will stay nearly flat. Current demand for dining is estimated at $770.8 million in 2024 for the three trade areas. Again, the demand might grow substantially when the Micron factory is completed, and the area's population expands by nearly 10%.

Wholesale demand

The produce distributors sell mainly to wholesale buyers and some farmers who participate in the retail markets also sell on a wholesale level. This section identifies some high potential wholesale opportunities at the Regional Market.

Public schools

School districts are large buyers of food and have pursued efforts to bring locally grown products into their purchasing practices (often called "Farm to School" or "F2S"). New York City public schools, for example, are the second largest single buyer of food in the nation, following the Department of Defense, and have been engaged with F2S for several decades. Within Central New York, the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) is the biggest buyer among the region's school systems and has been particularly interested in expanding its local foods purchasing.

According to its Food Service Director, SCSD is the fifth largest school district in New York State, serving nearly 21,000 students. Nearly half of the children live in poverty and 78% are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. SCSD serves breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, and operates with a $5.5 million food procurement budget.

Across New York State, there are 731 school districts and 2.4 million students.[28] On account of its central location, the Regional Market is well positioned to serve many of these districts, either directly or through partnerships with school districts and their food suppliers.

Various barriers make it difficult for schools to purchase locally grown foods, including low meal costs, contracting requirements, mismatch between desired products and local availability, seasonality, and transportation. For several decades, dedicated food service directors and supporting organizations have worked to overcome these barriers, including a geographic preference bid that encourages public institutions to purchase from local farmers and supplemental funds for local purchasing. A major hurdle in Syracuse has been a lack of infrastructure to warehouse and process local ingredients.

Recognizing the potential impact that changes in purchasing practices could have for NYS farmers, Governor Hochul launched the 30% NYS Initiative, which seeks to have at least 30% of

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28 NYSED Data Site

the ingredients in foods purchased by public schools come from New York produced and processed sources. The 30% NYS Initiative is spearheaded by the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets.

One of the incentives within the 30% NYS Initiative is higher reimbursements for school meals. This includes raising the state's reimbursement for school meals from 5.99 cents per meal to 25 cents per meal for districts that achieve the 30% standard, a 317% increase.[29] During its initial year (SY 2022-23), the state distributed over $8 million to 59 school districts for NYS food products. For SCSD, the Food Service Director projects that the higher reimbursement rate could mean an additional $500,000 in food cost reimbursement for the district, funds flowing to the region's farmers.

New York State also recognized the barriers to school purchasing created by inadequate food processing infrastructure. In response, New York State created the School Food Infrastructure Grant program to invest $50 million over five years to support regional school food facilities. These facilities can be used for ingredient preparation, processing, food aggregation or storage. The Regional Market is partnering with SCSD, Onondaga County, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Russo Produce to secure a grant under this program to pay for equipment within food processing facilities at the Regional Market.

Executive Order 32

Expanding the food purchasing goals from the schools to all New York State agencies, Governor Hochul signed Executive Order 32 in August 2023. EO32 requires all state agencies that purchase food to specify the purchase of NYS grown or produced foods whenever feasible. Purchasing targets ramp up annually, with the target of 30% by the end of 2027. The Office of General Services (OGS) is directed to ensure that its centralized food contracts highlight NYS foods and every agency that purchases food is required to report its performance annually to OGS.

In addition to public schools, major institutional purchasers of food include prisons, hospitals, universities, nursing homes, and other residential facilities.

According to the governor's office, state agencies purchased $78 million of local foods in 2023, a huge increase from $15 million in 2022 and these purchases represented 15% of total food purchasing. If $78 million equals 15%, then total food purchasing was approximately $520 million.[30] Assuming that total food purchasing stays constant, then reaching the 30% goal would mean at least an additional $78 million of local food purchasing across the state.

Due to its central and accessible location, connections to farmers, and produce distributors, the Regional Market is well positioned to play a major role in supplying these state agencies if it has improved facilities to aggregate, store, process, and transport locally grown food.

GrowNYC

GrowNYC, the organization best known for running numerous popular retail farmers'

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29 30% New York State Initiative | Agriculture and Markets and 30% NYS Initiative

30 At Great New York State Fair, Governor Hochul Announces State Exceeds 2023 Goal of Sourcing Local Food From New York Farmers | Governor Kathy Hochul

markets (called Greenmarkets) in New York City, responded to the enormous demand for local foods among the city's restaurants, grocers, and institutions by creating a wholesale division that delivers farm-fresh products throughout the city. GrowNYC operates its own aggregation, sales, and delivery service, with about 70% of its business focused on food access providers such as food pantries and senior centers, as well as private schools. The wholesale division works with about 50 farmers as well as food processors including Upstate Growers and Packers in Clinton, NY. Currently, they operate out of a 5,000 sf space in Coop City in the Bronx, which they describe as difficult to access and inadequate. Without modern, code compliant facilities, GrowNYC has been limited in its ability to expand its business.

GrowNYC recently finalized construction of a new wholesale distribution warehouse in the Hunts Point section of the Bronx and began operating in winter 2025. The warehouse offers 60,000 sf of distribution space, with GrowNYC using 20,000 sf and planning to lease out the remainder (with the goal of eventually utilizing all of the space itself). The facility, which was toured by the consultant team and the CNYRMA Executive Director in December 2024, is designed with multiple cold rooms for various products, including dairy and meat. The ceiling height permits four-high racking.

Figure 35. GrowNYC new warehouse, Bronx

The development budget was approximately $43 million. The largest share of funding at $19 million came from Empire State Development, followed by a $9 million investment from the NYC City Council and $5 million through the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC). New Market Tax Credits contributed about $4.5 million. Federal funding included $2.7 million from the Economic Development Administration. The land is owned by NYC EDC and leased to GrowNYC.

GrowNYC will need to substantially increase its distribution activities to meet the potential of this new facility. With modern facilities, they see growth opportunities with NYC restaurants and large institutional buyers, including the public schools and other public institutions affected by the EO32 mandate. The CNY Regional Market is ideally positioned to supply GrowNYC with farm products from Central and Western New York.

Private buyers

Independent food distributors typically sell to independent restaurants, grocers, farm stands, and local institutions, while filling in for larger grocery chains and other buyers when they are short on particular products from their customary sources.

According to the data provided by Nielsen-Claritas, demand for dining out in the Syracuse region is not expected to grow. However, this does not account for the potential population growth in the area following the Micron plant construction. According to research conducted on behalf of OpenTable, the online restaurant booking app, a majority of consumers (54%) nationwide anticipate dining out more in 2025, with more midweek dining and "experiential dining" with tasting menus and guest chef dinners, trends that should support the region's independent restaurants.

Stakeholders report that the Regional Market's inadequate wholesale distribution facilities discouraged some buyers from purchasing products there. With new, modern facilities that meet all food safety concerns, the Regional Market's distributors will be able to compete with other distributors to serve the needs of private buyers.

Supply Analysis

The supply analysis examines the current mix of vendors and businesses at the Regional Market, the state of agriculture in Central New York, and the potential for growing business activity at the Regional Market.

Regional Market vendors

According to data provided by Market management, 189 vendors purchased licenses over the course of 2022 to sell in the retail operations at the Regional Market.[31] Most of these vendors rent stall spaces by the season ("seasonal vendors"). Collectively, they rent 344 stalls within the sheds or the open-air B-Line area.

The vendors came from 30 different counties around New York State in 2022, well beyond the seven core counties that make up the Regional Market's statutory area. The figure labeled "CNYRM District and Vendor Origins" shows all the counties in New York State where vendors originate. Vendors who rent space on a daily basis ("daily vendors") make up about a quarter of the vendors at the Regional Market on each day of operation and they came from nearly a dozen

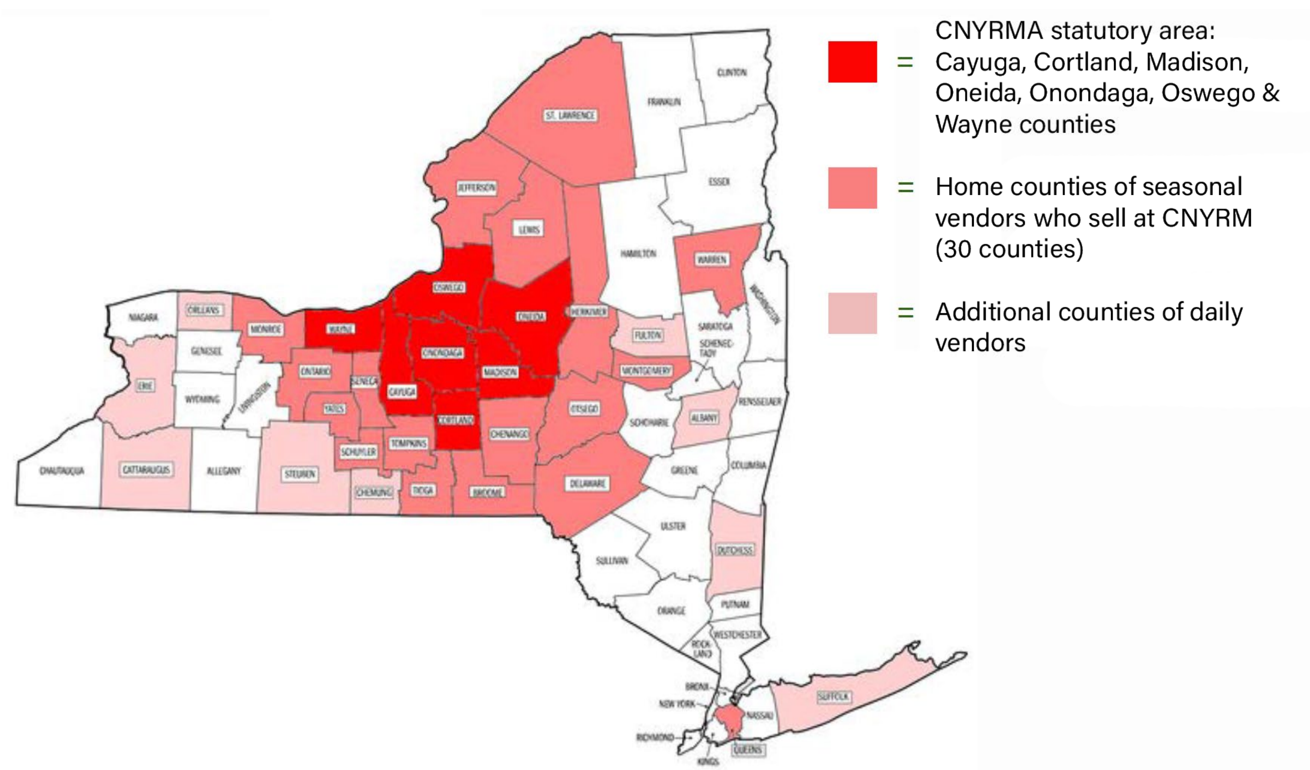


Figure 36. CNYRM District and Vendor Origins

31. In 2022 Market management conducted a written survey that was completed by 159 vendors, which represents 84% of the Regional Market's 189 licensed vendors. While these participants were self-selected, the high response rate suggests that the results are likely representative of all vendors.

other counties, stretching to nearly every corner of New York State, plus a few from other states and Canada.

Most of the vendors who sold on Saturdays came from Onondaga County (45%). Vendors from Cayuga, Oswego, and Wayne counties each represent about 11% of the Saturday vendors.

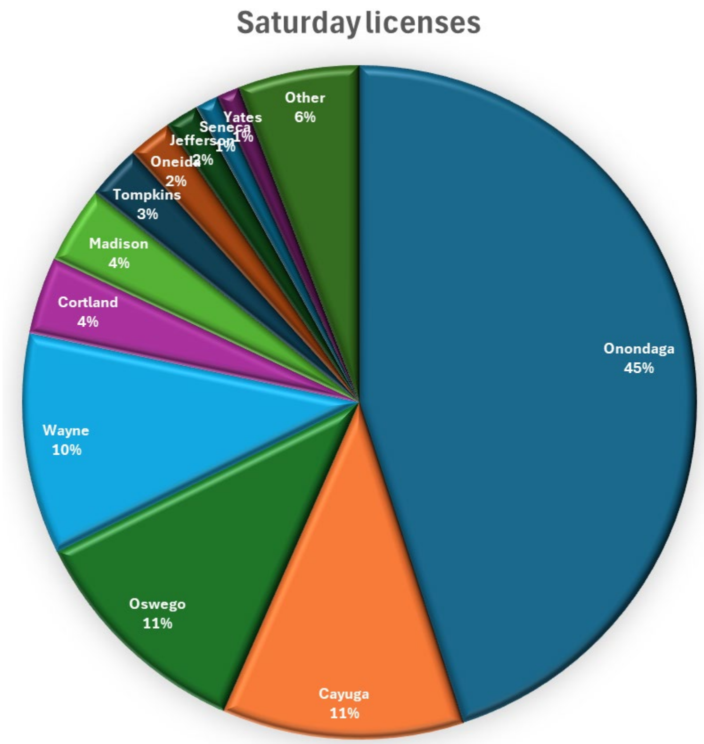


Figure 37. Vendor Origins for Saturday Licenses

County	%
Onondaga	45.0%
Cayuga	11.6%
Oswego	11.1%
Wayne	10.6%
Cortland	3.7%
Madison	3.7%
Tompkins	2.6%
Oneida	2.1%
Jefferson	1.6%
Seneca	1.1%
Yates	1.1%
Other	5.8%

The vast majority of vendors (70%) report selling only products that are grown or produced in Central New York. The Regional Market allows vendors selling non-local products as well, expanding the range of available products and providing some low-cost items. Nearly all the vendors (87%) report selling at least some products that originate in Central New York.

Vendors who pay for a seasonal stall on Saturdays are allowed to sell on Thursdays and Sundays without additional fees. Some vendors only pay for stalls on Sundays. In 2022, 28 vendors purchased seasonal Sunday licenses and they rented 135 stalls. These vendors are more likely to come from Onondaga County (64% of the seasonal Sunday vendors) but vendors come from counties throughout the region.

Nearly half of the vendors report being women-owned businesses, while over one-fifth (21%) are minority owned.

The Regional Market is a critical sales outlet for many of the vendors. For 21% of the vendors, the Regional Market represents 100% of their sales. For half of the vendors, the Regional Market represents at least one half of their businesses' total sales.

Many of the vendors or their families have been selling at the Regional Market for a long time. For nearly half of the vendors (45%), they or their families have been selling for ten years or more. For 20% of the vendors, it is more than 50 years! However, the Regional Market is also a place for new entrepreneurs to launch their businesses: 40% of the vendors have sold at the Regional Market for less than five years.

Market management reports that car counts show over 20,000 people a day visiting the Regional Market during peak season on a Saturday. They believe that about one million people visit the Regional Market annually. Management estimates daily total sales on Saturdays at between $800,000 and $1,000,000. If the Regional Market has 189 seasonal vendors and 25% more daily vendors for a total of 236 vendors, then average sales per vendor on a peak Saturday would be between about $3,400 and $4,200.

Another way to estimate total sales is based on data collected in the customer exit survey. The survey found that average purchases on Saturdays was $48.53 and the average group size was 2.13. If there are 20,000 visitors, then there are 9,390 groups. Multiplying groups by average sales, total daily sales on a peak Saturday equal about $450,000.

Central New York agriculture

The Regional Market's ability to serve the region's agricultural economy depends on the evolving needs of the region's farmers and food producers. Information was collected about the status of agriculture from recent reports and the US Census of Agriculture, as well as from interviews with farmers and agricultural support organizations.

According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, there are 4,662 farms within the Regional Market's seven-county region, with over a million acres of farmland.[32] Average farm size is 234 acres. These farms had sales of $1.7 billion in 2022. Data about the region's agriculture is found in the table labeled "2022 Census of Agriculture Profile for CNYRM Counties."

The largest sector is dairy cows, with milk sales at $832 million. While a few vendors sell

2022 Census of Ag		Total
Number farms		4,662
Acres farmland		1,089,715
Ave farm size (acres)		234
Farms with sales $10-25k		627
Farms with sales $25-50k		477
Farms with sales $50k-100k		328
Farms with sales >=$100k		1,125
Market value products sold (000)	$	1,672,639
Crops (000)	$	643,905
Vegetables, melons, potatoes	$	62,422
Fruits and tree nuts, berries	$	225,712
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	$	34,678
F&V, Nursery Sales (000)	$	322,812
Livestock, poultry and products (000)	$	1,028,734
Poultry and eggs	$	35,923
Cattle and calves	$	74,759
Milk from cows	$	832,381
Poultry, Cattle & Milk Sales (000)	$	943,063

Table 12. 2022 Census of Agriculture Profile for CNYRM Counties

32 The seven counties include Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, and Wayne. While CNYRMA's authorizing legislation includes only a portion of Wayne County, these census data include the entire county.

dairy products, meat, and eggs, the products that typically are sold at the Regional Market include vegetables, fruits, and nursery items. Throughout the seven-county region, farmers producing these products had total sales of $323 million. All told, there is 1.6 times more livestock, poultry and related products sold in the region ($1.03 billion) than crops ($644 million).

During the five-year period between the 2017 and 2022 Census of Agriculture, the region experienced a nearly nine percent drop in the number of farms but only a two percent drop in farmland acreage. As shown in the table labeled "2017 & 2022 Census of Agriculture Trends for CNYRM Region," average farm size increased over seven percent. These data reinforce observations from stakeholders and various reports that larger farms are growing in size while mid-sized farms (often referred to as "ag-in-the-middle") are disappearing. Overall, the market value of products sold increased 20%, from $1.4 billion to nearly $1.7 billion.

Census of Ag		2017	2022	Δ	Δ %
Number farms		5,100	4,662	(438)	-8.6%
Acres farmland		1,109,332	1,089,715	(19,617)	-1.8%
Ave farm size (acres)		218	234	16	7.5%
Farms with sales $10-25k		731	627	(104)	-14.2%
Farms with sales $25-50k		408	477	69	16.9%
Farms with sales $50k-100k		344	328	(16)	-4.7%
Farms with sales >=$100k		1,098	1,125	27	2.5%
Market value products sold (000)	$	1,393,369	1,672,639	279,270	20.0%
Crops (000)	$	414,139	643,905	229,766	55.5%
Vegetables, melons, potatoes	$	58,022	62,422	4,400	7.6%
Fruits and tree nuts, berries	$	141,814	225,712	83,898	59.2%
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	$	30,452	34,678	4,226	13.9%
F&V, Nursery Sales (000)	$	230,288	322,812	92,524	40.2%
Livestock, poultry and products (000)	$	757,943	1,028,734	270,791	35.7%
Poultry and eggs	$	27,073	35,923	8,850	32.7%
Cattle and calves	$	87,252	74,759	(12,493)	-14.3%
Milk from cows	$	598,110	832,381	234,271	39.2%
Poultry, Cattle & Milk Sales (000)	$	712,434	943,063	230,629	32.4%
	Inflation adjusted				

Table 13. 2017 & 2022 Census of Agriculture Trends for CNYRM Region

The products most likely to be sold at the Regional Market (vegetables, fruits, and nursery items) saw substantial (40%) growth in sales. This finding suggests a healthy sector, which should be well positioned to take advantage of improvements at the Regional Market that lead to increased demand for these products.

Within the CNYRM region, Wayne County has the most farms overall and the most farms with sales over $100,000, followed by Cayuga County. The number of farms by county is shown in the figure labeled “2022 Census of Agriculture: CNYRM Counties with Number of Farms in Sales Categories.”

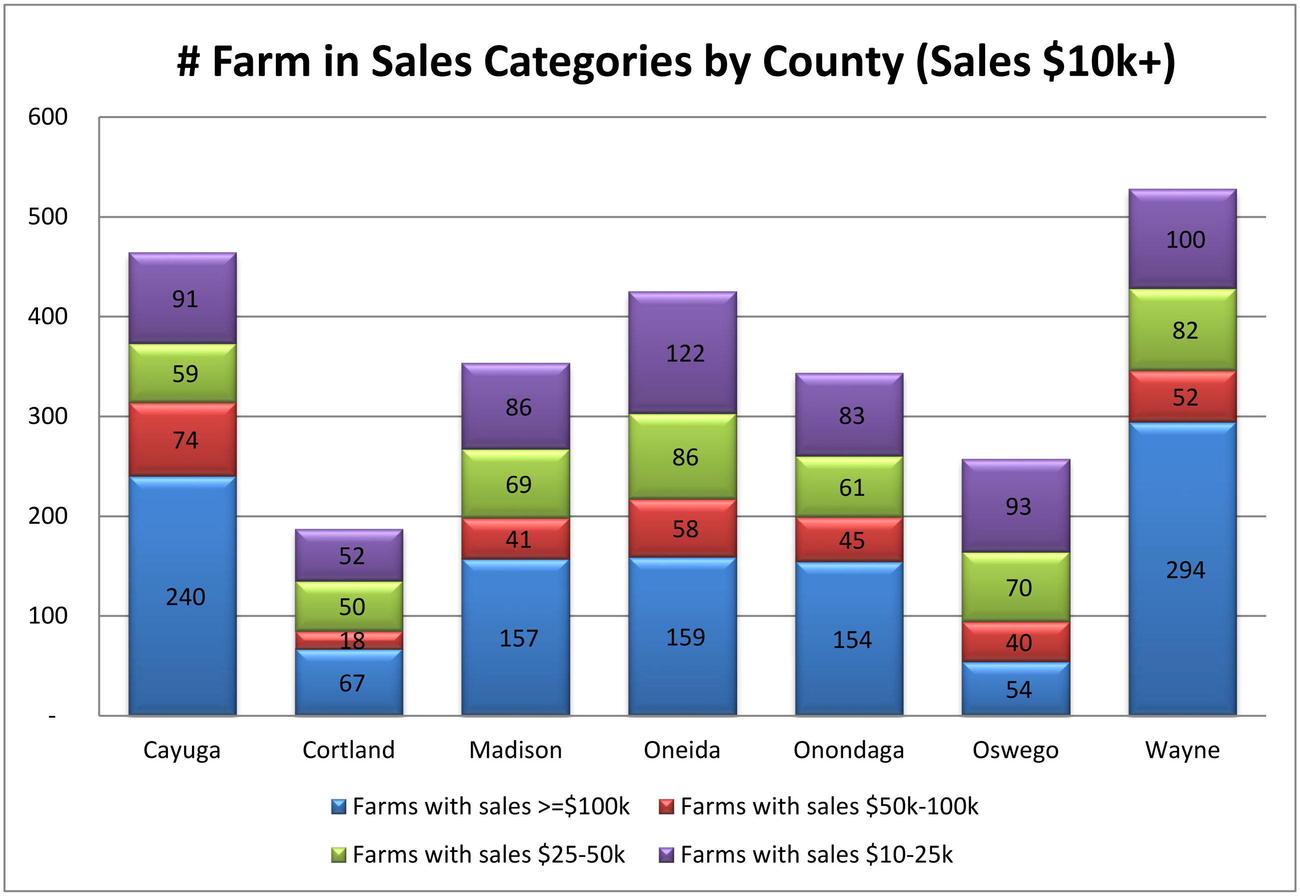


Figure 38. 2022 Census of Agriculture: CNYRM Counties with Number of Farms in Sales Categories

As shown in the figure labeled "2022 Census of Agriculture Crops Sales by County," Wayne County dominates the region for fruits, tree nuts, and berries, with sales of over $200 million, or 89% of the region's output. Wayne County also has the highest sales for vegetables, melons and potatoes, although its share is a more modest 28%. Oswego, Oneida, Onondaga, and Cayuga counties all have robust vegetable production, with sales at least $10 million.

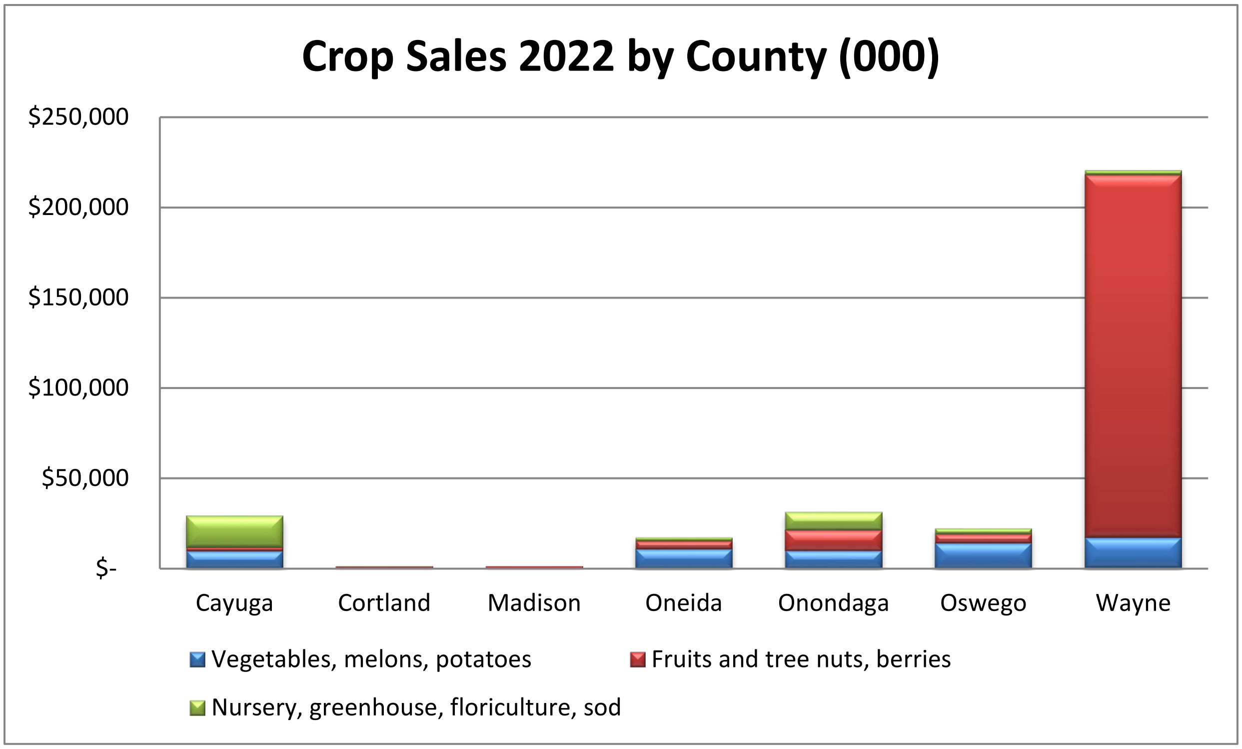


Figure 39. 2022 Census of Agriculture Crops Sales by County

Farmers in the region benefit from several co-ops and food processors, which facilitate sales to larger buyers such as Walmart and Wegmans. Regional Market farmers mentioned membership in Upstate New York Growers and Packers Cooperative in Clinton, NY, about 45 minutes east of Syracuse, and Eden Valley Growers, a co-op based in Erie County south of Buffalo. Upstate Growers and Packers was established in 2002 and includes over 20 active members. Its leadership includes farmers who sell at the Regional Market.

