

Executive Summary

Urban and Regional Planning students from Michigan State University compiled this report to aid the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders such as the City of Bay City and Bay County, by formulating strategies for the revitalization of the Bay Area Farmers Market.

There are currently two farmers' markets located in Bay City. The purpose of this report was to analyze data and lifestyle information, in conjunction with Michigan case studies, to determine the feasibility of a year-round market in the Bay Area. Our research supported the feasibility of a year-round market in Bay City, Michigan. We researched the methods in which the Bay City Markets can create one successful community market. We've provided a relevant context through evaluating the current status of the Bay Area Markets, by studying other Michigan markets and their applicable trends.

We assessed the social impact of markets from both state and national examples of thriving year-round markets. Next, we researched the health impacts of markets by examining components such as SNAP/WIC benefits and the availability of existing produce in proximity to the existing markets. Third, the economic impact of markets was assessed through looking at existing markets across the state of Michigan. This includes the retail potential for local farmers and an evaluation of the existing agriculture climate in the region. Additionally, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted to understand the current condition of the potential sites identified by our client, the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce.

Though our research and methods, we recommend that the Bay Area pursue the establishment of a year-round market in their community. With careful execution of the establishment, the future market could act as a catalyst to spur further revitalization in Bay City. To capitalize on the social impact of markets, the future Bay Area Farmers Market will work to create a friendly environment that will promote the health, happiness, and well-being of customers. This can be done through a strong marketing strategy and by employing resources from around the state that are provided by organizations such as the Michigan Farmers Market Association. The farmers market will accept Food Assistance benefits. Staff from local organizations that have been previously invested in the culture and development of Bay City will assist in the market's everyday operations. Lastly, a dynamic and strategic location and structure will amplify the effects of the markets on the Bay Area community for both locals and tourists alike.

Steps for Year-Round Market Implementation

	Low Cost	Moderate Cost	High Cost
Short Term	<p>Create a social media presence including a website, Facebook, and Instagram</p> <p>Establish hours of the Bay Area Farmers Market</p>	<p>Create a Professional Marketing and Branding Plan</p> <p>Hire Market Staff</p> <p>Apply for Membership with the Michigan Farmers Market Association</p>	<p>Establish a strategy for merging the two markets via community input</p>
Moderate Term	<p>Utilize community input to develop character and mission of the Bay Area Farmers Market</p> <p>Develop a straightforward vendor application process and market rules</p>	<p>Partner with existing community group for market support</p> <p>Establish a management strategy for the future of the market</p>	<p>Pursue funding from community stakeholders for future longevity</p>
Long Term	<p>Create and implement Bay Area Farmers Market Certified Local program</p>	<p>Establish token system and purchase market-owned card reader for EBT and credit</p>	<p>Purchase both parcels comprising Site 2</p> <p>Renovating Site 2 structure</p>