



Strategic Plan 2017 - 2019



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Introduction

The Warren Farmers Market is a seasonal market that is held from June through October and managed by Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership (TNP).

In 2015, TNP began the strategic planning process for the Warren Farmers Market for the first time as part of the United States Department of Agriculture's Farmers Market Promotion Program grant.

There were a total of four meetings in 2015 and 2016, forty people participated in the process. All of the information collected from the community and various market stakeholders during those four meetings as well as surveys conducted at the market have been analyzed and used to guide the 2017-2019 Warren Farmers Market Strategic Plan.

This document was created in Fall 2016 as a living and working document that can be built upon as the market grows to meet customer demand.

Our Partners

- Body Bliss Connection LLC
- Lake to River Food Co-Op
- Mercy Health
- The Fine Arts Council of Trumbull County
- The Trumbull Memorial Health Foundation
- Trumbull County Creating Healthy Communities
- Trumbull County Farm Bureau
- Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership
- Trumbull Soil and Water Conservation District
- United States Department of Agriculture





Team Values

- We value equitable access to fresh and nutritious food and believe it is a foundation for human health and dignity.
- We are accountable to our community by requiring our vendors to produce and source what they sell with integrity.
- We value a positive team environment that is supportive, respectful, open-minded, and creative.
- We have an unflinching commitment to racial, ethnic, gender, and social diversity and inclusion.
- We value education and growth.
- We value sustainability and we strive to operate the market on a model of social, economic, and ecological permanence

Vision

The Warren Farmers Market promotes a sustainable farmers market that benefits local food producers, artisans, and community members. The Warren Farmers Market improves the quality of life for the citizens of Warren by reducing food insecurity.

Mission

The mission of the Warren Farmers Market is to provide a venue for people to connect with local farmers and food producers, to allow local makers sell their hand crafted goods, to create opportunities for learning about healthy food and wellness, and to provide a space for the community to gather and socialize.

Organizational History

In 2012, the market, which is now known as the Warren Farmers Market, was started by Mercy Health. At this time the market was a once a month event located in the parking lot of the Mercy Health Outpatient Clinic on Tod Avenue NW in Warren, Ohio. TNP learned after the market had started of its existence and sought to partner with the market as one of the goals of TNP is to improve the health of Warren residents by increasing access to nutritious foods and the elimination of food deserts in Warren neighborhoods.

TNP worked to help promote the market throughout 2012. TNP also partnered with GROW Youngstown Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Share. TNP and the Garden Resources of Warren (GROW) program also held cooking demos on Courthouse Square during “Noon in the Park,” a free weekly concert series on Courthouse Square and sponsored by the Fine Arts Council of Trumbull County.

The market moved to Courthouse Square in Historic Downtown Warren, Ohio in the 2013 season and TNP took on a management role for the market. At this time the market was still once a month and was held on Friday’s, again during Noon in the Park.

After a successful season in 2013, the Warren Farmers Market became a weekly event in 2014 and the day the market was held was moved to Tuesdays from 3pm to



6pm. TNP was also awarded the Farmers Market Promotional Program Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture which allowed us to better promote the vendors at the market, perform more cooking demonstrations for educational outreach, provide technical support to our farmers that vend at the market, and to create this plan for the market through various surveying techniques and focus groups.

In 2015 TNP was able to add the Double Your Dollars program to the market through support from the TMH Foundation, allowing customers that use the Ohio Direction Card SNAP EBT benefit to shop at the market, further increasing access to Warren residents. Through this initiative, SNAP/ EBT customers are able to double their dollars up to \$10 each visit.

Through initial surveys and meetings, issues around lack of transportation were repeatedly mentioned by residents and stakeholders. In 2016, through a partnership with TNP and Second Baptist Church, TNP was able to pilot a free transportation program that will also help increase food access throughout the city of Warren.

Timeline of the Market

2012

The market was started by Mercy Health

TNP partnered with the market as well as with GROW Youngstown Community Supported Agriculture and hosted a Warren pick up location

TNP and the GROW Program held cooking demos during Noon in the Park

2013

The market moved to Courthouse Square and TNP took on a management role

The market was once a month and on Fridays during Noon on the Park

2014

The market became weekly and held on Tuesdays 3pm - 6pm

The market started accepting SNAP benefits through the Ohio Direction Card. TNP was awarded the Farmers Market Promotional Program Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture

2015

TNP added the Double Your Dollars program with funding by Trumbull Memorial Health Foundation allowing SNAP/ EBT customers to double their dollars up to \$10 each visit

2016

Through a partnership with TNP and Second Baptist Church a free transportation program was piloted.

