

Eastern Market Community Workshop
September 9, 2015
Notecard Questions

FOOD INDUSTRY

Q: What is the current state of Eastern Market food industry (processing) infrastructure?

A: Currently, many of the food industry facilities in the Eastern Market are aging and are due for upgrades, particularly in order to meet Food Safety Modernization Act standards. Additionally, many food businesses are outgrowing their existing spaces.

The infrastructure to support food industries such as water, sewer, electric, gas, and roads need significant upgrades as well.

Q: How far do we need to go to get to world class? i.e.: transportation/roads, power, regulatory/inspection, storage/coolers, international?

A: Let's look at two sets of world-class criteria.

One set of standards regards food systems:

The fact that Eastern Market exists as one of the last working markets in the country puts the Market in a unique place on the "world stage."

Eastern Market covers a wide swath from small-scale organic producers to those who process meat products for national distribution. World class has entirely different meanings to small artisanal makers or larger processors and Eastern Market is a place where the two collide.

The aim of this planning work is to retain the Market as a working market while providing the local existing businesses the opportunity to update and expand their systems and methods to meet and exceed all FDA/USDA standards. Many of these businesses have a long way to go to become world class while others are already there.

Another set pertains to urban development:

While benchmarks have not been finalized, world class facilities may include the following: Pedestrian friendly frontages along Wilkins and St. Aubin, zero stormwater runoff land development, co-location or near location of services and workforce housing, waste and heat recovery infrastructure, green transportation standards for ground transport such as alternative fuel station, no idling policies at loading docks, low emission fleet management and optimized truck routes.

Q: Plans for clean industry standards?

See previous answer.

Q: I don't believe there is a big overlap of industry employees and those who want to live in an urban warehouse district.

A: We agree. Our goal is to create more jobs (thousands) than housing (hundreds) but to give those of all incomes the opportunity to create household wealth by reducing the need for owning an automobile. We have also heard from nearby residents that they are interested in affordable housing options in the Eastern Market district.

Our goal is to locate jobs and housing in close proximity within the existing market core because it is more suited for small-scale food businesses that can be part of more varied mixed-use district. People living there may work in Midtown or Downtown but more residential growth makes a safer district (more eyes on the street), a more vibrant district (more disposable income), and a more valuable district (higher density).

In the expanded district area featuring larger scale food enterprises the goal is to use greenways to separate areas of employment from areas of residential development so that they are still closer in proximity than with current urban development patterns. This is one way in which urban development in Eastern Market can be innovative and world class.

Q: Not at all convinced that major/large scale food industry really needs to be here.

A: It's a question of how big is big. Most of the food industry in the Eastern Market consists of small to medium scale operations. The district was built on food production and distribution, which contributes to the area's identity as a food hub for Southeast Michigan. We think it is important to continue this legacy while making sure the current public market core becomes more visitor-friendly and available to a wider mix of businesses.

The goal of this planning process is to not replace businesses with large-scale enterprises. Instead, it is providing the opportunity for local small to medium food businesses to have the flexibility to grow and remain in the Eastern Market District in the future.

TRUCKING + OTHER TRAFFIC

Q: Can you channel both truck and passenger traffic to Mack? If trucks are at Mack, how do cars get on the freeway or over to Woodward?

A: As a main artery, Mack has the capacity to accommodate both cars and trucks, though widening Mack from Dequindre to Chene so that it is consistently a four lane thoroughfare is under consideration.

We are also looking at how to better channel and designate truck routes so that there is more improved access for cars, bikes and pedestrians.

Q: What consideration has been given to pedestrian access via East (Gratiot, Wilkins)? Is there a vision for an Eastern gateway event/space/design element that would calm traffic at Russell/Gratiot intersection?

A: Traffic patterns and especially pedestrian access are key elements in the planning process and are being fully considered. Primary entryways to the Eastern Market district are especially important, and gateways for Gratiot, Wilkins, Mack and Adelaide intersections are being developed that would welcome people to the market and help direct traffic flow.

The actual designs for these spaces and gateways will occur following the planning process as project priorities are established and implemented.

Q: Have you developed a great and optimal circulation system relating to I-75 roads? Trucks versus cars versus all else?

A: We are working on it! It is key to accommodate all types of traffic that make Eastern Market a functional working market, from trucks and cars to bikes and pedestrians. Optimal traffic flow and recommended routes for trucks, bicycles, and autos are part of the planning deliverables.

