

# French Market Corporation Strategic Plan 2021-2026

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

In October 2020, French Market Corporation began a strategic growth planning endeavor with the objective of maximizing the organization's financial contribution to the public services and functions of the City of New Orleans through the development of smart and sustainable revenue opportunities. The project was led by a collaborative of several entities:

- The Mayor and other leaders of The City of New Orleans who allocated funding, support, and invaluable information and feedback to the process.
- French Market Corporation leadership and staff, who provided insight and took action to begin implementation of the plan.
- **trep**wise, a growth consulting firm who spearheaded District-level strategic planning efforts and internal stakeholder engagement.
- Concordia, who led efforts in capital planning through community engagement specific to the Flea and Farmers Market areas.
- Think Like Pirates, led by Richard McCarthy, who provided market-specific expertise and knowledge.
- Linetta J. Gilbert of Gilbert & Associates, who brought experience in community engagement, strategic planning, and racial equity and inclusion.

This document is the product of comprehensive primary and secondary research, outreach, and strategic planning conversations. For more information on methodology and process, please see the appendix: [Process & Methodology](#).



# THE OPPORTUNITY

The French Market District is an iconic series of spaces and places in the French Quarter, each with its own unique character, beauty, and histories. While the properties in the District do bear significant meaning to both visitors and tourists alike, there is an opportunity to maximize the impact of these spaces on our local communities through consistent engagement of residents and tourists alike.

**Discovery Insights.** Consulting partners and FMC staff spent months diving into stakeholder outreach (interviews, focus groups, and surveys), researching in the latest best practices in planning public spaces, and studying several exemplary waterfront districts. The strategic plan represents a synthesis of what consultants learned throughout the planning process. Key implications from Discovery included needing consistent, culturally relevant activation throughout the market, contributing value to visitors and locals, and deciphering opportunities for a more financially impactful French Market District.

“ I feel the area modestly reflects the culture and legacy of New Orleans. I also see a trend to less authenticity. While that may be unavoidable due to the mandates of commerce, I hope the management works diligently to promote authenticity within the needs of commerce.



The French Market District was historically a place of opportunity, community connection, and recreation, and the contents of this plan aim to leverage the strengths of the area, and of our city's culture, to advance the mission of the French Market District.

# STRATEGIC FOCUS

With a better understanding of the organization's foundations, we can begin looking toward the future. Throughout the planning process, consulting teams gathered insights and information from a variety of sources, from internal and external stakeholders to globally celebrated markets, parkways and monuments. Throughout this work, it became clear that to develop a successful public district, FMC must focus plans and actions in three areas: Activation, Value, and Sustainability. The priorities and actions of the plan look to fulfill the core purpose of the organization while making strides in these three areas of strategic focus.

## ACTIVATION

*A common thread among beloved and profitable public spaces is that they are consistently activated. Much like a person, successful public spaces feel as though they are alive, with a unique personality that reflects the attributes of their location and surrounding culture. The result is a space that feels more like a friend and less like a set of structures. This connection empowers visitors and users to feel a sense of pride and ownership over the space, which in turn generates investment (of money, time, and otherwise).*

## VALUE

*The beauty and the challenge of FMC lies in enacting the [four facets of its mission](#) in a way that provides significant, repeated value to many different types of audiences. The key to serving its large and diverse population is providing targeted relevant experiences, meeting and exceeding expectations, and keeping experiences fresh. There must be perceived value in both what is constant (shops, vendors, installations, and eateries) and in what changes, (events, special features, or exclusive offerings).*

## SUSTAINABILITY

*Key to FMC's success is its ability to sustain itself financially while contributing to the city's budget. While the plan calls for investment in some areas, the intended result of those recommendations is profitability. In building the plan, the project team prioritized a blend of strategies that increase revenue in the short and long-term. Partnerships are an effective way to refresh FMC's value with efficient use of resources. A sustainable FMC is one where resources are not stretched and its mission is front and center.*



# DISTRICT, ASSET & INTERNAL STRATEGIES

# ACTIONS & PROGRESS

## Year 1

*Year one of the plan focuses on the groundwork necessary to reposition FMC's spaces in the mind of locals by creating plans for building lasting value.*

*Major efforts include:*

- *Leveraging FMC's marketing budget allocation to revisit brand assets, giving them a current look and feel and expanding awareness of a unified District.*
- *Collaborate closely with existing cultural organizations (such as the Office of Cultural Economy) to build a collaborative that supports FMC in understanding of and funding for culturally authentic programming and initiatives\**
- *Use a combination of heatmap data and developer bids to determine the best form of mixed usage of Elysian Fields parking lots.\**
- *Implement new technologies for effective management of vendors and commercial tenants.\**
- *Onboard a new hire into the currently vacant Director of Capital Assets & Procurement role to research, manage, apply, and report on external funding opportunities for investing in FMC's growth.*

## Year 2-3

*During years 2-3 of the plan, the organization will put in place the right people and partnerships to steer forward on achieving its longer-term goals.*

*Major efforts include:*

- *Create a master transportation plan for the district in partnership with RTA and private transportation providers, such as Hop On Hop Off, Bike Easy, and the Basin Street visitors center.*
- *Complete cultural activation plan for a consistently activated FMC.\**
- *Leverage new brand assets to launch promotional campaign featuring vacant UPB units.*
- *Launch Manager of Cultural Activation fellowship to create and implement strategy for cultural curation and community engagement.*
- *Revisiting visitor and financial metrics to determine necessary changes or pivots to the plan.*

*\*Indicates actions in progress as of October 2021*

*Note: Please reference District-Level, Asset-Specific, and Strengthening the Core sections of the plan for more details on strategies and actions.*

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# ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Mission | Roles | Strategic Focus



# MISSION

## French Market Foundations

When French Market Corporation was initially formed in 1932, its primary role was management and maintenance of the then operating markets. In 1973, the need for property preservation and revitalization became apparent. The city transformed the Corporation into a nonprofit organization with the Mayor of New Orleans as the sole shareholder. Since then, FMC has acquired additional properties to form the French Market District. The Corporation's consistent role throughout history includes serving for public benefit. The pursuit of public benefit is materialized through the organization's mission (*right*).

“ In over 200 years of existence, the Market has been built, destroyed, and rebuilt many times over, but what remains unchanged is the Market's central spirit of commerce, community, and culture that is irresistible to visitors from near and far.

*French Market Corporation Homepage*

## CURRENT MISSION

The purpose of French Market Corporation as outlined in its mission statement is summarized below.

- To function as a public benefit corporation, which preserves, restores, maintains, promotes and develops properties and historical assets in order to generate revenue for the City and support tourism.
- To manage city assets: the French Market, Upper Pontalba, Jackson Square Pedestrian Mall, French Market and Elysian Fields parking facilities, Oscar Dunn Park, Edison Park, Bienville Park, Joan de Arc Park, Dutch Alley, Latrobe and the Riverfront Park, showcasing their architectural, cultural, economic and historical value.
- To incubate and support small business growth and profitability, particularly for those who create and sell goods and food that is locally, artisanally made and that serves both tourists and locals alike.
- To foster the growth of tourism, and the New Orleans economy, through efforts to increase visitor traffic, increase vendor and commercial tenant sales, thereby increasing money earned from rent and taxes.

# MISSION (continued)

As a public benefit corporation, FMC has a duty to uphold its obligations to the City of New Orleans and its people as stated in [its mission](#). The challenge in implementing this role is managing the expectations, wishes, and desires of many stakeholder groups. As **trepwise** and Concordia consulted a wide range of stakeholder identities, a common theme emerged: everyone wants to see FMC live up to its potential as a true gem for New Orleans. To make this vision a reality, FMC must communicate its mission in a way that entices all relevant audiences. The metaphor of the *Front Door* to New Orleans resonated with many stakeholders throughout the planning process as a means to bring FMC's vision to life.

## The Front Door to the City

According to stakeholder input, a majority of locals do not see value in FMC's assets. In activating its spaces, FMC must function in a way that welcomes and unites New Orleans residents and visitors alike. Doing so will lead to sustained engagement and hedge risks to FMC revenue. The *Front Door* concept positions FMC as a passageway to experiencing New Orleans sights, sounds, tastes, and hospitality at its fullest. Ideally, stepping into the French Market District brings locals and visitors over the threshold and into a truly unique and authentic experience.



# MISSION (continued)

*Why is a metaphor important?*

Most users of FMC are not aware of, or do not understand, the scope of the organization's mission. Therefore, it is important to set expectations for what an individual will find and discover when engaging with the organization's assets. Using the *Front Door* metaphor appropriately sets user understanding of the organization before users even step foot on site<sup>4</sup>. This concept will also support the repositioning (rebranding) of FMC among locals. The *Front Door* Metaphor implies the following characteristics:



A word cloud of characteristics associated with the Front Door Metaphor. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'Invitation' being the largest and most central word. Other words include 'Hospitality', 'Inclusivity', 'Passageway', 'Authenticity', 'Movement', 'Togetherness', 'Comfort', 'Opportunity', and 'Starting Point'.

Starting Point  
Opportunity  
Hospitality  
Comfort • Authenticity • Movement  
Invitation  
Inclusivity • Togetherness  
Passageway

# MISSION (continued)

**Bringing the concept to life.** How to employ the mission concept to help FMC communicate its value and guide key decisions:

## EXTERNALLY

- *In marketing, branding and communications efforts, including language and imagery targeted at locals and visitors alike*
- *To help determine which opportunities for growth are mission-aligned*
- *To evaluate how to allocate and invest resources on behalf of the broader organization*
- *To evaluate the tenant and vendor product mix*
- *To excite new and previous users to return to the market and experience it repeatedly*
- *To help vendors and tenants understand how their participation impacts the city*

## INTERNALLY

- *To define the culture of the organization*
- *To hold staff and leadership accountable to certain values and standards through tools such as annual evaluations, impact measurement, etc.*
- *To guide Board makeup, expectations, and participation*
- *To assist Board and leadership in making strategic decisions on behalf of the organization*
- *In evaluating and choosing opportunities for partnership and collaboration with other organizations*

# ROLES

As presented in the [Discovery Report](#), FMC's mission comes to life through the organization's fulfillment of the following roles:

- Revenue generation for the City
- Public benefit & social good
- Historic preservation & storytelling
- Property management
- Incubation of small business
- Cultural curation, celebration & promotion
- District & asset cohesion

Perhaps FMC's least defined role is that of a public benefit corporation. The official definition, according to FMC's bylaws, is the *"preservation, restoration, maintenance, promotion and development of the City of New Orleans' properties and historical assets,"* and *"to facilitate revenue enhancing projects in and around the French Quarter supporting the City's tourism efforts."*

This definition is open to interpretation and has led to instances of mission creep in FMC assets and activities over the years. In an effort to clarify its role under this terminology, **trep**wise lifted insights from stakeholders and research alike to define a clearer picture of FMC's contribution to public benefit.

## DEFINING PUBLIC BENEFIT

### What does public benefit mean for FMC?

- Optimizing the spaces and places under FMC purview that align with FMC's resources, skills, and expertise.
- Creating meaningful, profitable, and equitable opportunities for the people of Greater New Orleans in accordance with its mission.
- Upholding the reputation of the city to attract international attention, serving visitors and locals alike.
- In times of crisis, serving as a venue for activities that sustain the livelihood of the people of Greater New Orleans, i.e. a distribution center for supplies, a vaccination site, a venue for announcing essential information, etc.

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# PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Brand | Reputation | Promotion





# FMC BRAND

**Unannounced change goes unnoticed.** During Discovery we learned that there is a hangover in perception, especially among locals, as to what FMC offers. In other words, the perception of FMC is lagging the reality of its offerings. A brand refresh will allow FMC to reposition itself in the minds of locals, building excitement and intrigue with a new look and feel. Therefore, a core recommendation for this strategic plan is a revisit of the FMC Brand.

A brand is a set of assets - language, icons, name, etc. - that depicts the identity and persona of an organization, service, or product. The purpose of a brand is to empower organizations to attract and connect with individuals, such as customers, employees, suppliers, and partners, on a relevant, human level. FMC's brand has particularly powerful implications, since it is closely complements the overarching brand of New Orleans.