The *Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan*, issued in 2022, highlights numerous important issues affecting agricultural within the county. The plan recognizes that agriculture has become increasingly difficult and threatened in Onondaga County, with a decreasing population of farmers, loss of mid-sized farms, and pressures that remove land from production. The drop in the number of midsize farms is occurring while large farms are increasing in size.

The plan highlights some of Onondaga County's assets in food distribution, processing, and waste management, plus organizations such as the Onondaga County Agricultural Council and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The Regional Market is recognized as a key asset for the county's farmers and food producers.

Among its recommendations, the plan identifies opportunities to create a regional food hub, flash freezing, commercial kitchen, and produce processing. These ideas have all been integrated into the Regional Market revitalization strategy.

FoodPlan CNY notes that Central New York is one of the most important agricultural regions of the Northeast, in part because its farms and food manufacturers are just hours away from several major markets, including New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Toronto, and Montreal, and the more than 56 million residents in the Northeast. The plan highlights the importance of local food sources and distribution as a basic, secure source of food, noting how the pandemic revealed the fragility of the food supply during a time of crisis. The Regional Market is repeatedly mentioned in the report as one of the most critical assets of the regional food system.

Recommendations from *FoodPlan CNY* include:

- Strengthen the "middle" of the food system: rebuild the infrastructure and capacity of regional food distribution and processing
- Grow community-based, healthy food environments
- Create healthy, resilient environmental systems
- Expand public space and participation in the food system
- Coordinate food system projects, planning, and policy

These recommendations have all been integrated into the Regional Market revitalization strategy.

Vendor input on strategies

Vendors participated in a dot voting exercise in October 2024 to provide their input into various potential strategies for improving the Regional Market. About 50 vendors participated on Saturday and 20 on Sunday. Twelve potential strategies for improving the Regional Market were described in posters and the vendors were asked to identify the strategies that they felt were best for the Regional Market, as well as the ones that should not be pursued. Appendix I includes the twelve posters.

Each vendor was given three green dots to affix to the three posters that represent the best ideas worth pursuing; three yellow dots to put on posters with ideas worth more investigation, and three red dots to put on posters that should not be pursued. Participants were not required to affix all of their dots. To score the results, each green dot was worth three points, each yellow dot one point, and each red dot negative three points. Tallying all the responses, the charts below show the results divided between Saturday and Sunday participants.

Saturday 10/19/24			
Concept	**Opportunity**	**Score**	**Rank**
Concept 6	Upgrade sheds	120	1
Concept 8	Enhanced marketing	78	2
Concept 10	Daily retail	60	3
Concept 4	Shared kitchen	47	4
Concept 5	Wholesale farmers' market	36	5
Concept 11	Education	28	6
Concept 1	Distributor facilities	21	7
Concept 12	Public interest broker	21	7
Concept 3	Value-added facilities	17	9
Concept 2	Shared cold storage	6	10
Concept 9	Workforce development	-3	11
Concept 7	Produce auction	-62	12

Figure 40. Regional Market Vendor Saturday Input

Sunday 10/20/24			
Concept	**Opportunity**	**Score**	**Rank**
Concept 6	Upgrade sheds	24	1
Concept 10	Daily retail	15	2
Concept 5	Wholesale farmers' market	11	3
Concept 7	Produce auction	11	3
Concept 8	Enhanced marketing	10	5
Concept 11	Education	8	6
Concept 1	Distributor facilities	6	7
Concept 3	Value-added facilities	5	8
Concept 4	Shared kitchen	4	9
Concept 2	Shared cold storage	1	10
Concept 9	Workforce development	1	10
Concept 12	Public interest broker	-2	12

Figure 41. Regional Market Vendor Sunday Input

The vendors on both days clearly prefer investments into the existing sheds, as these were the two highest scoring ideas by far. They also want more marketing and daily retail. The vendors on Saturday (mainly farmers) expressed interest in a shared commercial kitchen at the Regional Market.

Competition and Trends Analyses

Competition

The Regional Market is by far the largest farmers' market in Central New York and the only one with permanent facilities. According to the USDA Local Foods Directory and online directories, there are several seasonal farmers' markets in the region that operate either once or twice per week, including:

- Downtown Syracuse at Clinton Square, Tuesdays 7 am - 3 pm
- Syracuse Eastside Farmers' Market, Wednesdays 2 - 6 pm
- DeWitt, Wednesdays 12 - 6 pm
- Cicero, Tuesdays 3 - 7 pm
- Fayetteville, Thursdays 11 am - 6 pm
- Skaneateles, Saturdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm and Thursdays 3 - 6 pm
- Side Track Farmers' Market, Clay
- Weedsport, Wednesdays 3 - 7 pm
- Moravia, Tuesdays 4 - 6 pm and Thursdays 10 am–2 pm
- Oswego, Thursdays 4 – 7:45 pm
- Fulton, Saturdays 8 am - 12 pm

Only two of these farmers' markets operate on Saturday mornings (Skaneateles and Fulton), typically the most popular day and time for farmers' markets across the country, likely because of the size and popularity of the Regional Market.

The region also has several farm stands, although key informants note that the number has dropped in recent years. While the competition from these locations has diminished at the retail level, farm stand operators had previously been substantial purchasers from farmers and produce distributors at the Regional Market so that wholesale trade has diminished, as well.

In addition to farmers' markets and farm stands, the Regional Market competes for consumer dollars with other places that sell groceries and prepared foods.

Today supermarkets and groceries dominate food retailing in the United States with 88.0% market share according to the 2022 Economic Census. The remaining food sales are captured by beer, wine and liquor stores (with 10.2% of the nation's food sales) and by specialty food stores, defined as stores that are primarily engaged in the retail sale of a single food category such as meat and seafood markets, dairy stores, candy and nut stores, and retail bakers (with 5.9% of sales). Nationally, the market share of specialty food stores at 5.9% decreased from 6.6% in 1980 but increased substantially from only 2.8% in 2017.

According to the 2022 Economic Census, Onondaga County had 261 food and beverage stores (NAICS code 445), with sales of $1.70 billion and 7,070 employees.[33] The largest share of stores was classified as grocery stores (NAICS 4451), with 179 stores and sales of $1.56 billion, or 91.5% of the total. The Economic Census counted only 23 specialty food stores (NAICS 4452) with sales of $19.7 million (1.2% of the total) and 59 beer, wine, and liquor stores (NAICS 4453) with sales of $124.6 million (7.3%).[34] These data indicate that Onondaga has greater concentration of grocery stores than the nation as a whole, perhaps suggesting that there is room to grow the number of specialty food stores.

National trends in historic public markets and food halls

The following are key trends that inform the planning for the Regional Market.

1. **Continued national interest in local foods and farm-to-table eating**. Consumers and food professionals have maintained a strong interest in locally grown and raised foods, with local products offered as points of differentiation by grocers and restaurants. Public markets often have tenants who are local growers and food producers, including day stall vendors or Farmers' markets that feature local producers, allowing the markets to benefit from this trend.
2. **Cooling off in the growth of farmers' markets**. The number of farmers' markets around the country grew rapidly for several decades but that growth has recently slowed. USDA maintains a national database of farmers' markets, with the number of markets in their database leveling off at about 8,800 nationally.

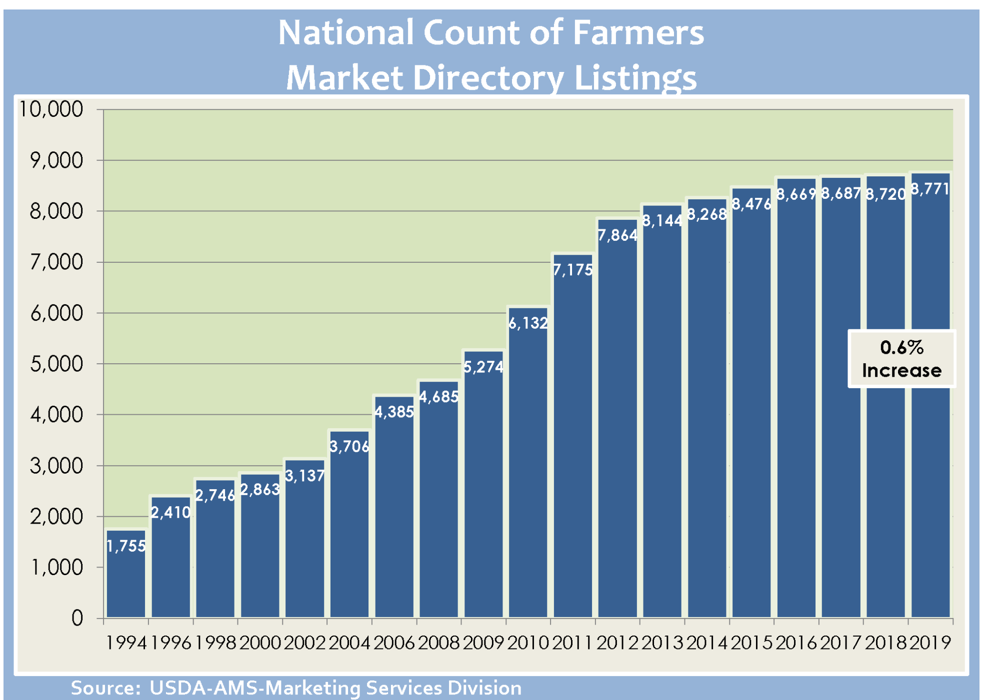


Figure 42 - USDA number of farmers' markets

33 [EC2244BASIC: Retail Trade: Summary ... - Census Bureau Table]
34 Data from the Economic Census accessed online at www.census.gov/econ/census.

3. **Explosion of privately developed and operated food halls**. Food halls, which feature local businesses selling prepared foods in a market-like setting, have been developed throughout the country, mainly by private developers. Cushman & Wakefield, a national real estate brokerage and advisory, predicts the creation of 6,000 food halls in the coming years. The only food hall in Syracuse is the Salt City Market, located in downtown. Unlike most privately developed, for-profit food halls, the Salt City Market is a mission driven concept created and operated by the Allyn Foundation to support diverse start-up entrepreneurs.
4. **Pandemic response**. The COVID pandemic affected businesses throughout the economy. Some impacts to public markets included:
   - Challenging disruption, especially for indoor markets designed for close social interaction. For indoor public markets, the closely packed aisleways and intense social interaction that had been perceived as benefits of the market experience became a liability.
   - Increased demand for groceries with reduced eating out. During the initial months of the pandemic, consumers rapidly altered their purchasing behaviors which led to increased grocery sales and decreased restaurant purchases. Public markets were designated as essential places and some merchants experienced increased sales. As the pandemic wanes, this trend has lessened.
   - Expanded use of technology for ordering and delivery, POS and purchasing. Some public markets adopted online ordering platforms with great success, responding to consumers' heightened interest and familiarity with these new technologies.
   - Markets became centers for emergency feeding and saw greater SNAP utilization. Some public markets played central roles in their communities' emergency response efforts and vendors also adapted to higher SNAP demand.
   - Pent-up demand for social spaces, particularly ones perceived to be safer such as outdoor settings. Consumers have come out of the pandemic with interest in finding safe social spaces.
5. **Focus on equity and diversity**. Discourse over equity and inclusion blossomed in the previous several years, with organizations and individuals exploring new ways to address inequities.

Detroit Eastern Market case study

Detroit's Eastern Market shares many similarities with the CNY Regional Market and has successfully launched a wide variety of improvements and innovations. A detailed case study is found in Appendix J.

Eastern Market, established in 1891, is a five-shed complex with 165,000 square feet of vendor space and four support structures on an 11-acre campus in the heart of Detroit. All five sheds are transient sales spaces where vendors come, set up, sell, tear down, and leave. Two of the sheds are enclosed while three are open on their sides.

Eastern Market transferred from city to nonprofit management in 2006. In addition to operating the city-owned buildings, Eastern Market Corporation (EMC) also plays a central role in planning and oversight for the larger Eastern Market District. This approximately 42-acre mixed-use urban district includes dozens of food retailers, restaurants, food manufacturers, and food distributors, as well as residential and service components.

Following the completion of several strategic planning efforts, EMC determined that its mission is to "Nourish a healthier, wealthier, and happier Detroit by providing access to fresh food, supporting local businesses, and fostering a sense of community." Key strategic objectives include:

1. **Promoting access to fresh food**: Ensuring Detroiters have access to affordable, nutritious, and locally sourced food through its iconic public market and other initiatives.
2. **Supporting local farmers and businesses**: Creating opportunities for small-scale farmers, food producers, and entrepreneurs by providing a vibrant space to sell their goods and connect with customers.
3. **Strengthening community and culture**: Serving as a hub for cultural events, art, and music to bring people together and celebrate Detroit's diversity and history.
4. **Encouraging economic growth**: Revitalizing the surrounding area by fostering job creation, entrepreneurship, and investment, focused on strengthening regional agriculture.

To revitalize its wholesale market, EMC identified the need for modern food distribution facilities. It created a pilot project to move three farmers who were selling on a wholesale basis from an open shed into a temporary produce distribution building with loading docks and refrigeration. Based on the pilot's success, the State of Michigan awarded Eastern Market a $12 million grant to build a dedicated food distribution center to serve the region's farmers. Together with an allocation of New Markets Tax Credits and several smaller philanthropic grants, EMC is investing nearly $16 million in an enlarged and improved permanent Shed 7 with a variety of facilities to serve large and medium-sized farmers from throughout the State of Michigan plus from northwest Ohio and southwest Ontario.

To support Eastern Market's retail activities and diversify income to keep rental rates for vendors affordable, EMC renovated the historic sheds, revised operations policies, added new retail market days, and promoted use of the sheds for events. Since 2007, four sheds have been renovated at a total cost of $19 million, plus $1.5 million for parking lot upgrades. The creation of a Community Kitchen in Shed 5 expanded EMC's food incubation work and allowed EMC to pilot cooking and nutrition programming.

While the Saturday Market has been strong, EMC has reconsidered how it operates and promotes retail markets on other days of the week since these days have never been as popular as Saturdays. For many years, the retail market operated on Tuesdays and Fridays, but these functioned at a tiny fraction of Saturdays. EMC added two new seasonal markets with some success, while a seasonal night market was attempted but failed to capture sustainable attendance.

Successful initiatives have included Flower Tuesdays, the Tuesday Health & Wellness Market, and Sunday Street Markets, which showcase local makers of products other than food, along with food trucks, some prepared food, and limited fresh foods. During each Sunday Street Market, EMC partners with a community organization to host popular events such as the Detroit Festival of Books (see the figure labeled "Detroit Festival of Books at Eastern Market"), Vegan Fest, Renaissance Faire, and food and drink-related events like the Detroit Burger Battle, Taco Showdown, and Bourbon & Blues Festival.

Figure 44. Detroit Festival of Books at Eastern Market

Use of the indoor sheds for events skyrocketed following their renovation. Eastern Market has become a popular spot for weddings, even though the space is not available on Saturday nights. Friday nights in spring and fall are often sold-out years in advance. See the figure labeled "Wedding at Eastern Market."


Figure 44. Wedding at Eastern Market

EMC has developed a variety of initiatives to support the region's farmers, including small batch processing and freezing facilities, boxed food programs, and construction of a grain mill. EMC has also created low-cost incubation space to support early-stage food entrepreneurs and affordable acceleration space for quickly growing food companies.

Finally, EMC has worked to improve the public realm of the market district, so it is safe, welcoming, and enjoyable for the public. In addition to operating the retail markets, key placemaking activities have included streetscape improvements, façade improvements, and public art. Of particular note is Eastern Market's mural program. In 2019 *Smithsonian Magazine* selected Murals in the Market as one of the six best mural festivals in the world.

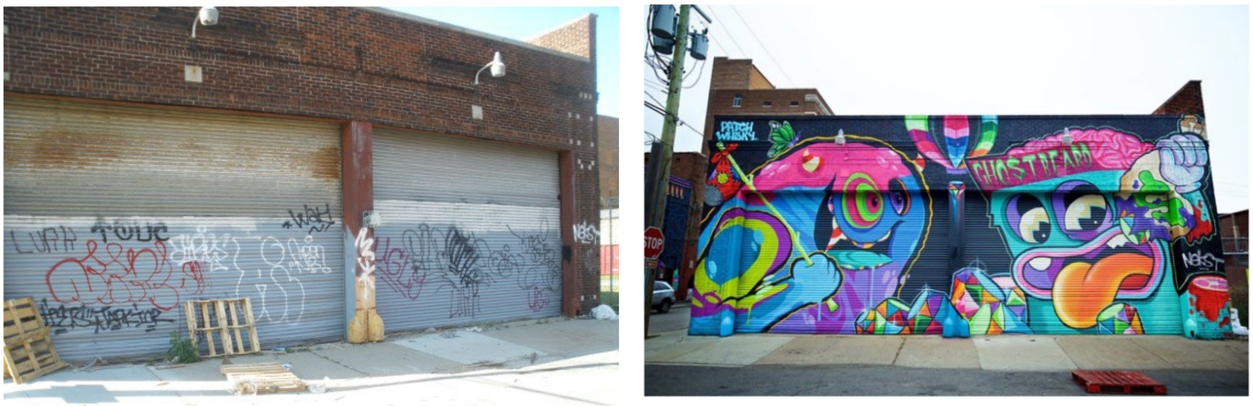


Figure 45. Murals in the Market at Eastern Market transformed graffiti-filled surfaces into works of art

EMC's operating budget ranges from \$5 to \$6 million per year. Approximately one-third is earned revenue from vendor fees, rental fees, or program income. The balance comes from a wide variety of sources including large philanthropy, individual giving, small family foundations, local, state, and federal grants, and corporate sponsorships. EMC's full-time professional staff has ranged from 23-28 people over the years.

Summary of Findings and SWOT Analysis

Key findings from the research and assessment

1. There is widespread community support for the Regional Market, as evidenced by the nearly 5,000 area residents who took the community internet survey, the tens of thousands of customers who visit the Regional Market each week, and the community and state leaders who recognize both the central role that the Regional Market currently plays in the local food system and its potential to further enhance farming and the lives of residents.
2. Customers cherish their connections with the farmers and other vendors, their social interactions with other customers, and the wide variety and quality of products available at the Regional Market. While they want to see improvements to the facilities and parking, they want to maintain the essential nature of the Regional Market as it currently exists. In addition to the wide range of produce and other fresh foods they get at the Market, customers want more foods to consume there, places to sit and eat, and extended hours of operation.
3. Based on recent demographic trends, demand for fresh and prepared foods in the region is projected to stay stagnant because of modest projected population decreases within a thirty-minute drive radius around the Regional Market. However, expected new high-tech manufacturing in the region could lead to substantial population gains and higher household incomes, and thereby stoke new demand by area consumers.
4. Agriculture in the Regional Market's seven-county region continues to be a major driver of the economy, with nearly 4,700 farms generating sales of $1.7 billion in 2022. Specialty crops, including vegetables, fruits, and nursery products, generated sales of $323 million in 2022, a 40% increase since 2017. The number of midsize farms is dropping, however, reinforcing the need for food marketing, aggregation, and distribution infrastructure such as the Regional Market.
5. The Regional Market's retail markets are either popular but stagnant (Saturday Farmers' Market) or in decline (Sunday Flea Market and Thursday Farmers' Market). Improvements to the sheds and parking areas, as well as investments in marketing and expanded product offerings, are needed to bolster the Saturday Farmers' Market. The Sunday and Thursday markets need to be reconceptualized and relaunched. The successful introduction of new market concepts at Detroit Eastern Market, centered around themes and operated in partnership with area organizations, provide a useful model for CNYRM.
6. At 50 acres, the Regional Market's campus is large and has substantial underutilized space that can be developed in ways that reinforce the Market's mission and increase revenue. The Market is well positioned along I-81 and has infrastructure to support development.
7. Utility upgrades, particularly electrical service and stormwater management, will need to be part of improvements to the Regional Market. There appears to be adequate drinking water, gas, and sewer capacity on the campus.
8. Vendors and customers strongly favor upgrades to the Regional Market's sheds, which require deferred maintenance and replacement of outdated and poorly performing infrastructure such as doors and heating systems.

9. Survey respondents who do not visit the Regional Market identified parking as the principle reason they do not come. Over a third of customers said that parking was not convenient. While steps should be taken to encourage use of alternative transportation, nearly all customers drive to the Regional Market so access, entrances, circulation, and parking are critical to its success. Potholes, confusing circulation routes, and conflicts between pedestrians and cars make the Regional Market feel unsafe and chaotic to visitors.
10. The Regional Market plays a critical role in food access for disadvantaged families, providing affordable fresh foods at an accessible urban location, and this role could increase following the example of other public markets. The Regional Market can play a larger role in supporting the community by offering cooking classes and nutrition education.
11. The three Commission Houses have long outlived their useful life as food distribution warehouses, yet longstanding businesses have survived despite the substandard facilities. To reach the Regional Market's potential to serve the agricultural community and to permit these local, multigenerational businesses to thrive, modern warehouses are needed for the produce distributors. The Commission Houses are interesting historical structures that can be repurposed for restaurants, retail, and event spaces once the produce distributors move into new facilities. These new uses can bring people to the Regional Market on a daily basis.
12. EO32 and other policies are driving demand for New York State grown and processed foods. New facilities elsewhere in New York State, such as the GrowNYC warehouse in the Bronx, will need fresh produce from Central and Western New York to meet the demand for local foods from NYC schools, institutions, restaurants, and retailers. The Regional Market is ideally positioned to aggregate and distribute these products if it has expanded distribution and production infrastructure.
13. While limited food processing takes place at the Regional Market at present, there is strong interest in adding food processing to support EO32 and the public schools' local food purchasing initiatives. Food processing can provide good paying jobs for residents with limited English proficiency while adding value to local agricultural products.
14. Stakeholders and several recent studies have identified the need for affordable cold storage and shared commercial kitchens to support food rescue organizations, individual farmers, and start-up entrepreneurs. The Regional Market provides an ideal location for these facilities.
15. While the Regional Market hosts some events, other public markets have much more extensive public and private event programs, from which they derive substantial revenue. Improvements to the A and C Sheds, upgraded outdoor spaces, adaptive reuse of a Commission House, and the addition of space to the Market Commons can provide a wide range of event and meeting spaces at the Regional Market.
16. The Regional Market can play a broader role in regional food marketing, helping to define and build the Central NY food brand, working in partnership with agricultural, tourism, cultural, education, and public health organizations.
17. The Regional Market is experiencing operating losses and high debt. It needs to make strategic investments and operational changes that will increase income and build management capacity to undertake revenue enhancing activities.

SWOT

The SWOT analysis (Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats) seeks to concisely state the Regional Market's existing strengths and weaknesses, and to reveal the opportunities for improvements and any potential threats to its future. This analysis sets the stage for the development principles, program, and design options.

Strengths

1. Site and facilities
    a. Long history, well known in the region
    b. Syracuse's centrality in state, city, and along major highway corridors
    c. Proximity to highway and well-traveled roads
    d. Large campus with substantial parking
    e. Distinctive historic structures
2. Farmers/vendors/tenants
    a. Multi-generational, longstanding businesses
    b. Large numbers of vendors who come from throughout New York State
    c. Strong agricultural region with diverse specialty crops
    d. Customers appreciate vendors' customer service
3. Customers
    a. Loyal customers from throughout the region
    b. Come for the shopping experience
    c. Diverse, including many New Americans
    d. Large SNAP and DoubleUp Food Bucks usage
4. Leadership and partnerships
    a. New leadership and experienced site management
    b. Public officials dedicated to the Regional Market's success
    c. Tenants' history of partnerships and service to schools and other institutions

Weaknesses

1. Site
    a. Entrance experience confusing
    b. Chain fast-food restaurant sends opposite signal of quality local foods
    c. Circulation and parking feel chaotic
    d. Deteriorated pavement and potholes
    e. Security fences illogical and ineffective
    f. Perceived by some as dangerous (homeless, some vandalism)
    g. Vacant and deteriorated buildings near Market
2. Facilities
    a. Aged facilities; Commission Houses highly inefficient, outdated, deteriorated
    b. Delayed maintenance on sheds and other structures
    c. Lack of ADA accessibility
    d. Leaky windows and doors
    e. Welcome center lacks signage
    f. Overgrown landscape

    g. Vacancies, particularly 513 Hiawatha Boulevard East
3. Customers
    a. Confusion about which products are locally and which are imports
    b. Reports of falling patronage, particularly on Thursdays and Sundays
    c. Lack of new customers, visitors
4. Vendors
    a. Few food service offerings
    b. Thursday market small
    c. Sunday market shrinking
    d. Some tenants not related to mission
5. Leadership and partnerships
    a. Token program challenges: running out of tokens, location of office, long lines
    b. Historically, limited engagement with community and government partners
6. Finance
    a. Previously, unrealistic budgeting
    b. High debt load
    c. Decreasing income from Sunday flea market and Thursday farmers' market
    d. Substantial operating losses in last few years

Opportunities

2. Site and facilities
    a. Large campus with substantial unused land
    b. Repurpose historic commission houses for food service, events
    c. Interest in educational and community gardens
3. Customers
    a. Expected population growth in Inner Harbor and in region
    b. State mandate for local food purchasing
    c. Ongoing consumer/restaurant interest in local foods
    d. Capture more SNAP spending
    e. Interest in educational programming
4. Farmers/vendors
    a. Size and diversity of regional ag sector, farmland availability
    b. Tenants looking to expand with private investment
    c. Ethnic food portal with immigrants
    d. Distribution hub for central and western New York farmers to NYC, especially with GrowNYC
5. Leadership
    a. CNYRMA can own and develop facilities throughout region
    b. Can issue bonds and acquire property
    c. Multiple potential funding sources: state, federal, county, philanthropies, bonds, tax credits
6. Partnerships
    a. Programming and events
    b. Support for farmers and small businesses
    c. Food rescue could grow with cold storage
    d. Potential resource hub for food and agriculture-based organizations

Threats

1. High current debt load could lead to financial struggles
2. Further building deterioration and associated liabilities
3. Car/pedestrian conflicts
4. Loss of agricultural land and farmers
5. Continued loss of wholesalers without modern facilities

Development and Design Principles

Development principles

The development principles lay the foundation for the revitalization strategy by enunciating high-level objectives. The proposed strategies will adhere to these development principles. Based on the research and analysis, the following development principles are proposed:

1. Strengthen the Regional Market's key brand attributes around fresh, local, healthy food sold by area farmers and independent locally owned businesses.
2. Maintain the Regional Market as a welcoming public space for its diverse constituencies.
3. Make the Regional Market an active and vibrant place seven days a week.
4. Diversify the Regional Market's income sources to ensure rents and fees are affordable for farmers and small businesses while generating adequate funds for ongoing maintenance and improvements.
5. Create facilities that support the evolving marketing, production, and distribution needs of the region's farmers.
6. Ensure investments, tenants, and programs enhance the Regional Market's mission.
7. Encourage the use of alternative transportation.
8. Minimize disruption to operations during construction.
9. Reduce operating costs, particularly energy with more efficient systems and energy generation.
10. Build management's capacity for development at the Regional Market and eventually for projects around the region.