Q: Has the research been done yet on the increase in truck logistics and negative impact of its noise, air, vibration, and physical pollution they bring? Southwest District knows the realities of that impact.

Q: What are the environmental impacts of trucking?

A: The impacts of diesel trucking are most severe in highly congested areas, places where trucks have to sit and idle through traffic. Eastern Market is a recognized center of industry and currently has 1000s of truck trips per week.

Air quality, pedestrian safety and noise abatement can be best managed through the development of efficient truck routes connected to Mack or Gratiot. Defined trucking corridors and planting buffers are proposed to mitigate air quality and noise associated with trucking.

Q: What is the truck count now and projected?

A: Great question. Currently we have traffic counts but not truck counts for the district. SEMCOG has provided traffic data indicating a daily use count on Mack Avenue of approximately 9,000 vehicles. We will ask them what percentage can assumed to be commercial trucking.

We can then look at projected increase from new food distribution/processing investments to determine how this would change over time. The Dequindre corridor north of Mack, while now dormant, has been an industrial corridor for a long time. An important planning goal is to keep truck routes close to the I-75 spine so that trucks do not travel through new residential areas to the east.

Q: Will closing 375 backup other entry points?

A: We won't know until more detailed plans for I375 and the M3 Connector are developed. Reconfiguring traffic through the I375 corridor will be a major undertaking if the option to remove the freeway is pursued. Extensive study by MDOT and other planning and engineering groups will be completed before plans proceed. Right now, it is our understanding this closing I375 is just on the table as an option.

Q: If 375 closes could it be converted to a trucking, warehouse hub feeding into I-75 and cover the gap with parking and parks?

A: Maybe! Please see the answer to the prior question. This will be a long time coming and require ample coordination, planning and design with MDOT and others. We are keen to explore use of the M3 connector for all of those uses.

Q: What is the expected impact of the upcoming parking meter changes?

A: The extension of parking meters into new areas in Eastern Market District has been put on hold for an indefinite period. Eastern Market Corporation is trying to work with the City to make sure any changes in the parking system are part of a comprehensive plan and not done in piecemeal fashion.

Q: Parking is NOT useful anymore. How about building parking structure upon entering the Market?

A: This is certainly an option but first we want to use the assets we currently have, like the existing parking garage. Parking garages are expensive to build and operate and high parking demand is a warm weather Saturday problem. Other than 30 or so Saturdays of the year Eastern Market District has ample parking.

EASTERN MARKET IDENTITY + OPERATIONS

Q: Are you concerned about organizing Eastern Market out of its Authenticity?

A: The organic growth that has happened in the market district has been phenomenal. This has certainly been to its benefit but if current trends in Eastern Market real estate continue, higher prices will change the nature of the district. The Meat Packing District in New York and the Fulton Market district in Chicago are examples of local food districts that were surrendered to bars, boutiques and lofts when the organic process of commercial gentrification went unchecked.

In order to preserve its authenticity and identity as a working food district as more development interest is happening in the Market, some planning for the future is necessary to ensure that food businesses and other key ingredients to Eastern Market are not displaced.

There is a difference between (1) a planning method that rigidly organizes and locates everything and allows little room for the organic growth and flexibility and (2) a planning process that provides a framework for decision-making that guides the community and district forward into the future. The aim of this Eastern Market planning process is number 2—*a framework for decision-making that guides the community and district forward into the future.*

Q: Is it possible to link the sheds so that the inclement weather is handled year round?

A: This is something the planning team and the Eastern Market Corporation will consider. Perhaps the key is a temporary cover for the colder months. We definitely have winter conditions in mind throughout the planning process. However, since the spaces between the sheds are working streets, the linkage would need to be more like a canopy (tall enough for tall vehicles to pass under) rather than a complete enclosure.

On a related note, heat was installed as part of the Shed 5 renovation completed in 2015, funding has been secured to provide heat to Shed 3 in 2016, and a heated enclosed structure is proposed for a new Shed 4 scheduled to open in 2017. At that time Eastern Market will have side by side by side heated structures for cold weather and canopies connecting them for protection from rain/snow etc.

Q: What studies, if any, have been conducted to determine population growth for the Eastern Market area?

A: US Census has indicated area population growth of 3% and 6.7% between 2011-2013 for the 48201 and 48207 zip codes, respectively (approximate areas of study).

Q: Where is the green space in this plan? It is crucial to build a vibrant community/district.

