

FRENCH MARKET[®] DISTRICT

French Market
Corporation

Public Market Phase II

Strategic Growth Plan

June 2026

Prepared by Trepwise



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Executive Summary



*A synopsis of planning process,
stakeholder learnings, and
growth strategies*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

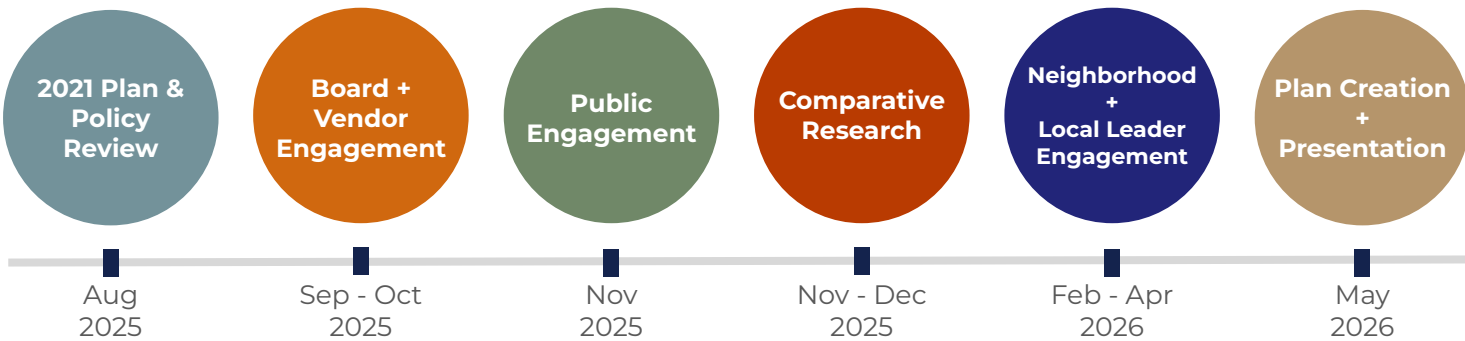


INTRODUCTION

French Market’s Flea and Farmers Market (the Market) has been at the center of New Orleans culture and history for over 200 years. This unique attraction keeps centuries-old traditions alive in the French Quarter. Building on the 2021 French Market District Strategic Plan and Flea and Farmers Market Reports, this Phase II Strategic Growth Plan aims to identify specific and actionable ways to launch the Market into the future as, FMC seeks to strengthen its reputation and attract more visitors, locals, and vendors. Elevating the market experience for all requires cultivating an ideal assortment of offerings, clarifying market policies, and testing fresh approaches to attract new audiences. The planning process placed people at the center of the Market’s future. Much of this report presents the feedback and perspectives of market users, and incorporates best and interesting practices from other markets across the world. We are grateful to French Market leadership and staff, Public Markets Committee members, vendors, customers, and community members who provided feedback in this process.

PROJECT PROCESS

The process began with a review of previous planning work and policy review and prioritized the perspectives of a variety of users who interact with, or hold interest in, the market.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLAN FRAMEWORK

Throughout the process, research and stakeholders provided a wealth of insights. In order to translate ideas into action, the project team organized insights into six categories (right). This framework serves as a model for planning and is used consistently throughout the document to group like ideas, strategies, and action items.



KEY STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

A user-centered approach was essential to this process. **The list of stakeholders who provided input includes: French Market customers (primarily visitors), current and potential vendors (makers, artisans, performers, culinary talent, etc.), community members and residents, board members, FMC leadership and staff, and local institutional leadership.**

Stakeholders view the French Market as a culturally significant space with deep history and strong potential, yet one that currently **falls short of meeting the expectations of key user groups**, especially locals, vendors, and potential vendors.

While visitors generally enjoy the market's atmosphere, locals perceive it as **tourist-oriented, difficult to access, and lacking authentic storytelling and product diversity**. Vendors praise improved staff relations but face declining customer spending, opaque policies, unclear vendor relations, and an **oversaturation of low-quality, mass-produced goods** due to product and tenure dynamics.

Across audiences, people seek **intentional curation of products and daily programming to create a "living museum"** that reflects New Orleans' cultures through immersive, routine experiences rather than large festivals. Improvements to **infrastructure, cleanliness, layout, signage, and access (especially parking and transportation)** are seen as essential to elevating the overall experience. Stakeholders also call for clearer, more equitable policies, stronger vendor representation, targeted recruitment of artisans, and modernized marketing and brand storytelling to shift public perception and rebuild relevance with locals while **enhancing the market's authenticity and appeal**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS (CONTINUED)

The following pages reflect primary learnings from the Discovery process and indicate which user groups shared these insights. The learnings are organized into six categories based on the [plan framework](#).

People							
Key Learning	Details	Customers (Mostly Visitors)	Locals	Vendors	Potential Vendors	Staff + Board	Partners / Leaders
Market is not meaningfully engaging locals	Locals feel the Market is “not for them,” creating missed opportunity for sustained, repeat visitation.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of awareness of how to become a market vendor	Creatives, makers, and small business owners do not understand the value of vending at the market, product criteria, or how to apply.				✓	✓	✓
Vendor economics are strained	Seasonality and declining customer spending impact vendor revenue and stability.			✓		✓	
Opportunity to deepen partnerships and ecosystem role	Strong potential to collaborate with regional partners to elevate programming, positioning, and visibility.		✓			✓	✓

Right: Resident and customer engagement events



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Positioning							
Key Learning	Details	Customers	Locals	Vendors	Potential Vendors	Staff + Board	Partners / Leaders
Strong foundation, but not reaching full potential	The Market is culturally significant and well-loved, but feels under-realized and not fulfilling what it could be.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lacks authenticity and clear identity	The experience feels overly tourist-oriented, with limited cultural storytelling and inconsistent identity.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing and storytelling are not effective	Brand lacks clarity and consistency; insufficient storytelling about vendors, culture, and offerings.		✓	✓		✓	✓

Products							
Key Learning	Details	Customers	Locals	Vendors	Potential Vendors	Staff + Board	Partners / Leaders
Product quality and curation need improvement	Too many mass-produced goods; desire for more artisan/handmade, local, and high-quality offerings with clearer curation standards.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

WHAT PRODUCTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT THE FRENCH MARKET?

*Stakeholders expressed interest in a curated mix of products that demonstrate **quality, craftsmanship, and cultural identity**. Stakeholders want to see more handmade and culturally authentic goods to elevate the experience. They note that a spectrum of pricing ensures something for everyone.*

For additional examples of products that stakeholders requested, see [Slide 25](#).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Programming							
Key Learning	Details	Customers	Locals	Vendors	Potential Vendors	Staff + Board	Partners / Leaders
Programming should shift toward consistent, cultural activation	Strong preference for daily programming, cultural experiences, and "living museum" feel vs. large, disruptive events.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Events are misaligned with vendor needs	Large festivals are costly, disruptive, and do not consistently drive meaningful vendor benefit.			✓		✓	

Place							
Key Learning	Details	Customers	Locals	Vendors	Potential Vendors	Staff + Board	Partners / Leaders
Physical environment impacts perception and experience	Cleanliness, layout, signage, and overall organization detract from quality and ease of navigation.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Right: A recent FMC program calendar