Design principles

The design principles provide a strategic approach to physical improvements to the Regional Market. The proposed design recommendations will adhere to these design principles:

1. Preserve and upgrade the historic structures for greater functionality, comfort, and efficiency.
2. Create modern food aggregation, distribution, and processing facilities in line with current codes and best industry practices.
3. Maintain the interaction between the retail and wholesale markets.
4. Improve connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods and properties.
5. Enhance the pedestrian experience by making pedestrian and vehicular circulation safer and logical, improving the parking experience and encouraging alternative transportation.
6. Create compelling spaces for educational and event programming.

Revitalization Strategies & Program Elements

Based on the research, stakeholder input, and the development and design principles, the consultant team developed four core strategies to guide investment in the Regional Market:

- Strategy 1: Construct modern food distribution and production facilities that meet the current needs of farmers, wholesalers, and buyers.
- Strategy 2: Upgrade and expand the Regional Market's retail facilities while preserving the distinctive customer experience.
- Strategy 3: Turn the Regional Market into a branding and educational center for New York food and agriculture.
- Strategy 4: Build the capacity for future development by establishing a nimble and robust ability to invest in additional food production, distribution, and marketing opportunities that serve the region's farmers and the community.

These four strategies are detailed below.

The team created two rendered site plans (see Appendix 1 of this document), which identify the recommendations for physical improvements to the Regional Market. Site Plan Option A maintains the current configuration of NBT Bank Parkway while Option B shows its relocation. Snippets of the plans are incorporated within the description of each strategy, below.

Strategy 1: Construct modern production and distribution facilities

Construct food distribution warehouses

Food distribution warehouses play a central role in supporting the region's farmers and food producers and can play an even greater role with new elements such as shared cold storage, all of which will support the governor's initiative to increase local food purchasing by state agencies. Various studies have highlighted the importance of these functions to the region. The existing Commission Houses do not meet current food handling requirements and cannot be transformed into modern facilities.

Figure 46 - Food Distribution Warehouse Location

The north side of campus can accommodate two food distribution warehouses of approximately the same size. The proposed first phase, a warehouse of about 40,000 sf, would meet the needs of the Regional Market's existing tenants and provide space for shared cold storage. The location and configuration are shown in the figure labeled "Food Distribution Warehouse Location." A second warehouse can be constructed once commitments for additional leased space have been secured.

At their proposed locations, one side of each warehouse will face the historic sheds, keeping the important connection between wholesaling and retailing at the Regional Market. Like the side of the Commission Houses facing Farmers Market Place, this southern façade constitutes the warehouses' "front door" where the produce distributors can service buyers arriving by car and van. The northern façade, facing Tex Simone Drive, is conceived as the "back door" that accommodates large delivery vehicles.

As shown in the figure labeled "Plan View of Food Distribution Warehouse," the Phase 1 warehouse is designed with seven bays, each measuring 48 ft wide and 120 ft long, or 5,760 sf, plus a 20 ft wide covered outdoor space (adding 960 sf to each bay) facing south. Large truck access is from Tex Simone Drive while smaller wholesale buyers and retail customers have access from the south side of the building, along with nearby parking. Each bay's 48 ft width can accommodate four truck loading stations at the rear of the warehouse (facing Tex Simone Drive).

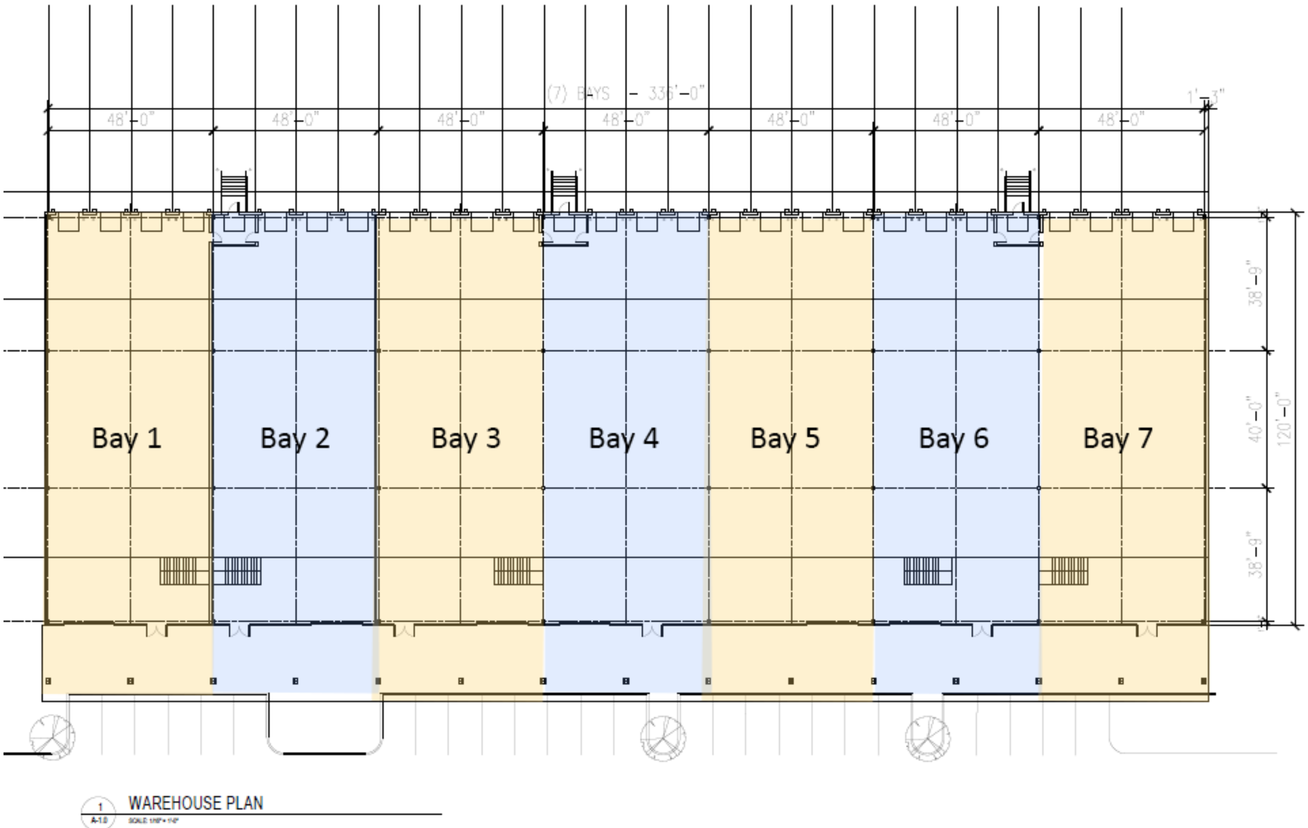


Figure 47 - Plan View of Food Distribution Warehouse

As shown in the figure labeled “Section View of Food Distribution Warehouse,” recommended design features include:

- Building height of approximately 30 ft to permit four-high rack systems, greatly expanding the distributors’ capacity compared to their current, fragmented, single-story coolers.
- Truck access to the warehouses from Tex Simone Drive, removing truck traffic from the center of the Regional Market. Large trucks will never need to traverse the core of the Regional Market.
- Loading docks with sealed entrances and adjustable lifts to accommodate trucks of all sizes, including semi-trailers.
- Temperature controlled loading zone to maintain the cold chain, of adequate size to accommodate offloading of an entire semi-trailer for product inspection before the pallets are transferred to the storage racks or “cross docked” to other trucks without storing.
- Architecturally interesting façade facing the sheds, providing a harmonious design relationship between the warehouses and the Regional Market’s retail zone.
- Glass façade and a canopy system on the southern side to provide weather protection and

support small scale buyers who currently pick up from the distributors in vans and cars. The design concept for the canopy includes Douglas fir purlins and wood decking on a painted steel frame, with a green roof on top.

- Second-story offices with windows facing the sheds to the south.
- Solar panels and perhaps wind turbines on top of the warehouse, plus rainwater capture.
- Due to unstable soils, the structural engineer has preliminarily identified “controlled modulus column rigid inclusions” to allow the use of conventional shallow foundations and spread footings in lieu of piles, pile caps, and grade beams. These columns would be spaced every 6-8 ft across the site and be somewhere between 45-81 ft in depth, where they terminate in the glacial till level. While this approach was used for cost estimating, test borings and additional analysis will be needed to determine the right approach.

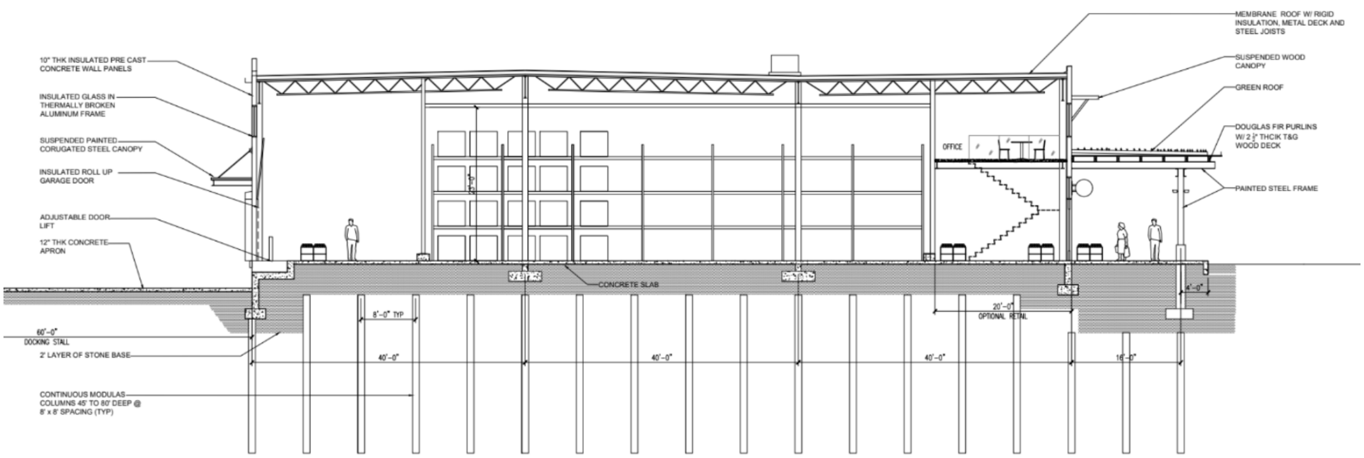


Figure 48. Section View of Food Distribution Warehouse

The figure labeled “Artist's Rendering of Food Distribution Warehouse” illustrates elements of the proposed design, including rooftop solar panels, a green roof on the canopy, and second story office windows facing the center of campus.

The new facility will greatly improve the efficiency of tenant operations and increase the produce distributors’ capacity. For example, both Guinta Produce and Russo Produce currently lease non-contiguous spaces in the Commission Houses. Russo Produce works out of 16 different walk-in coolers, ranging in size from 200 to 800 sf. One of the proposed bays, at 5,706 sf, has more cubic feet of cold storage than either Guinta Produce or Russo Produce currently use, at less than half the square footage, and all in one location.

The proposed development approach is for the Regional Market to construct the warehouse core and shell, with each tenant responsible for interior fit-out, utility distribution within the building, and HVAC systems, including cold storage. This will allow the businesses to configure their cold storage rooms and the height and positioning of rack systems as they prefer. Given substantial tenant investments, the leases will need to be adequately long to amortize the investment.

For the shared cold storage facility, the Regional Market could construct and operate the facility or a tenant could operate it under guidelines established by the Regional Market.

Figure 49. Artist's Rendering of Food Distribution Warehouse

Construct food processing facilities

Like the distribution warehouse function, food processing has been identified as a critical way to support the region's farming community. Processing facilities should be geared to adding value to locally grown foods, including washing/packing, food service and consumer branded packaging, IQF (individual quick freeze), and cooking/manufacturing. Food production businesses can provide substantial employment opportunities with well-paying, blue-collar positions, often suitable for people with limited English language proficiency. New food processing capacity is critical to supply the tens of millions of dollars in demand by institutional buyers because of the EO32 local food purchasing mandate.

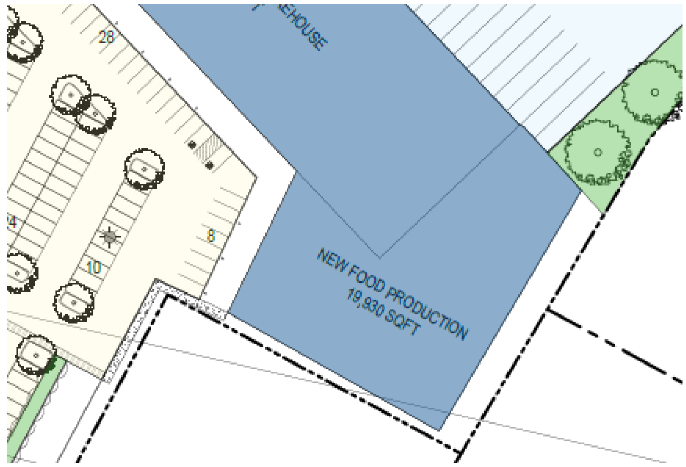


Figure 51 - Food Production Facility

Existing tenants at the Regional Market are looking to introduce food processing activities. Russo Produce is partnering with the Onondaga County Department of Health and the Syracuse City School District on a project to supply public schools with high demand products (such as pizza) which will be made with New York State sourced ingredients in support of the governor's 30% NYS Initiative for school meal programs. Russo Produce and its partners want to lease an approximately 20,000 sf food production facility that will include packing, IQF, and a production kitchen.

An approximately 20,000 sf warehouse is proposed for the eastern side of the first distribution warehouse, with the expectation that Russo Produce will rent the bays at this end of the distribution warehouse and connect directly to the food production facility (see figure labeled "Food Production Facility"). As shown in the artist's rendering above, this building is conceptualized as being less tall than the food distribution facility since food production requires ground level space.

Over time, the Regional Market should

Figure 50 - Additional Food Production Sites

house multiple food processing facilities. The site plans identify several sites where food processing buildings should be located. As shown in the figure labeled "Additional Food Production Sites," the site plan shows two warehouses of approximately 19,000 sf each on the currently unused land to the east of the Commission Houses. A food production facility can also be constructed on the west side of the proposed food distribution warehouse if the NBT Bank Parkway is relocated.

Construct a shared kitchen facility

Stakeholders and previous reports called for creation of a shared kitchen at the Regional Market. This facility could be operated by the Regional Market and offer an incubator program to assist start-ups. Numerous public markets around the country have these types of facilities, including Detroit Eastern Market, Findlay Market in Cincinnati, and Grand Rapids Downtown Market. They typically range in size from 2,500-10,000 sf.

One type of shared commercial kitchen is the "ghost kitchen," which provides production space for food service operations that offer only delivery or pick-up service but no dining rooms. A ghost kitchen may be rented by existing restaurants seeking to expand their delivery business, by restaurateurs seeking to introduce new restaurant concepts, and by start-ups who do not have the capital to invest in their own brick-and-mortar restaurants. The number of ghost kitchens grew rapidly during the pandemic and they remain popular in cities throughout the country. With the closing of the commissary kitchen operated in tandem with Salt City Market, no ghost kitchen currently exists in Syracuse and businesses from that facility are eager for a comparable space. The proposed outdoor eating areas could accommodate diners who pick up food from the ghost kitchen.

There are many benefits for start-up food businesses to be affiliated with a shared commercial kitchen at the Regional Market. Specialty food producers and prepared food businesses will have access to sell their products at the retail markets and can work with the food distributors to assist with product distribution. Food service start-ups could provide catering services in the Regional Market's event spaces. The potential to connect with organizations that partner with the Regional Market to support entrepreneurs, discussed in Strategy 3 below, will also benefit incubator businesses.

Realign NBT Bank Parkway

The consultant team prepared two site plan options for the orientation of the new food warehouses, production facilities and shared kitchen buildings, with differing alignment of roadways to accommodate them, each with their own benefits and drawbacks. Option A, which is shown in the figure labeled "Site Plan Option A: Maintain NBT Bank Parkway Configuration," leaves NBT Bank Parkway in place. This option maintains existing circulation routes and eliminates the construction cost and the legal and political process of road relocation (NBT Bank Parkway is a City of Syracuse right-of-way and the realignment would require City approvals). Drawbacks include the physical separation between the two warehouse distribution buildings (which limits the ability of the distributors to interact), the need for vendors and customers to cross the four-lane parkway, and the limited customer parking to the north of the F Shed.

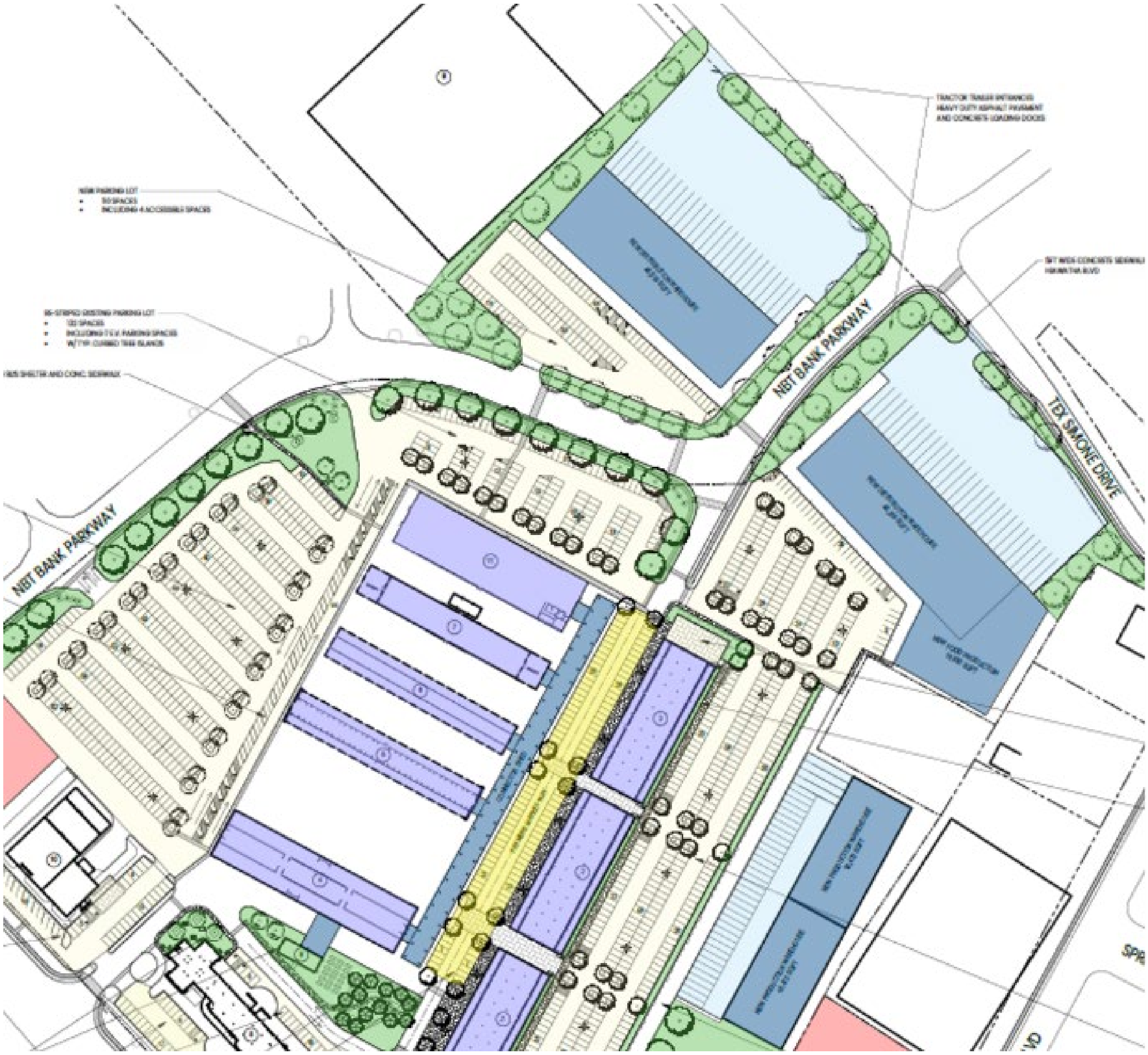


Figure 52. Site Plan Option A: Maintain NBT Bank Parkway Configuration

Site Plan Option B, shown in the figure labeled "Site Plan Option B: Realign NBT Bank Parkway," proposes the realignment of NBT Bank Parkway and Farmers Market Place. The benefits of realignment include:

- A more integrated campus that facilitates interaction between the various wholesalers
- Improved connections between the wholesalers and the retail markets
- Larger contiguous parking area to the north of the F Shed.
- Creation of a continuous driveway around all of the parking areas

The downside would be additional cost and the disruption caused by construction. The consultant team's cost estimator put the cost of materials and labor for roadway realignment at approximately $500,000. Depending on how the realignment project is designed and managed, overhead costs could add about 50% more cost.

Since the first wholesale distribution warehouse and food production facility can be constructed without realigning the roadways, the roadway realignment could happen in a later construction phase.

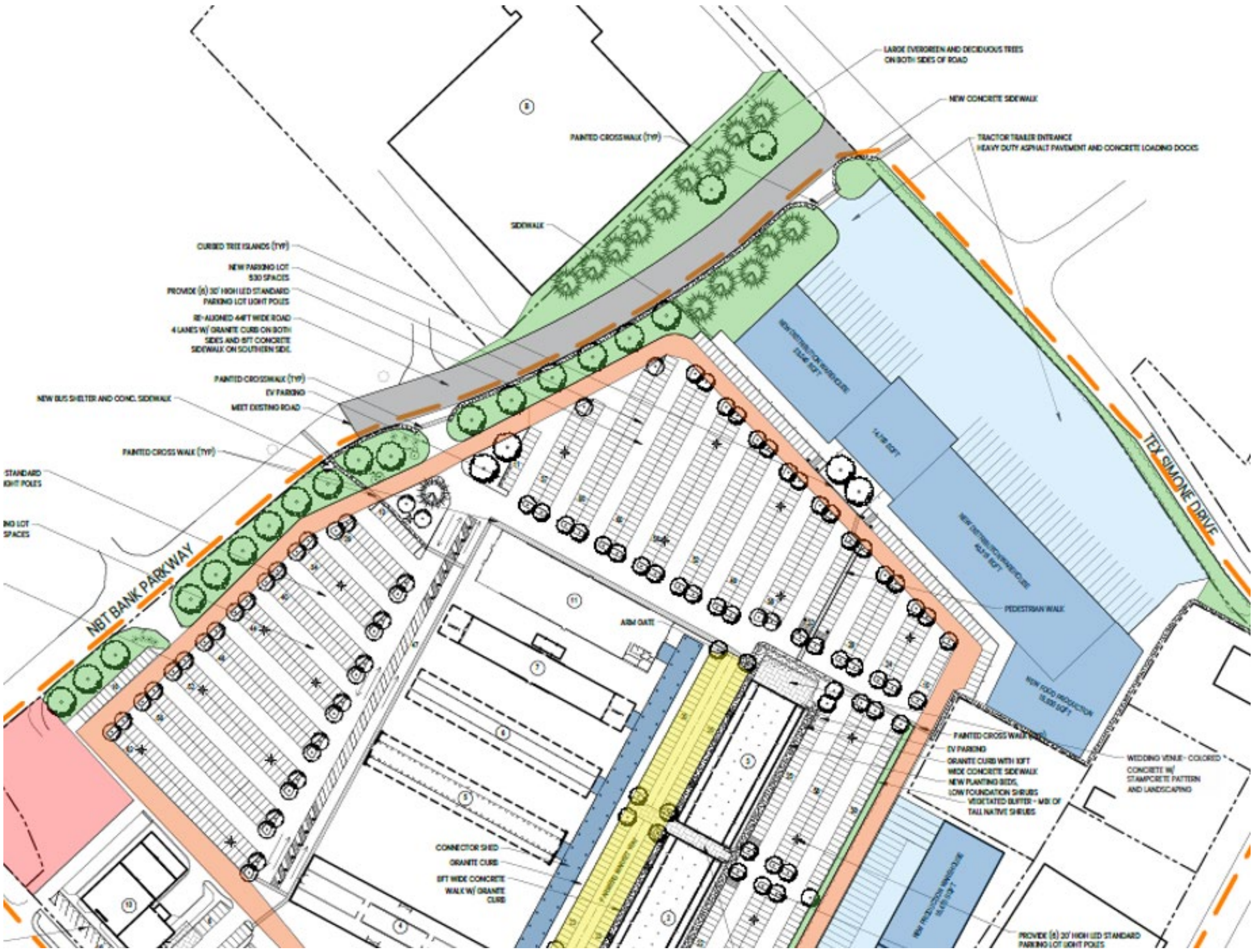


Figure 53. Site Plan Option B: Realign NBT Bank Parkway

Upgrade infrastructure and utilities

➢ **Electricity**

The Regional Market requires a new approach to distributing electricity throughout the campus and ensuring there is adequate power to operate the new cold storage facilities. The Regional Market has retained C&S Engineers to assess the electrical needs in detail and work with National Grid to create a campus-wide electrical plan.