A: Good question. We have heard that spaces for sitting and resting are important and they will be considered and planned. It is a challenging puzzle to overlay green space and a working food district, but we are working on it.

The Dequindre Cut will be a great asset when it opens in late 2015 and that is a starting point for more strategic green space in the district. With this in mind, the majority of the green space will most likely be a network of linear green spaces ranging from greenways to green alleyways and a greener street design.

Q: What is the plan/where are resources for workforce development? How are schools being engaged?

A: The most important part of work force development is jobs! Creating a wide range of jobs, especially entry level ones, is a key opportunity for the Eastern Market district and is central to this planning process in terms of creating a vision that accommodates expansion of food sector employment.

EMC is partnering with Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit to develop a workforce program associated with Red Truck Fresh Produce and Grobbel's Corned Beef has already developed a strong workforce program. EMC works with local, state and federal agencies to connect employers to available resources to support workforce development in the food industry and will continue to prioritize this goal. EMC is also in conversations with the Detroit Public Schools about opportunities for collaboration in the food sector.

Q: The 3 alternatives each require site control to some degree. How will site control be achieved? In my opinion, the Eastern Market plan needs to address this issue.

A: Site control is definitely a key ingredient in future development. EMC is working with the City to preserve land for food-related development and intends to work with private developers to ensure responsible land acquisition and development in the future.

At the same time, Eastern Market Corporation is not viewing itself as the developer. Therefore, it will not necessarily be the entity that will hold and retain landownership. It will encourage food related development and advocate for policy change and improvements. The planning process is considering many development and site control options.

PLANNING PROCESS

Q: At what level has local and/or state government been engaged?

A: Local and state government have been invited into the Eastern Market 2025 planning process and have participated in stakeholder meetings specifically centered on government and policymakers.

The Eastern Market 2025 Strategy Planning Team followed protocols regarding public engagement to insure that this plan becomes part of the City's new master plan. In addition, EMC has forged strong working relationships with Mayor Duggan's community and economic development team as part of larger eastside development opportunities of which Eastern Market is a major anchor.

Also, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is a member of the Eastern Market 2025 Strategic Planning Task Force.

Q: Especially concerning infrastructure development and expansion, what kind of preparation and planning is in effect to deal with the political bureaucracy and special interest group interference and/or opposition? How does the district planning move forward in spite of these barriers? Examples: Parking over the freeway, Biergarten on top of the parking garage, re-developing gateways, Remove freeway entry

A: Part of the purpose of community engagement being a priority in this planning process is to make sure all of the key players are involved in the conversation. We hope this inclusion will reduce political interferences.

We are and will continue to work with local and state governments to support the implementation of the objectives outlined through this planning study. This planning study is also intended to set guidelines for how special interest groups can work within the Eastern Market district.

An important part of this plan process is the extensive community engagement. Once a plan is finalized and fully vetted by Eastern Market's many stakeholders we will have a vision for the future that is widely shared. A widely shared vision helps overcome the barriers you identify.

Q: Why is Lafayette area not included on any of your presentation?

A: The planning study focuses on the Eastern Market district, but how Eastern Market relates to and connects with surrounding neighborhoods is definitely a key consideration. So far we have had two meetings specifically for Lafayette residents and many Lafayette stakeholders have been otherwise involved in the planning process as well.

Q: What partnership or community organizations will help EMC with implementing any plan?

A: EMC has many important partners that make its programming possible! Many community partners and players will play a role in implementation. Furthermore, this planning study is a framework for the future of the district, which will guide decision-making, development and improvements. Many people will participate in bringing this vision to life, not just EMC.

EMC worked as a convener in the planning process helping to assemble a wide cast of contributors. When it comes to executing the plan, EMC does not view itself as the implementer but more as the shepherd of implementation.

Q: How were/are residents being engaged? Especially low-income communities that are directly impacted?

A: There are several stakeholder groups that have been a part of the planning process so far. This has included meetings with Eastern Market residents, residents of Elmwood Park and Lafayette Park to the south, and residents of Forest Park to the north. Residents from the District also sit on the Eastern Market 2025 Strategic Planning Task Force.

We will continue to reach out to surrounding neighborhoods and make sure residents are aware of and active participants in the planning process. Also as an aside, the planning process for expanding the market district is looking at areas that are unused and unmaintained.

By working with unused land, the transition between the Market and existing residents will allow more employment opportunities for local residents and improve connectivity for those that walk to and from the Market.