February

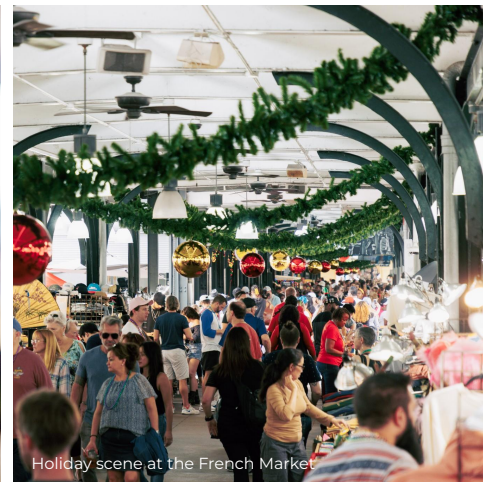
FRENCH MARKET
DISTRICT

2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 LIVE MUSIC 2PM	2	3	4 LIVE MUSIC 1PM	5 COOKING DEMO 12PM	6 COOKING DEMO 12PM	7 LIVE MUSIC 2PM
8 LIVE MUSIC 2PM	9	10	11 LIVE MUSIC 1PM	12 COOKING DEMO 12PM	13 COOKING DEMO 12PM	14 LIVE MUSIC 2PM
15 LIVE MUSIC 2PM	16	17 MARDI GRAS	18	19 COOKING DEMO 12PM	20 COOKING DEMO 12PM	21 LIVE MUSIC 2PM
22 LIVE MUSIC 2PM	23	24	25 LIVE MUSIC 1PM	26 COOKING DEMO 12PM	27 COOKING DEMO 12PM	28 LIVE MUSIC 2PM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<i>Policies</i>							
Key Learning	Details	Customers	Locals	Vendors	Potential Vendors	Staff + Board	Partners / Leaders
Barriers limit new vendor participation	Emerging artisans and creatives face challenges entering the Market due to unclear or restrictive processes and policies (i.e. moratorium list).			✓	✓	✓	✓
Momentum in relationships, but governance still needs work	Improved staff–vendor relationships, but ongoing need for clearer communication, representation, and trust–building between vendors and staff.			✓		✓	
Unspoken rules and hierarchy among vendors cause tension	Negative comments or disrespect from other vendors is part of the vendor experience for many, especially newer vendors, and may inhibit new creatives from applying.			✓		✓	



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

The strategies and initiatives of the Public Markets Phase II Strategic Growth Plan stem directly from comprehensive market assessment, stakeholder input, and comparative study. Below is a high level snapshot of the plan that will guide FMC's growth over the next three years. Each initiative has a set of corresponding actions.

For a more detailed plan, please see [Public Market Phase II Strategic Growth Plan](#) (page 44 of this document).

Framework	Strategy	Sample Initiatives
1 PEOPLE	Differentiate and understand the needs and desires of different groups (e.g. locals, visitors, vendors, local leaders), to add value to their market experience.	- Define great experiences by user type (customer vs. vendor; local vs. visitor). - Use technology and partnerships to curate new experiences.
2 POSITIONING	Establish a unique identity for the French Market, and leverage storytelling opportunities to increase awareness, reputation, and knowledge of the market among user groups.	- Refresh the brand and reputation of French Market. - Upgrade marketing messaging and storytelling content across channels.
3 PRODUCTS	Curate an intentional, elevated product mix that enhances the market's identity, reflects a diversity of cultures, and provides unique, desirable goods.	- Analyze product mix every three months. - Shift to a product-driven vendor solicitation approach.
4 PROGRAM	Evolve the market experience into a living museum that offers full sensory experiences by designing daily, consistent activation throughout the market that appeals to different user groups.	- Establish criteria that transform FMC into a 'living museum.' - Use programming for consistent ambience and atmosphere.
5 PLACE	Enhance the sense of place in the market to ensure all users have safe, pleasant experiences.	- Invest in infrastructure, safety, and signage. - Prioritize neatness and cleanliness.
6 POLICIES	Leverage policies to enhance the identity of the market and create fair, enjoyable, and safe experiences for vendors of all tenures.	- Clarify and update vendor policies to support vision and strategies. - Ensure consistent and productive vendor engagement.



Market Assessment



A snapshot of current conditions, opportunities, and constraints shaping the market



MARKET ASSESSMENT

PROGRESS SINCE 2021 PLANNING

BACKGROUND

In 2021, FMC launched a comprehensive strategic plan that outlined key recommendations to strengthen both the Flea and Farmers Sheds and the broader French Market District. When approaching this phase of work in 2025, it was critical to understand the organization’s progress against those previous recommendations. This initial component of the market assessment reports on that progress, and identifies areas lingering challenges to provide context for this growth plan.

COLOR CODING:

Positive
Progress

Some Progress;
Challenges Remain

Needs Attention

No Longer
Relevant

2021 FRENCH MARKET PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS		CURRENT STATUS
	<i>Policy Recommendations</i>	
Leadership Structures	GOAL 1: Reinforce the old by improving the FMC’s services to existing vendors. If new staff is brought on to curate new activities, then existing staff will be able to better address the needs of internal customers (flea vendors and food stallholders).	New leadership and consistent market staffing have driven increased clarity in vendor services and policy. Vendors rate their experience with market staff very highly. Policies are in place to protect vendors, but there is opportunity for additional services, such as wifi or additional marketing support.
	GOAL 2: Grow the new by building the capacity of new staff to forge partnerships and curate new activity and commerce.	This goal has not been realized and is the primary reason for the development of the 2025 Growth Plan.
Vendor Tools + Policies	GOAL 1: Reduce staff time and resources it takes to operate the Flea Market.	FMC leadership has recently procured market management technology (Market Spread), which is in implementation; this will create opportunities to manage the market more efficiently and effectively.
	GOAL 2: Assist the market staff to work smarter via new technology and business partnerships.	
Staffing	GOAL 1: Enlist the talent necessary to curate the public space (while other departments manage the existing community of vendors).	While FMC did intend to hire a Manager of Cultural Activation role, the position evolved to manage data analysis and vendor tracking. There remain opportunities for additional capacity to focus on cultural representation and activation in all facets of the market.

MARKET ASSESSMENT

	<i>Policy Recommendations (Continued)</i>	
Security	GOAL 1: Integrate the senior security staff into the culture and operations of public markets.	Significant progress has been made in the area of security. FMC has leveraged a team of grounds patrol officers, made up of former senior NOPD officers. Additionally, security detail is onsite at key times.
	GOAL 2: Utilize the new captain's skillset to design training and safety mitigation measures among vendors that adds little additional costs to the operating budget.	FMC has effectively partnered with the French Quarter Management District, Office of Homeless Strategy & Services, and NOPD to leverage the French Quarter Security Task Force to ensure the safety and security of all who spend time in the market. Cultivating a direct relationship with the 8th District NOPD Captain has benefited the organization, and the Captain has worked closely with FMC to ensure policy and legal knowledge are current and effective.
	GOAL 3: Develop greater coordination between various public and private safety operations.	Significant progress has been made to increase coordination, as defined by this goal. Vendors still report a lack of security presence that disrupts their day-to-day operations, as well as the customer experience (e.g. panhandling and hustling). While French Market's role in coordination have been successful, there are perceived challenges with enforcement at the City level that cause safety issues to remain.
Unhoused Population	GOAL 1: Identify practical services that deliver dignity to the unhoused.	FMC supports the Office of Homeless Strategy & Services in their new "encouraged compliance" efforts. Grounds patrol agents have been trained to call on specific resources that can connect people experiencing homelessness with shelter, permanent housing and other critical services. FMC staff continue to meet weekly to discuss support for the unhoused.
	GOAL 2: Partner with professional service providers who can serve the unhoused.	

MARKET ASSESSMENT

	PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS	CURRENT STATUS
<i>Program Recommendations</i>		
Existing Successful Programs	GOAL 1: Confirm that all existing festivals are valuable moving forward.	FMC has assessed the value of its festivals, both from an attraction and profitability standpoint. Results show that large festivals have historically been costly, often with negative ROI. Vendors see even or decreased sales during festivals, and event set-up impedes vendor load-in/out. There is a strategic shift in progress from large events to more routine, smaller programming.
	GOAL 2: Evaluate how these potentially lucrative events serve culture bearers.	FMC has adopted the City of New Orleans culture compensation standards of \$200 per performer per hour. This is a positive step, but now limits the volume of cultural performances due to budget constraints.
Pop Ups + Specials	GOAL 1: Provide the FMC with signature products to lure locals for an extended period of time.	FMC creates signature merchandise for Creole Tomato festival, featuring local artists, and signature throws for parades, like the New Orleans Holiday Parade.
	GOAL 2: Reinforce seasonal specials with curated pop-up events.	Some pop-ups happen at the markets, and they are generally well-received. The Strategic Growth Plan provides an opportunity to solidify the design of these offerings.
	Goal 3: Compensate artists, musicians, and culture bearers fairly for their talents; provide them public recognition, and forge an ongoing relationship with the FMC (to continue to perform for the FMC's banner festivals).	FMC has adopted the City of New Orleans culture compensation standards of \$200 per performer per hour. This is a positive step, but now limits the volume of cultural performances due to budget constraints.
Focus on Food	GOAL 1: Relaunch the weekly farmers market in Crescent Park.	This goal is no longer relevant as FMC no longer manages Crescent Park. While community members did express a desire for fruits and vegetables at the French Market, historic sales of fresh food have been limited.