National Grid has indicated that there is adequate capacity on poles around the campus. They have proposed eliminating the current centralized approach, which uses antiquated equipment, and instead feed the campus from multiple points on the periphery. National Grid can utilize public incentives to improve the grid if the Regional Market allows electric car charging stations to be installed. C&S Engineers is studying the centralized vs. distributed approach.

The new warehouses will require substantial power so every effort should be made to ensure efficiency and explore ways to generate energy on site. The Regional Market currently has a limited solar array on the C Shed roof, but Market management reports that the panels are not all operational and are likely obsolete. New opportunities for solar as well as wind power should be explored as the project moves into engineering and design, as well as technologies that capture the heat being generated by the refrigeration systems and technologies such as geothermal that could be installed while the parking areas are replaced. Ideally, the Regional Market could become a carbon neutral campus.

- **Drinking water and wastewater infrastructure**

Based on information collected during the site investigation, the Regional Market has adequate infrastructure and capacity for water and sewer. The introduction of food processing facilities and additional food service might significantly increase flow over current levels so this issue will need to be considered as development moves forward.

- **Stormwater**

As can be seen in photos and site plans, the 50-acre campus is mainly impervious surfaces. Large open parking lots, if not designed and managed properly, can be detrimental to stormwater quality and affect nearby waterways. Since the Regional Market's original construction, standards for onsite stormwater management have evolved and existing infrastructure likely does not meet current standards.

Multiple stakeholders mentioned that water pools after rainstorms, pointing to the need for improvements. The proposed repaving throughout the campus provides opportunities to address any stormwater issues, perhaps with pervious asphalt or other techniques. The new buildings can also incorporate rainwater capture, with the water then used for landscape watering and other "gray water" purposes. The Authority is encouraged to explore improved stormwater management and use of green infrastructure solutions throughout the site.

- **Wireless internet service**

Some vendors reported that wireless internet service is spotty around the Regional Market. Customers increasingly do not carry cash and expect to pay for all purchases with credit cards or electronic payments.[35] To encourage vendors to accept credit cards and better serve customers, the Regional Market should provide reliable internet service or ensure there is strong (5G) cell phone service.

35 According to Pew Research Center, 41% of people in 2022 reported not using cash for any purchases in the prior week. The rate has nearly doubled since 2015. Higher income households are more likely to eschew cash, with nearly 60% of people earning $100,000 or more not using cash. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/10/05/more-americans-are-joining-the-cashless-economy/

- **Solid waste management**

At present, the Regional Market's management is responsible for minimal solid waste because the farmers' market vendors are required to take unsold products back with them and the Regional Market's wholesalers and other leasehold businesses are responsible for their own waste management. Some of the produce wholesalers collect compostable waste.

If the food production facilities create additional compostable food waste, the nearby Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) has the capacity to process food waste so on-site composting solutions are not needed.

Strategy 2: Upgrade and expand retail facilities

The farmers, vendors, and customers who use the Regional Market want to see improvements to the sheds and retail visitor experience, without eroding the attributes that make the Regional Market unique and beloved. The following recommendations address their principle concerns and deferred maintenance needed to keep the infrastructure in safe and operable condition, while also making the Regional Market more accessible from adjacent neighborhoods and more pedestrian oriented.

Maintain and upgrade the sheds

The Regional Market's sheds need investment to preserve the structures, address deferred maintenance, and improve their comfort and functioning for vendors and customers. These improvements do not alter the essential historic character of the sheds or the cherished shopping experience.

At present, the garage doors on the A and C sheds are solid structures. See the figures labeled "A Shed with Closed Garage Doors" and "C Shed with Closed Garage Doors." When the doors are closed, the interior spaces are dark, particularly for the C Shed which does not have clerestory windows as the A Shed does.

The consultant team recommends replacing the garage doors with new ones that are predominately glass, thereby improving sight lines through the sheds and making them more attractive spaces for events. Properly designed and installed

Figure 54. A Shed with Closed Garage Doors

Figure 55. C Shed with Closed Garage Doors

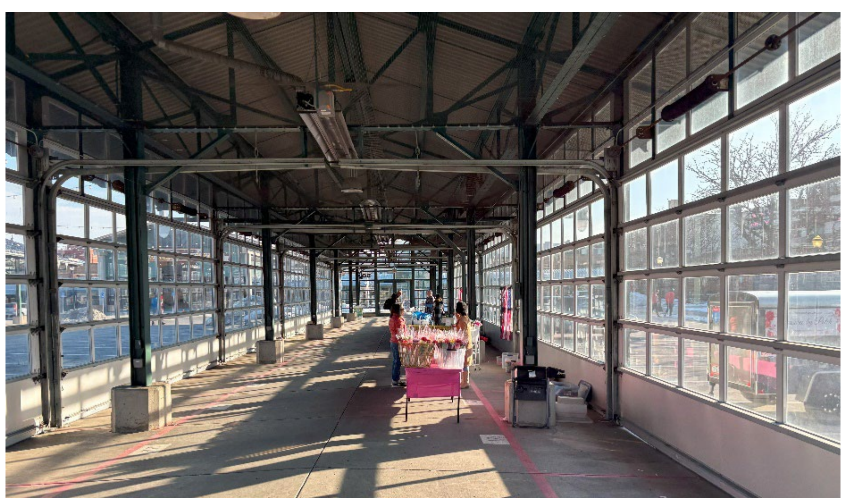


Figure 56. Garage Doors at Historic City Market in Kansas City

garage doors will also greatly reduce wind drafts. The figured labeled “Garage Doors at Historic City Market in Kansas City” shows the recommended approach as a similar historic public market.

In addition to aesthetic reasons, the garage doors on C Shed should be replaced because the current system for raising and holding the doors open appears structurally deficient and could present safety issues. See figure labeled “C Shed with Open Garage Doors,” which shows the hydraulic arms that hold the doors open.

Figure 57. C Shed with Open Garage Doors

The table labeled “Shed Upgrades and Maintenance Needs” identifies improvements needed for each shed. Improvements to the A and C sheds can enhance their functioning as event spaces as well as farmers’ market venues.

The consultant team prepared a rendering of the C Shed to show the impact of replacing the garage doors with a glass system, upgrading the entrance doors, and adding a more prominent sign to identify the structure.

Figure 58. Artist's Rendering of C Shed Improvements

		Shed				
Category	Item	A	C	D	E	F
Structural	Brickwork, columns, foundations	Repair exterior brick & foundation; paint	Repair exterior brick & foundation; paint	n/a	Repair exterior brick & foundation	Treat columns for corrosion
Architectural	Doors & frames: entrance, garage/overhead	Replace entrance frames and doors; replace ALL overhead doors	Replace entrance frames and doors; explore roll-up garage doors with frames	n/a	Replace entrance frames and doors; replace ALL overhead doors	Repair overhead and entry doors
Architectural	Roof/gutters	Paint & re-seal roof				Determine plan for roof
Architectural	Slabs/foors	Reseal asphalt floor	Reseal asphalt floor	Reseal asphalt floor	Clean concrete floor	Paint concrete floor
Architectural	Restrooms, storage	n/a	n/a	n/a	Upgrade both bathrooms	Restore to original specs (2013)
Architectural	Painting	Paint all walls & beams	Paint all walls and steel structure	Paint all metal structures	Paint all interior and exterior	Interior painting
MEP	Electrical, solar, lighting	Repair & change lights	Upgrade lights as needed	Finish lighting upgrades, remove old lights	Upgrade lights as needed	Upgrade to LED lighting
MEP	AV/IT	Internet, cameras, audiospeakers, building control systems				
MEP	Fire protection/sprinkler	-	-	-	-	TBD
MEP	Heating/ventilation	Repair heating units; upgrade fans	Replace & repair existing heating units;	-	Repair as needed	Clean/repair heating units; address openings
Site	Resurfacing/striping	Restripe all floors				-
Identity	Signage	Design wayfinding system; install signage				

Table 14. Shed Upgrades and Maintenance Needs

Repurpose Commission Houses

Once the current tenants are relocated to the new food distribution warehouses, the historic Commission Houses should be repurposed for events, food and beverage operations, and retail stores. These changes will improve the experience for existing customers and attract new visitors, provide opportunities for local entrepreneurs, diversify and increase income for the Regional Market, and bring more activity throughout the week and year.

The Commission Houses are attractive historic warehouses with interesting brick walls, steel beams, clerestory lighting, and wood ceilings. The two figures labeled “Commission House Interior” provide recent images of the interior spaces.

Commission House 1 is closest to Park Street and the best retail location. Commission House

1 has a gross area of 13,360 sf and Commission House 2 has a gross area of 16,345 sf. The new uses in Commission Houses 1 and 2 are proposed to be active retail functions such as a brewpub, distillery, restaurant, and food retail such as coffee shop, bakery, fish market, and butcher shop. The loading docks facing Farmers Market Place can be reconfigured for outdoor seating and dining areas, as well as outdoor merchandising. Several current vendors in the farmers' market expressed interest in retail spaces at the Regional Market.

Figure 59 - Commission House Interior 1

Industrial spaces such as these have become popular wedding venues in many cities and the historic and unique character of the space should make it very popular. Commission House 3 has a gross area of 15,400 sf and is envisioned as a flexible event space for weddings, parties, and meetings with a catering kitchen, restrooms, bride's room, and storage. A small outdoor area on the north side of the building is recommended to be a place designed for wedding ceremonies or cocktail hours. The loading dock facing Farmers Market Place can become valuable exterior space for cocktail parties and for event guests seeking a break from the party.

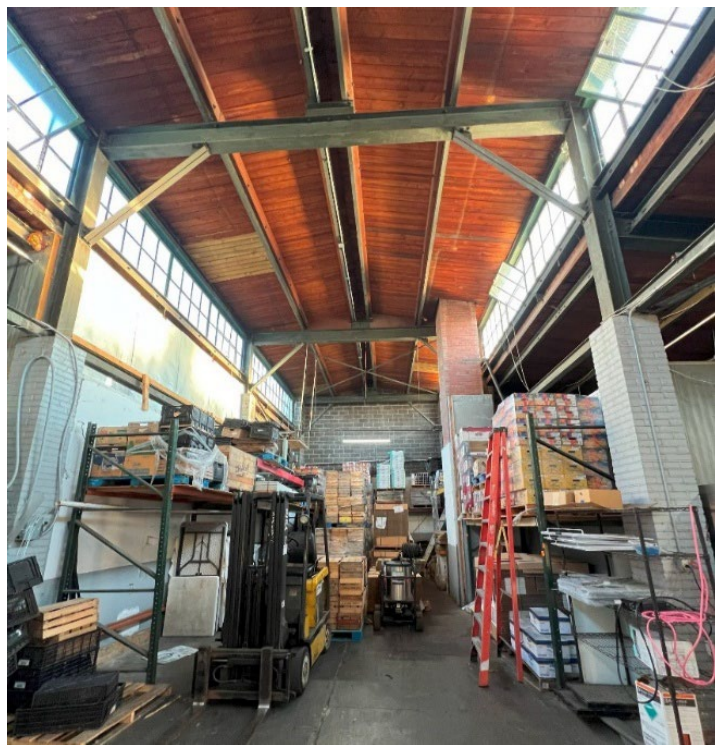


Figure 60 –Commission House Interior 2

The adaptive reuse potential of these buildings can be seen in the figure labeled "Artist's Rendering of a Repurposed Commission House Interior." The structural engineer determined that the existing walls are not load bearing so they can be removed to create the desired open space.

Based on their age, condition, and unique design, the Commission Houses are likely good candidates for historic preservation tax credits. Improvements to the buildings will therefore need to be designed by an experienced historic preservation architect and in conformance with preservation guidelines. Since the use of the buildings will change, they will also need to meet different building code standards, perhaps requiring structural enhancements to meet these requirements.

Figure 61 - Artist's Rendering of a Repurposed Commission House Interior

Construct a connector shed

The proposed connector shed provides a covered walkway between the sheds along their eastern ends. This route is currently used most frequently by shoppers as they walk from one shed to another. The placement of the proposed shed is shown in the figure labeled "Connector Shed and Farmers Market Place."

The purposes of the connector shed include:

- Provide shelter from inclement weather.
- Create a more intimate, pedestrian-scale environment between the sheds and the Commission Houses, enhancing the functioning and experience of Farmers Market Place.
- Provide additional covered vending space as well as covered gathering and sitting space, which will serve the proposed food trucks on Farmers Market Place.

The proposed design for the connector shed, at an early conceptual level, is found in the figure labeled "Connector Shed Design Concept."

Design elements include:

- Simple geometry and minimal embellishment, intended to enhance and not compete with the architecture of the historic sheds.
- A height of 14.5 ft to the underside of the roof, providing adequate clearance for farmers' trucks to pass underneath.
- An overall length of approximately 560 feet, stretching from A to F Sheds.
- Rooftop solar panels.
- Decorative rainwater downspouts.

The connector shed can be constructed in segments, if necessary. The first phase should connect the A and C Sheds, since these are most functional for evening and winter events.

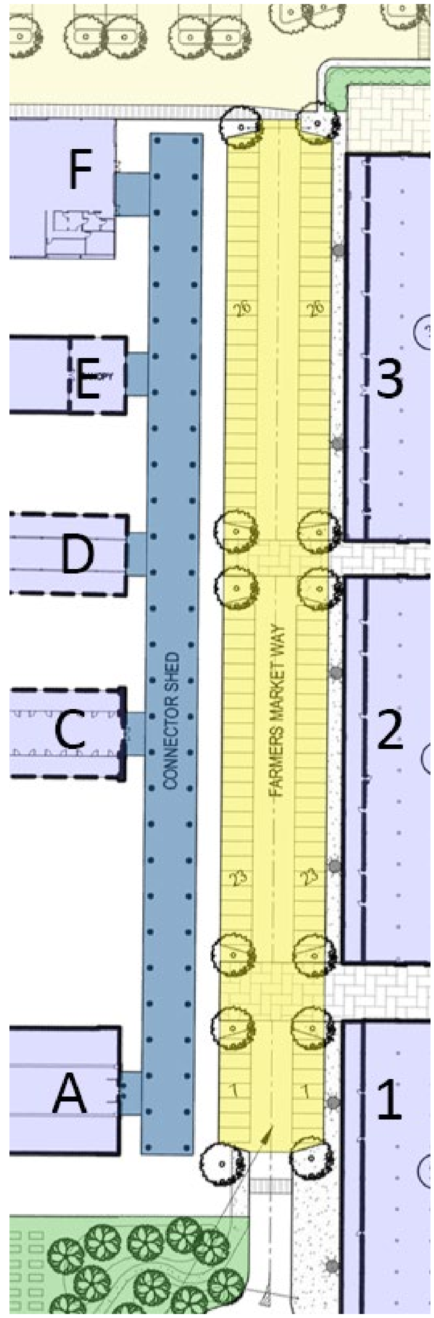


Figure 62 - Connector Shed and Farmers Market Place

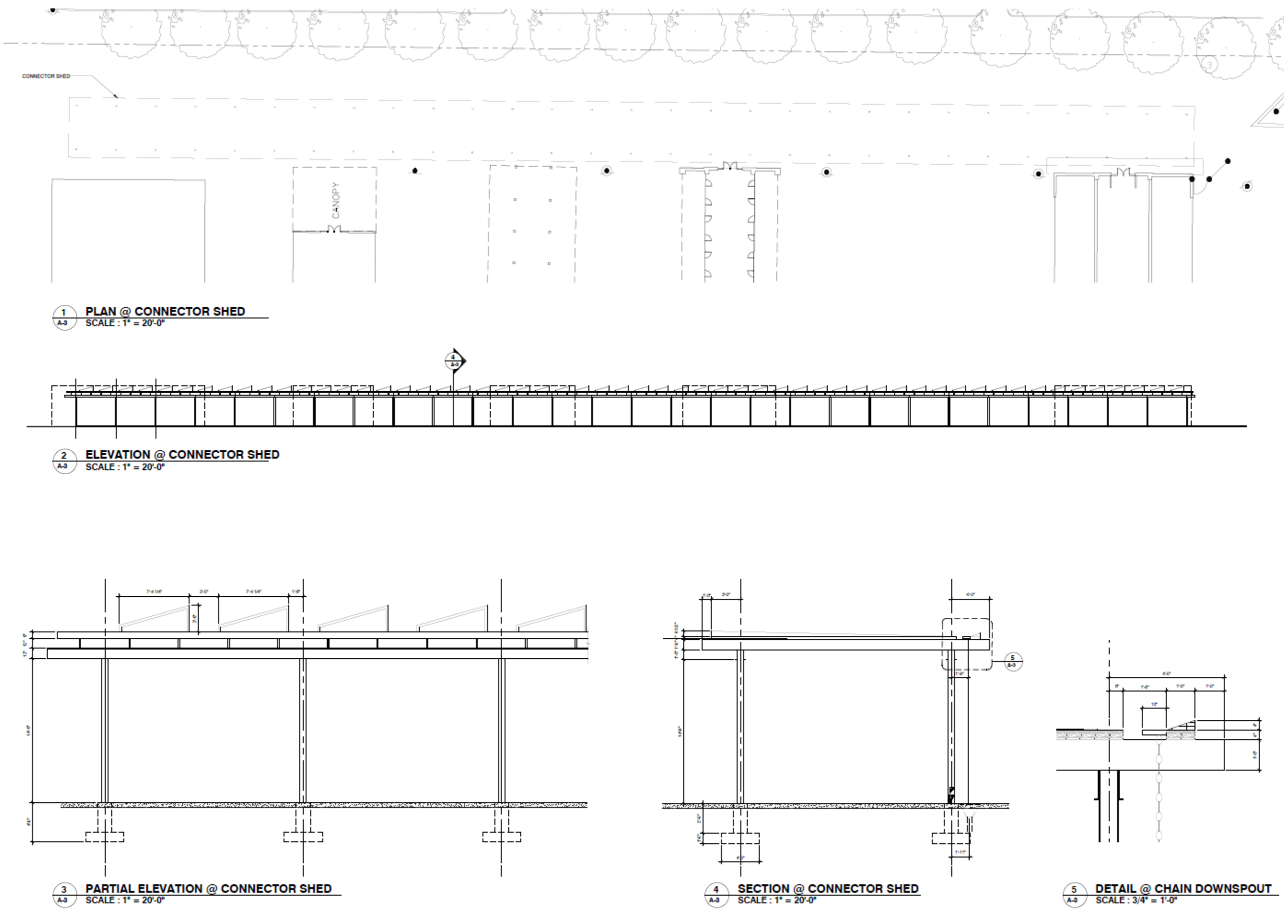


Figure 63. Connector Shed Design Concept

Redesign Farmers Market Place

At present, the Commission Houses are separated from the sheds by multiple elements: the Commission House loading areas, Farmers Market Place, a concrete median strip with fence, and the shed parking lot with two rows of angled parking and one-way driving lanes on both sides. Cars sometimes drive in the wrong direction within the shed parking lot and there are frequent back-ups as drivers wait for spaces to become free. This parking lot is a major contributor to the parking and circulation "chaos" and unsafe conditions described by stakeholders. In addition, Farmers Market Place is not a hospitable environment for pedestrians. The figure labeled "Farmers Market Place Streetscape" provides an image of this area.

Figure 64 - Farmers Market Place Streetscape

Once the produce distributors move from the Commission Houses to the new food distribution warehouse (Strategy 1), Farmers Market Place will no longer be needed for large delivery vehicles since they will access the warehouse from Tex Simone Drive. Turning the Commission Houses into retail, food and beverage, and event uses will make them aligned with the retail activity in the sheds and more central to the entire Regional Market retail experience.

The consultant team proposes transforming Farmers Market Place into an attractively landscaped, multipurpose, pedestrian-friendly environment. Farmers Market Place can provide a much better customer experience and become an outdoor event space and home for food trucks and outdoor seating and eating areas, plus an extension and growth opportunity for the Saturday Farmers' Market and other retail markets.

The figure labeled "Connector Shed and Farmers Market Place" shows recommended improvements that include:

- Eight-foot-wide sidewalks with granite curbs next to the Commission Houses.
- Pull-in parking on both sides of the two-lane roadway with 112 spaces.
- Wide and clearly marked crosswalks that bring customers from the parking area to the east of the Commission Houses to the sheds.
- Stamped concrete, brick, or other attractive roadway, suitable for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Trees and other plantings.
- Pedestrian-scale lighting of adequate intensity to light the space for evening events, plus decorative lighting across the roadway.
- Retractable or moveable barricades at the north and south ends, making the space pedestrian-only for events or busy market days.

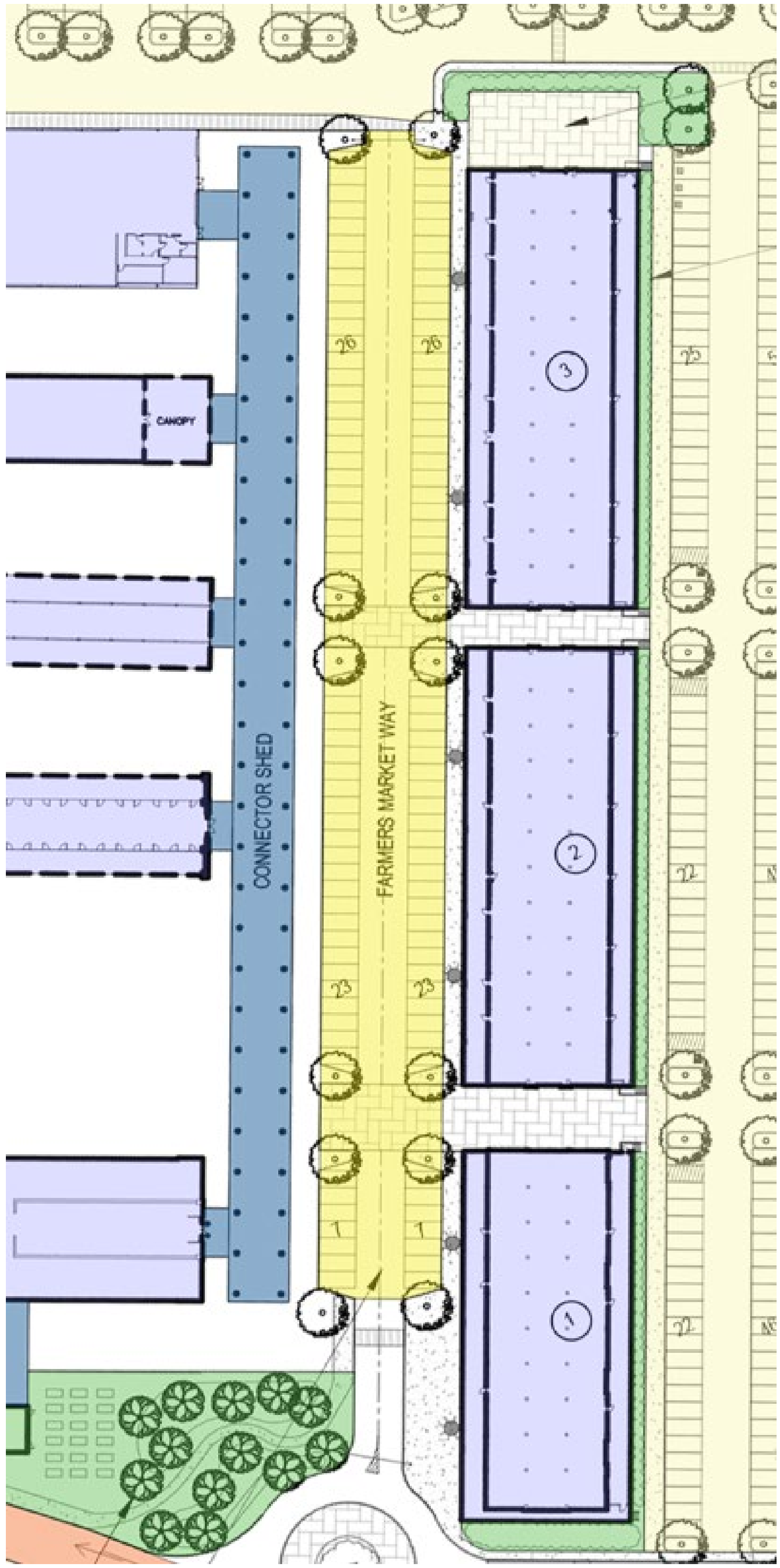


Figure 65. Connector Shed and Farmers Market Place

The figure labeled "Artist's Rendering of Farmers Market Place" illustrates the proposed improvements, showing the area closed to vehicles during an evening event.

Figure 66. Artist's Rendering of Farmers Market Place

Comparable spaces include the Bottleworks development in Indianapolis, which includes a multi-use street next to The Garage Foodhall, and the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, California.