The Community We Serve



Warren is located in northeastern Ohio – located midway between Pittsburgh and Cleveland. A legacy city with a rust belt heritage, Warren has struggled with the fallout from the loss of the steel industry in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Warren's population plunged from over 60,000 in the mid 1970s to just over 40,000 today. The effects of economic decline continue to ripple through the community, and among the myriad impacts is a lack of access to fresh healthy food. Many neighborhoods are located in food deserts, with residents lacking access to fresh produce and food. The once thriving public transportation system has dwindled to one costly and infrequent bus line that does not connect to any grocery store in the city limits.

Thirty percent of Warren's population lives below the poverty level (Census 2010). 83.2 percent of the population has graduated high school, however only 12.1 percent has a bachelor's degree or higher. The median household income is \$29,317 (ACS 209-2013), the unemployment rate for the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman metro-area was 13.0 percent in September 2015 (Bureau of Labor Statistics), and 27 percent of adults are not in the work force in Trumbull County (Center for Community Solutions). The city is racially diverse, with 67.7 percent of residents identifying as white and 27.7 percent as African-American. 23.7 percent of Warren's residents are under the age of 18, the demographic most significantly impacted by food insecurity.

The health profile for Trumbull County reveals staggering concerns- over 85 percent of adults in Trumbull County have inadequate fruit and vegetable

consumption rates- nearly 10 percent higher than the national average (US CDC, US HHS). 39.26 percent of adults in Trumbull County are statistically obese. Nearly 11 percent of Trumbull County adults have been diagnosed with diabetes and in the population served by Medicare 28.16 percent have been diagnosed, indicating a possible correlation between income and

dietary deficiencies. Trumbull County has 25 percent of the population enrolled in Medicaid and 15 percent or 31,633 persons are enrolled in the SNAP program, which is an increase of 71 percent from December 2006 (Ohio Department of Medicaid, Ohio Job and Family Services).



Social and Economic Impact of the Market

The first studies of the market took place in 2015 and were completed by TNP. There were two surveys used, one for vendors and one for customers. There were 8 responses to the vendor surveys and 72 responses to the customer surveys. In 2015, it was found that 65% of customers visited the market at least once a month. It was also found, by TNP, that the average amount spent weekly by customers was between \$11 and \$20.

Vendors were asked to report their total sales for 2015. Nine vendors reported and their sales totaled \$24,161. Of that amount, \$3,742 in sales came from Ohio Direction Card SNAP EBT customers and \$5,064 in sales from the Mercy Health Fruit and Vegetable Program.

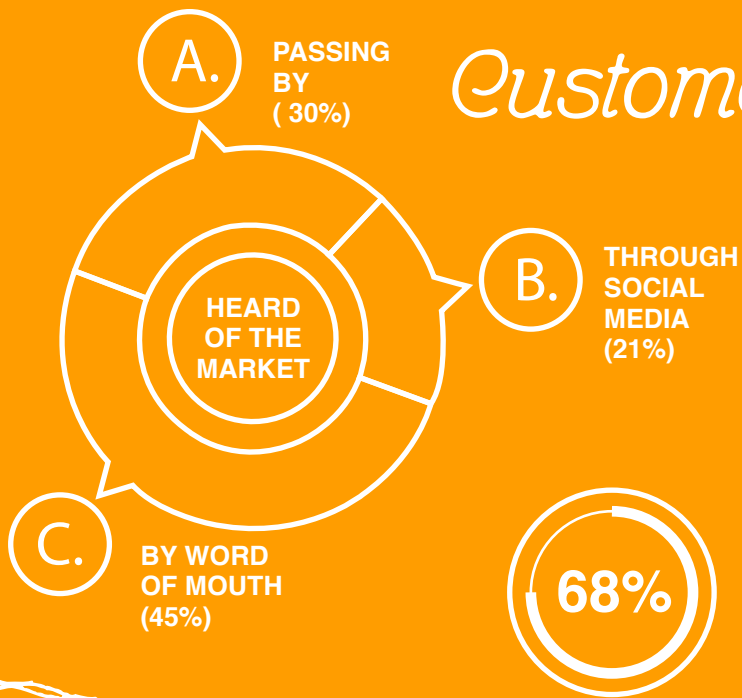
In 2016, Youngstown State University's Regional Economic Development Initiative performed surveys of vendors that take part in the market, businesses surrounding the market, and customers that shop at the market. There were 76 customer responses, 14 vendor responses, and 13 local business responses.

In 2016, it was discovered that 68% of the customers that responded to the survey attended the market at least once per month. In both 2015 and in 2016, the typical amount of money spent per customer at the market was between \$11 and \$20. It was interesting to note that in 2016, 30% of market attendees learned about the market by simply driving past and 21% find out about the markets events through social media.

Also found in the 2016 study, an overwhelming majority of vendors indicated that they often have repeat customers at the market and that there was a strong sense of community at the Warren Farmers Market. It was also revealed that vendors whom sell their products at the market do not travel far. On average they travel between 8 and 30 miles every week. There were \$3,384 in sales by SNAP EBT users and \$4,802 in sales from the Mercy Health Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Voucher Program. At the time of writing this report, all vendors have yet to report their 2016 sales totals. Local businesses believe the market has a positive impact on their business and in general are very positive about the market and its impact in Warren.