MARKET ASSESSMENT

	PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS	CURRENT STATUS
Program Recommendations		
Focus on Food (Cont.)	GOAL 2: Explore new food distribution models for the French Market.	Food is currently a meaningful draw to the space, and it contributes to customers' extending their stay and increasing their spending in the market. Board members value food experiences and would like to see more grab and go or snack options to support pending activity at the Riverfront. Expansion of food offerings is a primary opportunity for growth strategy.
	GOAL 3: Make food a priority when staging pop-ups with partners to promote seasonal and cultural foods.	FMC has implemented a series of weekly cooking demos that correlate to seasonal foods and celebrations (king cake for Mardi Gras, gumbo for Fall, and more). Creole Tomato Fest is a pillar food-oriented event of the market, and there remains opportunity to expand storytelling through food pop-ups and demonstrations.
Calendar	GOAL 1: Expand and diversify the audiences that attend the French Market.	Market visitation primarily consists of visitors from nearby regions and cities such as Houston and Atlanta, as well as some visitation from the Northeast and Midwest. There is opportunity to increase spending and attract locals back to the market

Right: Live music performance at the Market.



MARKET ASSESSMENT

	PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS	CURRENT STATUS
<i>Place Based Recommendations</i>		
Short-Term	GOAL 1: Improve the French Market's facilities in the short-term: public art, bathrooms, parking, seating, visitor information, etc.	Bathroom renovations and bike parking have been added since 2021. Stakeholders state a dinginess and cluttered state that can be fixed in the short term with vendor appearance standards (tablecloths, signage), consistent cleanings (pressure washing), and beautification through landscaping.
Medium-Term	GOAL 1: Improve the French Market's facilities in the medium-term: performance platform, green infrastructure, upgraded rain screens.	While progress has been limited towards this goal, there is opportunity to reassess the proper medium term place-based improvements with this plan. Wayfinding has emerged as a critical need in the medium-term.
Long-Term	GOAL 1: Improve the French Market's facilities in the long-term: add a shed over the open plaza, build play areas, use bollards to create pedestrian-only walkways for continuity through the market, address loading needs	The open plaza space has served as a flexible place for experimentation for FMC. Plans are in place to use the space to pilot programming and performance in accordance with the Growth Strategy within this document. The primary benefit of keeping the space uncovered and open is that it allows for the move-in and move-out of temporary infrastructure, such as food trucks, seasonal markets, and small stages without disrupting routine vendor operations in the main market space.

Right: A short-term depiction of previous place-based recommendations for the French Market.



MARKET ASSESSMENT

MARKET ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

As the consulting team interacted with different perspectives, much feedback and many ideas emerged. To analyze all findings and develop related strategy, assessment insights were organized into six categories: people, positioning, products, programming, place, and policies. These six topic areas capture the wide diversity of experiences at the French Market and are the organizing framework for this report, including stakeholder learnings, comparative studies, and strategies and initiatives.

MARKET ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

PEOPLE

Market users' perspectives on how their experiences meet expectations

01

POSITIONING

Awareness and reputation; how this drives interest and traffic

02

PRODUCTS

Items, consumables (food and beverage), and services sold at the market

03

PROGRAMMING

Offerings that create an immersive experience, like music, demonstrations, tours

04

PLACE

Location, buildings, and infrastructure; security presence and sense of safety

05

POLICIES

Vendor rules, expectations, and regulations

06

MARKET ASSESSMENT

STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

The assessment focused on the perspectives of people with some relationship to the Market. This includes frequent users, previous users, and non-users. Understanding this diversity of perspectives and opinions paints a complete picture of the Market's positioning and potential, which empowers Market leaders to pinpoint opportunities. Stakeholder learnings are organized according to the [Market Assessment framework](#).

Board Members

Interviews
Group Updates

Vendors

Survey
Committee Discussion

Customers

Pop Up
Activations

Public

Public
Sessions

Neighborhood + Local Leaders

Group
Discussion

September 2025 - April 2026



Above: The market engages in city-wide events by welcoming the over 150k visitors traveling to the city for the Taylor Swift concert in October 2024.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

PEOPLE

Market users' perspectives on how their experiences meet expectations

01

PEOPLE

Common Experiences

The planning process underscores that the market's people: its customers, vendors, performers, staff, and more...are what make it a special and interesting place. Therefore, we begin our analysis of feedback centered around the various user groups and how the market meets or misses their expectations. All stakeholders agree the French Market has a strong and powerful history, and they appreciate the diversity of vendors and cultures that converge in one space. Visitors, locals, and leaders alike see the market as a place for connection, creativity, and cultural expression that honors the past and celebrates modern creativity. **Stakeholders, especially locals (vendors, performers, community members, Board members, and area residents) would like to see increased connection to the market's history within the user experience.**

Local Residents

The greatest opportunity for FMC is attracting more locals to the market. Lessons from other destinations demonstrate places that appeal to locals are also meaningful for visitors. Additionally, **increased local attraction and spending at the market will help vendors, tenants, and performers ride out slower periods in the middle of the week or in summer months.**

Generally, the common experience among local residents is that the market does not meet their desire for an authentic asset. There are some misperceptions to overcome, such as the assumptions among locals that there is no reason for them to visit the market. In reality, some variety of high quality foods and beautiful handmade art and goods are available. As the market moves to implement its plan, rebuilding relevance with local residents and community members will be critical to future success.



Above: Discussion group from public session

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

PEOPLE (CONTINUED)

Market Customers

At live activations over two separate days, more than one hundred customers (mostly visitors and a few residents) engaged with the consulting team. A vast majority of these customers reported that the market **met or exceeded their expectations**. Customers consistently describe the French Market as welcoming and friendly. The market's **open-air layout, manageable size, and approachable environment** contribute to this perception. Many visitors, especially out-of-town guests, make a point to return regularly to the market. The addition of food is a particular highlight, with patrons praising the variety of options available.



Above: Customer engagement pop up event

Still, customers identified several ways to enhance their experience, such as:

- Increased variety, including more local art and quality handmade products and additional food and drink options.
- Additional signage and guidance to navigate the market.

Vendors & Tenants

The vendor experience is particularly unique. Vendors are intimately familiar with the market and have specific insight about the market's customers and conditions. Vendors lauded their recent experience with **market staff, highlighting the ease of communication and support**. Some aspects of market policy administration, however, create additional stress and challenge for vendor and tenant businesses. Overall, the vendor experience seems to be one of adaptation and enduring commitment, as many vendors have remained loyal through the years despite external challenges, like natural disasters and the global pandemic. There are currently three common challenges to the experience that vendors shared regularly:

- Customer **spending is down** due to economic conditions, decreasing vendor sales and revenue post-pandemic.
- While vendors praise improved staff relations, **challenges persist with vendors on policy and administrative matters**. This insight is addressed further in the Policies section.
- **Some vendors do not feel like their voices are fully represented by the vendor committee**. Additionally, a few voices on the vendor committee are inflammatory, and their approach to communication with market leadership does not leave much room for understanding or negotiation.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

PEOPLE (CONTINUED)

Potential Vendors and Performers

Artists, makers, and creatives who are interested in becoming vendors are generally **unaware of how to get into the market**. The policies and procedures for application are difficult to understand and discourage many creatives from pursuing vendorship. Additionally, there is a perception that the French Market is unwelcoming to new vendors who perceive that a long-tenured set of vendors hold priority and power. Creatives also shared a belief that barriers to entry are high and that communication with Market staff regarding vendorship is sporadic or nonresponsive. Additionally, potential vendors shared their **concern that the volume of mass produced or inexpensive items in the market would dominate their unique and artisan goods**. Accordingly, they redirect their time and efforts to other markets or sales channels.