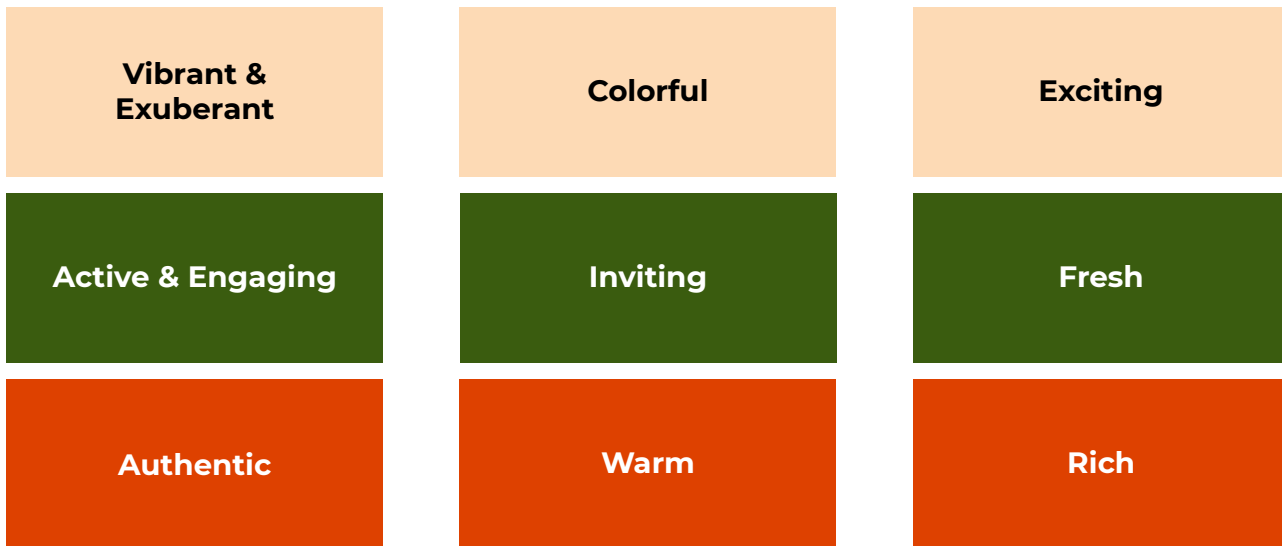
## A SAMPLE OF FMC'S CURRENT BRAND ASSETS



# A SUCCESSFUL FMC BRAND

**Success for FMC means a positive reputation, increased awareness among audiences and visual experiences that demonstrate freshness and authenticity.**

The purpose of a great brand is simple: to make target audiences feel something. Additionally, great brands stand out with both striking visual elements and a cohesive, relatable story. The beauty of FMC's brand is that it has the rich history and culture of New Orleans behind it, which is currently not being leveraged to the fullest. From our work in discovery, several clear brand attributes came forth. Building off of the *Front Door* metaphor, the following attributes are key.



# BRAND STRATEGY

## REPOSITION AND REFRESH THE FMC BRAND IN ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVATION, SUSTAINABILITY, & VALUE

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Successful refresh and modernization of FMC brand assets
- Increased awareness of the French Market Corporation brand, managed assets, and role within the District
- Improved perception and increased usage of the area and its offerings by all target audiences

### CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Cohesive Brand.** A cohesive brand, as perceived in people's minds and shown through physical and visible markers, is needed for the District to effectively communicate the purpose, appeal, and impact of FMC on the public. Defining and activating this cohesive brand will be challenging with a one-person marketing team.

**Naming.** There are mixed sentiments on the French Market Corporation and French Market District names. In some ways, the name has a strong legacy, but when locals think of the Corporation, they only think of the Flea and Food Market areas.

**Marketing Expenditure.** FMC spends a great deal on advertising, but this investment has not been effective at targeting locals. It will be essential to balance investment in target audiences to achieve marketing goals.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Repurpose current agency investment to select an agency to support in repositioning the FMC brand. The proper partner will have a background in tourism brand development and a working knowledge of the nuances of New Orleans culture. The proper mix of partners may include both a national tourism branding agency and a local firm who understands the unique nature of New Orleans history, culture, and attitudes.*
- *FMC's selected agency partner(s) will conduct further research to determine the core elements/attributes of FMC's brand, building off findings from the planning process and the Front Door mission concept.*
- *From research and discovery, agency partner(s) will guide FMC in defining its true identity to create a central brand story and positioning.*
- *FMC will revisit its tangible brand assets: name, logo, colors, etc. to determine how to best convey the brand identity in a way that resonates with target audience groups.*

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *With agency support, FMC will develop clear strategies and next steps for the launch of its brand. This work will include everything from rebuilding the website to PR campaigns to activating the brand consistently in FMC spaces and assets, and more.*

## AUDIENCES & EXPERIENCES



# FMC AUDIENCES & EXPERIENCES

**Providing public benefit necessitates clear definition of the public and their needs.** Dividing a population into target audiences (i.e. smaller groups who share distinct needs, characteristics, or behaviors) can help an organization understand how to better serve and communicate with each audience; thereby building positive, relevant associations. Eventually, these associations create loyal relationships between the organization and its stakeholders. This mutual understanding between FMC and its audiences is especially important in serving such a diverse sampling of the public. The following pages present user experiences as outlined from information gathered during discovery and research. These journey maps demonstrate the high and low points of each experience. This information has assisted the consulting teams in further honing the strategic and tactical priorities of the strategic plan and will be useful to FMC throughout implementation.