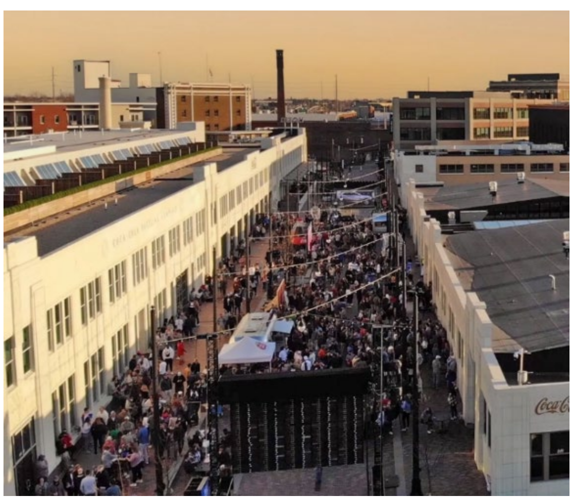


Figure 67 - Bottleworks, Indianapolis

Figure 68 - Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica

Expand daily food retailing

The large flow of traffic on Park Street, the proximity to I-81, and the Regional Market's renown throughout the region create the potential to expand daily food retailing on the campus, particularly for independent, ethnic businesses. More daily food retailing will be particularly beneficial to residents in Northside and other nearby neighborhoods who have limited access to groceries (the USDA food access map identifies nearby neighborhoods as low income and low access).

Additional daily retail opportunities include:

- Converting vacant space within Market Commons to retail food businesses or food and beverage operations. The largest space is 3,200 sf and formerly was home to Helena's Mediterranean Café and Grocery. The space has been cleaned up and can soon be listed for lease and there are other vacancies within Market Commons.
- Repurposing two of the Commission Houses to daily food retailing and food and beverage operations.
- Developing "outparcel sites" around the campus, discussed in greater detail as part of Strategy 4, with ground floor retail and food and beverage uses, consistent with the CNY Regional Market Authority's mission to support NY agriculture and the community.
- Expanding Halal Regional Fresh Poultry Market, as proposed by the business owner.

Halal Regional Fresh Poultry Market currently leases a 3,200-sf facility at the Regional

Market that fronts Park Street (the building marked "C" in the figure labeled "Halal Poultry Expansion and Parking") where its processes live poultry and small ruminants for customers as they wait. The business currently offers a very limited selection of specialty food items. The owner has proposed an 8,000 sf expansion for groceries and prepared foods. The new concept is modeled on a similar facility operated by the owner's family on Long Island, New York.

Figure 69 - Halal Poultry Expansion and Parking

The consultant team recommends that the Regional Market pursue this opportunity. The area shaded in light blue on the Site Plan shows where the building footprint can expand and the proposed configuration of a new 71-car shared parking lot, controlled by the Regional Market Authority, that can be used by Poultry Market customers as well as to support development of adjacent parcels.

As part of any expansion to the facility, the Regional Market should work with the owner to address odors emanating from the animal processing. While more investigation is needed, the current odors are likely from waste being stored in outside dumpsters. Strategies for minimizing odors should be required, including perhaps better cooling and air handling in the current facility and refrigerated waste rooms, where all detritus is held until removed from the site.

Improve the arrival, circulation, and parking experience

The Regional Market should have improved gateways at its principal entrances, clearer circulation routes around the campus, and more organized and convenient parking. To accomplish these goals, the consulting team proposes the following enhancements.

➢ **New gateway entrance on Park Street**

The Park Street entrance is the most used access point to the Regional Market and is highly visible to passing vehicles but does not provide a welcoming or distinctive arrival experience. The figures labeled "Park Street Entrance" and "Park Street Entrance Signage" show the current condition. Compared to the larger green and white sign (providing directions to the bus and train station, NBT Bank Stadium, and Destiny USA), the yellow and green sign for the Regional Market is small, deteriorated, and graphically uninteresting. The Regional Market would benefit from a large gateway sign, welcoming visitors into the campus and providing a sense of arrival. The entrance area should also offer increased landscaping, reinforcing the Regional Market's brand as a locus of vibrant local agriculture.

Figure 70. Park Street Entrance

Figure 71. Park Street Entrance Signage

The consultant team created an initial concept for the gateway entrance (see the figure labeled “Artist’s Rendering of Park Street Entrance”). This shows a large permanent gateway sign spanning Farmers Market Place at Park Street and installation of a “Welcome to the Market” banner between the existing signposts, as well as upgraded landscaping.

Figure 72. Artist’s Rendering of Park Street Entrance

- **New rotary on Farmers Market Place**

On busy days, there are backups both entering and exiting the Regional Market at Park Street. This situation is made worse by the lack of signage and clear circulation routes inside the campus. When the section of Farmers Market Place between the sheds and Commission Houses becomes a pedestrian-oriented zone, there needs to be a way to divert drivers and encourage them to access parking areas on both the east and west sides of the campus.

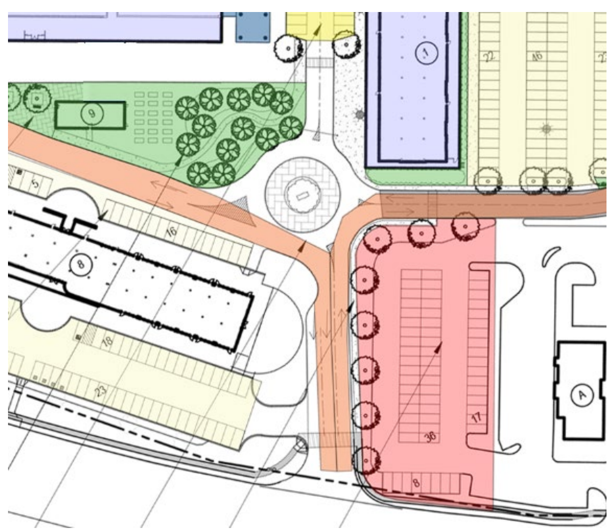


Figure 73 - Rotary on Farmers Market Place

The consultant team recommends creation of a rotary, or small roundabout, on Farmers Market Place at the southern end of the pedestrian zone (see figure, “Rotary on Farmers Market Place”). The rotary will improve the flow of cars to the various parking areas around the campus. The center of the rotary provides the opportunity for public art, landscaping, and/or signage.

Farmers Market Place on the northern side of the rotary should have removable bollards or a gate system to stop vehicular traffic from entering when that space is pedestrian-only.

- **Clear vehicular paths between the Welcome Center and Market Commons**

Customer vehicles currently circulate on both sides of the Welcome Center. While vendor vehicles must continue to access the edges of A Shed, the consultant team proposes to divert all customer traffic to the roadway south of the Welcome Center. The unused guard shack and truck scale should be removed and trash storage should be relocated. See the figure labeled “Improved Circulation by Welcome Center,” which identifies the new driving route in orange.

The site plan also shows landscaping improvements around the Welcome Center, highlighted in green. Spaces not being used for vehicular thoroughfares in this area should be reprogrammed for greenspace and pedestrian use, including seating areas, tree plantings, and a demonstration garden.

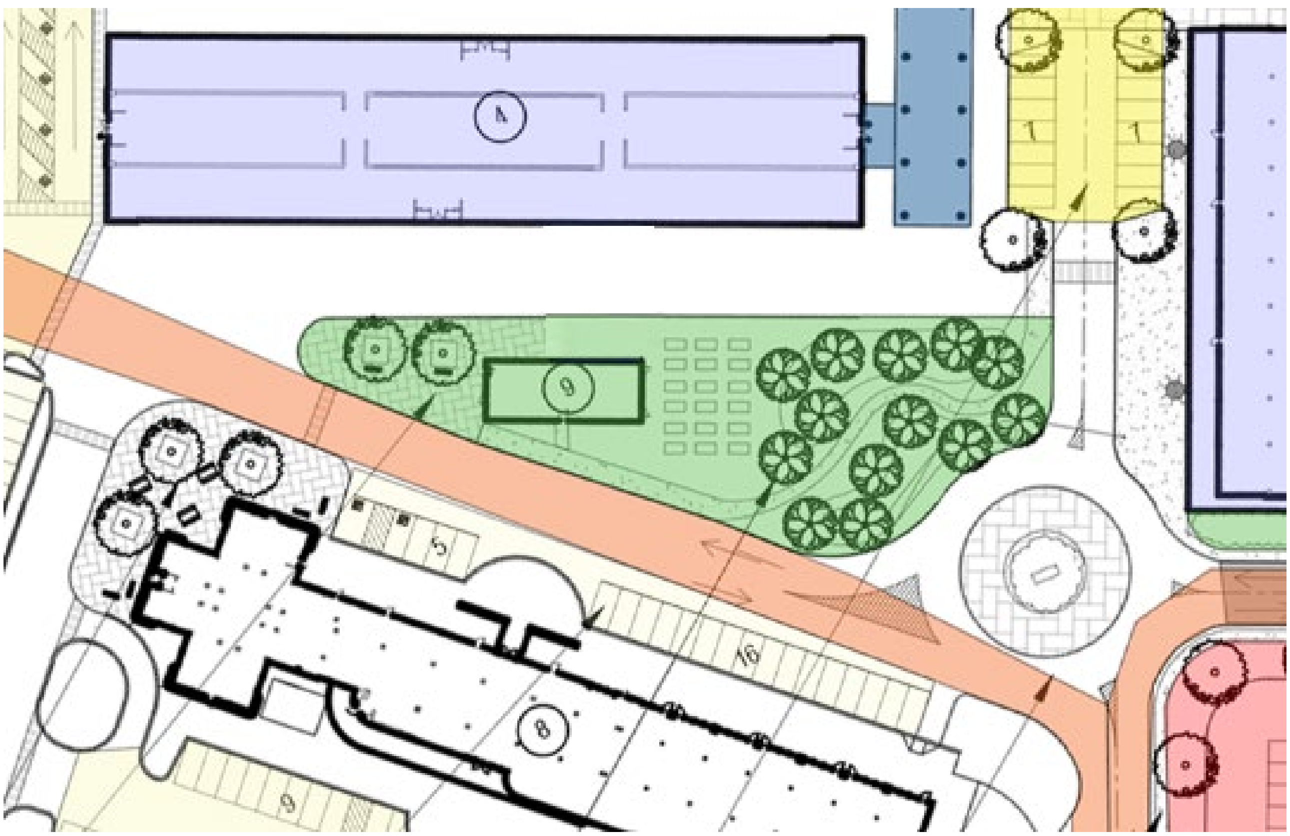


Figure 74. Improved Circulation by Welcome Center

- **Improved entrance at Hiawatha Boulevard and Carbon Street.**

The Regional Market’s entrance at Hiawatha Boulevard East and Carbon Street has a gravel roadway, is fenced, and has a gate that sometimes is closed, making it feel like an afterthought (see the figure labeled “Entrance at Carbon St. and Hiawatha Blvd”). However, the Carbon Street entrance is frequently used by nearby pedestrians coming from the Northside neighborhood. When the gate is open on Saturdays, it is also used by customers seeking to avoid the congested Park Street entrance.

This entrance should be made into a permanent and attractive entryway for cars, bicycles and pedestrians, particularly once the Commission Houses convert to public uses. A paved driveway is proposed at this location, with a 9 ft wide sidewalk, stormwater infrastructure, lighting and landscaping. Welcoming signage should be constructed at the entrance. See figure labeled “Improvements to Carbon Street Entrance.”

This new entrance at Carbon Street should also serve as a primary means of access for parcels fronting on Park Street and Hiawatha Boulevard in this corner location, to access shared rear parking lots. Eliminating parking from the frontage of Park Street and Hiawatha Boulevard in this area will help to improve aesthetics, provide better site design options, and assist in traffic safety.

Figure 75. Entrance at Carbon St and Hiawatha Blvd

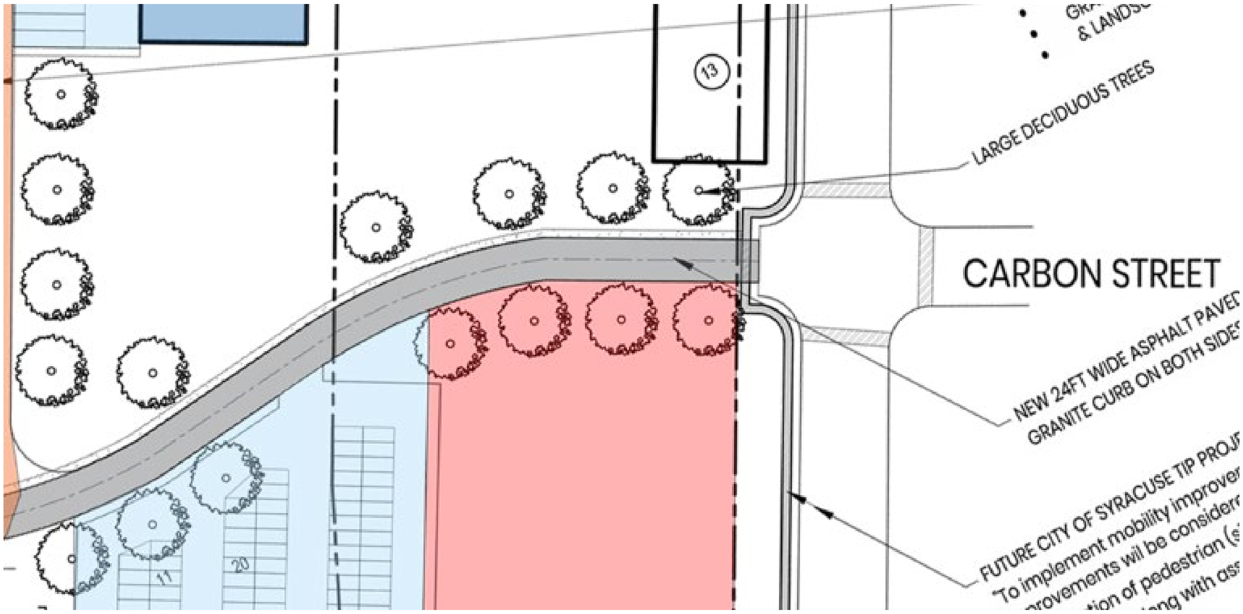


Figure 76 – Improvements to Carbon Street Entrance

- **New pedestrian and bicycle pathway at Hiawatha Boulevard East and Tex Simone Drive/1st North Street**

The entrance to the Regional Market at Hiawatha Boulevard East and Tex Simone Drive is another important access point for residents of the Northside neighborhood, an active bus route, and a route frequently used by trucks going to or from the Byrne Dairy freezer facility. When the new distribution and production warehouses are constructed, this entrance will likely be used even more intensively. Currently, this entrance does not have any signage for the Regional Market and there are not any sidewalks (see the figure labeled "Entrance at Tex Simone Dr. and Hiawatha Blvd")

Figure 77. Entrance at Tex Simone Dr. and Hiawatha Blvd

Tex Simone Drive should be improved with sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian-scale landscaping. When the produce distribution warehouse is created, landscaping should be used to shield the loading zone from Tex Simone Drive.

To facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access from the adjacent neighborhood, a new, approximately 5 ft wide concrete pathway could link the south side of Tex Simone Drive to Commission House 3 and the F Shed, wrapping around the new food production warehouse. This would substantially reduce the travel distance into the center of the Regional Market for pedestrians.

- **New loop driveway**

A new loop driveway is proposed to encircle the core retail functions and serve the proposed food production warehouses. The loop driveway will make it easier for customers to access parking in the three major parking areas: to the east side of the Commission Houses, to the north of F Shed, and to the west of the historic sheds. The loop road concept should be applied regardless of whether NBT Bank Parkway is realigned. The figure labeled “New loop driveway” reflects Site Plan Option B, with relocation of NBT Bank Parkway.

Figure 78 - New Loop Driveway

- **Expanded and better organized parking**

As the survey research found, current customers want improvements to the Regional Market's parking and some previous customers said they no longer visit because of parking. The site plan seeks to improve the parking by reorganizing the layout, repaving and relining the surfaces, and adding attractive landscaping. Dedicated handicapped parking spaces are proposed near the sheds on the west side parking lot, and handicapped spaces are proposed next to the Commission Houses on the east side.

Attention should also be paid to stormwater management, heat island mitigation, and pedestrian safety within the large parking lots. To address the aging pavement and stormwater issues, all parking areas should be resurfaced in concert with a campus-wide stormwater strategy. One approach might be to grind the existing pavement in place while addressing stormwater at that time.

At present, the Regional Market has 1,591 parking spaces. The largest parking cluster, in the unpaved lot next to Byrne Dairy, sees limited use because there are no sidewalks or crosswalks across NBT Bank Parkway. Site Plan Option A, which leaves NBT Bank Parkway in place, shows 1,500 parking spaces. By contrast, Site Plan Option B expands the parking to 1,660 spaces and makes the parking spaces more convenient to the retail areas, eliminating the need to cross a busy thoroughfare.

- **Market Diner parking and outdoor seating**

The Market Diner parking area is currently on the east side of the building, while the façade facing Park Street is blocked by landscaping. On busy Saturdays, shed customers use the parking spaces in competition with diner customers. The diner also has an outdoor seating area in front of the building that faces the very busy and unappealing Park Street and I-81 overpass.

The consultant team proposes a new outdoor eating area for the diner on the east side of the building, near the main entrance, and the addition of parking spaces on the Park Street side which will serve both the Market Diner and Middle East Grocer. The figure labeled "Reconfigure Market Diner Parking & Outdoor Seating Area" shows the proposed configuration.

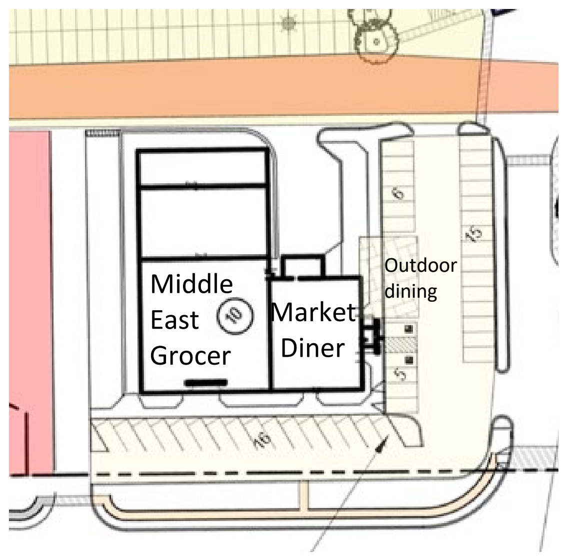


Figure 79 - Reconfigure Market Diner Parking & Outdoor Seating Area

Encourage use of buses and alternative transportation

Today a tiny fraction of Regional Market customers arrives by bus, foot, or bicycle. The principle barriers to increased use of alternative transportation lie outside of the Regional Market's property, including a lack of sidewalks and crosswalks on surrounding roads, few bike lanes, infrequent bus service and lack of bus shelters. Luckily, the City of Syracuse is taking steps to improve the public realm, with plans for multi-use bike lanes and sidewalk upgrades on the Regional Market's edges. In concert with these improvements, the Regional Market can take steps to improve pedestrian, bicycle, scooter, and transit access both within the campus and public rights-of-way within the Market's purview.

- **Bus shelter**

The consulting team proposes the installation of a bus shelter at the NBT Bank Parkway stop across from the Regional Transportation Center, which according to CENTRO is the busiest stop near the Regional Market. The bus shelter is identified on the site plans, along with a sidewalk that connects the bus shelter to the sheds. Improved bus stop infrastructure along Park Street is also encouraged.

The Regional Market should advocate for more frequent bus service on Saturdays and

Sundays, and partner with CENTRO to encourage more bus ridership, including promotional efforts to make people aware of existing bus routes and offering rewards (such as free Market Tokens or swag) for people who take the bus. The Market Authority should also work with community organizations and facilities to offer special transit service to and from the Regional Market for residents in need.

- **Bike infrastructure**

To encourage bicycling to the Regional Market, the site plans include the installation of bike racks and propose bicycle lanes for the roadways entering into and within the Regional Market. The Regional Market should offer locations for bike/scooter rental facilities. Finally, the Market Authority should advocate for safe routes to the Regional Market. Like the buses, promotional efforts can encourage customers to bike to the Regional Market.

- **Improve pedestrian and bike connections within the campus**

The site plan identifies many improvements to sidewalks and connectivity, including new crosswalks across NBT Bank Parkway and Tex Simone Drive, the pedestrianization of Farmers Market Place, and the new pedestrian friendly entrance on Carbon Street.

Vendor mix

- **Saturday Farmers' Market**

The mix of vendors on Saturdays is generally strong, with a preponderance of fruit and vegetable producers and a wide range of meat, poultry, bakery, and other specialty food vendors. As discussed in the Financial Analysis of Current Operations, income from the Saturday Farmers' Market has grown significantly over the past five years, at a compound annual growth rate of 5.0%, outpacing inflation during this period of 3.6%. The Saturday Farmers' Market does not need major changes to the vendor mix, just persistent efforts to ensure that customers continue to be offered a wide range of locally grown and produced products from area farmers and food producers. The proposed improvements to the sheds and parking areas will enhance the shopping experience and address most customers' concerns. Signage identifying which vendors are farmers will help customers make informed choices.

Without taking away from the core fresh food shopping experience, the Regional Market would benefit from more prepared food options, along with seating areas and other improvements in the plan. These options could be food trucks, particularly in the near term. When the Commission Houses convert to retail uses, those buildings will provide ideal locations for additional food and beverage service and food retail.

- **Sunday Flea Market**

The Sunday Flea Market has become stale and is experiencing fewer customers and vendors. Income to the Regional Market from Sunday Flea Market operations has dropped from a high of nearly $270,000 in annual revenue in FY18 to about $192,000 in FY25. The Sunday Flea Market should be reconceptualized, rebranded, and relaunched.

The consultant team recommends the approach taken by Detroit Eastern Market, which is to make the Sunday market a series of thematic special events, in partnership with organizations throughout the region. For example, one Sunday might be "vegan day" and the Regional Market would offer programming along this theme while recruiting vendors who make vegan products. Eastern Market has experienced success with the Detroit Festival of Books, Renaissance Faire, and food and drink-related events like the Detroit Burger Battle, Taco Showdown, and Bourbon & Blues Festival. The Regional Market will need to identify potential partners and build an annual calendar of themed Sunday markets.

➢ **Thursday Farmers' Market**

The Thursday Farmers' Market has decreased substantially in vendor participation and revenue for the Regional Market, providing only about $4,500 per year in revenue. CNYRM should consider altering the operating schedule on Thursdays and move to an afternoon and evening operation, with musical programming and an emphasis on food trucks in the evening. Food truck rallies were the most desired addition to the Regional Market's operation, according to the community internet survey.

Events

The Regional Market has hosted numerous events over the years, including concerts in the F Shed. The events program should expand, working closely with site neighbors to mitigate any conflicts such as noise.

Events fall into two primary categories: (1) those activities that are open to the public and (2) private event rentals. In the Operating Pro Forma, projections are made for the number of both types of events, rental fees charged for private events, and beverage sales.

The annual Food Truck Battle at the NYS Fairgrounds reportedly attracts over 20,000 people for a two-day event and includes musical entertainment and an artisan village. As the facilities are improved, the Regional Market should host its own food truck events, as well as car shows, craft shows, and ethnic festivals.

The Regional Market will have several different event spaces, of different sizes and characteristics, providing the opportunity to host both large, multivenue events and a wide range of events based on number of attendees and desired environment. Event spaces include:

- A and C Sheds – historic market sheds, able to accommodate large groups
- F Shed – large indoor event space, able to accommodate 3,000 attendees
- Commission House 3 – wedding and upscale event space
- Farmers Market Place, B Line, and the Connector Shed – outdoor spaces for concerts and festivals
- Community Center (operated by Morris Construction) – free meeting space and low-cost event space for neighborhood residents

Upgrade the Welcome Center

The Welcome Center, located between the Market Commons and A Shed, is used on some days for SNAP token sales, vendor relations, and customer information. However, there are no signs on the building to make visitors aware of its purpose and the space inside is cramped, so

SNAP participants sometimes need to queue outside the building, which is unpleasant during inclement weather.

Currently, the eastern side of the building houses an antiquated centralized electrical distribution system for the Regional Market campus. Assuming this use will be abandoned for either direct electrical feeds from existing poles around the campus periphery or a new centralized facility in an appropriately designed stand-alone structure, then the Welcome Center can expand into the whole structure and become a more functional center of SNAP token sales, a better information spot for visitors and vendors, and an advertising and promotional space for regionally grown foods (recommendations for promoting regionally grown foods are discussed under Strategy 3). The outdoor area around the Welcome Center can be better landscaped to provide green space and an attractive sitting area in place of the concrete flower planters and cement barriers.

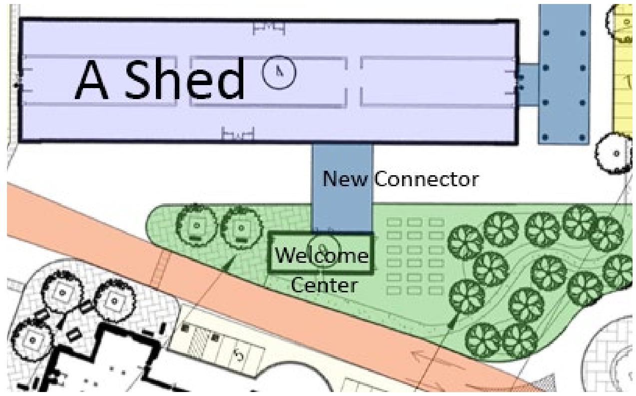


Figure 80 - Welcome Center and A Shed Connector

The consultant team explored the creation of a new structure connecting the A Shed with the Welcome Center, which would house restrooms to support events within the A Shed and provide more space for SNAP token distribution. The location of the new connector and its approximate size are shown in the figure labeled “Welcome Center and A Shed Connector.” The structure would be approximately 50 x 56 feet and contain six men’s and six women’s toilets. Preliminary cost estimation determined that construction would be prohibitively expensive (over $3 million) but the idea should be explored further during the design development phase to confirm this cost estimate because additional restrooms would enhance the value of the A Shed for private rentals.

Strategy 3: Turn Regional Market into a branding and education center

An important role that the Regional Market can play is helping to create and build brand awareness and desirability of locally grown and produced foods. This goes beyond the Regional Market being a place to sell and buy local foods. Rather, the Regional Market can help define what the local foods brand stands for and can play a pivotal role in marketing locally grown and produced food to area consumers, visitors, and wholesale buyers. The Regional Market can also play an important role in educating consumers about purchasing, storing, and cooking healthy fresh foods and can assist local entrepreneurs learn the business of food.