FMC Leadership & Staff

FMC's Public Markets Committee (Board) members frequently patronize the French Market to grab a good, quick bite, people watch, or show off the city to visitors. In their experience, the market has meaningful potential, and they have pride in the space as a cornerstone of the New Orleans experience. **They identify cleanliness and clutter as the primary issues that hinder their experience.**

For the most part, market staff has a positive experience working with vendors and enjoys getting to know them over the years. However, as mentioned in the vendor experience, there is a **lack of understanding from vendors of leadership policies and decisions**. The vendor/leadership connection could benefit from additional bridge building, understanding, and decision-making clarity. On a related note, vendor governance needs more structure, consistency, and oversight by FMC leaders. See the [Pike Place Comparative Spotlight](#) for an example of effective governance.

Local Leaders

Throughout this process, a **clear need has emerged for stronger partnerships with business and sector leaders across the region**. While FMC is well-connected to local political leaders, enhanced partnerships in key areas would benefit the market experience and enhance the market's reputation. Leaders, entities, and partners are willing to serve as ambassadors to: influence the narrative around the market, drive visitors to the market, attract quality vendors to the market, enhance the ambiance and experience, and more. Local leaders shared an interest in collaborating more readily with FMC, however, a lack of communication inhibits knowledge of market happenings and new offerings. Leaders are invested in the success of the French Market. Their sentiments align with other stakeholders, and they support increased authenticity, higher caliber vendors and products, and more consistent activation of the space. Leaders also mentioned opportunities for beautification, external funding, and venue rentals.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

POSITIONING

Awareness and reputation; how this drives interest and traffic

02



POSITIONING

Reputation and Perception

There is **significant gap in perception between locals (vendors, leaders, residents, and more) and visitors**. While visitors at the market feel it's a unique and joyful experience, locals have a more mixed perception. They tend to note that the products and experiences are not of interest to them, and that the area is difficult to get to. Local residents shared they have little interest in visiting the market outside special events or when guests are in town. The market has been labeled across the region as a touristy place with little to offer to locals from nearby neighborhoods and parishes.

Storytelling

All user groups name the desire for the market to provide an authentic and uniquely New Orleans experience. This insight highlights a current lack in storytelling. The market should not only reflect the past through static plaques or brochures, but **it must be a place where history and culture come to life through a dynamic, sensory experiences. Effective storytelling can draw people in, encourage them to stay, and walk away with priceless experiences.**

Fortunately, the market has a rich and robust legacy to pull from. With its historical significance as both the center of commerce and a multicultural meeting point, there is opportunity for authentic storytelling that celebrates the cultural anthropology of the region. Consistent feedback from a variety of local leaders, vendors, performers, and residents indicates that **New Orleans has a complex history that deserves increased attention through our monuments, places, and experiences. The French Market is an ideal setting to tell these stories by weaving together memories of the space for the past 200+ years.**



Example of current marketing via social media
Source: FMC Instagram Page

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

POSITIONING (CONTINUED)

Marketing and Promotions

A lack of consistent messaging and promotion drives market misperceptions. **There is an opportunity to infuse a modern brand identity and promote it to all market stakeholders: visitors, locals, makers, creators, and performers.** Understanding and appealing to users’ needs through many channels will be key to the market’s growth. FMC’s marketing previously centered print and one-directional online ads, but the organization has shifted towards targeted digital promotion. Vendors suggested promotion within hotels and increasing social media presence, while locals recommend using marketing channels to enhance creative storytelling through content creation in different formats, such as video.

Throughout the stakeholder process, FMC leadership demonstrated a strong desire for understanding customer data and preferences. Below is summary of findings of the top demographic groups visiting the French Market from August 2024 through July 2025.

TOP AUDIENCES VISITING FMC (08/01/24 - 07/31/25)		
Demographic Group	% of Market Visitors	Description
Power Elite	12.3%	The wealthiest households in the US, living in the most exclusive neighborhoods, and enjoying all that life has to offer
Booming with Confidence	10.6%	Prosperous, established couples in their peak earning years living in suburban homes
Suburban Style	10.1%	Middle-aged, ethnically-mixed suburban families and couples earning upscale incomes
Singles + Starters	9.5%	Young singles starting out and some starter families living a city lifestyle

Above: [Placer.AI](#) database insights on the most common visitors to the French Market. This information should be leveraged to drive positioning and therefore branding, marketing, and content creation. Data set courtesy of New Orleans & Company.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

POSITIONING (CONTINUED)

Strategic Partnerships

When engaging local leaders and institutions in this planning process, an insight emerged: **there is a lack of knowledge of FMC's value or current state**. Strategic partnerships can serve as an engine to influence residents and visitors alike. While FMC has solidified foundational partnerships to support its operations (namely security and neighborhood relations), **casting a wider net of institutional partners across the Greater New Orleans region could be pivotal to developing ambassadorship, celebrating cross-promotion, and overcoming negative local perceptions**.

Potential Ideas for partnerships to enhance awareness, reputation, relevance, and accessibility to the market include:

- Engaging with more hospitality, cultural, and art entities to meet visitors where they are.
- Forming and deepening relationships and space-sharing with local cultural, arts, and food organizations to create special interest experiences, exhibits, or pop-ups at the market (and establish relevance with new users).
- Establishing relationships with youth organizations and services to create valuable experiences for young people through field trips and education and/or performances, play, and cultural engagement.
- Partnering with economic and small business support organizations to buttress new vendors and performers. These entities offer technical assistance programs for entrepreneurs that may support vendor business establishment and growth.
- Collaborating with a diverse set of transportation and transit providers: private tour companies, microtransit operators, public transit agencies, bike share, parking management entities and more to enhance the ability for people to physically arrive at the market.

For a detailed map of potential partners and their roles, please see the [Partnership Guide](#) in the Appendix.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS



PRODUCTS

Items, consumables (food and beverage), and services sold at the market

03

PRODUCTS

Product Mix

Throughout the years FMC leadership and Board have worked to cultivate a diverse product mix that sparks customer interest and spending, preserves the authenticity of the market, and celebrates the many cultures of New Orleans. There are, however, challenges related to fully realizing this intention.

While some peer markets are built around one core signature product, the New Orleans brand lends itself to a more diverse set of offerings, and therefore, a more diverse crowd. However, As manufactured products have become increasingly available, affordable, and appealing, stakeholders have noted an **increase in the prevalence of cheap, low-quality, mass-produced items** at the market like keychains, t-shirts, and imported goods. While some vendors still sell handmade, artisan items, they are more costly to produce and therefore for to purchase. Customer and local feedback tends to value well-made, high-quality items at the market. **While shifting the market makeup to feature more hand crafted items may increase average price point, it will elevate the market experience and increase the market's overall sophistication.** Additionally, based on national travel trends, luxury travelers are currently driving American tourism spending; the timing to curate a portfolio of high end/higher priced products may be right. For insights into the possibilities for a healthy product mix, see the spotlight on [Charleston City Market](#). **When asked about markets that exemplify an authentic and high quality product mix at various prices, residents mentioned [Frenchmen Art Bazaar](#), [Arts New Orleans Markets](#), [Three Rivers Arts Festival](#), and the [Disco Warehouse](#) on Lower Decatur Street.**

Food Products

Much of the feedback on food products overlaps with insights on food programming, please see the [Food Programming](#) section for more information.

WHAT PRODUCTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT THE FRENCH MARKET?