TOURISTS & VISITORS



VENDORS & TENANTS

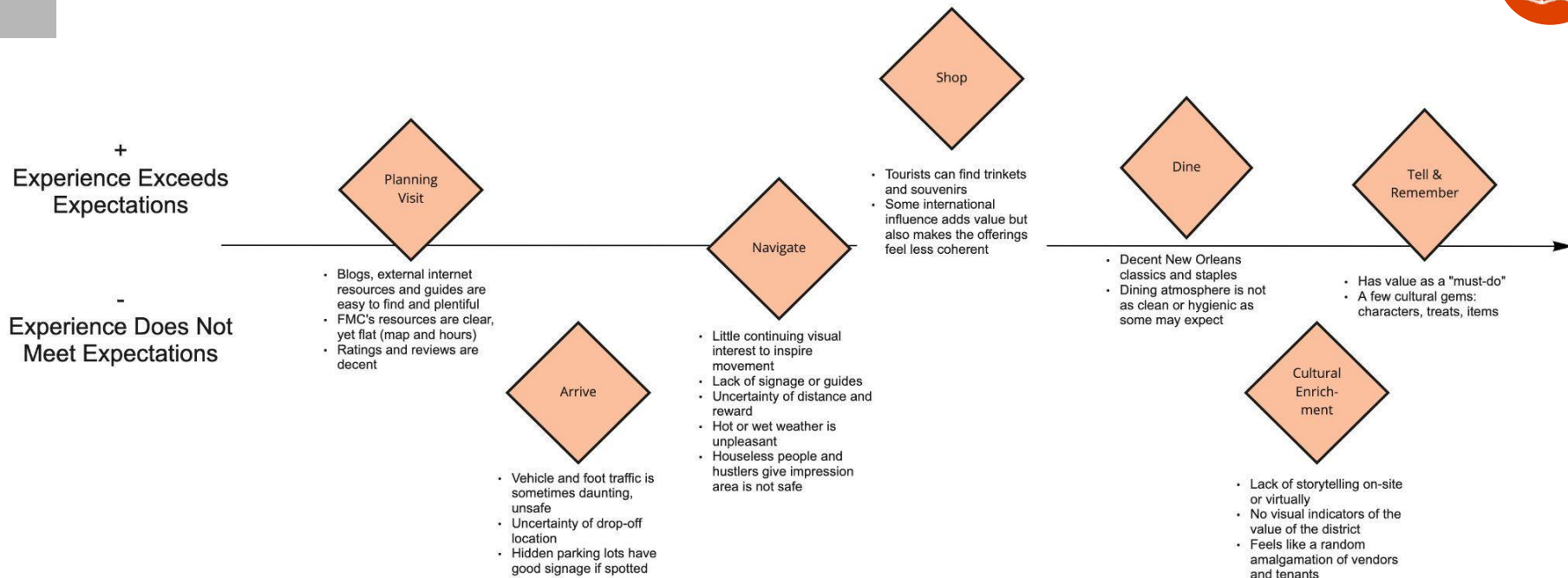


LOCALS



UNHOUSED PEOPLE

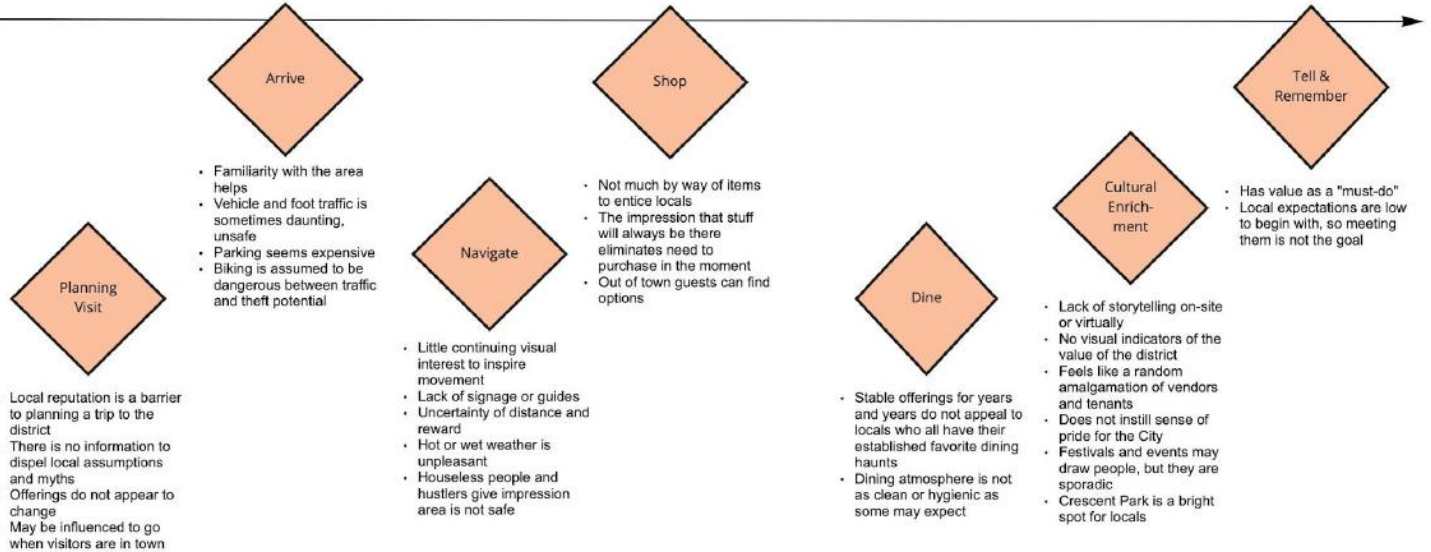
# USER JOURNEY: TOURISTS & VISITORS



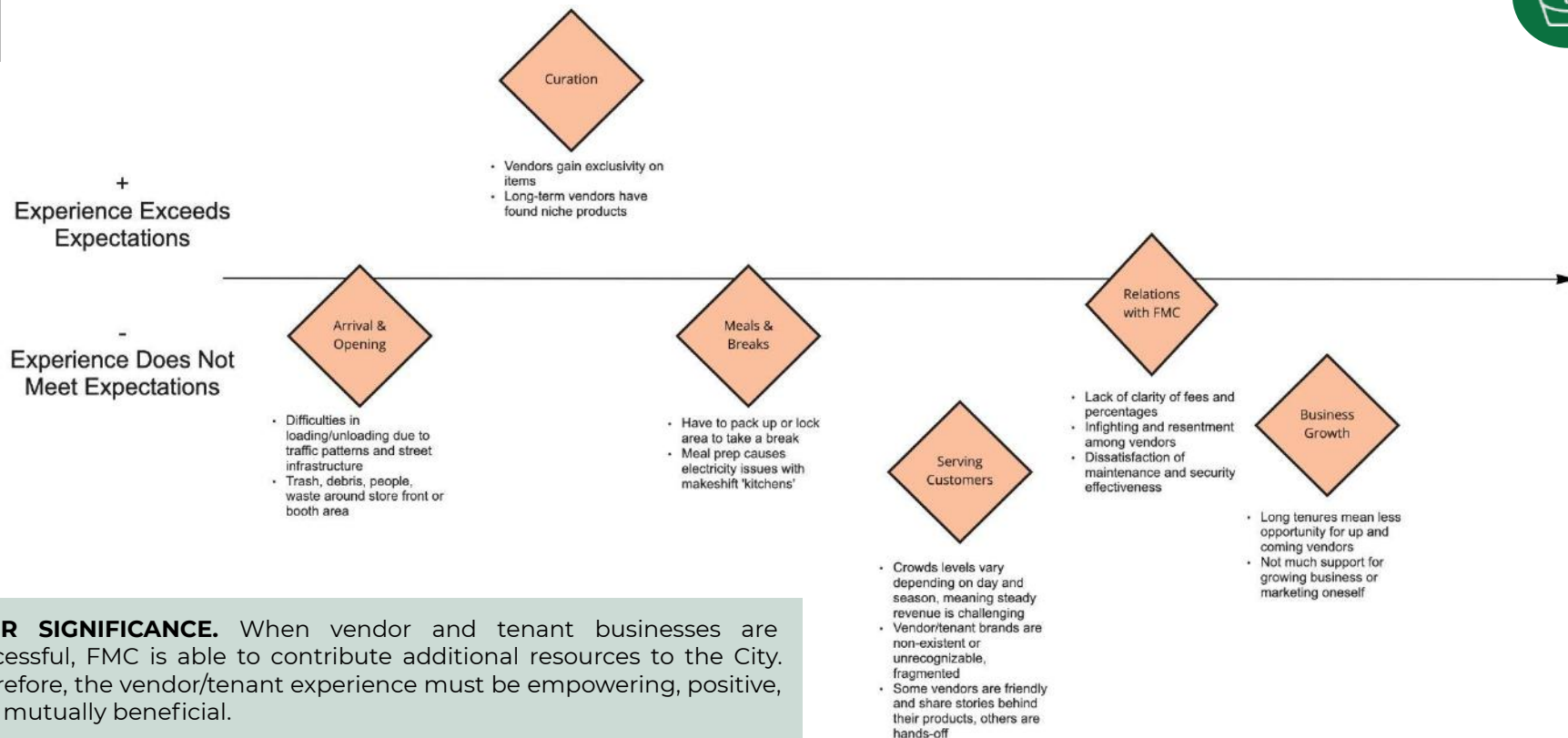
**USER SIGNIFICANCE.** Tourists and visitors are the primary users of FMC, and therefore, contribute heavily to the financial success of the commercial tenants and vendors of FMC. As the City works towards a more sustainable form of tourism, targeting wealthier individuals, FMC will need to adapt to serve more discerning visitors.

+  
Experience Exceeds  
Expectations

-  
Experience Does Not  
Meet Expectations



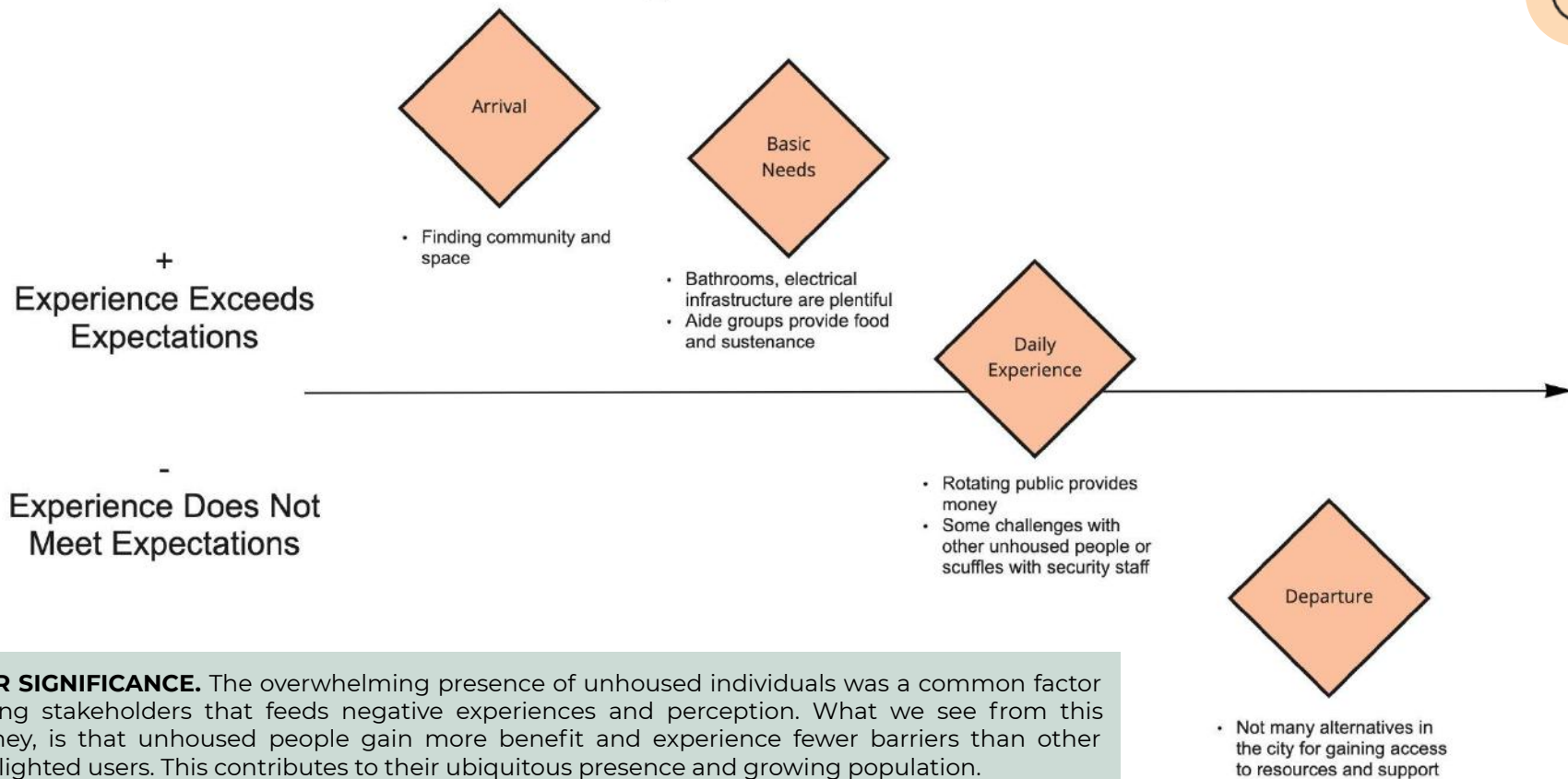
# USER JOURNEY: VENDORS & TENANTS



**USER SIGNIFICANCE.** When vendor and tenant businesses are successful, FMC is able to contribute additional resources to the City. Therefore, the vendor/tenant experience must be empowering, positive, and mutually beneficial.



# USER JOURNEY: UNHOUSED PEOPLE



**USER SIGNIFICANCE.** The overwhelming presence of unhoused individuals was a common factor among stakeholders that feeds negative experiences and perception. What we see from this journey, is that unhoused people gain more benefit and experience fewer barriers than other highlighted users. This contributes to their ubiquitous presence and growing population.

# USER JOURNEY

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

- There is a lack of intentionality about how FMC's spaces and offerings serve its audiences.
- Locals experience barriers that overpower the current perceived benefits of visiting FMC.
- Tourists and visitors can find transactional value interacting with FMC. The key is maximizing the impact (financial, promotional, reputational) of each transaction.
- As echoed in stakeholder feedback, specific engagement and opportunities for Culture Bearers are an opportunity.
- There is a lack of physical and informational cohesion and connection from one end of FMC properties to the next.
- The unhoused population has the greatest benefit and fewest barriers to using the space.



## DISTRICT-LEVEL STRATEGIES



# DISTRICT-LEVEL STRATEGIES

Based on an extensive discovery process, additional research, and the knowledge and experience of our combined teams, the following strategies have emerged as key to organizational success over the next five years. The following pages provide more insight and action to each of these strategies.

## DISTRICT-LEVEL STRATEGIES

### **[1] LEVERAGE NONPROFIT STATUS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO ACCESS EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR FMC ACTIVATION AND IMPROVEMENT**

The organization has a unique position as a nonprofit organization that manages City-owned properties. From preliminary research by the consulting team, it is clear that funding opportunities abound to support the activation of tourist and recreation areas focused on equitable economic stimulation. With a dedicated staff member (the Director of Capital Assets and Special Projects) and clear roles in raising funds, FMC should be able to fund planned projects with much less burden on the organization's revenues.

**[2] REVISIT THE FEASIBILITY OF A UNIFIED RIVERFRONT.** Riverfront spaces require extensive resources and a distinct set of skills and knowledge than currently exist at FMC. Based on stakeholder feedback and a look at comparative public spaces, the City's transition of FMC's riverfront properties to a consistent riverfront authority is prudent.

**[3] IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND NAVIGABILITY THROUGH PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE.** Eye catching visual indicators throughout the District can show users how to navigate the French Market District, which empowers them to understand and find their way in the space. These additions also support a holistic brand experience and can serve as vessels for carrying the history and culture of New Orleans.

### **[4] DESIGN SMART USAGE OF PARKING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.**

Considering FMC's location as an asset, there are plentiful opportunities to form stronger bonds with transportation providers. Formalized partnerships with bus companies, public transit, and bike organizations can make getting to and around the area much more user-friendly.

**[5] INFUSE CULTURE AND HISTORY INTO THE OXYGEN OF FMC ASSETS.** In addition to clear indicators of entry and direction, routinely activating the length of French Market properties with historical and cultural moments will delight users. FMC's spaces have many histories and stories to share that could build a more authentic experience for locals and visitors alike. This strategy employs both non-living exhibits, as well as daily and weekly pop-ups and performances, moving FMC programming away from few costly events and instead investing in the daily life of the area.

**[6] CONTRIBUTE TO A SECURE SENSE OF PLACE.** New Orleans has a reputation of being welcoming, yet gritty and unsafe. While many stakeholders expect some level of these attributes, the presence of houseless individuals is concerning to all stakeholders. Therefore, identifying limits on usage, as well as partnering with other organizations to supplement resources and support will be helpful. Response training among security personnel under their new jurisdiction is key to the success of this programming.

# [1] LEVERAGE NON-PROFIT STATUS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO ACCESS EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR FMC ACTIVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased and diverse sources of revenue to fund the activation of the French Market District
- Decreased burden on organizational revenues to fund special projects and infrastructure maintenance/improvements
- Greater collaboration between FMC and other non-profit entities to build a more inclusive and equitable FMC experience

## FMC ROLES IN EXTERNAL FUNDING

**OWNERSHIP.** For federal and other funding opportunities that fall directly within FMC's mission, the organization will serve as the owner of the funding, leading the effort in applying, securing, and allocating funds, as well as forming strategic partnership to carry out the work. Such projects include funding for District marketing, some infrastructure and historic preservation, funding for workforce development, and district-level programming.

**CO-APPLICANT.** In many cases of funding for preservation and infrastructure improvements, the property owner must serve as the main applicant for funding. This means FMC would work with the city as a secondary applicant to disburse funds as planned in conjunction with the City.

**CONVENER.** For many opportunities, FMC is the physical venue in which funding is applied. In these cases, they would serve as a convener, bringing together the proper organizations to plan projects, secure funding, and report on outcomes. The cultural activation of the District and TA for Flea Market vendors. FMC may or may not be owners in these projects.

**INFORMER.** Funding available directly to small businesses or individuals should not be administered by FMC, but the organization can use their resources to inform and educate potential applicants about such opportunities (email newsletters, workshops, etc.)

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Repurpose the existing Director of Capital Assets & Procurement role to oversee, manage, and track all funding opportunities.*
- *Create a work plan for research, applications, planning, and executing on funding opportunities.*
- *Define clear roles for FMC for funding, and identify key partnerships to determine what funding FMC owns and shares vs. is a beneficiary of. See Appendix Funding Opportunities & Impact Dashboard*
- *Begin application for immediate funding opportunities.*

# [1] LEVERAGE NONPROFIT STATUS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO ACCESS EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR FMC ACTIVATION AND IMPROVEMENT (continued)

## MAJOR IMMEDIATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA).** The EDA has ongoing annual opportunities for funding technical assistance programs for equitable economic development. This resource could be invaluable to supporting the Flea/Food Market strategy of diversifying opportunities for small businesses and culture bearers. Additionally, in 2021, the EDA released \$3B in funding under the American Rescue Plan. A large portion of this funding will go towards entities who stimulate the economy through tourism and outdoor recreation.



**INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES.** The Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) offers opportunities for physical restoration and technical assistance through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. This funding could be a great opportunity to consider in the feasibility study for the Elysian Fields parking facilities. Additionally, the LA Department of Environmental Quality has a Brownfields funding opportunity to improve vacant lots and other historic physical assets that may be leveraged to fund improvements to the Flea & Farmers Markets.