Vendors expressed strong interest in having the Regional Market conduct additional marketing activities (vendors on Saturday said that enhanced marketing was the second most important strategy for the Regional Market, following upgrading the sheds). The Regional Market can use its facilities, programs, and partnerships to increase the desirability of locally grown and produced foods, helping to build the Regional Market’s customer base while enhancing the perceived value of local foods. This includes supporting the work already underway with the Onondaga Grown initiative.

Build the local food brand

While additional work is needed to refine the core brand promises, the local food brand is likely to include quality, freshness, and purchasing from neighbors. Building on the work of Onondaga Grown and expanding it to include the entire region, the brand should be about the people who grow the foods and the taste and nutritional quality of the foods they grow.

Customers expressed confusion about which products sold at the Regional Market come from local sources and which are not. Some farmers have signage that identity themselves as growers, but others do not. The Regional Market should have a consistent signage program that identifies local growers.

Byrne Dairy is a major player in the local dairy economy, which is the largest segment of agriculture in Central New York (milk from cows represents one-half of all farm sales in the region, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture). Their freezer facility at the Regional Market offers a huge canvas for a mural promoting the local food brand.

The Regional Market needs to address brand inconsistencies within its own campus. The most glaring inconsistency is having a corporate fast-food restaurant at the Regional Market's entrance. Since Wendy's has a long-term lease, it is likely to remain. The Regional Market should take steps to disassociate itself from this property, including shielding Wendy's with landscaping and removing references to the business from the Market's website (Wendy's is currently featured on the "Eat at the Market" section of the website).

Expand office space and create a cluster of food and agriculture agencies

Numerous organizations support and/or represent the region's farming community. These organizations could better serve their constituents if they were clustered together in an accessible place where they share resources and enhance each other's work, making a one-stop-shop for farmers seeking information and support. The Regional Market offers a compelling and accessible location to house these organizations.

The second floor of the Market Commons building currently contains the offices of CNYRMA and several office tenants. When it was designed and constructed in the 1930s, the structural infrastructure was created for an expanded second floor. The figure labeled "Potential for 2nd Story Space at Market Commons" shows where this addition could be located. This expansion would add 3,400 sf of space, areas that could be leased to agricultural support organizations and offer shared meeting space. The space could also house businesses who provide services to the Market and its tenants, such as a marketing agency whose clients include the businesses and vendors who sell at the Regional Market.

Figure 81 - Potential for 2nd Story Space at Market Commons

Create hands-on teaching kitchen/cooking demonstration

Many public markets offer hands-on cooking facilities or demonstration kitchens, recognizing the importance of educating consumers about healthy eating and how to prepare locally produced foods. Classes can be offered by vendors, Regional Market staff, area and visiting chefs, and partners such as Cooperative Extension and nutritionists from area hospitals.

A compelling model exists at the Grand Rapids Downtown Market. Its teaching kitchen has six cooking stations and a teacher's station. Each station has a cooktop, sink, and prep area. A hydraulic lift system allows each station to drop from 36" in height – conventional kitchen counter height – to 30", so children can comfortably and safely stand and learn how to cook. A bank of wall ovens is on one wall and there is a separate area to sit down to eat or meet.


Figure 82 - Teaching Kitchen at Grand Rapids Downtown Market

Since it opened in 2013, the Downtown Market has run kids cooking classes, summer camps, corporate and conference events, wine tastings, and private dinners in the space. The Lifestyle Medicine division of Corewell Health currently leases the kitchen for nutrition education programming for staff and the community.

If the Regional Market builds a shared commercial kitchen, it is possible to offer consumer classes in that space. However, the educational experience will not be the same because home cooks will be learning in a commercial kitchen environment, with equipment they are unlikely to have at home. A busy shared kitchen might not have consistent availability for consumer classes. Ideally, the Regional Market will have cooking education facilities designed for that purpose.

Install edible landscape and teaching gardens

Teaching gardens and edible landscapes can build residents' awareness of fresh local foods and offers the potential to partner with organizations such as Cornell Cooperative Extension. The recently installed "Voice of the Farmer" garden at the NYS Fairground, seen in the figure labeled "Voice of the Farmer Garden at NYS Fairground," offers one model of what a teaching garden might look like, with multiple raised beds and interpretive posters.

Figure 83 - Voice of the Farmer Garden at NYS Fairground

The area around the Welcome Center offers a compelling location for a teaching garden since it will be highly visible and makes use of an oddly shaped space. A potential layout is shown in the figure labeled "Educational Gardens Next to the Welcome Center."

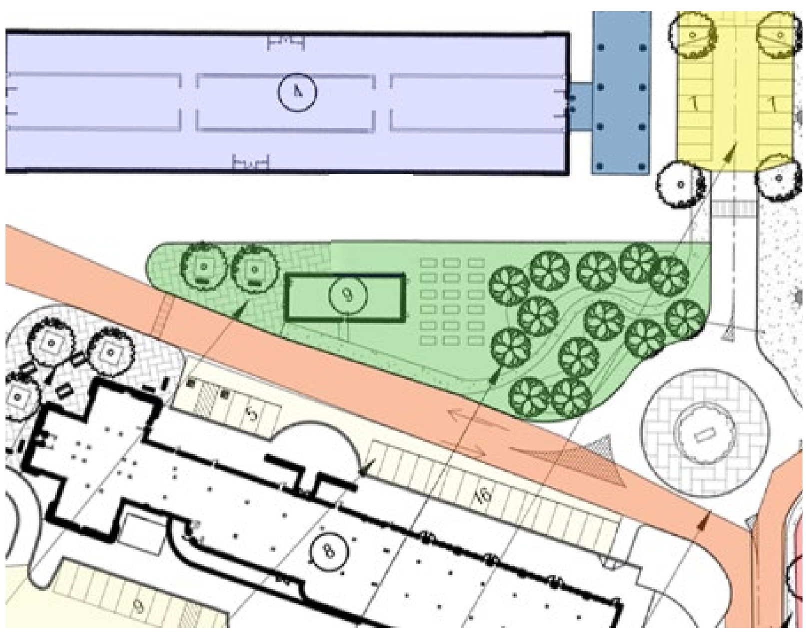


Figure 84 - Educational Gardens Next to the Welcome Center

Landscaping at various sites around the campus can be planted with edible and native species, creating opportunities for a partnership with the Syracuse Urban Food Forest Project ("SUFFP"), a collaborative program between SUNY ESF and Syracuse University, and perhaps the Onondaga Nation. The leadership at SUFFP has offered to develop planting strategies and plant lists and would create community engagement through planting events.

Build community gardens

A local community gardening organization called RISE has expressed interest in locating a garden at the Regional Market. The figure labeled "RISE Seward St. Garden www.syracusegrows.org" shows one of their operations. A community garden will add food production to the Regional Market, deepening its commitment to the holistic food systems model. A potential location for a community garden is the one-acre parcel on Park Street between Wendy's and Halal Fresh Market Poultry. This land is owned by a CNYRMA board member so would require their approval, but the land is currently vacant. A community garden would beautify the area and further the connection with the community, while not precluding development of the parcel in the future.

Figure 85 - RISE Seward St. Garden www.syracusegrows.org

Promote Taste of NY and regional agritourism experiences

Regional farmers and Onondaga Grown have invested in agritourism experiences, such as farm stays, U-pick operations, and wine tasting facilities. The Regional Market can promote ag tourism to the thousands of customers who come to the Market and to tourists. This might include information at the Welcome Center and murals showing the location of farms that encourage visitors, as well as events that highlight ag tourism such as having farm animals visit the Market.

Figure 86 - Onondaga Grown Promotion

Integrate mission-themed public art

Art can provide a powerful means to build the meaning of local foods, instill community pride, and enhance the experience of going to the Regional Market. Murals and sculpture provide two mediums that can readily be integrated into the Regional Market. Potential locations include the shed and Commission House walls, the center of the proposed rotary, along Farmers Market Place, and the Byrne Dairy freezer.

Pursue sustainability

The Regional Market brand should include environmental sustainability, realized along numerous dimensions, and the Regional Market should be a demonstration site for sustainability practices. Examples include:

- Energy efficiency and on-site energy production, leading to net zero energy.
- Minimize waste and promote composting.
- Highlight the minimal food-miles traveled from local farmers.
- Rainwater capture and use in landscaping.
- High efficiency HVAC systems, potentially including geothermal.
- Community gardening, green roofs, and living walls

As these sustainable systems are implemented, interpretive information should be installed to build consumer awareness and support.

Strategy 4: Build capacity for future development

The Regional Market offers great opportunities to support the region's food system and the community. While the Regional Market Authority will need to gear up to implement the considerable capital investments identified in Strategy 1, it also needs to create the ongoing capacity to make additional capital investments over time. The fourth strategy concerns future development opportunities, which can pursued once tenants have been identified for the spaces, including additional food distribution and food production activities. The site plans show potential development sites that do not yet have a specific function, but which should be developed in a way that supports the Regional Market's mission and helps it financially.

Locations for additional development

As shown in the figure labeled "Site Plan Option A: Development Sites," the blue areas labeled 1, 2, and 3 identify food distribution and food production spaces. In the first phase of development, the building labeled "1" should be constructed. This includes both a distribution warehouse and a connected food production facility, which will meet the space demand from existing Regional Market tenants. As the Regional Market recruits new tenants and/or if current tenants seek to expand, then the second food distribution warehouse (labeled "2") and additional food production facilities (labeled "3") should be constructed. The side-by-side buildings labeled "3" are approximately 19,000 sf each. Parking for both delivery vehicles and cars can be accommodated in front of these buildings.

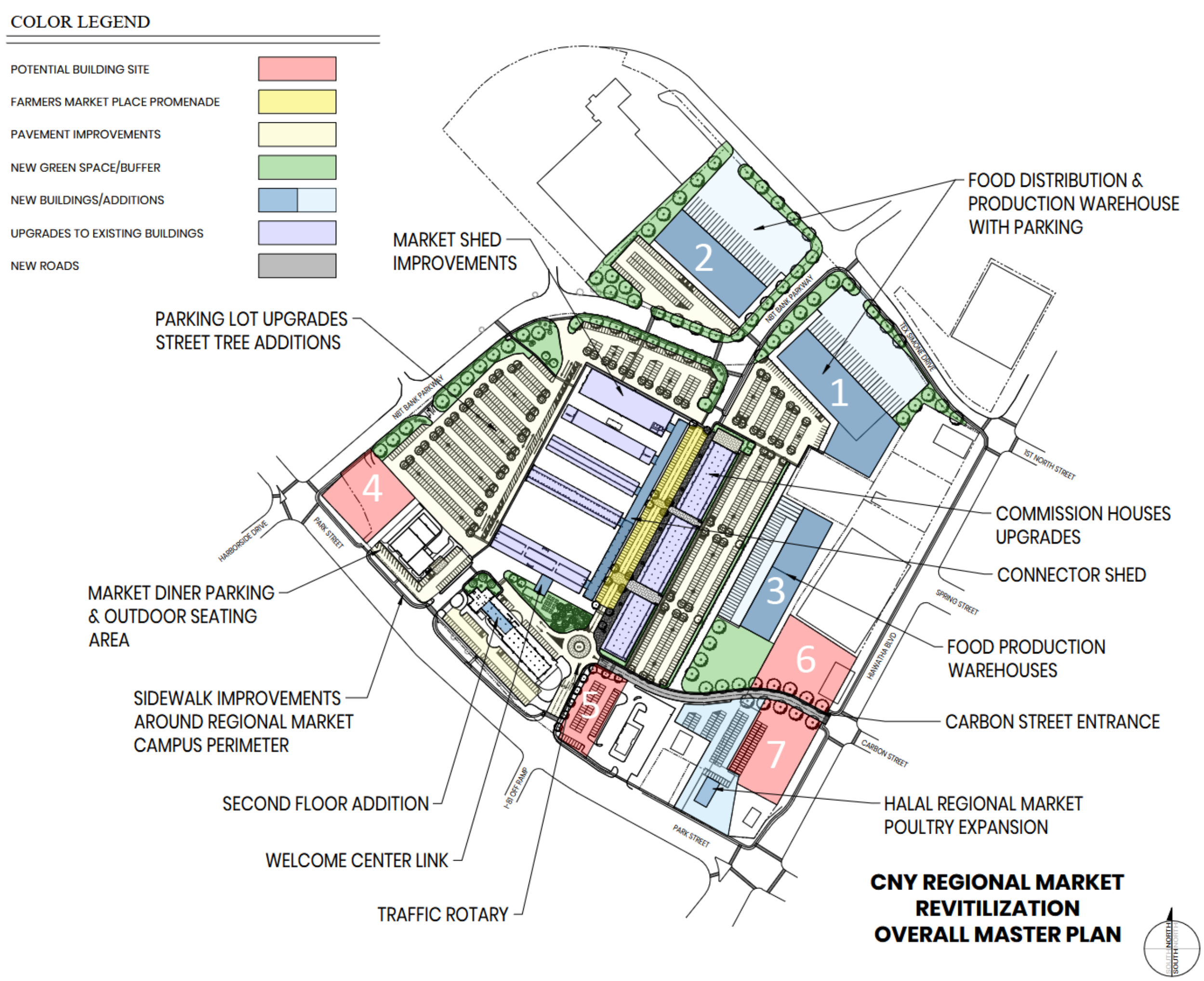


Figure 87. Site Plan Option A: Development Sites

Under Site Plan Option B, similar opportunities exist for new distribution and food production facilities. As shown in the figure labeled "Site Plan Option B: Development Sites," the same warehouse and food production area is recommended in the first phase of development (labeled "1"), while a second distribution and/or food production building can be constructed next to it in future phases (labeled "2") if NBT Bank Parkway relocates. This configuration keeps the distribution businesses in close proximity, facilitating intra-business trading and easier access for customers, as well as expanding the parking next to the F Shed.

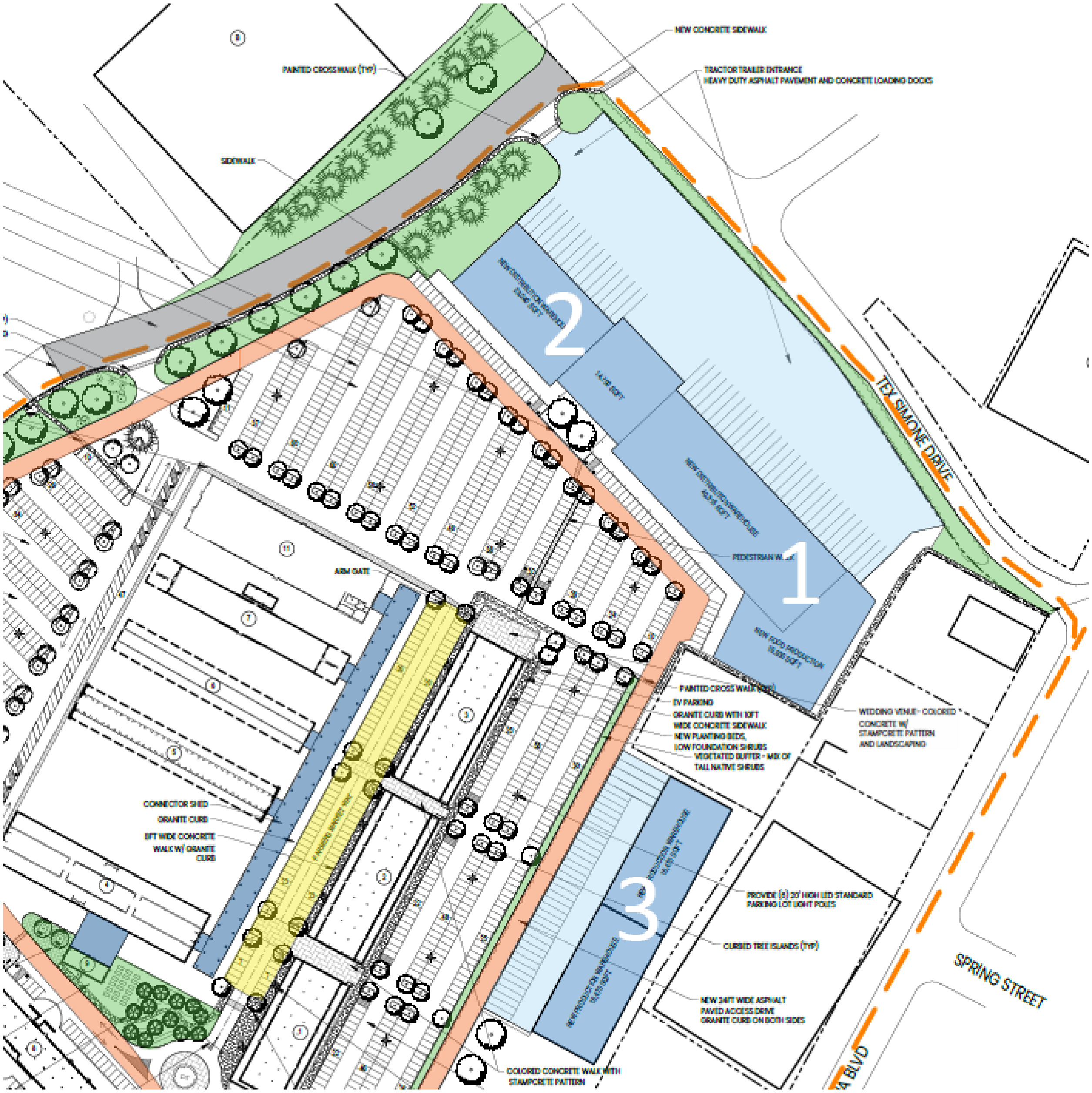


Figure 88. Site Plan Option B: Development Sites

As shown in the figure labeled "Site Plan Option A: Development Sites," there are four areas in light red, labeled 4 through 7, that the consultant team identified for potential development:

- Site 4, at the corner of Park Street and NBT Bank Parkway, is a vacant site (except for the billboard, which is protected by deed) of about 0.83 acres.
- Site 5 is the parking lot adjacent to the Park Street entrance. This site, of about one-half acre, has a prominent location at the Regional Market's busiest entrance and is highly visible from Park Street and the I-81 exit ramp.
- Sites 6 and 7 are on either side of the Carbon Street entrance from Hiawatha Boulevard

East. Each site is about one acre. These sites provide opportunities for multistory, mixed-use development. To create a larger and visually prominent development pad and replace a currently vacant and derelict structure, the Regional Market should consider acquiring the property at the corner of Park Street and Hiawatha Boulevard.

As the Authority considers developing these sites, it should ensure that all future development furthers the Regional Market's mission, while also providing much-needed revenue streams. For example, a multistory building could have mission-related food uses on the ground floor, such as a locally owned bakery, grocery store, and/or restaurant, while the upper levels have housing or offices.

Provide truck access and adequate utility infrastructure to development sites

The circulation plan is designed to provide good access to all of the development sites. As utility infrastructure planning and work is undertaken, these sites should be made ready for future development, particularly with adequate electrical power and sewer hook-ups.

Establish streamlined leasing and development processes

To meet the needs of potential tenants, the Regional Market should create a streamlined leasing and development process so businesses can move quickly to establish or expand their businesses at the Regional Market. Providing timely and accurate information about development and design criteria, including any incentives that can support food businesses, can expedite the leasing and development timeline.

Recruit new food businesses

The Regional Market should actively recruit desired businesses to the Regional Market, not just wait for interest or proposals. The proposed staffing plan includes a development specialist, who should be responsible for leasing.

Recruitment should seek to diversify the lines of products that are distributed, produced, and retailed at the Regional Market with businesses that utilize local foods. Examples of diversification include meat businesses that source from local farmers and do butchering or make sausage, and cheesemakers who use local dairy products. These types of food processors will enhance the Regional Market's connections with the wide range of farmers in the region.

In addition to their financial capacity and track record, new tenants should be evaluated on how they support the Market's mission. These evaluation metrics include how they enhance:

- Regional agriculture, such as buying from local farmers and helping to build the Central NY food brand.
- The Regional Market's ecosystem, such as buying inputs from other tenants and participating as vendors in the retail markets.
- The community, such as providing training and good paying jobs.

Utilize build-to-suit and land-lease options

The Regional Market should offer flexible methods to construct facilities for new tenants. These methods include build-to-suit capacity as well as offering land leases so tenants can build their own facilities. With land leases, the Regional Market should provide design criteria to prospective tenants and have design review controls so new structures are compatible with the Regional Market's environment.

Create financing mechanisms for predevelopment, construction, and equipment

Developing financing capacity will expedite the development process. The Regional Market should develop mechanisms and reserve funds that allow it to support or participate in the financing of predevelopment, construction, and equipment purchases. This might be done in partnership with local government, banks, or economic development organizations that have financial assistance programs.

Create accelerator program for second-stage companies

Once the shared commercial kitchen is operational, the Regional Market should begin planning for an accelerator program to help incubator graduates move to the next level with affordable rent and support services. The accelerator could be located in one of the food production warehouses, with facilities and programing tailored to the needs of the emerging businesses. Detroit Eastern Market has created a successful accelerator and has encouraged development of businesses such as co-packers that serve numerous specialty food producers (see the figure labeled "Co-packer at Detroit Eastern Market.")

Figure 89 - Co-packer at Detroit Eastern Market

Explore future development sites around region

According to its legislative mandate, the Regional Market is authorized to operate facilities anywhere in the seven-county region. While there is much to be done at the current site, the organization can potentially play a bigger role in supporting the region's farmers by creating other aggregation, production, and marketing facilities. This will require additional assessments and planning once the work is well underway at the Regional Market campus.

Development Costs, Phasing, and Funding Sources

Development costs and phases

Trophy Point Construction provided cost estimates for the various proposed site changes and additions. While detailed, these estimates are based on conceptual drawings and therefore might vary substantially depending on final designs and future conditions. Some elements, such as a new system for electrical distribution, have not yet been designed so the development budget has a placeholder number rather than an estimate.

The estimates assume New York State prevailing wage rates for Onondaga County, with construction starting in September 2025 and completing in September 2027. The estimates assume a single prime contract that is competitively bid, with the entire project bid at one time.

The cost of improvements will vary, in part, depending on the delivery mechanism. The cost estimate assumes that a construction manager oversees all of the work. Alternatively, CNYRMA could potentially oversee contractors directly for some of the improvements, such as the upgrades to the sheds. This might drive down the cost.

The estimates have two principle components. "Hard costs" include labor and materials based on unit prices for each of the elements in the conceptual plans. "Soft costs" include general conditions (10% of hard costs), overhead and profit for a construction manager (8% of the sum of hard costs and general conditions), design contingency (15% of the sum of hard costs, general conditions, and overhead and profit), bid contingency (5% of all the previous items), and escalation (8.1% of all the previous items, assuming a construction midpoint of September 2026). Since Trophy Point did not include design fees or other soft costs such as legal fees, the development estimate adds 12% for these expenses. Taken together these soft costs equal 74% of the hard costs.

Phase 1 Development

The consultant team identified high priority elements that it recommends for Phase I construction as follows:

1. Improvements to the historic A Shed and C Shed.
2. Electrical service upgrades and redistribution.
3. Construction of a food distribution warehouse.
4. Construction of an adjacent food production facility.
5. Commission House upgrades.
6. Site work, including Farmers Market Place improvements, upgraded entrances and parking lots, and greenspace additions.
7. Construction of the connector shed between A Shed and C Shed.
8. Expansion of Halal Regional Fresh Poultry Market.

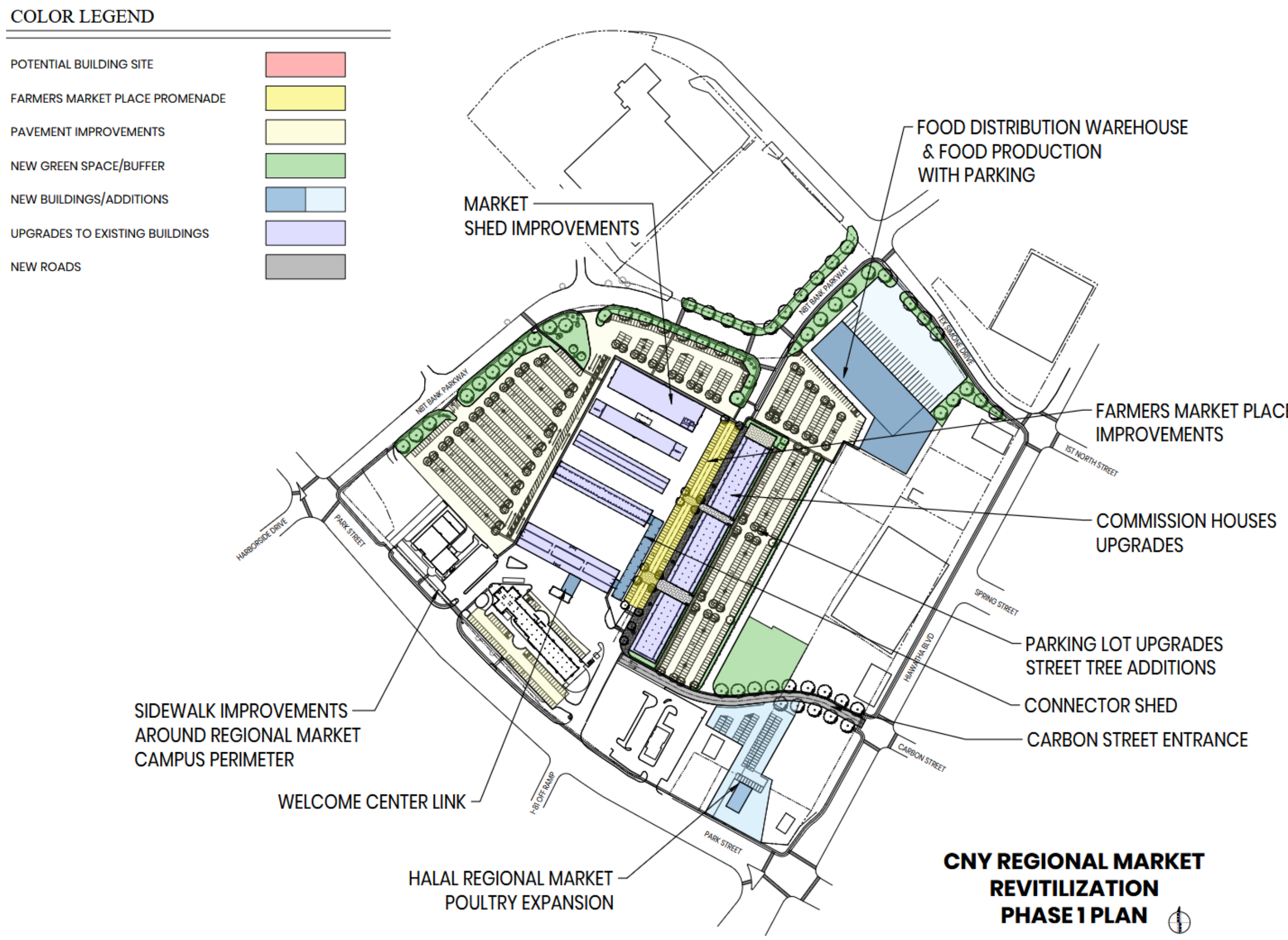


Figure 90. Phase 1 Plan

The recommended Phase 1 elements are identified in the figure labeled “Phase 1 Plan.”