*Stakeholders expressed interest in a curated mix of products that demonstrate **quality, craftsmanship, and cultural identity**. Some ideas that were shared include:*

Wearables

- Black Masking
- Indian beadwork
- Jewelry
- Caps
- Scarves
- Belts
- Bags
- Costumes
- Hair & headpieces

Home Goods

- Baskets
- Cutting boards
- Pottery
- Cookware
- Wooden spoons
- Oven mitts
- Spoon rests
- Tablecloths
- Napkins

Decorative & Novelty

- Art prints
- Photography
- Cards
- Small sculptures
- Figurines
- Wall hangings
- Artistic keychains
- Instruments

Food & Culinary

- Spices
- Shelf stable cooking kits
- Sauces and jams
- Grab and go foods
- Fresh produce

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

PROGRAMMING

Offerings that create an immersive experience, like music, demonstrations, tours

04

PROGRAMMING

Special Events

A multi-year programming analysis highlighted that **sporadic, large, culminating events were not effectively benefiting the market's mission, vendors, operations, and finances.** Major festivals and events are costly to produce, and they do not positively affect FMC's profitability. Vendors confirmed that in many cases, large events in and around the market distract customers from shopping and purchasing. Additionally, the noise levels and loading/unloading process for event setup interrupt vendors' ability to work effectively.

Feedback from locals confirms that major events do not draw them to the market, and locals would support **more routine programming that enhances the daily atmosphere of the market.** Stakeholders did, however, name one exception: the **Creole Tomato Festival.** This signature event evokes nostalgic feelings for many and highlights the connection to the market's agricultural roots. Across all groups, stakeholders emphasized the reputational value of this event and recommended it continue to be a component of the Market's programming. Other experience-enhancing events mentioned by stakeholders include **cultural appreciation celebrations that intersect with holidays, external festivals, commemorations, or significant moments in history.**

Youth Programming

Vendors and local residents alike would like to see the market as a more youth-friendly space, specifically for teens. Families and youth are excellent visitors and stewards of a space, and there is a broader City-wide effort to make New Orleans youth-friendly for locals and visitors alike. FMC can contribute to this effort by **hosting routine youth-friendly activations and increasing accessibility for young people and their families to attend the market.**

Stakeholder Ideas for youth programs included:

- Age appropriate field trips and/or home schooling programs to attract groups of students on quieter mid-week days, provide historical and cultural education, and demonstrate the mix of cultures and entrepreneurs who form the market's unique identity.
- Youth-driven programs, such as musical, dance, and theater performances, as well as youth art exhibitions and a pop-up youth market where youth performers and creators are highlighted.
- Entertainment for families and young people, such as storytime, kid-friendly cooking demonstrations, crafting, performances, and opportunities for play.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

PROGRAMMING (CONTINUED)

Cultural Programming

Perhaps the greatest ongoing programming opportunity relates to consistent cultural activation of the market. Stakeholder conversations clearly highlighted the need for a cohesive annual program plan. **How might we design a consistently authentic experience for French Market goes considering the 300+ years of history and dozens of cultures who shape it today?** The answer to this question is complicated and requires an iterative, innovative, and measured approach. Generally, stakeholders (vendors, locals, and visitors) would like to see programming that reflects:

- Representation of the multitude of cultures that make up the market's history and the region. There is currently no single place where locals, visitors, and their families can gather to experience the many cultures that have shaped the region simultaneously.
- Vendors actively crafting and making at their booths to demonstrate cultural expression.
- Weekly cultural performances, like dance, cooking demonstrations, live music, and more featured in a central location or prominent small stage.
- Performances and programming that add to the daily ambiance, rather than take away from the core market experience, meaning music is not too loud, does not displace vendors, or distract market customers.
- Opportunities to engage with the market in the evening, such as evening performances, adult activities, networking events, and more. FMC venue rentals for programs such as candlelight concerts, networking events, cooking or crafting workshops, a vintage flea market, or movies are all evening suggestions that could appeal to residents and visitors alike.

Educational Programming

There is strong demand among local residents to evolve the market experience into a living museum where past meets present. While stakeholders would appreciate place-based cultural enhancements, like plaques and murals, they are also seeking more energetic, human-centered cultural activations. These desires correlate to global travel trends that indicate travelers are seeking new, authentic, and special interest experiences when exploring destinations¹. To achieve this cultural activation stakeholders recommended:

- Guided tours catering to both general history and special interest (e.g. food, spirits, culture, ghosts, architecture, etc.).
- Use of technology to encourage interaction with history, such as self-guided cell phone tours, QR codes, games/competitions, and virtual reality.
- Kiosks with everyday local docents (e.g. National Park Service or State rangers) to interact with and provide guidance to people visiting the market.



Above: Youth programming at the Market

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

PROGRAMMING (CONTINUED)

Food Programming

Given the market's ties to food and produce, local stakeholders have a strong desire for increased food-related programming at the market. Building on the success of Creole Tomato Festival, there are opportunities to feature seasonal produce at the market in small but impactful ways, for instance, **identifying months or seasons to incorporate fresh local produce into food vendor menu items, market displays, food demos, and tours.** As mentioned in the 2021 plan, featured produce months, like blueberries in May, watermelon and okra over the summer, and mirlitons in November can create fresh reasons for locals and visitors to visit the market. These seasons could be brought to life through educational moments that tie food to culture and history, amateur cooking competitions, and more.



Above: Flyer for one of the markets regular programs.

Residents of surrounding neighborhoods (French Quarter, Treme, Marigny, and Bywater) strongly desire a fresh, local produce market in the area. While previous attempts to offer a weekly farmer's market have not drawn a critical mass of customers, there may be ways to experiment with CSA boxes or special curated meal kits featuring local produce, market-branded ingredients, and an instructional recipe.

Food trucks are a popular suggestion among both locals and visitors. The open plaza at the end of the market provides an ideal space for a food truck rally in concert with performances at the Old US Mint/Jazz Museum. Food trucks are a great way to bring a variety of cultures and foods to the table in an easy, low effort manner. However, it should be noted that food trucks are currently prohibited in the French Quarter, so this initiative would require approval by City Council.

Loyalty Program

Vendors in particular celebrated programming that encouraged customer loyalty and repeat visits. Several stakeholders mentioned a shopping passport, where customers received stamps for shopping at various booths, and could redeem a full book for discounts, free products, or free parking.

For a list of innovative potential pilot programs, please see the [Pilot Projects](#) section in the Appendix.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS



PLACE

Location, buildings,
and infrastructure;
security presence and
sense of safety

05

PLACE

Market Infrastructure

In many ways, the physical space of the market has improved greatly in recent years. **Bathroom renovations have been paramount to enhancing the customer and vendor experience**, and many visitors noted that the bathrooms were among the cleanest they have seen in the city. There is some concern, primarily from vendors, that with a transition of cleaning contractors, the bathrooms may not be consistently maintained in the future.

The open plaza, flanking Barracks street, has remained relatively untouched despite long-term plans for shed development. Currently, ample vendor space is still available under the existing sheds, which indicates a lack of demand on the vendors side. Beyond the numbers, the primary benefit to an open space like the plaza is the **flexibility it provides to try new things and experiment with a variety of programming**. Stakeholders' desire for culture, food, and pop-up programming indicate that leaving this space as-is may actually provide FMC ample opportunity for strategic growth. Rather than using this as additional vendor stalls, FMC can pilot or experiment new approaches for space utilization. There is still opportunity for short-term **beautification and day-to-day usage** of this space, using features such as landscaping (for beauty and shade) and seating.

Managing seasonal weather remains a challenge of the market. While some vendors need rain screens to protect themselves and their goods, others feel they make the market too hot and are not appropriately lifted and lowered in response to the weather. Given the difference of opinion, and the fact that heat, rain, and wind are an increasing factor in the region, there is room to explore innovative materials, measures, and policies to address seasonal weather. Some examples include responsive weather sensors that adjust rain protection panels as weather changes, updated technology for market staff to raise and lower rain panels on-demand from an app or centralized device, or additional retractable awnings that roll further out to protect goods.

Layout

Current product layout creates confusion for both customers and visitors. Early stakeholders shared a desire to potentially organize vendor sections by product type or handmade vs. manufactured goods. It is important to note that such organization would prove difficult given the policies and operations surrounding booth selection. Throughout the stakeholder process, a common layout-related gripe emerged from stakeholders: inconsistent, cluttered, and messy product displays. Customers and local residents shared that the **cluttered displays and crowded aisles negatively impact the browsing experience and create the impression of a low-quality market**. Additionally, high racks and shelves limit the visibility of neighboring stalls.

DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS

PLACE (CONTINUE)

Cleanliness

Cleanliness has markedly improved in many areas of the market, especially in restrooms and at ground level. Many stakeholders, including vendors and market leaders, express concern with the **cleanliness of the market ceiling**. Those who spend much of their time in the market request a routine seasonal cleaning procedure from top to bottom.



Access

Locals and vendors share their pain points for accessing the market: lack of efficient transportation, lack of security for pedestrians and bikers, and major issues with parking.

Stakeholders re-engaged with the idea of a district shuttle or circulator that could bring people to and from the market from key landmarks. Leaders across the city are currently working to improve French Quarter circulation, and ideas emerged for FMC to connect with transit and tourism leaders to support further development.

Parking is the greatest perceived pain point of the market among local stakeholders. While there are several lots within walking distance of the market, there is a strong perception among stakeholders that parking is scarce, costly, and unsafe parking. Several vendors and staff named that street parking is not enforced, which exacerbates inaccessibility of affordable parking spots. Discounts and incentives to encourage local visitation, especially in off times, were a popular request in public sessions. Specifically, many stakeholders desired validated discount parking with purchase. Additionally, the concept of a multi-story parking lot was discussed, which connects back to initial concepts for the Elysian Fields lots from 2024.



DEEP DIVE: STAKEHOLDER LEARNINGS



POLICIES

Market Policy and Operation Manual

French Market policies were a key driving factor for FMC to undergo the current planning process. While the manual is readily available to the public, the **policies are vague and difficult for vendors, potential vendors, and FMC leadership to navigate.** To further FMC's mission and grow the market, leaders are revisiting and revising policies for additional clarity. While evolving is necessary in many cases, policy changes can sometimes unintentionally harm and or create upheaval among tenured vendors. Occasionally, traditionally-abiding vendors may lose their status due to unintentional noncompliance. On the other hand, new and potential vendors often feel confused or lose out due to

lack of clarity on how to vend. The process to become a vendor is fairly opaque to an outside creator/artist, which deters them from applying. Once a vendor joins the Market, stakeholders imply that there is an **unspoken set of rules and hierarchy among a few tenured vendors that can make it isolating and challenging for to find one's place.**

Vendor Representation

There is a desire among vendors to shift how vendors are represented in FMC governance and key decisions. Stakeholders across groups provided feedback that the current structure for representation is not always effective. The Vendor Committee often brings good intent, but stakeholders indicate that it tends to serve a small subset of vendors, and the committee perspective does not always represent the majority. Additionally, recent interactions between vendor committee representatives and other stakeholders have been challenging, suggesting the need for clearer protocols, standards of conduct, and improved communication channels. Further, current parameters on vendor voices in Board and committee meetings hinders the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to discussion. **It is critical to effectively balance vendor perspectives in key market decisions, while ensuring vendors, market leadership, and Board can collaborate in the best interest of FMC's mission.**

Moratorium

The [moratorium list](#) of products intends to reduce the redundancy of market offerings. However, it has had some negative consequences. In some instances, stakeholders feel that the moratorium protects certain existing vendor items that should be eliminated and blocks the addition of more culturally aligned versions in the same category. There remains an **over-saturation of certain items, like tees and jewelry, many of which are manufactured, mass produced or low quality, while new locally designed and hand-made tees and jewelry are not permitted.** Therefore, existing vendors have a tenure-based monopoly on such items. Another important caveat regarding the moratorium is that several vendors are registered for items that they do not currently sell, establishing a pseudo monopoly on item categories that may not be currently offered on their tables.



Learnings from Comparative Markets



*A study of peer markets to
reveal successful strategies,
gaps, and best practices*



COMPARATIVE RESEARCH

Overview

To identify best practices among top markets, the consulting team performed a combination of secondary research and interviews to study three markets: [Pike Place Market](#) (Seattle, WA), [Charleston City Market](#) (Charleston, SC), and [La Ciudadela](#) (Mexico City, MX). The resulting takeaways are valuable lessons as the French Market seeks to evolve into the future. **Generally, findings from comparative markets validate stakeholder desires and offer detailed examples for how to bring the desired market features and attributes to life.** The following pages include a list of high-level takeaways from the overall comparative set, followed by more details on each market. Individual markets were assessed based on the initial framework of this plan (below).



High Level Takeaways

1. Evolve less-formal vendor management into intentional stewardship.

Comparative markets succeed when they pair day-to-day operations with structured vendor governance. Regular, inclusive vendor and artisan advisory mechanisms create clearer standards, better planning, and shared ownership of the market's direction—especially around curation, quality, and cultural integrity.

2. Clarify and broadcast what the French Market stands for.

Strong markets make deliberate choices about what belongs. Emphasizing handmade, local, and culturally authentic goods, supported by clear quality and authenticity standards, helps align vendor offerings with the Market's mission and reinforces trust with customers.

3. Treat artisans as cultural anchors, not just tenants.

Markets that thrive elevate makers through artisan-first zones, visible maker corridors, demonstrations, and storytelling. Deepening the presence of culturally significant artisans and giving them a voice in curation strengthens both identity and visitor experience.

4. Create pathways for new and emerging vendors.

Vendor incubation models such as guest stalls, rotating vendors, and pop-ups allow markets to stay dynamic while lowering barriers for local makers. These pathways refresh offerings without sacrificing standards or cohesion.

5. Activate the riverfront as a connector, not a backdrop.

Wayfinding, family-friendly spaces, and programming that draws people from the river into the Market help expand foot traffic and integrate the Market more fully into the public realm.

6. Give people a reason to stay longer and return often.

The strongest markets balance everyday utility with seasonal and cultural moments. A mix of daily needs, rotating vendors, night markets, and seasonal cultural markets ensures the markets feel relevant year-round, not just during peak tourism or events.

1. Pike Place

Comparative Summary

Pike Place Market is an iconic public market and a core civic institution, functioning as both a marketplace and a living neighborhood. Its identity is clearly defined by **authenticity, cultivated via local producers and handmade goods**, and the market consistently abides by a “Meet the Producer” philosophy. Therefore, Pike Place maintains a healthy draw of locals and tourists alike to ensure the market is always bustling and active.

Market Snapshot

Products

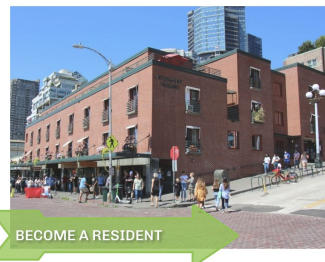
Pike Place maintains **strict juried standards** that prohibit mass-produced or imported resale goods. Local food and craft vendors must produce what they sell, and product duplication is actively managed. Structured pathways such as rotating daystalls and guest vendor programs, support small businesses and long-term vendor growth.²

People & Programming

Pike Place serves a **balanced mix of locals, families, and tourists**, supported by frequent, seasonal programming tied directly to vendor sales and cultural identity.² Daily buskers, night markets, festivals, and food demonstrations consistently drive foot traffic and time spent onsite. There is always something to do or see.³

Place

Pike Place’s multi-level layout, **strong wayfinding, and integration with Waterfront Park and public plazas encourage exploration and longer stays**. Interactive experiences and family-friendly programming significantly extend dwell time.³



Images: Pike Place Market Website

1. Pike Place Public Market

Positioning

Pike Place Public Market is positioned as the living heart of Seattle — an authentic, working public market where **everyday commerce, local culture, and civic life intersect**. Pike Place Market is not a curated attraction pretending to be local. It's a real place where real people buy food, make a living, and show up for one another — and visitors are welcome to step into that living ecosystem.