As there were no defined methods for calculating the total number of visitors each week at the market from 2015 to 2016, it will not be a reliable metric to determine economic impact of the market until a standardized method is established.

Customers



Respondents attend the market at least once per month



Of all customers surveyed attended the live cooking demonstrations



Of customers spend between \$11 - \$20 per visit

Vendors



Vendors from outside Warren travel between 8 to 30 miles to reach the market



85% FELT STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY



79% RANKED THE ATMOSPHERE AS THE TOP QUALITY OF THE MARKET



86% INDICATED THEY OFTEN HAVE REPEAT CUSTOMERS

Nearby Businesses



Felt that the location of the market had a positive impact on their business operations.



Reported to have customers that previously visited the Farmers Market that same day.



Felt that the increase in pedestrian traffic during the time of the market benefitted their business in some way.

Incentives for Shopping at the Market

The Double Your Dollars Program addresses the idea that farmers markets are too expensive for low-income shoppers. Through the Trumbull Memorial Health Foundation Grant, TNP is able to double the amount of money shoppers receive using their Ohio Direction Card. For example, if someone would like to spend \$10 at the market using their Ohio Direction Card Food Benefits they will receive another \$10. This allows the customer to now spend \$20 at the market to purchase food, \$10 from their food benefit card and \$10 from TNP.



Almost every week at the market in 2016 there was an educational cooking demonstration using locally produced foods from the market. The goal is to show customers how to make healthy and nutritious meals that are not only delicious but also in season. In 2015 TNP hosted 10 cooking demonstrations and had 264 attendees. In 2016 TNP worked hard to increase those numbers. TNP had 16 cooking demonstrations and 412 customers participated.

Some of the recipes featured were vegan macaroni and cheese, fresh fruit and veggie smoothies, and a truly unique tomato and watermelon salad. At the end of the 2016 growing season on September 27, there was also a class on canning at the market. Marie Economos from The Ohio State University Extension Trumbull County showed customers how to preserve vegetables from the garden and the market.

The Warren Farmers Market offers free market transportation to the citizens of Warren in a partnership between TNP and Second Baptist Church. Every week, transportation stops were made at a number of locations included but were not limited to, Highland Terrace, Tod's Crossing, Riverview Apartments, Warren Heights, Fairview Gardens, Trumbull Homes, and Waterstone Place. The criteria used to pick these locations was based on food access and age of the population that resides in each community as some of the locations are housing designed for Warren's elderly population.

In cooperation with the Fine Arts Council of Trumbull County, the market started hosting local artisans to sell their handcrafted items at the market so that the Market may increase variety of the items offered. There were a variety of items created by local artists including, but not limited to, paint-



ings, jewelry, up-cycled clothing, soaps, and beauty products.

There were also a number of small pop up events. The market is operated with flexibility so that when an opportunity to connect to short term incentives presents itself,

it is taken. In 2016 TNP partnered with the Trumbull County Employee Health and Wellness Committee that encouraged county employees to come to the market more often with a drawing sponsored by the committee, TNP took advantage of the Pokémon GO

craze and ran short term contests around catching Pokémon at the market, TNP also partnered with Trumbull Soil and Water Conservation District along with Trumbull County Farm Bureau to bring rain barrel education to the market including a free raffle for a hand painted rain barrel and all of the hardware to install the barrel.







Long Term Goals and Objectives

- 1.To increase access to local, sustainable food and products for the citizens of Warren, to be leaders in the local food landscape and to support the growth of a local food economy
 - a. Continue focusing on building and advertising our Warren Farmers Market Transportation Program.
 - b. Pop-up markets throughout the community.
 - c. WIC at the Warren Farmers Market.



2. That customers are given the tools to live a more healthy lifestyle that nourishes the brain and the body

- a. Continue building relationships with health and wellness organizations that can help better promote the market to citizens that can take advantage of programs such as Double Your Dollars and free transportation.
- b. Continue to provide cooking classes at the market with a focus on teaching people how to prepare fresh meals with in season produce.



3. That farmers and artisans that participate in the market are successful

- a. Increase the variety of items and types of vendors at the market
- b. Continue to offer small business support to vendors that participate in the forms of graphic/website design/marketing.
- c. Network farmers with the technical assistance they need to be successful growers
- d. Focus on advertising for the market and the different programs we offer so we can better stand out amongst our competition.



4. Strengthen the local economy of Warren, Ohio

- a. Define a set of standard metrics that will be used to measure the economic and social impact of the market
- b. Create opportunities for synergy between local restaurants/businesses and the market.



5. Continue to create opportunities for our farmers and vendors to network and collaborate

- a. Host gatherings that allow farmers and artisans to share their experiences.
- b. Encourage local producers to participate in classes and workshops that will help them meet other small business owners.