As shown in the table labeled "Phase 1 Cost Estimate," an initial cost estimate for Phase 1 Development is $80.1 million. An allowance of $5 million has been included for utility upgrades but this figure could vary considerably once the electrical distribution plan is created. The budget for the site work assumes that 85% of the budget is allocated to Phase 1 and the remaining 15% is included in Phase 2. The budget for the connector shed ($2 million) assumes that one-half is built in Phase 1 and the other half in Phase 2. Cost of the Halal Regional Fresh Market Poultry expansion will be borne by the tenant.

Cost Estimate		Phase 1
A Shed improvements	$	2,900,000
C Shed improvements	$	2,600,000
Utility upgrades*	$	5,000,000
Distribution warehouse	$	20,000,000
Food production building 1	$	9,000,000
Commission House upgrades	$	16,600,000
Site work (85% of estimate)	$	22,000,000
Connector shed (50% estimate)	$	2,000,000
Subtotal	$	80,100,000

Table 15. Phase 1 Cost Estimate

Phase 2 Development

The consultant team identified high priority elements that it recommends for Phase 2 construction as follows:

1. Construction of the second distribution warehouse.
2. Construction of a second food production facility.
3. Site work including relocation of NBT Bank Parkway, construction of the new parking lot north of the F Shed, improvements to the Market Diner parking lot and outdoor seating, and creation of a community garden.
4. Construction of remainder of the connector shed (between C Shed and F Shed).
5. Second floor addition to Market Commons.

An initial cost estimate for Phase 2 Development is $36.8 million, as shown in the table labeled "Phase 2 Development Cost Estimate." Since this work will likely happen beyond the construction dates identified in Trophy Point's cost estimate, the cost inflator will likely be higher than the 8.1% factor used in the estimate.

Cost Estimate		Phase 2
Distribution warehouse 2	$	20,000,000
Food production building 2	$	9,000,000
Site work (15% of estimate)	$	3,900,000
Connector shed (50% estimate)	$	2,000,000
Market Commons second floor	$	1,900,000
Subtotal	$	36,800,000

Table 16. Phase 2 Development Cost Estimate

Future Development and Staggering

Future work beyond Phase 2 includes improvements to Sheds E through F (as outlined in the table above labeled "Shed Upgrades and Maintenance Needs"), construction of additional food production facilities, construction of the connector structure with restrooms between A Shed and the Welcome Center, and development of mixed-use facilities at the identified locations around the campus.

Regardless of which elements are ultimately funded, implementation of the strategies will require staggering to keep the Regional Market businesses operational during construction. For example, the new food distribution warehouse must be constructed for the produce wholesalers before they can vacate the Commission Houses. Work on the sheds should minimize disruption to operations so construction that requires closing down the sheds should not happen during prime harvest months. Improvements to the parking lots will need to be staggered so there is always sufficient parking for Regional Market customers.

Capital funding sources

The consultant team identified numerous funding sources that might support both capital improvements and programming. Detailed descriptions are found in Appendix K.

Some funds have already been committed to capital improvements. These include approximately $2 million from the NYS legislature through the leadership of Assemblyman William Magnarelli and $4 million from Onondaga County through the leadership of County Executive J. Ryan McMahon, II.

The capital stack may include a variety of government funds from federal, state, county and local sources, tax credits, philanthropic funds, and debt. The table labeled "Potential Funding Sources" offers a model capital stack of $80 million, which covers the estimated Phase 1 development costs.

Sources		
Federal grants	$	4,000,000
State grants	$	45,000,000
County grants	$	4,000,000
Philanthropic grants	$	4,000,000
Historic tax credits	$	3,300,000
Naming rights	$	2,000,000
Debt/bonds	$	18,000,000
Subtotal	$	80,300,000

Table 17 – Potential Funding Sources

The primary source of funding, at $45 million, is expected to be the State of New York. The projected second largest source of funding, at $18 million, is debt incurred by the Regional Market, which will be paid through enhanced operating income. As will be shown below, the anticipated cash flow from operations at the Regional Market following the capital improvements should comfortably cover this debt level. While the Regional Market Authority has the statutory authority to sell bonds, as a practical matter the sale of bonds might need to flow through another governmental body, such as Onondaga County or the state, since they are regularly engaged in the bond market.

Historic tax credits should be a valuable source of funds for improvements to the Commission Houses. Based on a review by a local historic preservation architect and preliminary observations from New York's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Commission Houses will likely qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and will therefore be eligible for historic preservation tax credits. The federal historic rehabilitation tax credit program allows a 20% tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties. Based on the $16.6 million estimated cost to rehabilitate the Commission Houses, the associated tax credit value is $3.3 million.

To attract philanthropic grants or donations from businesses and individuals, the Regional Market will need to undertake a capital campaign. Detroit Eastern Market has been notably successful in attracting philanthropic support for both capital projects and programs, demonstrating that an historic public market is an attractive investment for these funders. Similarly, West Side Market in Cleveland has made substantial progress in achieving its current capital campaign goal of $65 million with public, philanthropic, and tax credit components.

Given the Regional Market's high esteem in the community and the large number of visitors, donors will likely be interested in naming rights for the numerous buildings and spaces around the campus. The capital stack identifies $2 million in naming rights.

To pursue philanthropic and corporate gifts and naming rights, as well as donations for various education, food access, and entrepreneurship programs, the Regional Market will need to build a culture of philanthropy among its board and staff. A capital campaign committee of prominent community leaders can supplement the current board of directors to help raise the needed funds.

Management and Partnerships

Organizational capacity

The bold changes proposed in this revitalization strategy will require a commensurate expansion of organizational capacity at the board and staff level, as well as stronger partnerships with outside organizations.

Board of directors

Recent amendments to the CNYRMA's governing legislation, signed by Governor Hochul in December 2024, expand the number of board seats by four, as well as requiring enhanced reporting and oversight by the State Comptroller and Department of Agriculture and Markets. The new legislation requires two additional board members to be appointed by the County Executive of Onondaga County and two by the Mayor of Syracuse.

The board of directors will be most effective if it has board members who possess the range of skills that reflect the diverse needs of the organization. These skills include:

- Facility management
- Financial management
- Food and farming
- Fundraising
- Information technology
- Law
- Marketing
- Real estate/leasing
- Small business entrepreneurship
- Strategic planning

One board member might have several of these skills; the goal is to have at least one board member who possesses each area of expertise.

The board will also be more effective if its members have connections throughout the community, reflecting the Regional Market's diverse customers, vendors, businesses, and partnering organizations. Connections to consider include:

- Active area corporations
- BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities
- Customers, including older adults, young adults, and youth/students
- Cultural organizations
- Elected officials and government agencies
- Foundations
- Media outlets
- Vendors

Finally, boards are generally strengthened when their members have a variety of lived experiences, so they bring different perspectives and insights to the work. Measures of lived experiences might include:

- Geography
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender/gender identity
- Age
- Other (such as food assistance experience)

To help the organization determine if it has the desired range of skills and experience on the board, many organizations create a board matrix, which includes sections for Expertise, Connections, and Lived Experience, with each of these subtopics in the first column and each board member's name along the top. Boxes are checked when a board member possesses those skills or experiences. The matrix makes it easy to see if at least one board has each listed quality, and the areas where the board might consider adding skills, connections, or experience in the future.

Staff

The staff should also have a wide range of skills, connections, and lived experiences. As positions are added and there is turnover, consideration should be given to building a diverse team.

Three areas should be considered for building staff capacity. One area is more capacity for events. Rebuilding the Thursday Market and reconceptualizing and relaunching the Sunday Market will require substantial effort to attract and coordinate with partnering organizations each week. The Regional Market should also grow its private event rental business, especially following improvements to the A and C sheds and when the new event space is created in Commission House 3. A full-time events coordinator can focus on sales and event management and other staff will be needed for event execution.

The second area for increased staff capacity is construction and development. The construction of the new warehouses and extensive site improvements, plus the many other physical improvements proposed in the revitalization strategy, will need staff oversight. Future development, including new food production facilities and exploring options for the targeted future development sites, will need business recruitment, leasing, and development expertise. Finally, a development position could explore new opportunities for the Regional Market to create programs or facilities in other parts of the seven-county district.

A third area is support for grant writing, fund development, and community partnerships. There are fundraising opportunities in food access, entrepreneurship development, and ag development, and a person skilled in grant writing and fundraising should be able to bring substantial new resources to the Regional Market for both capital improvements and programs.

Subsidiary organization

Numerous public markets have created subsidiary organizations to address specific situations. For the Regional Market, one area of potential benefit is creating a separate tax-exempt, nonprofit organization to facilitate donations that support the Regional Market's programs. While some public authorities, which are tax exempt as quasi-governmental agencies, accept charitable donations, this ability is not mentioned in the Regional Market's enabling legislation. Potential funders, particularly foundations with strict rules above donation recipients, might be concerned whether they can legally donate to the CNYRMA. Some foundations have policies against donating to government agencies. By creating a separate organization designed specifically for educational and charitable purposes under IRS code 501(c)3, this uncertainty will be removed, and the new nonprofit can be devoted to fundraising and developing programs that benefit the Regional Market and the community.

Funds raised by the nonprofit could support the Regional Market's educational programs (such as nutrition, cooking skills, and gardening), cultural festivals, rent subsidies for immigrant or disadvantaged farmers, and food access. Many public markets hold annual charitable events to raise money for their exempt activities; these events also serve to build community awareness and support for the market.

Proposed staff

The figure labeled "Organizational Chart" shows both existing positions and the proposed new positions (marked with an asterisk). The current Marketing & Specialty Events Coordinator is proposed to elevate to the manager level, overseeing the Special Events Coordinator and event staff. To streamline the org chart somewhat, the Development Manager is proposed to oversee the existing Project Assistant and Project Manager positions. The Shared Kitchen Manager and Coordinator positions are created when the Regional Market begins operating a shared commercial kitchen.

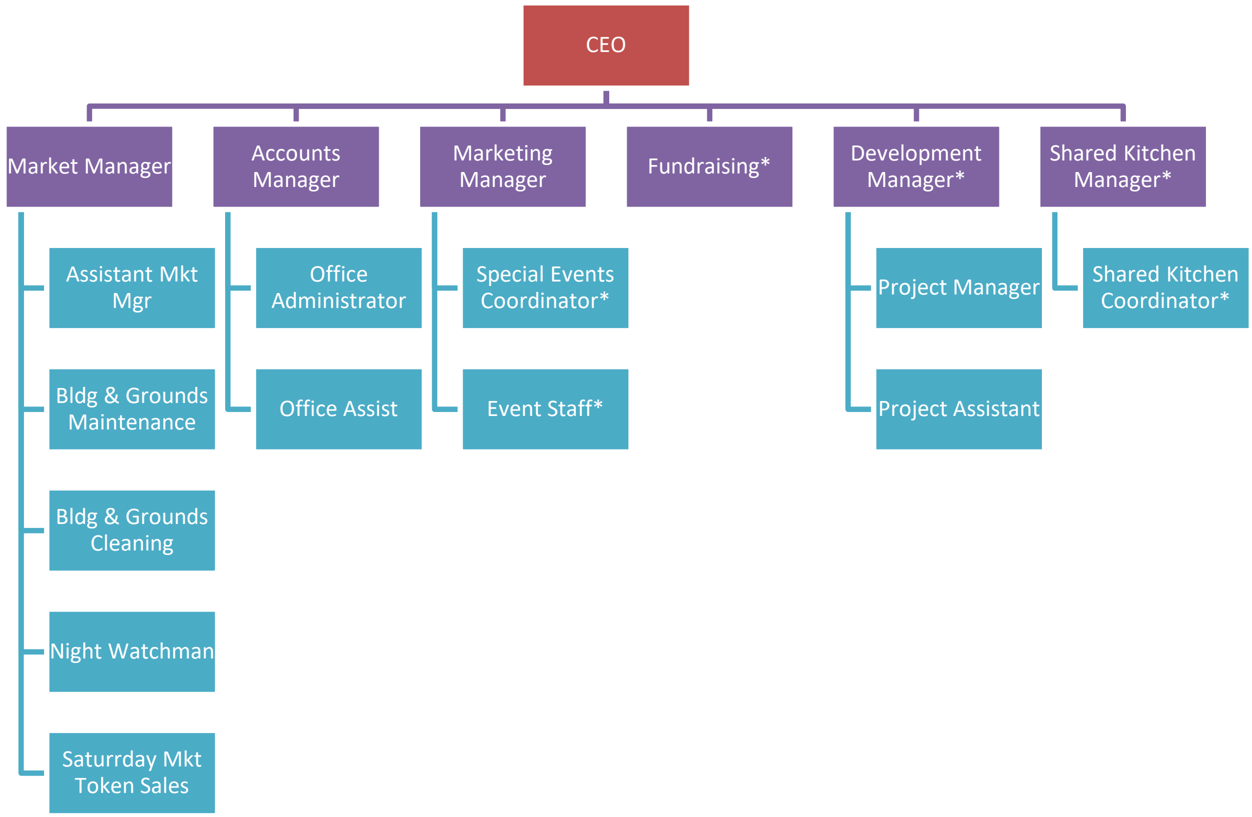


Figure 91 - Organizational Chart

Partnerships

The outreach conducted to develop this revitalization strategy identified numerous people and organizations throughout the region that value the Regional Market and are enthusiastic about working in partnership. Strategic partnerships can help the Regional Market more effectively achieve its mission.

Potential partnering organizations include:

- SOFSA/Onondaga Food Rescue Network
- Onondaga Grown
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
- GrowNYC
- Syracuse City School District and other school systems in the region
- RISE (Refugee & Immigrants Self-Empowerment)
- Visit Syracuse
- Farm Bureau
- CENTRO
- MOST (Museum of Science & Technology)
- Salt City Market

This is only a partial list of organizations whose interests overlap the Regional Market. As the Regional Market builds its educational facilities and programs, it will need to refine the list of potential partners and determine the most valuable partnerships.

Market culture

Many vendors at the Regional Market have sold there for decades, with some families dating their connection to the Regional Market's founding in 1938. Others start new each year. Regardless of their tenure, vendors and businesses at the Regional Market are part of its constantly evolving culture and are members of the Market's vendor community.

CNYRM would benefit from steps to enhance this culture. One effective activity employed at other public markets is an annual party for all vendors, typically held in the winter. The event can include recognition for various milestones and achievements.

Another cultural shift, mentioned in the Capital Funding Sources section above, is creation of a culture of philanthropy. Philanthropy is a potential source of funding for both capital projects and programs. Many stakeholders see the Regional Market as a critical community resource that can play important roles in local agriculture, community building, food access, education, and entrepreneurship. The Regional Market's board and staff need to welcome philanthropies and potential funders to the Market, understand their funding and programmatic interests, and propose ways to work together when interests and priorities overlap.

Operations Pro Forma

The consultant team created an operating pro forma to model the impact to expenses and income from the proposed improvements to the Regional Market. The pro forma builds upon actual FY24 and estimated FY25 income and expenses, as provided by Market management. Detailed financial projections are found in Appendix 2 of this document.

The pro forma models operating income and expenses only, excluding the costs of capital such as interest, amortization, and depreciation.

Income

The revitalization strategy identifies four sources of new or enhanced income for the Regional Market.

Leases

In FY25, the Regional Market derives rental income from land leases, warehouses, and retail/offices. Total square footage from these three sources equals 178,019. The table labeled "Lease Income" in Appendix 2 provides the calculations.

The pro forma includes the following changes:

- Land lease: 8,000 sf for the expansion of Halal Regional Fresh Poultry Market.
- Warehouses: 116,600 sf for five new warehouses (phased in over five years) for food distribution and food production, minus the current leased warehouse space of 46,993 sf when the Commission Houses switch from warehouses to retail uses.
- Retail/office: 48,505 sf for conversion of the Commission Houses to event and retail, plus 3,400 sf of new space on the Market Commons second floor.

As the table labeled "SF by Lease Type" shows, the Regional Market will have 304,131 sf of leasable space, an increase of 71% from the current total of 178,019 sf. The area devoted to warehouses nearly triples (while the warehouse capacity rises even more because of high ceilings and therefore greater volume). The conversion of the three Commission Houses to retail uses drives the large expansion of retail/office uses.

Lease type	Current SF	SF post implementation	Change
Land leases	105,086	113,086	7.6%
Warehouses	46,993	116,600	148.1%
Retail/office	25,940	74,445	187.0%
Total	178,019	304,131	70.8%

Table 18. SF by Lease Type

To determine income from leases, projections were made for rents per square foot for each type of space over a ten-year period. The leases are all assumed to be triple net, so the tenant is responsible for utilities, insurance, and maintenance. Typically, tenants under triple net leases are also responsible for property taxes but the Regional Market is tax exempt, providing an important financial benefit for tenants.

The Halal Regional Fresh Poultry Market land lease is projected at $7.00 per sf (FY25 dollars), increasing 3% each year. In Year 1, income from this lease equals $57,680.

Since the new food distribution warehouses will be so different from the Commission Houses, the current rents per square foot ($7.00 per sf) do not provide a reasonable approach for valuing the new space. Instead, the consultant team identified the current rent paid for each *usable cubic foot* of cold storage. This became the basis for proposing equivalent rents in the new warehouses. In practice, the value of the spaces should be much higher because of better operational efficiency, consolidated operations (and therefore the need for less labor), and ability to comply with regulations such as the FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act).

At present, one cubic foot of cold storage rents for $1.78 per year. The new warehouses, with 25' tall ceilings, have much greater capacity. The equivalent rent per square foot is $22.19. Rents increase at 3.0% per year.

Since the development budget assumes that tenants will pay for the fit-out costs in the new warehouses, including refrigeration systems, the model assumes that rent will be two-thirds of the $22.79 equivalent rent, or $14.79 per sf. At this level, the Regional Market is providing affordable rents, in recognition of the substantial upfront investments that will be made by the tenants and their long-term loyalty to the Regional Market.

The first food distribution warehouse (40,500 sf) is projected to come online in Year 2 and the second one (23,000 sf) is projected for Year 4. At $14.79 per sf, the first warehouse provides the rent opportunity of $635,000 when it comes online in the second year of implementation. The pro forma includes substantial vacancy (25% in year 1 for all leases) recognizing the need to plan for multi-year absorption.

The first food production warehouse at 19,930 sf is also slated to come online in the second year. Rent is targeted at $12.00 psf. This provides rent of about $254,000 in year 2.

At full build-out and fully leased, the two distribution warehouses and the three food production spaces, totaling 116,600 sf, will provide income of over $1.8 million in year 5. The calculations are shown in the table labeled "Warehouse Rent Projection."

Warehouse	SF	Rent/sf	Start year	Rent FY25	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Existing				$330,435	$340,348	$0	$0	$0	$0
New									
Produce distribution	40,500	$14.79	2		$0	$635,639	$654,708	$674,349	$694,580
Produce distribution	23,000	$14.79	4		$0	$0	$0	$382,964	$394,453
Food production 1	19,930	$12.00	2		$0	$253,725	$261,337	$269,177	$277,252
Food production 2	14,700	$12.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$198,540	$204,496
Food production 3	18,470	$12.00	5		$0	$0	$0	$0	$256,942
Subtotal	116,600			$330,435	$340,348	$889,364	$916,045	$1,525,030	$1,827,722

Table 19. Warehouse Rent Projection

The Regional Market gains new retail and restaurant space when Commission Houses 1 and 2 are converted to this use (Commission House 3 becomes event space and its revenue contribution is included in event income, below). For this analysis, it is assumed that income commences in Year 4, providing substantial time for the produce wholesalers to relocate and then time for the buildings to be retrofitted and leased. Rent for the new office space on the second floor of the Market Commons building is also projected to commence in Year 4.

Rent per square foot for Commission Houses 1 and 2 is projected at $24, a modest premium above the $21 per square foot currently charged at the Market Commons. This rate is reasonable since this space will be newly renovated and the buildings are unique and attractive. Office space rent on the second floor of the Market Commons building is projected at $13 per square foot. Retail/office revenue is summarized in the table labeled "CNYRM Projected Income for Retail/Office."

Retail/Office	SF	Rent/sf	Start year	Rent FY25	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Existing	25,940			$314,975	$324,424	$334,157	$344,182	$354,507	$365,142
New									
Commission House 1	13,360	$24.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$360,883	$371,710
Commission House 2	16,345	$24.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$441,515	$454,760
Commission House 3 (ew	15,400	$0.00	3		$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Market Commons 2nd Flc	3,400	$13.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$49,747	$51,240
Subtotal	74,445			$314,975	$324,424	$334,157	$344,182	$1,206,652	$1,242,852

Table 20. CNYRM Projected Income from Retail/Office

Sheds

The numerous proposed improvements to the sheds and site (including better parking and circulation), along with enhanced marketing and reconceptualization of the Thursday and Sunday markets, should result in increased revenue from the three retail markets. The table labeled "Shed Income" in Appendix 2 provides the calculations. The table shows projected change in rents year-over-year and change in the number of stalls rented.

Recognizing vendors' concerns about rental costs and decreased patronage, the rents are shown with zero change in the first two years and then a modest 3% increase per year. Higher income is primarily driven by increasing the number of stalls rented.

- The Saturday Farmers' Market has room for stall growth, but the percentage increase is modest: 3% in years 1-3, then 2% per year for three years, and stabilizing at 1% growth in the final four years. The number of stalls rented grows from approximately 428 in FY24 to 517 in Year 10, while revenue grows from $700,000 in FY25 to $1 million in Year 10.
- Reconceiving the Sunday Market as a weekly festival should provide growth in the number of rented stalls of 5% per year for the first three years, then 3% growth in the next three years, and finally 2% growth in the final four years. The number of stalls rented grows from approximately 173 in FY24 to 237 in Year 10, while revenue grows to about $333,000.

- Thursday Farmers' Market income has practically disappeared, at $4,060 in FY24. Changing the operating schedule to an afternoon and evening market provides an opportunity to revive this operation. The number of rented stalls grows from approximately 8 in FY24 to 76 in Year 10, and revenue grows to about $60,000 in Year 10.
- Food concessions brought in $38,757 in FY25. Given the lack of food service in the Regional Market today, there should be revenue growth of about $60k in Year 1 and eventually to $146k by Year 10.

As shown in the table labeled "Retail Markets Income." shed income is modeled to grow from $935k in FY24 to about $1.6M by Year 10.

Retail markets	FY24	FY25	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10
Saturday	$645,881	$699,711	$720,702	$869,245	$1,069,582
Sunday	$182,739	$191,832	$201,424	$257,439	$332,735
Thursday	$4,060	$4,930	$14,790	$46,666	$60,315
Food Concessions	$33,166	$38,757	$59,880	$107,032	$146,635
Total	$865,846	$935,230	$996,795	$1,280,383	$1,609,267

Table 21. Retail Markets Income

Events

Improvements to the A and C sheds, increased marketing of the F Shed, the creation of a wedding venue/event space in Commission House 3, and the proposed outdoor improvements to Farmers Market Place provide the opportunity for substantially greater event revenue. The table labeled "Event Space Rental" in Appendix 2 provides the calculations, showing revenues from private event rentals in one table (above) and from public events in another table (below). The staffing plan includes new staff positions to sell space and manage events.

Estimates are provided for the number of events per year in each of the event spaces and, for the private event rentals, the average rental fees. The Year 1 rental rates reflect the Regional Market's current fees and then they grow modestly over time (3% for the sheds and outdoor spaces, 5% for Commission House 3). Rent income for private events is estimated at $60k in Year 1 and grows to $426k in Year 10.

A second source of private event income is from beverage sales. Given its profitability, some public markets provide beverage services directly with their own staff. To calculate income for private events, the table shows estimated number of attendees per event, which is multiplied by the number of annual events to create a number for annual participants. This is then multiplied by the average number of drinks per participant and the average drink price. Cost of service (45%) includes cost of goods at 22%, supplies at 3%, and labor costs of 20%, resulting in net income from beverages at about $55k in Year 1 and rising to $418k in Year 10.

For public events, there are no space rental fees but there is beverage income. The number of drinks per participant drops to 0.75 and the price per drink is lower at $6.00. Net income is $12k in Year 1 and rises to $85k in Year 10.

Alternatively, the Regional Market could outsource beverage sales to a caterer and charge fees based on a percentage of sales, although the net income would likely be less.

The table labeled “Event Revenue Projection” shows the projected revenue from each of the three sources of income in years one, five and ten.

Revenue Projection	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10
Private event facility fees	$60,000	$229,290	$425,900
Private event beverage	$55,440	$173,382	$418,049
Public event beverage	$11,880	$44,131	$85,623
Total	$127,320	$446,804	$929,572

Table 22. Event Revenue Projection

Utilities, interest and miscellaneous income

The Regional Market currently pays for much of the utilities used on campus and then seeks reimbursements from leasehold tenants. To be consistent with current accounting, the pro forma includes both expenditures for utilities (increasing annually at 3.0% from the FY25 budgeted amount) and income reimbursement at 75% of that year’s expenditure. While utility usage will likely increase with the expanded economic activity, tenants will pay their bills directly so the expenditures by the Regional Market are not expected to increase substantially.