Policy

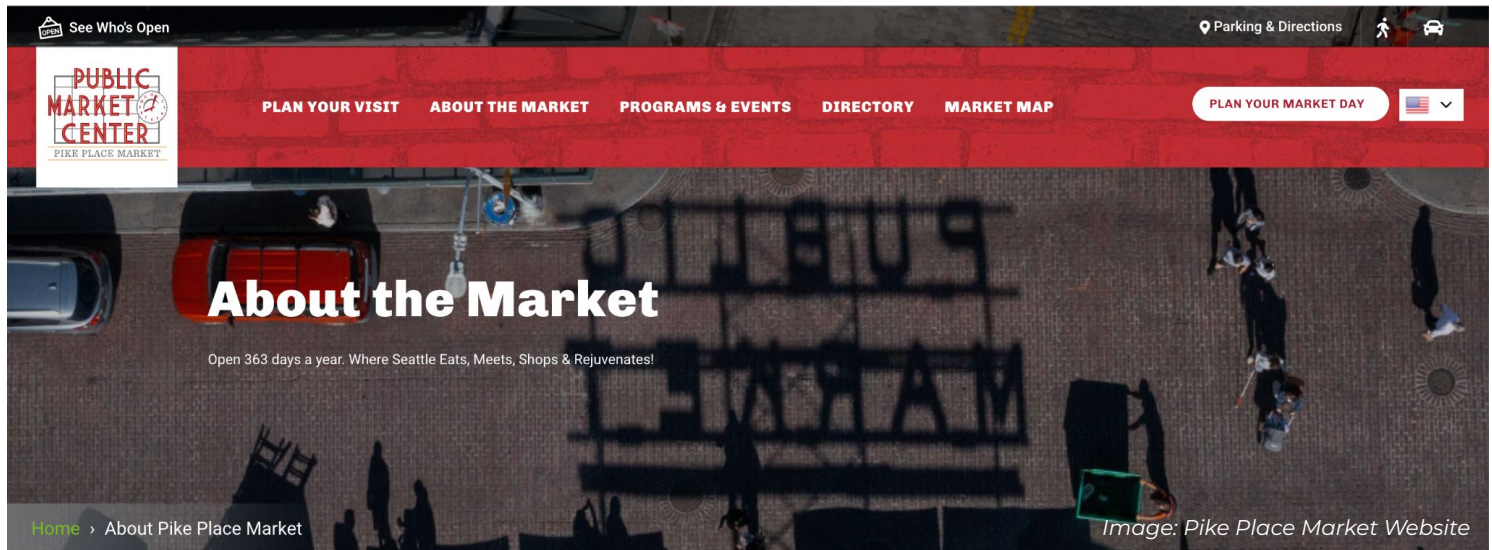
Pike Place is publicly owned but operated by a mission-driven nonprofit public development authority with vendor and community representation, strong preservation standards, and a dedicated foundation supporting fundraising and reinvestment.²

Pike Place Market manages a **highly inclusive and effective governance model**. As mentioned previously, every stakeholder role is represented through the various governance groups. Each group has distinct roles and authority as outlined in clear charter documents that are publicly available.³

PIKE PLACE MARKET GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE³

Pike Place Market Preservation & Development Authority Council (governance board)	Pike Place Market Historical Commission	Pike Place Market Constituency
Serves as a very high level oversight board (strategy, master planning, finance, etc.) with 12 volunteer members, including: • 4 mayoral appointees • 4 PDA appointed • 1 appointed by the Pike Place Market Constituency	A function of the City of Seattle that preserves the Market's physical and social character as "the soul of Seattle." The Historical Commission provides guidelines and regulatory oversight of the buildings and activities	Ensures there is public participation in Pike Place Market's future and acts as an advisory and lobbying group to the Pike Place Market PDA and the Seattle City Council. Elects one member to the PDA Council. Anyone over age 16 can join.

1. Pike Place Public Market



Pike Place Market's positioning comes to life on its website with clear messaging and accessibility to all essential information for visiting the market.

Key Opportunities for French Market

One area of opportunity for FMC is in stakeholder governance, particularly vendor governance. Pike Place Market reserves one third of its governing Council positions (4 of 12) for vendors. Additionally, they have established the Pike Place Constituency, which operates like a committee for the market. It is made up of market residents, vendors, business owners, and community stakeholders. The collaboration in those groups helps to build connection and representation between vendors, Board members and leadership. As a result, major decisions are informed and understood by the people they affect. French Market can borrow from Pike Place's model in the following ways:

- Introduce structured, routine vendor and community advisory mechanisms to strengthen governance and planning.
- Reconsider vendor and product standards focused on handmade, local, and culturally authentic goods sold by makers and producers.
- Create vendor incubation pathways (guest stalls, rotating vendors).
- Use the riverfront as an attraction channel through wayfinding indicators, programming, and family spaces.
- Through a mix of seasonal offerings and day-to-day needs, ensure there is always a reason to engage with French Market.

2. Charleston City Market

Comparative Summary

Charleston City Market functions as a tightly defined, artisan-first cultural destination with a globally recognizable identity anchored in heritage craft, most notably Sweetgrass basket weaving rooted in the Gullah Geechee tradition. Its historic Great Hall and adjoining sheds create a unified, linear experience that reinforces quality, authenticity, and cultural continuity.

Market Snapshot

Products

Charleston City Market employs **strict vendor screening standards** emphasizing handmade, locally produced, and culturally authentic goods. [Gullah artisans](#) are treated as cultural anchors with protected visibility, and mass-produced items are limited. The Night Market further reinforces this commitment by featuring 100% local artisans.⁴

People & Programming

Charleston City Market is heavily tourist-driven, drawing the attention of visitors through artist demonstrations, historic architecture, and its proximity to major festivals and cruise traffic.⁵ **Families and cultural tourists are especially attracted to the educational, walkable experience** centered on Sweetgrass basket weaving and other heritage crafts. **Programming is largely artisan-led**, while food offerings remains limited, reinforcing a strong retail and craft identity.

Charleston City Market's airy, bright, and organized stalls create a relaxed and pleasant shopping experience.



Images: Charleston City Market Facebook

2. Charleston City Market

People & Programming (Continued)

At Charleston City Market, Gullah Geechee basket weavers actively work at their stalls, making the craft process visible and central to the visitor experience. The Sweetgrass baskets themselves are prioritized not as tourist souvenirs, but as culturally rooted works tied to the land, history, and living traditions of the Gullah Geechee community. Additionally, the presence of Gullah Geechee artisans draws many tours to stop in the market.

The market hosts a night market on select Friday and Saturday evenings, which feature community programming related to holidays, i.e. a drum circle for Juneteenth. Food options for night markets are provided by food trucks, as the market does not have permanent food vendors.⁵

Policy

Charleston City Market is city-owned and privately operated under contract by the nonprofit Charleston City Market Preservation Trust, enabling administration of vendor rules, product standards, and brand consistency, with municipal oversight of preservation and capital improvements.⁵

Place

Charleston's approximately 32,000 rentable square feet support dozens of vendors within a predictable, high-flow linear layout⁶. While the market has about 300 registered vendors, about 140 of them display on any given day.⁵ The Great Hall provides a premium, climate-controlled corridor for high-quality makers, while open-air sheds allow for pop-ups and rotating vendors without diluting the core experience. In all areas of the market vendors maintain attractive, organized, and shoppable booths and tables that delight the eyes and entice browsing. Even tables that are crowded with products are visually appealing and easy to parse through.

Positioning

Charleston's revenue model is driven by tourism spending and vendor fees (rather than grants or public funding), Night Market income, and strong Convention and Visitor Bureau promotion emphasizing heritage and artisanship. Charleston City Market still offers some souvenirs and novelty items, but they are quality, durable goods that can be used, worn, or appreciated for years to come, such as belts or leather loafers.

2. Charleston City Market

Key Opportunities for French Market

Considering stakeholder feedback on FMC's market, Charleston City Market offers an inspiring example of an eclectic, culturally relevant, and well-priced product mix. The preservation of local culture and legacy is essential to the success of the Charleston City Market. Therefore, criteria for products and services gives preferential consideration to, and reduces barriers to entry for, makers of locally handmade goods. For instance, the market provides special provisions for Gullah Geechee vendors (the strong and unique African American culture that developed among enslaved people and their descendants along the coast of South Carolina and other states). This ensures a market that reflects the authentic culture of its place. Charleston's product criteria are inspirational for French Market, which may pursue the following opportunities for growth in this area.