## [2] REVISIT THE FEASIBILITY OF A UNIFIED WATERFRONT

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Greater mission and capabilities alignment for FMC
- Increased revenue from riverfront spaces
- A cohesive linear riverfront pathway that is representative of the city and its culture
- Increased quality of life for residents of neighborhoods bordering the riverfront, from the Aquarium to the end of Crescent Park.

### CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Riverfront.** Stakeholders report two primary challenges with FMC's management of the Moonwalk and Crescent Park riverfront areas. First, maintenance and security of these areas are especially challenging given barge allisions and physical accessibility challenges. Given these unique challenges, FMC staff do not currently have the resources and capabilities to effectively manage this space. Second, both the physical disconnection and split management of the riverfront limits its strategic potential as a pathway through the District and beyond. There is a common vision among residents, representatives, and leaders to have a comprehensively managed riverfront.

**Financial Challenges.** FMC's riverfront properties are limited in potential for revenue generation. The challenges mentioned above pose major barriers to activation under FMC's current mission. Therefore riverfront needs a separate authority to manage and maintain it due to the level of skill and resources required. It is not recommended to move the area under Parks & Parkways where it would have to compete for funding with more pressing demands on the City's budget.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Design a short-term plan for activation, through small pop ups and events, that builds good will with hyperlocals and draws revenue.*
- *Consult legal and other consultants to create a CEA that requires the City to fund and execute on uniting the riverfront.*

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Execute the CEA with the City.*
- *Work with the City to implement its existing riverfront development plans based on the City's 2006 Re-inventing the Crescent Plan, or, should the City desire to change course and update their plan and subsequent agreement with the Port and/or FMC, FMC should participate in the decision-making team updating the City's plan to clearly define the City's vision and strategies for use and development along the riverfront.*

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 4-5

- *In concert with the City, broadcast the provided public plan for the future of the French Quarter Riverfront.*
- *Approach Crescent Park with activities outlined in the City's plan to unify the riverfront.*

# [3] IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND NAVIGABILITY THROUGH PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased clarity of District boundaries and improved wayfinding, visual continuity and signage, and entry and exit points throughout the District for all visitors.
- Increased accessibility for those in wheelchairs and those who need mobility support throughout the District.
- Longer visit times and spending that indicates movement through the area.

## CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Wayfinding.** As mentioned in a previous NOBC report, visual cues for wayfinding are lacking from the District, causing a drop-off of foot traffic past Café du Monde. Visual cues or stations of activation along the walkway can add interest and intrigue and entice pedestrians to progress through the District. Work in this area is underway and has been approved by the City Council.

**Accessibility.** Accessibility was mentioned as a challenge, both in terms of accessibility for the elderly and for people with disabilities. FMC has tackled many improvements in accessibility, but more work is needed.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Continue working on clear, branded, signage that provides visual continuity and signals to tourists and locals their location within the District as well as its boundaries.*
- *Identify and clearly mark entry and exit points throughout the District so people can see them from vantage points throughout and outside of the District.*
- *Continue to identify and mark wheelchair accessible pathways and crossings throughout the District in accordance with ADA guidelines.*

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Design short-term promotional messaging and wayfinding improvements to more intentionally include all assets.*

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 4-5

- *To be determined as progress is made.*



## [4] DESIGN SMART USAGE OF TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased awareness and usage of parking options managed by FMC leading to increased revenue
- Decreased single vehicle traffic and increased usage of bike racks, public transportation, and rideshare options

### CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Traffic, Parking, and Transportation.** The flow of pedestrian and bicycle traffic is often hindered by illegal parking, speeding cars, and vehicles who do not yield the right of way. Ensuring there are clear entry and exit points to the District with multiple transportation options (on foot, by taxi or car, and by public transit) Parking is a top barrier to locals visiting the District due to perceptions that parking is hard to find and/or cost prohibitive. In addition, there are challenges with FMC-owned parking spaces, including safety issues on Elysian Fields and contractual challenges with the lot behind the French Market area and on nearby Elysian Fields Avenue. As a major revenue generator for the organization that subsidizes programming at other District assets, defining a sustainable and profitable plan for parking is essential.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Identify and clearly mark taxi and car ridesharing drop-off points in low-traffic areas. Identify, build, and clearly mark and promote secure bike storage areas across the District. Identify areas where it might be helpful to post crossing guards during high traffic times of the day.*
- *Gather data and bids to begin planning for Elysian Fields properties. Widespread suggestions include a mixed-use space with commercial tenants on the first floor and a multi-level parking structure on higher levels.*

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Develop a plan to improve ease of transportation access. This plan may include offering Hop On Hop Off incentives, RTA agreements, express bus/street car options, park and ride stops, ridesharing discounts, bike use discounts in partnership with Bike Easy and local bike tour companies, etc. Determine the feasibility of a co-branded FMC shuttle that moves between FMC parking lots and key drop off points within the District.*
- *Resume discussions with RTA about Park & Ride opportunities at the visitor center on Basin Street.*

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 4-5

- *Implement the plan to improve ease of transportation access.*

# [5] INFUSE CULTURE AND HISTORY INTO THE OXYGEN OF FMC ASSETS

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased funding and offerings for cultural and historic programs and opportunities throughout the District
- Increased engagement with local partners and agencies
- Increased visitor traffic tied to cultural and historic offerings
- Increased opportunities for local culture bearers to engage and be paid for their contributions within the District

## CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Cultural Curation & Promotion.** Culture bearers blend inspirations of the past and present to express the character of a population. When it comes to increasing tourism and providing opportunities to locals, having representation that mirrors the makeup of the city is essential. There are opportunities for increased cultural activation throughout FMC's portfolio of assets.

**Historic Preservation and Celebration.** As the project team conducted interviews, focus groups, and surveys, the importance of stories and memories of days past became a consistent point of discussion. Spaces within the French Market District are the pages of a book that tell the history of New Orleans. That history deserves to be shared, celebrated, and conveyed through fresh and innovative means to drive engagement and revenue.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Identify cultural agencies to partner with in curating FMC's cultural experience (Office of Cultural Economy, New Orleans African American Museum, Backstreet Cultural Museum, NOMA, Where Y'Art, etc.).*
- *Research local and national funding opportunities for cultural additions to the District.*

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Map out the key areas of activation based on traffic flow and opportunities for commerce.*
- *Establish database for capturing and preserving the stories and histories of French Market District.*
- *Determine physical infrastructure needed to implement cultural activation within the District. Determine feasibility of providing QR codes and/or VR experiences in the District.*

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 4-5

- *Share ideal itineraries by target audience online and through tourism partners. Featured online stories about each vendor, like a vendor program.*

## [6] CONTRIBUTE TO A SECURE SENSE OF PLACE

### DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A successful integration of the FMC and Homeland Security teams
- Improved ability for FMC security teams to support in de-escalation of issues that arise within the District
- Fewer incidents that require NOPD or EMS attention
- Increased supports for unhoused people within the District

### CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Security.** Inadequate security was cited as a barrier to increased visitor and local traffic. Aggressive panhandling and hustling were among the deterrents keeping locals away from the area. Currently, the FMC security force does not have the authority or skills to mitigate these challenges, but stakeholders are hopeful that shifting FMC security under the purview of Homeland Security will bring positive change.

**Supporting Unhoused People.** Currently, unhoused people are able to charge their phones, receive food, and find safety in public spaces within and adjacent to the properties that FMC manages. Some FMC staff and security have positive relationships with the “regulars,” and FMC security shared that 90% of those without housing are respectful of policies, while about 10% cause most challenges. Public perceptions suggests that the omnipresence of unhoused people leaves the space undesirable to locals and visitors alike.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Continue the progress of integrating FMC security into Homeland Security to provide additional authority, training, and growth opportunities to security personnel.*
- *Continue to engage organizations and experts in supporting unhoused people in public spaces and develop a multi-year plan for support.*
- *Hire a [Social Worker](#) as a shared role with French Quarter Management District to support unhoused population.*

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Through partnership with Homeland Security, continue to develop security staff mastery of de-escalation and preventative measures.*
- *Through partnership with organizations and experts in supporting unhoused people, implement the plan to provide support to those who find their way in the District.*

## ASSET-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES



# ASSET-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Most of the District-level priorities outlined in this strategic plan should be applied across all of FMC's assets. However, there are a few asset-specific recommendations that need to be prioritized as part of the plan.

## ASSET-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

**[1] REIMAGINING THE FLEA & FARMERS MARKETS.** Bring to life the plan's areas of focus - activation, sustainability, value - as conceptualized in the Flea and Farmers Market Study developed by Concordia.

**[2] TRANSITION CRESCENT PARK TO A DISTINCT WATERFRONT AUTHORITY.** In accordance with the [district level strategy](#) to reassign riverfront properties the to a skilled management entity, FMC must work with the city to explore opportunities and prepare Crescent Park for such a transition.



## ASSET-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

**[3] MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UPPER PONTALBA BUILDING (UPB).** The Upper Pontalba Building should capitalize on the opportunity it provides to live in the historic French Quarter.

# [1] REIMAGINING THE FLEA AND FARMERS MARKETS

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A French Market that supports local culture bearers and advances the city's cultural economy
- Increased programming and operations that serve the local public and promote sustainable tourism
- Clearer plans for strategic capital investments at the French Market

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1791, the French Market originated as a Native American trading post along the Mississippi River. From there it continued to evolve into a cultural and commercial hub for New Orleans, as French and Spanish colonists opened the market up to ships and traders from all over the world. Over the next three centuries, immigrants from Europe, Africa and the Caribbean began to open their own venues at this French Quarter market, offering everything from Italian butcheries to African coffee and Choctaw spices.

In the late 19th century, the Market was given its modern day, bizarre-like structure, designed by Joseph Abeilard, one of America's first African American Architects. With its new permanent home, the French Market continued to grow and add more commercial products, fresh produce and unique commodities that cannot be found anywhere else.

## FLEA AND FARMERS MARKET STRATEGIES

In mid-2021, Concordia partnered with FMC to conduct an expansive Flea and Farmers market study. Their report resulted in four main areas of strategy:

**Policy-Based Recommendations.** The report offers goals and actions focused on staffing FMC to support cultural activation of the Flea & Farmers Market area, empowering vendors and staff through policies and technology, and addressing security needs in the area.

**Program-Centered Recommendations.** The main takeaway from the report is that constant and consistent activation of the market areas is key to increasing visitation and spending. Additionally, inclusive and equitable opportunities to employ culture bearers is a prime focus throughout the plan. Exciting and enticing events and activities centered around the history and culture of local cuisine and agriculture will strengthen the ties to the history of the market and the heritage of the region.

**Place-Based Recommendations.** Creating spaces and places where visitors and users feel welcome, comfortable, and joyful is essential for the sustainability of the organization.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- See Concordia's FMC [Flea & Farmers Market Study](#) for actions items and implementation details.

# [2] TRANSITION CRESCENT PARK TO A DISTINCT WATERFRONT AUTHORITY

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Decreased cost and resource allocation for maintenance of park spaces
- Increased revenue from Crescent Park for the City
- Increased satisfaction and quality of life of neighboring residents

## CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Unique Needs.** Many individuals believe that Crescent Park is evidence of mission creep, and it requires very different management capacity than other FMC assets. The cost of the barge breaches, maintenance, and security are enormous, and it is unclear which entity is responsible for those repairs.

**Tourist Potential.** Physical barriers to accessing Crescent Park limit its potential as a tourist attraction. The need to ascend the flood wall and railroad tracks is a challenge. Many users call Crescent Park a “hidden gem” in the sense that even many locals do not know it exists or how to get there.

**Venue Usage.** There are barriers to optimizing the space as an event venue; neighborhood noise ordinances and the prices of event rental have caused major productions, like White Linen or Essence Fest, to look elsewhere for space. There seems to be little awareness that pricing for Crescent Park is determined on a sliding scale with a special rate for nonprofits.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- Approach Crescent Park with activities outlined in the district level strategy to [unify the riverfront](#).
- Design a short-term plan for activation through small pop ups and events that build good will with hyperlocals and draws revenue.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-5

- Approach Crescent Park in the same set of activities as the district level strategy to unify the riverfront.