Interest income and miscellaneous income are kept at the FY25 level for the entire 10-year pro forma period.

Grants/sponsorships

Some public markets attract substantial support from corporate sponsors, individual donors, and from public and private grant-making organizations. Some markets have fund raising events, such as the annual “Valentine to the Market’ at Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia on Valentine’s Day, that brings donated funds.

As discussed in the Organizational Capacity section above, the Regional Market might benefit from creating a tax-exempt, nonprofit subsidiary in compliance with IRS code 501(c)3 so it can more readily accept donations.

For financial modeling, it is assumed that the Regional Market can attract $120,000 in Year 1 and grow sponsorships and donations 5% annually in the following years.

Income summary

The various projected income sources are summarized in the tabled labeled “Pro Forma Income Summary.” The final column shows growth over the 10-year period compared to FY25 amounts.

The biggest source of revenue, growing from about $800k in FY25 to $3.8M in Year 10, is from leases, predominately from the new warehouses, food production facilities, and retail spaces that are added to the Regional Market. The fastest income growth comes from Other Income, which is due to the robust event program.

A vacancy factor is applied to the lease revenue to account for absorption. The vacancy is set at 25% in Year 1 and decreases 5% each year until it stabilizes at 5% in Year 5 and beyond.

Overall, income grows from about $2M in FY25 to $6.6M in Year 10. While the income growth is substantial over this ten-year period, $6.6M is approximately the current gross income of Detroit Eastern Market.

Operating Projection	FY25	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10	Change FY25-Yr10
Lease Revenue	797,950	879,568	3,312,329	3,839,897	381%
Shed Income	935,230	996,795	1,280,383	1,609,267	72%
Other Income	227,021	380,498	716,034	1,221,731	438%
Grants/sponsorships	0	120,000	145,861	186,159	
Gross Operating Income	**1,960,201**	**2,376,862**	**5,454,606**	**6,857,054**	250%
Vacancy (Leases)	0	219,892	165,616	191,995	
Bad debt	0	11,884	27,273	34,285	
Subtotal	0	231,776	192,889	226,280	
Adjusted Gross Income	**1,960,201**	**2,145,085**	**5,261,717**	**6,630,774**	238%

Table 23. Pro Forma Income Summary

Expenses

Many of the Regional Market's operating expenses should stay consistent once the revitalization plan is implemented. For these items, it is assumed that expenses increase 3.0% per year. Substantial changes are proposed in two areas: new staff and additional marketing expenditures.

Staff costs

To estimate wages for various staff positions in the pro forma, comparable wages were identified using the database of the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for the Syracuse metropolitan area. Since the data dates from May 2023, the wages were inflated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI inflation calculator to February 2025.[36]

New and altered staff costs include:

- The salary for the Marketing & Events Manager is pegged to the annual mean wage of the occupation category Public Relations Specialist (occupation code 27-3031): $80,849.
- The Fundraiser is pegged to the annual mean wage of the occupation category Fundraisers (occupation code 13-1131): $76,800.
- The Construction & Development Manager position is pegged to the Regional Market's current salary for the Market Manager: $81,000.
- The salary for the CEO position is pegged to increase to General and Operations Managers (occupation code 11-1021) starting in Year 5: $131,598.
- Shared Kitchen Manager is pegged to Food Service Managers (code 11-9051): $70,966. The position begins in Year 3.
- Shared Kitchen Coordinator is pegged to the Assistant to the Market Manager: $53,518. The position begins in Year 3.

Annual raises are assumed to be 3.5%. Benefits and payroll taxes are based on FY25 numbers: 38.3% for fringe benefits and 7.7% for payroll taxes.

In FY25, the Regional Market has budgeted payroll and related benefits at $1.08M. The pro forma projects these costs to grow to $1.5M in Year 1, $1.9M in year 5, and $2.3M in Year 10, as the number of staff grows from 11 to 16. As a percentage of all expenses, payroll grows from 61% of the expense budget in FY25 to 70% in Year 10.

Marketing costs

In FY25, the Regional Market allocated less than $50,000 to marketing costs and spent about $42,000 in FY24. The investment in new and improved retail facilities and the need to grow the three retail markets will require increased expenditures for marketing and events.

The recommended annual marketing budget in Year 1 is $84,500, including advertising ($25,000), events ($40,000), social media ($12,000), and research ($7,500). The events budget includes five events with an estimated cost of $13,000 per event for entertainment, supplies, and supplemental staff, minus income of $5,000 per event from items such as ticket sales to offset a part of the expenses. Marketing costs, along with other expenses besides payroll, grow at 3% per year.

Utilities

Overall, the Regional Market will see increased electrical usage with the new warehouses but nearly all costs should be borne directly by the tenants (as pass-throughs or, preferably, as direct bills from the power company). Upgraded electrical fixtures in the sheds and elsewhere on

36 US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Syracuse, NY - May 2023 OEWS Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates; https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

campus, including full conversion to LED lighting, upgraded electrical distribution equipment, and facility improvements to reduce drafty doors and upgrade to more efficient heating systems, should improve electrical and gas efficiency. At the same time, using the facilities more frequently for events will increase costs.

For this analysis, utility expenses are based on recent experience, increasing 3.0% per year from the FY25 estimate of $177,396. For income (utility reimbursement), the model assumes that the Regional Market can capture back from tenants 70% of the cost of utilities. This is in line with historical experience.

Net operating income

The expenses and income are summarized in the table labeled “Operating Income” in Appendix 2. A condensed version of this chart is shown in the table labeled “Projected Operating Budget.”

Based on the projections and assumptions in the model, net income in Year 1 should be slightly negative. This is driven by increased staffing costs that precede higher income from all sources. Once the new warehouses come online in Year 2 and the shed income increases following the physical upgrades, net income should grow substantially, reaching $2.5 million in Year 5. By Year 10, net income is modeled at nearly $3.4 million.

The Regional Market should create a capital reserve to fund future maintenance and repair needs. When NOI is positive, the model identifies funds going into a capital reserve account, up to $250,000 per year. Based on the assumptions in the model, the capital reserve grows to $2M in Year 10.

Operating Projection	FY24	FY25	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10
Lease Revenue	666,085	797,950	879,568	3,312,329	3,839,897
Shed Income	865,846	935,230	996,795	1,280,383	1,609,267
Other Income	236,047	227,021	380,498	716,034	1,221,731
Grants/sponsorships	0	0	120,000	145,861	186,159
Gross Operating Income	**1,767,978**	**1,960,201**	**2,376,862**	**5,454,606**	**6,857,054**
Vacancy (Leases)	0	0	219,892	165,616	191,995
Bad debt	0	0	11,884	27,273	34,285
Subtotal	0	0	231,776	192,889	226,280
Adjusted Gross Income	**1,767,978**	**1,960,201**	**2,145,085**	**5,261,717**	**6,630,774**
Operating Expenses	2,110,406	1,775,146	2,222,385	2,749,685	3,241,866
Net Operating Income	**-342,428**	**185,055**	**-77,300**	**2,512,032**	**3,388,908**
Capital reserve	0	0	0	225,000	250,000
Profit (Loss)	**-342,428**	**185,055**	**-77,300**	**2,287,032**	**3,138,908**

Table 24. Projected Operating Income

Positive NOI above the capital reserve provides the opportunity to assume debt toward the proposed capital improvements. Assuming cost of capital at 8% and a 30-year payment period, $2.3M per year in cash flow (the projection for Year 5, assuming $225K is held for capital reserve) can fund about $26 million of debt. The model capital stack (discussed previously in the section on development costs, phasing, and funding sources) shows debt of $18 million, providing a substantial debt service ratio of 1.44.

Conclusion

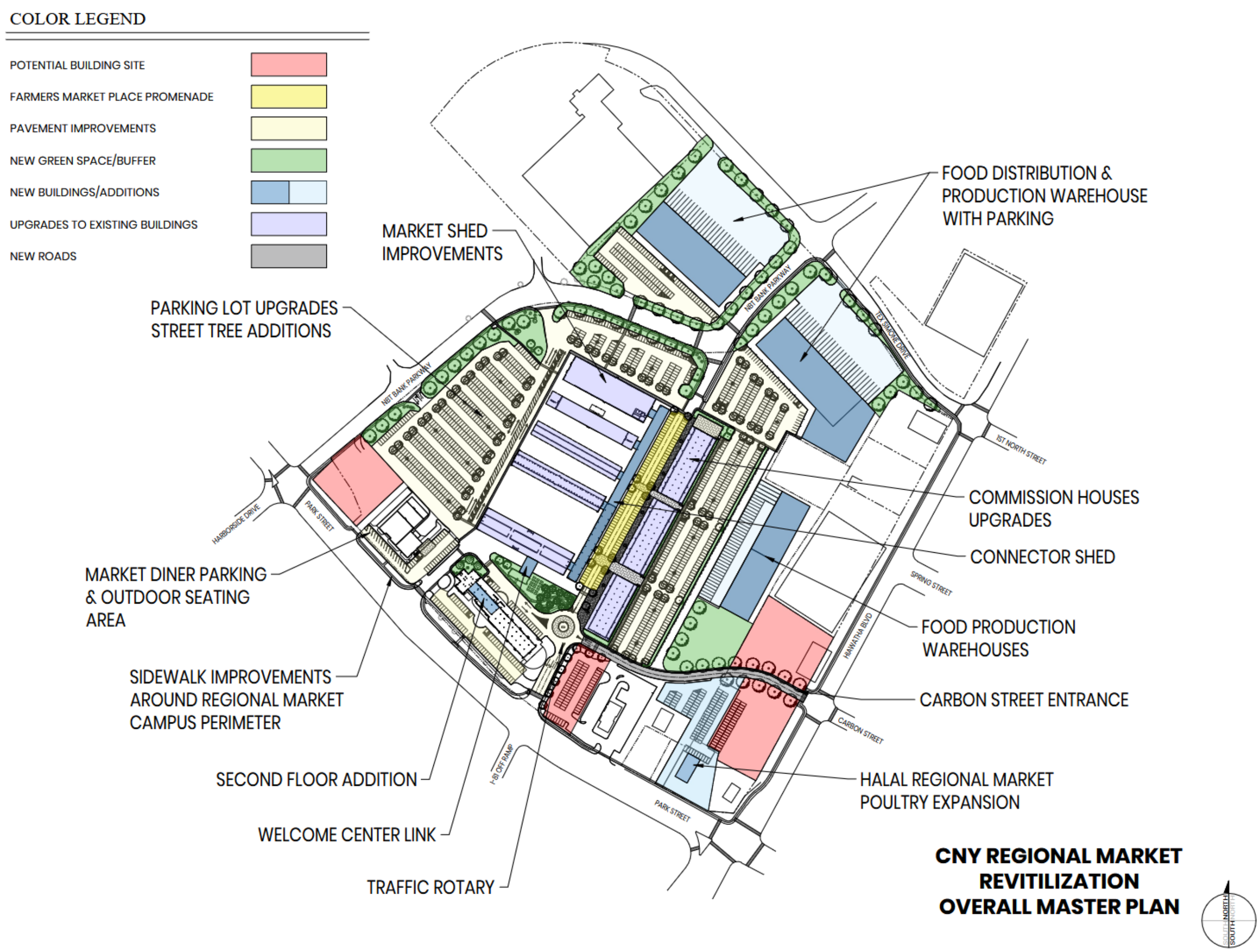
The CNY Regional Market Revitalization Strategy provides a comprehensive, food systems-based approach for improving the Regional Market and increasing its ability to serve the regional farming community and area residents. Key elements of the strategy include:

- Targeted improvements of the historic market sheds, based on the input from vendors and customers as well as the consultant team's professional experience.
- Reconceptualization of the Sunday and Thursday markets, following national best practices.
- Creation of new, modern food distribution and production warehouses.
- Repurposing of the historic Commission Houses to become vibrant restaurant, retail, and event spaces.
- Improved public spaces, including a pedestrianized Farmers Market Place and new entrances and circulation routes.
- New ways for the Regional Market to build the Central New York food brand, helping to define what the brand stands for, building demand among area residents and visitors, and supporting farmers and food producers throughout the region.
- Enhanced board and staff resources to improve operations, take advantage of new programs and partnerships, and build the capacity for future development throughout the Regional Market's 50 acre campus and at other sites in the seven county district.
- Diversified income sources while maintaining reasonable rental rates for vendors and tenants.

The results of these improvements will be a Regional Market that is better able to serve Central New York's farmers and food producers and to take advantage of opportunities such as New York's Executive Order 32. Throughput of local foods should increase substantially, opening up new markets for area farmers throughout New York and well beyond. New and enhanced income streams will move the Regional Market to positive net cash flow, providing resources to improve site management, marketing, and pursue development opportunities both on the campus and elsewhere in the region.

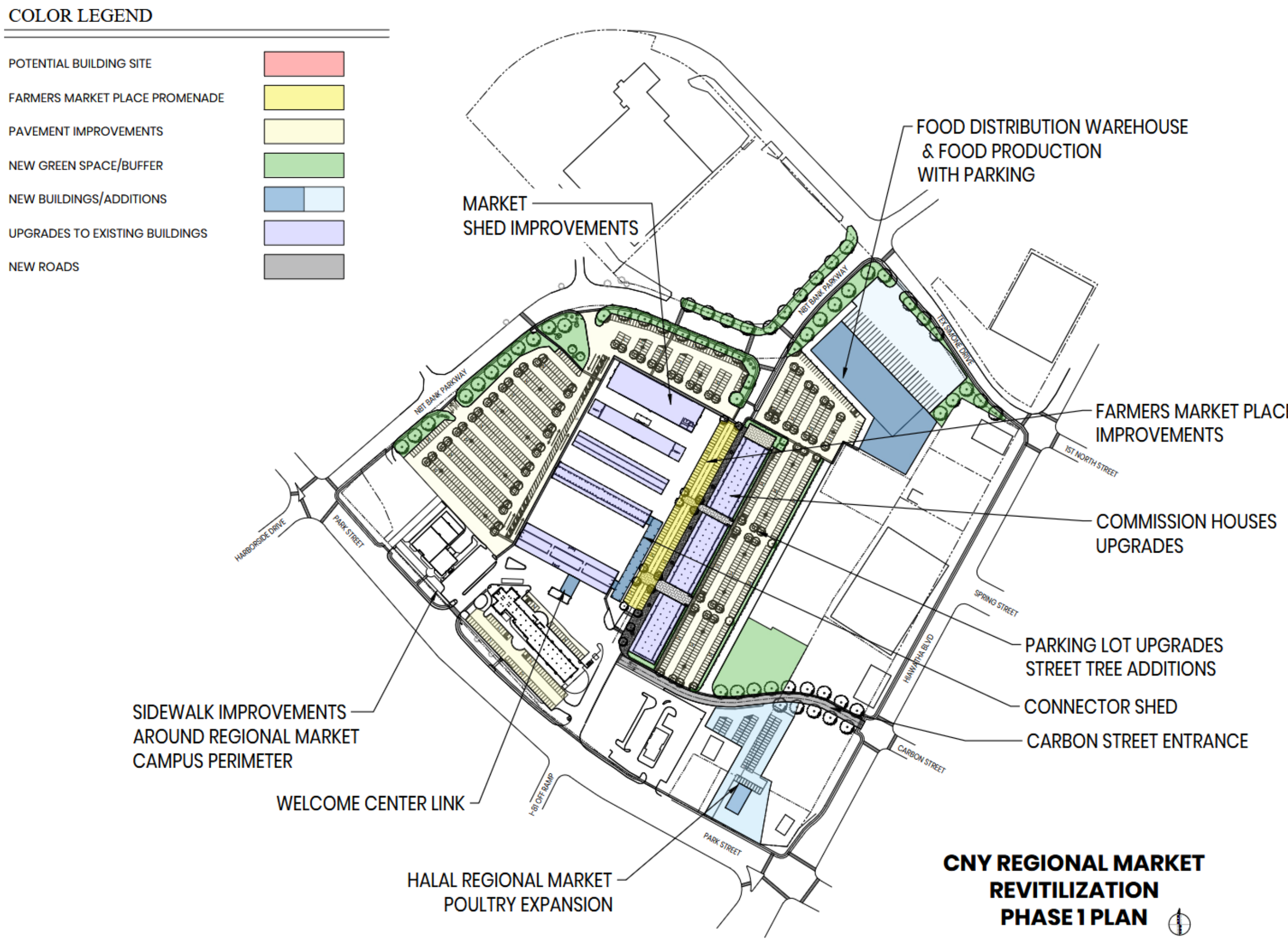
Appendix 1: Site Plans and Design Concepts

Site Plan Option A: No Change to NBT Bank Parkway



Site Plan Option B: Relocate NBT Bank Parkway

Site Plan: Phase 1 Development



Appendix 2: Financial Projections

Lease Income										
CNY Regional Market										
Summary	Leased SF FY25			Rent FY25	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10
Land lease	105,086			$ 152,540	$214,796	$221,240	$227,877	$234,713	$241,755	$280,260
Warehouse	46,993			$ 330,435	$340,348	$889,364	$916,045	$1,525,030	$1,827,722	$2,118,831
Retail/office	25,940			$ 314,975	$324,424	$334,157	$344,182	$1,206,652	$1,242,852	$1,440,806
Total	178,019			$797,950	$879,568	$1,444,761	$1,488,103	$2,966,395	$3,312,329	$3,839,897
Land Leases	SF	Rent/sf	Start year	Rent FY25	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10
Existing	105,086			$ 152,540	$157,116	$161,829	$166,684	$171,685	$176,835	$205,001
New										
Regional Market Poultry	8,000	$7.00	1		$57,680	$59,410	$61,193	$63,028	$64,919	$75,259
Subtotal	113,086			$152,540	$214,796	$221,240	$227,877	$234,713	$241,755	$280,260
Warehouse										
Existing				$330,435	$340,348	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
New										
Produce distribution	40,500	$14.79	2		$0	$635,639	$654,708	$674,349	$694,580	$805,208
Produce distribution	23,000	$14.79	4		$0	$0	$0	$382,964	$394,453	$457,279
Food production 1	19,930	$12.00	2		$0	$253,725	$261,337	$269,177	$277,252	$321,411
Food production 2	14,700	$12.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$198,540	$204,496	$237,067
Food production 3	18,470	$12.00	5		$0	$0	$0	$0	$256,942	$297,866
Storage	0	$8.00			$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Subtotal	116,600			$330,435	$340,348	$889,364	$916,045	$1,525,030	$1,827,722	$2,118,831
Retail/Office										
Existing	25,940			$314,975	$324,424	$334,157	$344,182	$354,507	$365,142	$423,300
New										
Commission House 1	13,360	$24.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$360,883	$371,710	$430,913
Commission House 2	16,345	$24.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$441,515	$454,760	$527,192
Commission House 3 (events)	15,400	$0.00	3		$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Market Commons 2nd Floor	3,400	$13.00	4		$0	$0	$0	$49,747	$51,240	$59,401
Subtotal	74,445			$314,975	$324,424	$334,157	$344,182	$1,206,652	$1,242,852	$1,440,806
Total	304,131									
Change	70.8%									
Annual rent increase	3.0%									

Table 25 - Appendix 2: Projected Lease Income

Shed income								
CNY Regional Market								
	FY24	FY25	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10
Saturday	$645,881	$699,711	$720,702	$742,323	$787,531	$827,380	$869,245	$1,069,582
Sunday	$182,739	$191,832	$201,424	$211,495	$228,732	$242,661	$257,439	$332,735
Thursday	$4,060	$4,930	$14,790	$29,580	$38,084	$43,149	$46,666	$60,315
Food Concessions	$33,166	$38,757	$59,880	$77,095	$87,349	$98,966	$107,032	$146,635
Total	$865,846	$935,230	$996,795	$1,060,493	$1,141,695	$1,212,157	$1,280,383	$1,609,267
Annual rent change								
Saturday			0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Sunday			0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Thursday			0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Food Concessions			3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Annual rent (ave)								
Saturday	$1,541	$1,634	$1,634	$1,634	$1,683	$1,734	$1,786	$2,070
Sunday	$1,008	$1,110	$1,110	$1,110	$1,143	$1,178	$1,213	$1,406
Thursday	$577	$630	$630	$630	$649	$668	$688	$798
Food Concessions	$10,754	$10,754	$11,077	$11,409	$11,751	$12,104	$12,467	$14,452
Annual stall change								
Saturday			3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Sunday			5%	5%	5%	3%	3%	2%
Thursday			200%	100%	25%	10%	5%	2%
Food Concessions			50%	25%	10%	10%	5%	3%
Annual vendors								
Saturday	419	428	441	454	468	477	487	517
Sunday	181	173	181	191	200	206	212	237
Thursday	7	8	23	47	59	65	68	76
Food Concessions	3	4	5	7	7	8	9	10

Table 26 - Appendix 2: Projected Shed Income

Event Space Rental							
CNYRM							
Private events income projection	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10	Annual increase
Facility fees							
Events/year							
A Shed	12	13	14	15	16	21	5%
F Shed	12	13	14	15	16	21	5%
Commission House 3			50	55	61	98	10%
Farmers Market Place			2	3	4	10	25%
Rental rates (average)							
A Shed	$1,500	$1,550	$1,600	$1,650	$1,700	$1,970	3%
F Shed	$3,500	$3,610	$3,720	$3,830	$3,940	$4,570	3%
Commission House 3			$2,000	$2,100	$2,210	$2,820	5%
Farmers Market Place			$1,000	$1,030	$1,060	$1,220	3%
Rent income							
A Shed	$18,000	$20,150	$22,400	$24,750	$27,200	$41,370	
F Shed	$42,000	$46,930	$52,080	$57,450	$63,040	$95,970	
Commission House 3	$0	$0	$100,000	$115,500	$134,810	$276,360	
Farmers Market Place	$0	$0	$2,000	$3,090	$4,240	$12,200	
Total	**$60,000**	**$67,080**	**$176,480**	**$200,790**	**$229,290**	**$425,900**	
Beverages							
Ave. participants							
A Shed	200	210	221	232	244	311	5%
F Shed	500	525	551	579	608	776	5%
Commission House 3			100	105	110	141	5%
Farmers Market Place			300	315	331	422	5%
Annual participants	8,400	9,555	16,408	18,885	21,666	40,865	
Drinks/participant	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	
Price per drink	$8.00	$8.40	$8.80	$9.20	$9.70	$12.40	5%
Drink revenue	$100,800	$120,393	$216,586	$260,613	$315,240	$760,089	
Net income	**$55,440**	**$66,216**	**$119,122**	**$143,337**	**$173,382**	**$418,049**	

Table 27 - Appendix 2: Projected Private Event Space Rental Income

Public events	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 10	Annual increase
Events/year							
A Shed	6	7	8	9	10	10	10%
F Shed	5	6	7	8	9	10	10%
Farmers Market Place			5	6	7	10	10%
Ave. participants							
A Shed	300	315	331	348	365	400	5%
F Shed	600	630	662	695	730	931	5%
Farmers Market Place			500	525	551	704	5%
Annual participants	4,800	5,985	9,782	11,842	14,077	20,350	
Drinks/participant	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	
Price per drink	$6.00	$6.40	$6.80	$7.20	$7.60	$10.20	6%
Drink revenue	$21,600	$28,728	$49,888	$63,947	$80,239	$155,678	
Net income	**$11,880**	**$15,800**	**$27,439**	**$35,171**	**$44,131**	**$85,623**	
Total Events	35	39	100	111	123	180	
Total Event Income	**$127,320**	**$149,097**	**$323,041**	**$379,298**	**$446,804**	**$929,572**	

Table 28 - Appendix 2: Projected Public Event Space Rental Income

Operating Projection	FY24	FY25	Year 1	Year 5	Year 10
Lease Revenue					
Land lease		152,540	214,796	241,755	280,260
Warehouse		330,435	340,348	1,827,722	2,118,831
Retail/office		314,975	324,424	1,242,852	1,440,806
Subtotal	666,085	797,950	879,568	3,312,329	3,839,897
Shed Income					
Saturday	645,881	699,711	720,702	869,245	1,069,582
Sunday	182,739	191,832	201,424	257,439	332,735
Thursday	4,060	4,930	14,790	46,666	60,315
Food concession	33,166	38,757	59,880	107,032	146,635
Subtotal	865,846	935,230	996,795	1,280,383	1,609,267
Other Income					
Utilities	73,511	90,355	127,903	143,956	166,884
Interest income	76,313	76,356	76,356	76,356	76,356
Events	23,853	11,391	127,320	446,804	929,572
Misc	62,370	48,920	48,920	48,920	48,920
Subtotal	236,047	227,021	380,498	716,034	1,221,731
Grants/sponsorships			120,000	145,861	186,159
Gross Operating Income	**1,767,978**	**1,960,201**	**2,376,862**	**5,454,606**	**6,857,054**
Vacancy (Leases)			219,892	165,616	191,995
Bad debt			11,884	27,273	34,285
Subtotal			231,776	192,889	226,280
Adjusted Gross Income	**1,767,978**	**1,960,201**	**2,145,085**	**5,261,717**	**6,630,774**
Operating Expenses					
Payroll and Related Benefits	1,370,062	1,083,835	1,475,080	1,908,587	2,266,802
Repairs and Maintenance	127,280	67,250	69,267	77,961	90,378
Office Expense	30,336	38,116	39,260	44,187	51,225
Utilities	171,129	177,396	182,718	205,651	238,406
Legal and Professional	50,681	112,364	115,734	130,260	151,007
Security	133,913	77,272	79,590	89,579	103,846
Operating Insurance	126,217	115,561	119,028	133,967	155,304
Advertising**	42,037	47,812	84,500	95,105	110,253
Other Operating Expenses	58,751	55,542	57,208	64,388	74,644
Subtotal	2,110,406	1,775,146	2,222,385	2,749,685	3,241,866
Net Operating Income	**-342,428**	**185,055**	**-77,300**	**2,512,032**	**3,388,908**
Capital reserve	**0**	**0**	0	225,000	250,000
Profit (Loss)	**-342,428**	**185,055**	**-77,300**	**2,287,032**	**3,138,908**
Capital reserve - cumulative			0	750,000	2,000,000

Table 29. Appendix 2: Operating Budget Projection