# [3] MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UPPER PONTALBA BUILDING

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Maintain 100% occupancy and build waiting list for units in UPB
- Sustained high levels of tenant satisfaction measured by lease renewals and low complaints
- Decreased response and repair times for maintenance requests

## CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Upper Pontalba Building.** The Upper Pontalba Building (UPB) is an iconic monument that requires extensive and expensive upkeep. Additionally, there is a lack of knowledge that FMC has managed the building since the 2000's and a widespread misperception that no residential units are available to rent.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Enact short-term communications campaign that features UPB as a prime residence or second home for those in neighboring cities and states.*
  - *Test permissible incentives to attract new and renewal tenants, such as: a referral bonus for current tenants who refer a new lessee, free parking, a welcome package with gifts and gift certificates to FMC vendor shops and eateries..*
- *Clarify roles and responsibilities between the Property Manager and Building Repair Supervisor, and empower these leaders to collaborate through shared performance management measures that evaluate them on efficiency and collaboration.*

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Incorporate awareness and co-branding of UPB into greater branding, marketing, and communications planning.*



# [4] DETERMINE THE BEST FUTURE FOR A MIXED USE ASSET ON ELYSIAN FIELDS

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Completed data study for improved usage of the Elysian Fields Parking lots with a determined plan for the assets
- Development concepts that are inclusive, revenue generating, and provide public benefit

## CONTEXT FROM DISCOVERY

**Elysian Fields Parking Lots.** Stakeholders agree that the Elysian Fields lots occupy a prime location and incredible potential. Staff site that parking in the space is unsafe, reporting routine vehicle break-ins. It is clear that the space could be optimized for both revenue and benefit to the surrounding community.

## POTENTIAL USAGE

Throughout conversations with stakeholders, as well as FMC leadership and staff, the following (not mutually exclusive) development concepts surfaced:

- Mixed usage commercial and residential space with top floors reserved for parking
- Affordable housing units
- A music venue tenant
- Specialty food/grocery and culturally relevant retail tenants
- A community support resource, such as a center for the unhoused

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Work with NOLABA to understand the potential users of an Elysian Fields development.*
- *Gather data and bids to begin planning for Elysian Fields properties.*

# STRENGTHENING THE CORE GOVERNANCE | CULTURE | STRUCTURE



# FMC BOARD GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES

The frequent turnover of Board Members poses a challenge to the vision, strategic planning, and sustainability of the organization. By the time Board leadership learns the nuances of organizational requirements and operations, they are facing replacement. Additionally, the Board does not currently cultivate a pipeline of well-equipped potential members.

## **[1] SET TERMS LIMITS TO ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION EXIST HARMONIOUSLY IN FMC'S GOVERNANCE.**

Clearly defined terms of service are an international best practice for boards because they bring clarity to board service while balancing stability and fresh direction. Based on research and experience, we recommend the mayor shift to three-year Board terms, with a limit of two terms of consecutive service per member. This timing gives Board members enough time to learn the nuances of the organization, set strategic plans in action to affect its future, and even serve in leadership functions.

## **[2] SET AND WORK TOWARDS GOALS FOR BOARD COMPOSITION IN REGARDS TO GENDER, RACE, AGE, SECTOR, TENURE MIX, ETC.**

The highest functioning and most financially successful boards are those that are diverse in nature and representative of who the organization serves. In addition to diversity of perspective, diversity of tenure is key as well. For FMC, there are a few opportunities to add Board members who are strategic thinkers, planners, and actors, as well as voices who represent (and are influential among) culture bearers, historians, tourists, and urban planners.

**[3] CREATE AN UPDATED BOARD ONBOARDING PROCESS.** FMC is a complex organization with a great deal of history and significance. A lack of understanding of organizational context renders some Board members confused and ineffective in making informed strategic decisions. Therefore, clear onboarding processes are essential. **trepro** recommends an initial required set of meetings and background documents, as well as mentor matching for new members.



# FMC BOARD GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES (continued)

**[4] LEVERAGING COMMITTEES FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING.** Appointing new Board members may sometimes be a challenge. Leveraging existing board committees to attract volunteer members of the public could provide a great pipeline to Board service. There is no lack of engaged leaders who would be honored and effective in serving a culturally and economically significant organization like FMC.



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- *Seek approval and adjust bylaws to enact three-year term limits and two consecutive terms.*
- *Create a list of goals of the makeup of the Board, balancing the stakeholder population and the population of the city, as well as key functions, networks, tenures, etc.*

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- *Define board onboarding process, including necessary meetings, background info ,and board mentorship.*
- *Revisit committee purpose and begin to recruit non-board volunteers in key areas of need through local leadership development organizations (YLC, Urban League, Industry Associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc.).*

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 4-5

- *Perform Board self-evaluation to determine success against goals.*

# ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE & CULTURE

Strategies around structure and culture will ensure that FMC's teams are aligned and empowered to carry out the activities of the strategic plan.

## **[1] ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF STAFF-WIDE COMMUNICATION THAT KEEPS EVERYONE EMPOWERED WITH INFORMATION.**

Due to the physical distance and timing of shift work, employees are rarely all together to share information. The use of asynchronous, multimedia communication, like video, audio recordings, text messages, etc., to disseminate key operational information on a weekly basis is essential.

## **[2] CREATE CLEAR PATHWAYS FOR ADVANCEMENT LEVERAGING PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AND JOB LEVELING.**

FMC employees take pride in their jobs. They enjoy working for an organization with so much significance and impact. Staff members are excited for new leadership to revisit organizational structures and plans for career growth at FMC. Maintenance/security supervisors and staff feel that providing opportunities for specialized skill building, management training, and promotion will benefit the organization in the long run, raising morale, retaining motivated employees, and preserving valuable institutional knowledge.

## **[3] FILL KEY STAFF AND CONTRACT POSITIONS TO FULFILL THE CORE AREAS OF FOCUS: ACTIVATION, VALUE & SUSTAINABILITY.**

In its current footprint, FMC's capacity is limited. Due to the expanse of work under FMC's mission, leadership spends much of their time reacting to the daily needs of the properties, staff, tenants, and vendors. This leaves little time for the proactive and strategic thinking required to make FMC a world class destination. Therefore, empowering staff with more knowledge and agency over their teams would create space for leadership to focus on higher level organizational needs. Additionally, filling key positions, such as the Director of Capital Assets and Procurement, and contract workers in key areas will increase efficiency, effectiveness, and impact. See Appendix: [Additional Organizational Roles](#) for more information.

## **[4] OPTIMIZE DEPARTMENTAL STAFFING TO CARRY OUT THE ACTIONS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN.**

Shifting public perception and attracting new visitors, locals, vendors, tenants, and culture bearers to the market will require significant marketing work. Therefore, FMC should invest in a part-time Marketing & Events Intern who can project manage the various lanes of work under the marketing department and execute daily marketing functions like social media, collateral creation, advertising and sponsorships, etc. Further, the Director of Marketing should employ contractors in several key areas to partner on strategy and implementation. Such contractors include: the previously mentioned branding firm, contract event coordinators, graphic designers, and public relations experts. Employing contractors in these function gives FMC the opportunity to leverage specific expertise without bringing on the burden of additional full-time employees.

Additionally, while the Executive Director and Deputy Director are charged with the strategic load of the organization, their time is often pulled into pressing daily matters and emergent situations. Therefore, a strategic force who can think holistically about the cultural activation of FMC's assets would be instrumental in fulfilling the plans core areas of focus. With this addition, the Executive Director would be accountable for oversight of bringing the mission to life, and would serve as the face of the organization in building strategic partnerships, funding relationships, and liaising with City leadership and the Board. The Deputy Director would move into a Chief Operating Officer function. Other Directors would maintain their roles and responsibilities. This new staff member would be charged with community engagement and cultural strategy for FMC's spaces and places. See Appendix: [Additional Organizational Roles](#) for more information.



# SPOTLIGHT ON TECHNOLOGY

FMC must implement improvements in technology to support a stronger, more efficient and effective organization.

**COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY.** Given the decentralized nature of many maintenance and security staff, the broader FMC team is not always aligned on updates and information. This leads to confusion and sometimes vendors or tenants learn of changes before some staff teams. In an effort to centralize information and provide more real-time updates for employees who are not office or computer-based, FMC has begun to implement a new radio system for security and maintenance teams. Additionally, a new staff-wide communications tool, with real-time and scheduled texting capabilities, is on its way.

**TENANT AND VENDOR MANAGEMENT.** Vendor management and space allocation has been a core area of inefficiency of the organization. Current market management technology is limited, and working with vendors takes much time and energy from FMC staff. MarketSpread is a market management tool that will empower FMC to assign space, create financial incentives to encourage a diverse pool of vendors, and monitor the types of products vendors sell. More information on the purpose of this technology can be found in the FMC Flea & Farmer's Market Study led by Concordia in 2021.

Technology can also empower FMC to better understand sales trends and insights for commercial tenants. Requiring FMC tenants to use the CommercialCafe point of sale system will alleviate some of the uncertainty around sources and trends in retailer revenue.

**WEBSITE & OTHER DIGITAL ASSETS.** In addition to managing space and products, MarketSpread offers vendors tools to market themselves through integration with FMC's website. Featuring vendors and products more easily and predominantly on the website will also indicate to visitors what to expect and entice them with new and exciting products and vendor profiles.

**TRAFFIC MEASUREMENT.** One of the core challenges of planning is a lack of measurement of visitor numbers, frequency, and seasonal patterns. FMC has begun exploring camera technology that will allow the organization to track these visitor metrics. This information will provide the organization with benchmark information on visitor traffic and popular locations to better set goals and make decisions, as well as prove the effectiveness of efforts of the plan.



# ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS, STRUCTURE & CULTURE (continued)

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 1

- Establish multifaceted internal communication system including: mass texting (for critical info, celebrations, etc), pre-shift huddles, quarterly town halls, and a feedback box checked monthly.
- Define job leveling (the technical and soft skills required for each position) and set clear indicators for promotion or salary increase.
- Onboard a new hire into the currently vacant Director of Capital Assets & Procurement role to research, manage, apply, and report on external funding opportunities for investing in FMC's growth.
- Leverage the city's PERFORM system to implement routine performance evaluations and goal-setting for each person based on job leveling.
- Build list of preferred contractors in areas, such as janitorial, specialty maintenance, event planning, etc.
- Work with local and relevant university departments to hire part-time Marketing Intern role to begin searching and vetting marketing and events contractors.
- Continue implementation of technology tools for market management, communications, promotion, and traffic management.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 2-3

- Perform a comparative audit of FMC and City salaries for like positions; identify discrepancies, and build a phased approach to adjustment.
- Launch [Manager of Cultural Activation](#) fellowship to create and implement strategy for cultural curation and community engagement.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Year 4-5

- Revisit marketing intern performance and decide whether to bring any roles in-house.



## FINANCIALS





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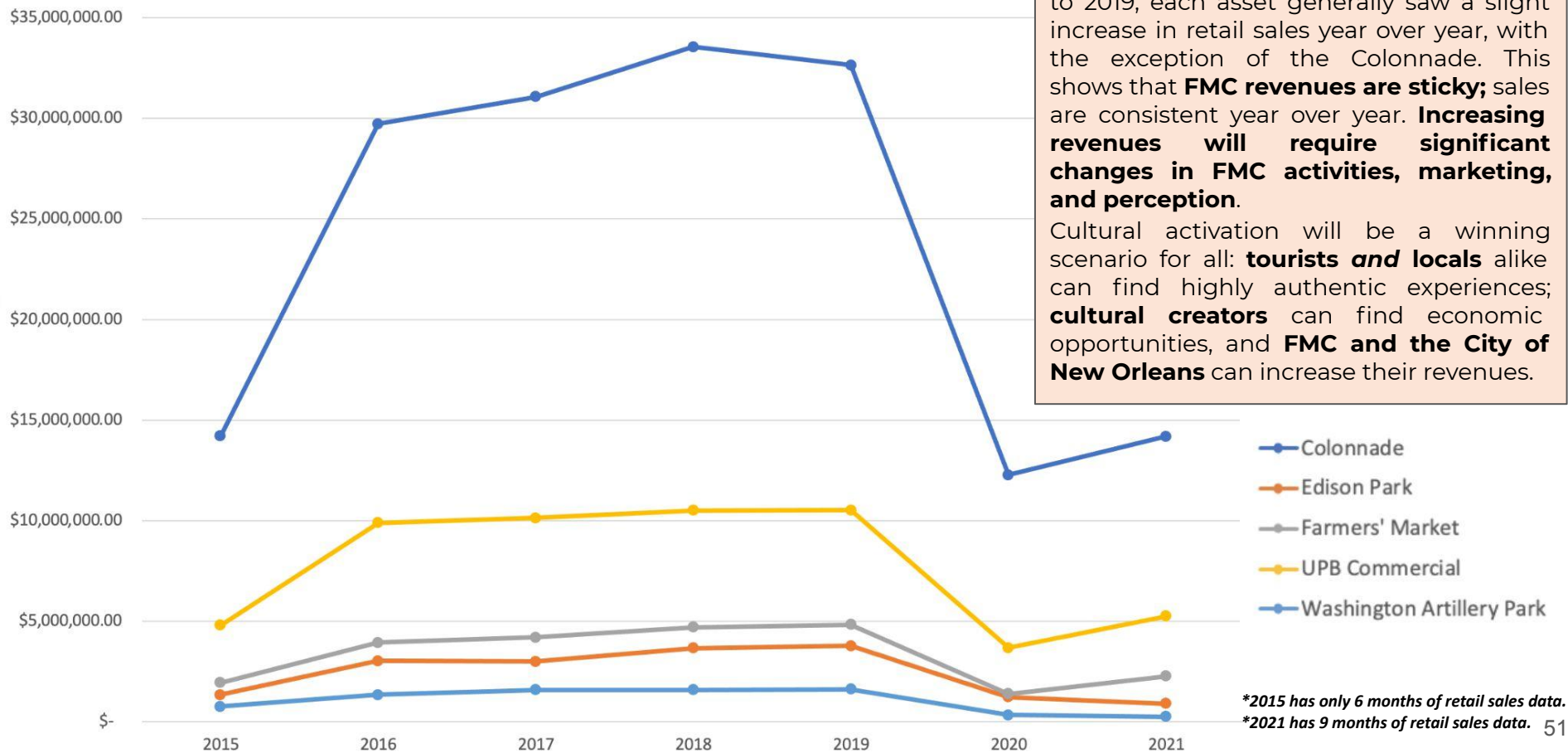
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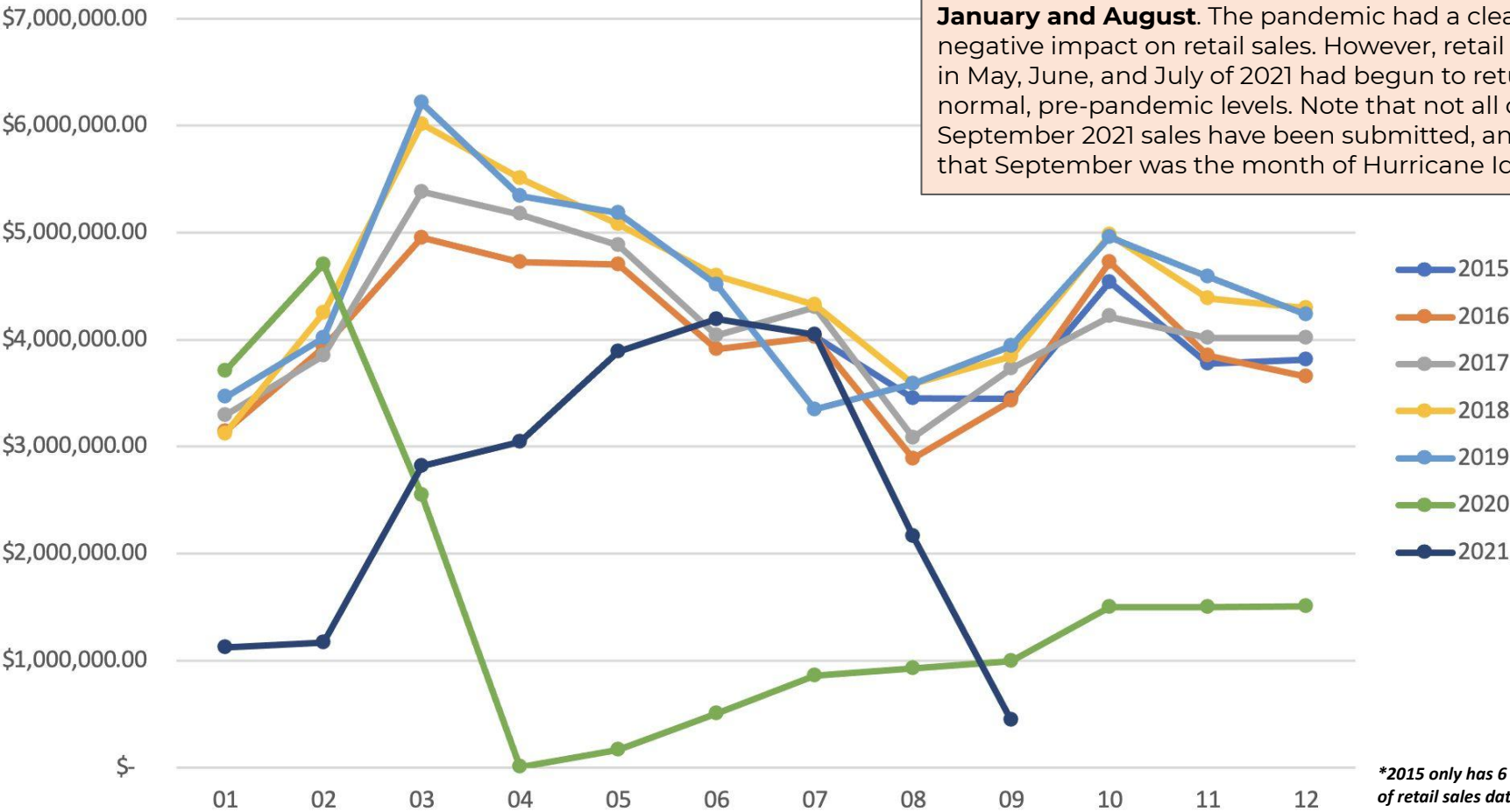
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# RETAIL SALES & TOURISM DATA ANALYSIS

# Retail Sales by Asset Over Time

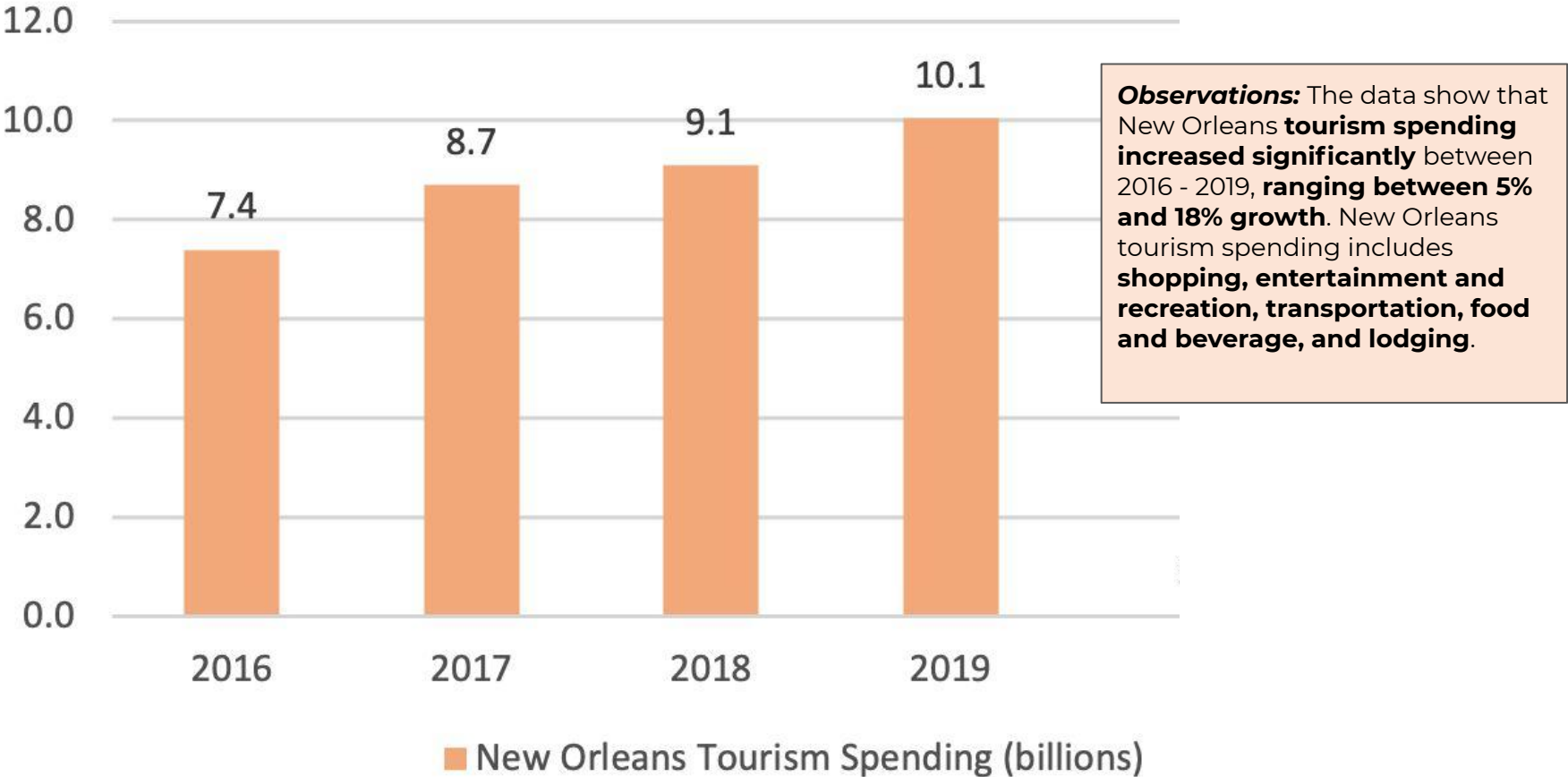


# All Years: Retail Sales by Month (Since 2015)



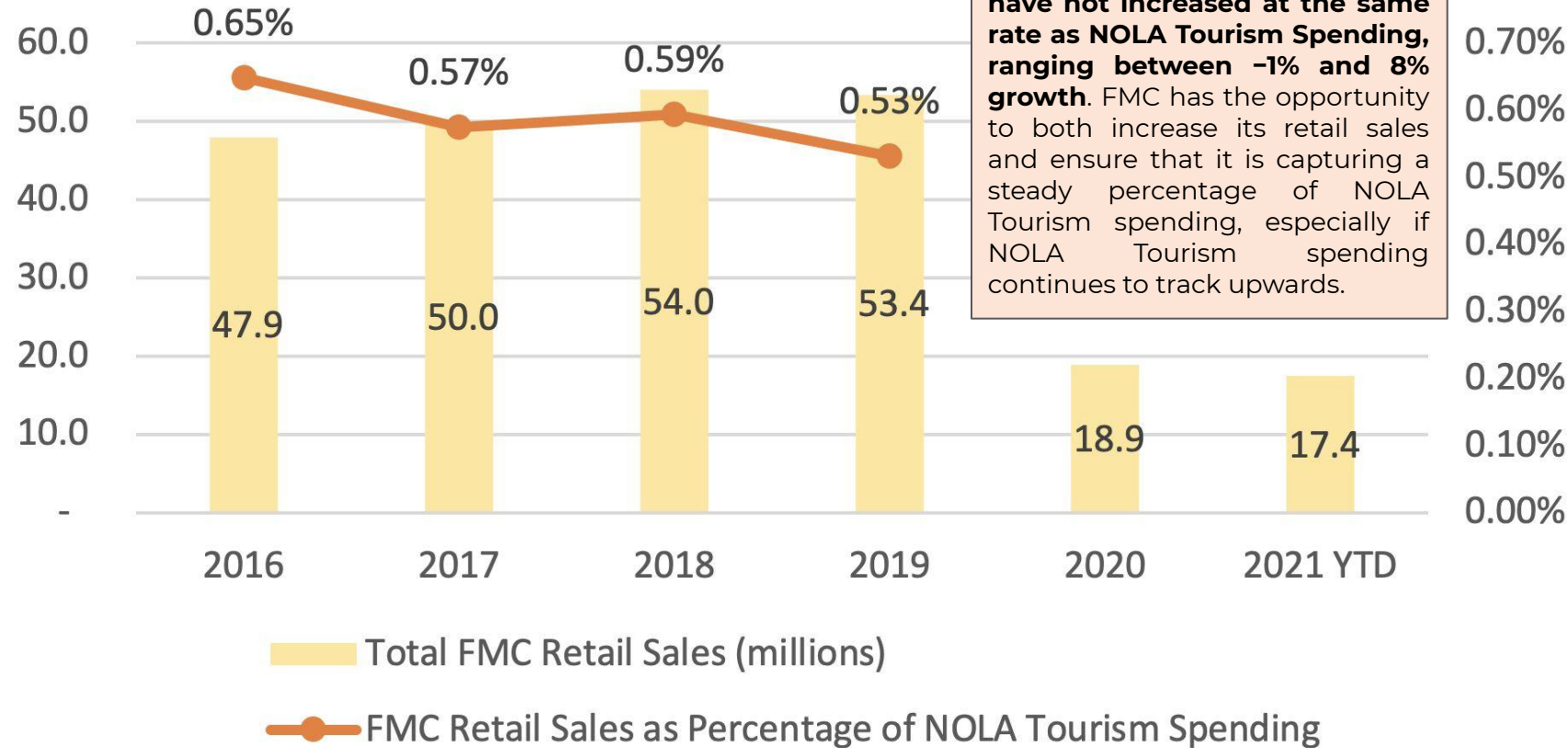
**Observations:** The data show that retail sales seasonality trends consistently from year to year with **peaks in March and October**, and **lows in January and August**. The pandemic had a clear negative impact on retail sales. However, retail sales in May, June, and July of 2021 had begun to return to normal, pre-pandemic levels. Note that not all of September 2021 sales have been submitted, and that September was the month of Hurricane Ida.

# NOLA Tourism Spending (2016 - 2019)

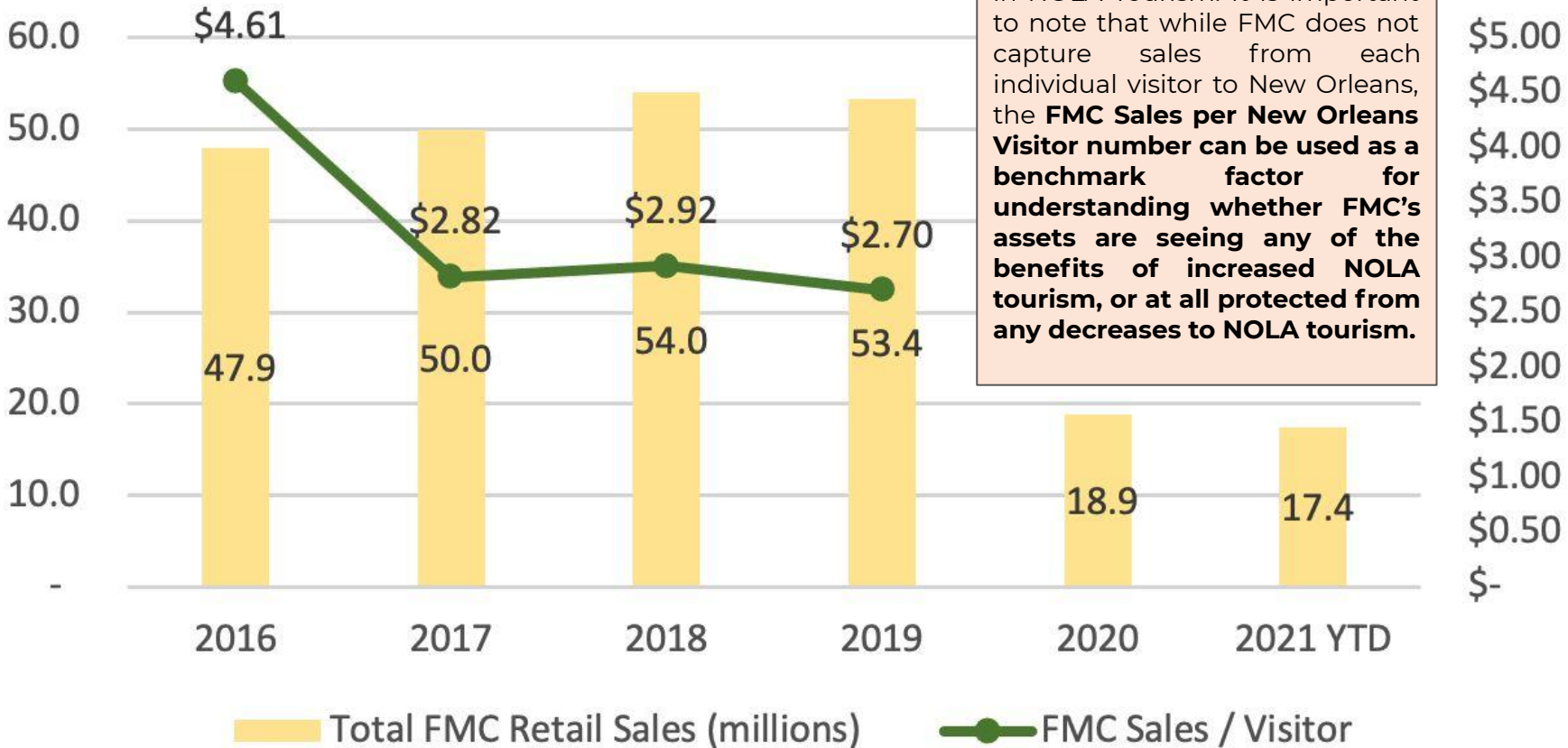


# FMC Retail Sales & FMC Retail Sales as a Percentage of NOLA Tourism Spending (Jan 2016 - June 2021)

**Observations:** FMC Retail Sales have not increased at the same rate as NOLA Tourism Spending, ranging between -1% and 8% growth. FMC has the opportunity to both increase its retail sales and ensure that it is capturing a steady percentage of NOLA Tourism spending, especially if NOLA Tourism spending continues to track upwards.



# FMC Retail Sales & FMC Retail Sales Per New Orleans Visitor (Jan 2016 - June 2021)



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# ACTIONS COSTING



# Using the Costing Spreadsheet

- Each of the six strategies in the plan contain a set of activities. The Excel spreadsheet (“FMC Plan Actions Costing\_8.2.2021”) provides an associated regular or contract cost with each action, with tabs organized by strategy.
- Prior to COVID-19, FMC’s retail sales were relatively consistent, which shows that FMC has a baseline measure (or status quo) of its ability to draw visitor spending. Another indication is FMC will need to make noticeable changes in order to attract more visitors and significantly increase its sales.
- The next section outlines an approach to gathering baseline measures so that FMC can track the impact of its strategic changes.

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# MEASURING FMC'S PERFORMANCE

# Preparing FMC for Measurement:

## Baselining Metrics

- **Baseline:** A baseline is **the level of a specific quantitative criteria that provides a starting point or point of comparison** (e.g. total annual retail sales). FMC will use baseline measurements of its quantitative metrics to measure its current performance relative to prior performance (also called *benchmarking*). A baseline measurement can also be used to inform projections and to understand the effects of certain actions on quantitative metrics such as revenues, traffic, etc.
  - For example, FMC could average its annual retail sales over the years in order to set expected sales performance targets for future years.
- **Key Metrics for FMC to Define Baselines** (see the “Impact” tab)
  - Retail Sales (overall, by month, and by asset)
  - Foot Traffic in Low, Medium, and High Traffic Areas at Consistent Times of Day/Locations
  - Volume of Tourists to New Orleans
  - Tourism Spending in New Orleans

# Measuring Traffic Performance

## Foot Traffic

- FMC should **utilize NOLABA's Buxton database to better understand both the quantity and profiles people who visit the FMC's spaces and places.**
- In addition, **exploring camera technology will allow the organization to track visitor metrics.**
- Finally, FMC may consider a **foot traffic measurement project that takes “on the ground” baseline measurements** by using a clicker to measure foot traffic in low, medium, and high traffic areas. A simple project like this one could empower FMC to make smart location and time-based choices, such as public art, signage, programming, etc. in accordance with the rest of the strategic plan. In order to determine if foot traffic and retail sales are correlated, the different rates of foot traffic over the course of different days could then be compared to the sales of retailers in those high/medium/low traffic areas.

# Measuring Financial Performance

## Funding & Retail Sales

- FMC should create a **system of measurement for reporting on grant opportunities and funding allocation, and impact**. To start, this can be a simple spreadsheet. As FMC increases its capacity to win cultural grants, the Director of Capital Assets and Procurement can assess if further grant management tech tools are required and assess which option may best fit FMC's needs.
- FMC should **determine a goal retail sales/visitor factor** using data on slides 7-8. For example, FMC could set a goal that Annual Retail Sales are equivalent to 0.6% of Annual NOLA Tourism Spending. [See the "Impact" Tab in this linked spreadsheet.]
  - This would mean that if Annual NOLA Tourism Spending was \$10 billion, FMC would see \$60 million in sales. For reference, FMC's best year saw \$53 million in retail sales. A more aggressive target would be for FMC to see 0.75% of Annual NOLA Tourism Spending, which would require FMC to make an additional \$22 million in retail sales over its best year. Again, for FMC to see that kind of growth, FMC will need to enact significant changes in FMC activities, marketing, and perception, especially since FMC sales are consistent year over year, as shown on slides 4-5.

# Measuring Financial Performance

## Funding & Retail Sales

- FMC should create a plan to **maximize the data tracking capabilities of the new sales software, MarketSpread, that retailers on FMC assets will use.** More specifically, FMC should ensure vendors are tagged by their location within the market, ensure vendors enter all their products categorize them by type, and set up the ability to analyze stall utilization.
- FMC should also continue to transform the analysis of retail sales on a quarterly basis into clear visuals (as on slide 5) in order to see how sales track against numbers from prior years. More specifically, FMC should **conduct an annual analysis, reflection, and strategy session** on the goal vs actuals retail sales/visitor factor and visitor traffic numbers, and **conduct deeper data analysis projects** to get a sense if new initiatives (signage, transportation, marketing campaigns, pop-up events etc.) are associated with any revenue increases.

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# FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

# Mapping out FMC Financial Projections: Economic Conditions & FMC Performance Assumptions

- The next slides map out **three different financial scenarios for FMC's retail sales:**
  - Depressed Economic Conditions & Baseline FMC Performance
  - Pre-2020 Economic Conditions & Baseline FMC Performance
  - Pre-2020 Economic Conditions & Improved FMC Performance
- The **scenario assumptions** are described below:
  - **Depressed Economic Conditions**
    - Within a depressed economic conditions scenario, FMC retail sales for 2022 are projected to perform 10% below 2019 retail sales. This projection assumes somewhat slow economic recovery in the wake of Hurricane Ida and COVID-19.
  - **Pre-2020 Economic Conditions**
    - Within a pre-2020 economic conditions scenario, FMC retail sales for 2022 are projected to perform at the same level as 2019 retail sales. This projection assumes a complete return to 2019 economic conditions in 2022, with limited lingering effects from Hurricane Ida and COVID-19. This projection also assumes no growth from 2019 retail sales levels.
  - **Baseline FMC Performance**
    - The average year over year FMC Retail Sales Growth between 2017 and 2019 was 4%. The baseline FMC performance scenario assumes 4% annual growth from 2022-2024.
  - **Improved FMC Performance**
    - The average year over year NOLA Tourism Spending between 2017 and 2019 was 11%. The improved FMC performance scenario assumes 11% annual growth from 2022-2024.



# Retail Sales by Month & Year:

## Actuals & Projections with Depressed Economic Conditions & Baseline FMC Performance

KEY
Actual Retail Sales
Projected Retail Sales

ASSUMPTIONS	
% Growth Assumption 2022 from 2019:	-10%
% Growth Assumption* 2023 from 2022:	4%
% Growth Assumption* 2024 from 2023:	4%

*\*Average YOY FMC Retail Sales Growth between 2017-19 was 4%;  
Average YOY NOLA Tourism Spending Growth between 2017-19 was 11%.*

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
		"Normal" Sales Year	Economically Depressed Year	Economically Depressed Year	Implementation Year 1	Implementation Year 2	Implementation Year 3
Month	January	\$3,462,605	\$3,708,714	\$1,228,896	\$3,150,000	\$3,276,000	\$3,407,040
	February	\$4,019,838	\$4,702,527	\$1,270,708	\$3,600,000	\$3,744,000	\$3,893,760
	March	\$6,213,492	\$2,547,863	\$3,043,849	\$5,580,000	\$5,803,200	\$6,035,328
	April	\$5,340,020	\$4,812	\$3,352,802	\$4,770,000	\$4,960,800	\$5,159,232
	May	\$5,184,724	\$161,273	\$4,238,749	\$4,680,000	\$4,867,200	\$5,061,888
	June	\$4,511,393	\$501,291	\$3,948,422	\$4,050,000	\$4,212,000	\$4,380,480
	July	\$3,346,809	\$861,908	\$3,200,000	\$2,970,000	\$3,088,800	\$3,212,352
	August	\$3,589,560	\$922,551	\$3,300,000	\$3,240,000	\$3,369,600	\$3,504,384
	September	\$3,942,946	\$990,996	\$500,000	\$3,510,000	\$3,650,400	\$3,796,416
	October	\$4,958,188	\$1,496,808	\$1,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,680,000	\$4,867,200
	November	\$4,588,507	\$1,499,969	\$2,000,000	\$4,140,000	\$4,305,600	\$4,477,824
	December	\$4,235,857	\$1,505,137	\$3,000,000	\$3,780,000	\$3,931,200	\$4,088,448
Grand Total		\$53,393,938	\$18,903,850	\$30,583,426	\$47,970,000	\$49,888,800	\$51,884,352

# Retail Sales by Month & Year:

## Actuals & Projections with

### Pre-2020 Economic Conditions &

### Baseline FMC Performance

KEY
Actual Retail Sales
Projected Retail Sales

ASSUMPTIONS	
% Growth Assumption 2022 from 2019:	0%
% Growth Assumption* 2023 from 2022:	4%
% Growth Assumption* 2024 from 2023:	4%

*\*Average YOY FMC Retail Sales Growth between 2017-19 was 4%;  
Average YOY NOLA Tourism Spending Growth between 2017-19 was 11%.*

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
		"Normal" Sales Year	Economically Depressed Year	Economically Depressed Year	Implementation Year 1	Implementation Year 2	Implementation Year 3
Month	January	\$3,462,605	\$3,708,714	\$1,228,896	\$3,500,000	\$3,640,000	\$3,785,600
	February	\$4,019,838	\$4,702,527	\$1,270,708	\$4,000,000	\$4,160,000	\$4,326,400
	March	\$6,213,492	\$2,547,863	\$3,043,849	\$6,200,000	\$6,448,000	\$6,705,920
	April	\$5,340,020	\$4,812	\$3,352,802	\$5,300,000	\$5,512,000	\$5,732,480
	May	\$5,184,724	\$161,273	\$4,238,749	\$5,200,000	\$5,408,000	\$5,624,320
	June	\$4,511,393	\$501,291	\$3,948,422	\$4,500,000	\$4,680,000	\$4,867,200
	July	\$3,346,809	\$861,908	\$3,200,000	\$3,300,000	\$3,432,000	\$3,569,280
	August	\$3,589,560	\$922,551	\$3,300,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,744,000	\$3,893,760
	September	\$3,942,946	\$990,996	\$500,000	\$3,900,000	\$4,056,000	\$4,218,240
	October	\$4,958,188	\$1,496,808	\$1,500,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,200,000	\$5,408,000
	November	\$4,588,507	\$1,499,969	\$2,000,000	\$4,600,000	\$4,784,000	\$4,975,360
	December	\$4,235,857	\$1,505,137	\$3,000,000	\$4,200,000	\$4,368,000	\$4,542,720
Grand Total		\$53,393,938	\$18,903,850	\$30,583,426	\$53,300,000	\$55,432,000	\$57,649,280

# Retail Sales by Month & Year:

## Actuals & Projections with

### Pre-2020 Economic Conditions &

### Improved FMC Performance

KEY
Actual Retail Sales
Projected Retail Sales

ASSUMPTIONS	
% Growth Assumption 2022 from 2019:	0%
% Growth Assumption* 2023 from 2022:	11%
% Growth Assumption* 2024 from 2023:	11%

*\*Average YOY FMC Retail Sales Growth between 2017-19 was 4%;  
Average YOY NOLA Tourism Spending Growth between 2017-19 was 11%.*

		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
		"Normal" Sales Year	Economically Depressed Year	Economically Depressed Year	Implementation Year 1	Implementation Year 2	Implementation Year 3
Month	January	\$3,462,605	\$3,708,714	\$1,228,896	\$3,500,000	\$3,885,000	\$4,312,350
	February	\$4,019,838	\$4,702,527	\$1,270,708	\$4,000,000	\$4,440,000	\$4,928,400
	March	\$6,213,492	\$2,547,863	\$3,043,849	\$6,200,000	\$6,882,000	\$7,639,020
	April	\$5,340,020	\$4,812	\$3,352,802	\$5,300,000	\$5,883,000	\$6,530,130
	May	\$5,184,724	\$161,273	\$4,238,749	\$5,200,000	\$5,772,000	\$6,406,920
	June	\$4,511,393	\$501,291	\$3,948,422	\$4,500,000	\$4,995,000	\$5,544,450
	July	\$3,346,809	\$861,908	\$3,200,000	\$3,300,000	\$3,663,000	\$4,065,930
	August	\$3,589,560	\$922,551	\$3,300,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,996,000	\$4,435,560
	September	\$3,942,946	\$990,996	\$500,000	\$3,900,000	\$4,329,000	\$4,805,190
	October	\$4,958,188	\$1,496,808	\$1,500,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,550,000	\$6,160,500
	November	\$4,588,507	\$1,499,969	\$2,000,000	\$4,600,000	\$5,106,000	\$5,667,660
	December	\$4,235,857	\$1,505,137	\$3,000,000	\$4,200,000	\$4,662,000	\$5,174,820
Grand Total		\$53,393,938	\$18,903,850	\$30,583,426	\$53,300,000	\$59,163,000	\$65,670,930

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# COMPARATIVE BUDGET ANALYSIS

# Comparative Budget Analysis

Part of the FMC financials analysis included comparing FMC expenditures as a percentage of total annual expense to similar organizations. (See the spreadsheet entitled “FMC Peer Org Budget Review”). The analysis looked at nonprofits, since their financials are publicly available, and aimed to find organizations with similar missions and/or structures to FMC. The other organizations analyzed included: Pike Place Market, Central Park Conservancy, Riverlife (Pittsburgh), Brooklyn Bridge Park, Brooklyn Navy Yard, Friends of the High Line, and Mercy Housing. The analysis used 2019 FMC data.

- **Key Similar Features**

- Significant property management responsibilities (large janitorial, grounds, and maintenance needs)
- Upkeep of multiple properties, including parks or other historic buildings
- Potentially management or sponsorship of fairs/festivals
- May have a food hall or farmers market type of space
- May manage riverfront areas in a U.S. city

# Comparative Budget Analysis - Findings

- Overall, FMC's **salary expenditure percentage is on par** with similar organizations.
- Other expenses, including marketing and advertising, insurance, utilities, janitorial, facility maintenance, landscaping, security, accounting, IT, and legal, were unfortunately not publicly listed for all other organizations. However, where those categories were available, FMC's expenditures as a percentage of total annual expenses were within a similar range.
- Notably, **FMC's expense to revenue ratio was significantly lower than most organizations analyzed** with the exception of Brooklyn Navy Yard. FMC's expense to revenue ratio was similar to Brooklyn Navy Yard. This indicates that FMC has a strong financial controls; however, it also indicates that FMC has the opportunity to invest more in order to achieve revenue growth that more closely tracks with the year over year growth of NOLA Tourism Spending.

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	EXPENSE TO REVENUE RATIO
French Market Corporation	New Orleans, LA	70%
<a href="#">Pike Place Market</a>	Seattle, WA	88%
<a href="#">Central Park Conservancy</a>	New York, NY	118%
<a href="#">Riverlife</a>	Pittsburgh, PA	80%
<a href="#">Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy</a>	Brooklyn, NY	98%
<a href="#">Brooklyn Navy Yard</a>	Brooklyn, NY	66%
<a href="#">Friends of the High Line</a>	New York, NY	95%
<a href="#">Mercy Housing</a>	Denver, CO	105%

# APPENDICES



# PROCESS & METHODOLOGY

At the onset of this project, FMC wished to determine how to best capitalize on the earning potential of the FMC in its charge to manage critical City assets. The FMC also recognizes the importance of tourism to the economic viability of the City and strives to enhance opportunities for its shops and vendors to increase their sales, and in doing so, increase rents to the FMC and taxes to support the City of New Orleans.

With this vision in mind, French Market Corporation engaged **treppwise**, Square Button Consulting, Concordia, Think Like Pirates, and Gilbert & Associates to lead a collaborative, inclusive strategic planning project to clarify its mission and optimize historic, cultural, and financial impact on the City.

Our collective work is grounded in a user-centric approach emphasizing stakeholder engagement, user experience, and collaborative idea development.

## Methodology

Since project initiation in October 2020, our team has conducted extensive discovery, including input from more than 200 individuals. In the coming months, we will continue to speak with visitors, consult subject matter experts, and integrate data from general surveys shared with public respondents.

To obtain stakeholder insights, our team developed standardized question guides and survey instruments informed by best practices in qualitative research and design thinking methodology. All stakeholder feedback has been anonymized in order to identify the representative macro insights and recommendations.

Interviews	Surveys	Focus Groups (Approximations)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>10</b> Individuals who represent partner organizations (including the City of New Orleans)</li><li>• <b>8</b> board members</li><li>• <b>5</b> FMC leadership team members</li><li>• <b>4</b> Upper Pontalba Residents</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>&gt;100</b> New Orleans residents</li><li>• Outreach to <b>185</b> Neighborhood Association Leaders to Disburse Survey</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>15</b> Staff Members</li><li>• <b>30</b> Culture Bearers</li><li>• <b>60</b> General Public</li><li>• <b>40</b> Tenants/Vendors</li></ul>



# ADDITIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

**DIRECTOR OF CAPITAL ASSETS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS (FORMERLY PROCUREMENT) (FULL-TIME).** This existing yet currently vacant full-time position will be responsible for supporting the Deputy Director in bringing a strategic approach to FMC when it comes to funding strategic and capital projects. The role will serve as a **collaborator in strategic planning for major district initiatives**, as well as a **project manager for implementation** in bringing those plans to life. A key function of this role is **seeking public, private, and foundation funding opportunities to invest in programming and infrastructure** for FMC, and **maintaining records and reporting**. This position reports to the Executive Director. Success factors for this position include the infusion of new funds into the organization to pursue and complete capital and other special projects.

**MANAGER OF CULTURAL ACTIVATION (FELLOWSHIP).** Beginning as a fellowship, and potentially transitioning to a full-time role with proof-of-concept testing, this position will **own the planning and process of bringing to life a rich, authentic, cultural experience across the FMC District**. This role is both strategic and action-oriented, as this person will spend much of their time as a **culture and community liaison, designing and executing lucrative opportunities for cultural engagement** with FMC. Their main project will include **forming strategic partnerships with a diverse group of the city's cultural leaders to design a plan to engage culture bearers**. This position's work will include designing programming, physical improvements, and other cultural activities that appeal to local New Orleans residents and visitors. This Manager will report to the Director of Marketing. Success factors in this role include: equitable business opportunities for local culture bearers and makers, increased visitation and spending in the District, and strong relationships and good will among the culture community.

**MARKETING & EVENTS INTERN (PART-TIME INTERNSHIP).** A rotating semi-annual or annual internship position for local students in marketing, communications, public relations, or hospitality management will greatly support the promotional efforts of FMC. The intern will report directly to the Director of Marketing, and will help **implement strategic marketing activities** related to FMC branding, **event planning**, and **day-to-day communications tasks**, such as **social media management**. The purpose of this role is to remove some of the burden from the Director of Marketing, so they can spend time on more strategic endeavors, such as building relationships for cross-promotion, working with tourism authorities to promote FMC, implementing technology to track area visitation, and working with the Manager of Cultural Activation to execute successful events.



**SOCIAL WORKER (FULL-TIME SHARED ROLE).** FMC is collaborating with the French Quarter Management District (FQMD) to host a shared social worker position. This role will provide much-needed **counseling and support to the population of unhoused individuals residing in the District and surrounding French Quarter**. Responsibilities will include **case management and resource referral**.

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES & IMPACT DASHBOARD

## PURPOSE

The document accessible to FMC staff offers a solutions for funding and grants management for FMC. The document has several worksheets that track funding opportunities, designated allocation for external funding, and the metrics that correlate with FMC's desired impact (according to its mission).

The repurposed Director of Capital Assets and Procurement role will ultimately manage this dashboard, but in the meantime, it should be owned by the Deputy Director, supported by other FMC directors.

More instructions and explanations can be found in the document itself.



# French Market Corporation STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

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