Certification of authentic Gullah Geechee products

- Introduce artisan-first zones, markers, or prominent maker corridors.
- Implement stronger quality standards that align with French Market mission, customer desires, and authentic regional identity.
- Develop a cohesive brand narrative centered on diversity of culture and makers.
- Launch a local-only night market or rotating artisan pop-ups.
- Expand cultural demonstrations (beading, masking, carving, instrument-making, Creole cooking).
- Improve vendor placement, wayfinding, and circulation across the market.

CHARLESTON CITY MARKET PRODUCT/SERVICE CRITERIA

QUALITY STANDARDS	ORIGINALITY	LOCAL & HANDMADE PRIORITY	CULTURAL INTEGRITY
• Well-crafted and durable goods • Professional presentation is required (clean booth design, signage, etc.)	• Limit excessive duplication of products types • Waitlist for some duplicate vendors, denial for others who do not meet other standards	• Preference to local makers • Handmade goods highly favored • Self-production requirements (no reselling without approval)	• Gullah Geechee culture and related items are protected and promoted in selection and beyond

3. Mercado de Artesanías La Ciudadela

Comparative Summary

La Ciudadela functions as one of Mexico City's most culturally significant artisan marketplaces, serving as a national showcase for handmade crafts from across the country. Located near Alameda Central and major cultural institutions, it operates less as a conventional retail market and more as a **living repository of Mexican folk art traditions**. The market's dense, colorful aisles, generational vendors, and frequent craft demonstrations create an immersive, museum-like environment rooted in place, land, and lineage.

Market Snapshot

Products

La Ciudadela's product mix focuses deeply on authentic and traditional artisan methods. 350 stalls primarily feature handmade textiles, ceramics, folk art, leather goods, jewelry, and culturally significant figures and objects.⁹ La Ciudadela is a feast for the eyes with incredible product variety and the bold, bright hues of Mexico's ancient ancestry. At La Ciudadela, **the products are the experience**. The objects on display are not generic souvenirs; they are culturally embedded works tied to regional histories, ancestral techniques, and living craft traditions passed down through generations across Mexico.⁷

People & Programming

La Ciudadela's visitor experience is highly sensory and immersive. **Artisan demonstrations, dense merchandising, and regionally clustered crafts create a "treasure-hunt" atmosphere** that appeals strongly to visitors and families. Each item in the market evokes a feeling and a specific memory of the visit that feels truly unique. The bright colors, use of animal iconography, and variety of toys, wearables, homegoods, and trinkets appeal to adults and children alike. Programming peaks around cultural holidays such as Día de los Muertos, Christmas, and Independence Day⁸, aligning craft demand with national traditions. La Ciudadela offers customers cultural immersion rather than spectacle or food-driven experiences.

3. Mercado de Artesanías La Ciudadela



Image: @soyelcharromexican on Instagram

Policy

La Ciudadela is managed by the City of Mexico, with daily operations heavily shaped by artisan cooperatives. This **cooperative influence preserves cultural norms and continuity**. Governance is relational and tradition-based.

Vendors are often individual artisans or family members, and strong social norms discourage imported or mass-produced goods. The intergenerational nature of passing down Mexican crafting skills sustains stall tenure, reinforces quality, and showcases authenticity.

Place

La Ciudadela was established just before the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico as a way to position the region as a purveyor of fine, artisanal crafts.⁹ La Ciudadela's compact, maze-like layout reinforces immersion but lacks wayfinding and accessibility. In the case of this market, crowded and full stalls enhance the experience and give visitors a sense of discovery. There is much to see, and customers can spend all day here, meaning they also need places to eat, drink, and rest. The middle courtyard, with live music and restaurants, is ideal for keeping visitors in the market and encouraging them to keep shopping as they navigate their way back out.

3. Mercado de Artesanías La Ciudadela

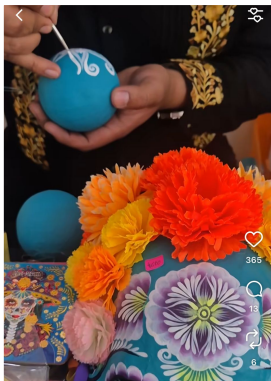
Key Opportunities for French Market

While there are several markets that bring local culture to life, Mercado de Artesanías La Ciudadela in Mexico City boldly exemplifies an immersive Mexican experience. The market is set up similarly to a town square. As customers weave their way through the market to central courtyard, the scent of local food and the sounds of mariachi guide them between stalls of Mexican artisans engaging in on-site crafting demonstrations. La Ciudadela is a place where vendors, products, programming, and place combine to create a bright market that feels alive with culture and heritage.



The diversity of goods, live crafting, bright colors, and varied yet orderly displays provide a spirit of adventure and treasure-seeking. The ambiance is primarily set through the market's products, anchored by its artisans, and enhanced by music and food offerings, as well as seasonal programs throughout the year. French Market can take the following takeaways from La Ciudadela.

- Deepen the presence of vendors to include more culturally significant artisans and makers.
- Establish clearer quality and authenticity standards for products.
- Expand craft demonstrations and cultural storytelling opportunities.
- Create artisan advisory structures to guide vendor curation.
- Develop seasonal cultural markets that highlight heritage, not just events.



The combination of people, positioning, products, programming, place, and policy create an immersive experience of Mexican culture and heritage that entices customers to explore deeper.

Images: Mercado de Artesanías La Ciudadela Instagram



Public Market Phase II Strategic Growth Plan



*A strategic path forward to
strengthen identity, elevate
quality, and expand impact*



VISION

THEMES FROM VISIONING

Based on stakeholder feedback, research, and review of previous planning, the ideal vision is a French Market that is...

AUTHENTIC <i>Reflects the true and complex stories of the region</i>	CULTURALLY RELEVANT <i>Provides cultural experiences that feel representative of the city</i>	ACCESSIBLE <i>Easy to get to and around for all user groups</i>
DELIGHTFUL <i>Provides pleasantly surprising, unique, and exciting opportunities</i>	WELCOMING <i>Makes it easy to create your own experience and find your way based on special interests</i>	LOCAL <i>Showcases products, programs, and people from the city/region</i>
FAMILY FRIENDLY <i>Creates a space for people of all ages to have a sense of belonging and safety</i>	ECLECTIC <i>Offers a well-curated set of products and programming that feels collected and cohesive</i>	HISTORIC <i>Connects users to the past and honors those who have paved the way and shaped the market</i>

STRATEGIES

The following strategies and initiatives are directly informed from the comprehensive market assessment, stakeholder input, and comparative study. This plan will guide FMC's growth over the next three years.

1 PEOPLE

Differentiate and understand the needs and desires of different groups (e.g. locals, visitors, vendors, local leaders), to add value to their market experience.

2 POSITIONING

Establish a unique identity for the French Market, and leverage storytelling opportunities to increase awareness, reputation, and knowledge of the market among user groups.

3 PRODUCTS

Curate an intentional, elevated product mix that enhances the market's identity, reflects a diversity of cultures, and provides unique goods.

4 PROGRAM

Evolve the market experience into a living museum that offers full sensory experiences by designing daily, consistent activation throughout the market that appeals to different user groups.

5 PLACE

Enhance the sense of place in the market to ensure all users have safe, pleasant experiences.

6 POLICIES

Leverage policies to enhance the identity of the market and create fair, enjoyable, and safe experiences for vendors of all tenures.

STRATEGIES

1 | PEOPLE

Differentiate and understand the needs and desires of different groups (e.g. locals, visitors, vendors, local leaders), to add value to their market experience.



INITIATIVES:

1. Clearly define what a great experience looks like for each type of user (locals, visitors, neighboring residents, vendors, etc.)
 - a. Leverage stakeholder feedback to take actions to evolve the user experience and pilot new programming, products and other elements ([see list of pilots in Appendix](#)).
 - b. Identify and promote the unique value (programming, products, dining) that the market provides to each user group (e.g. pop up markets and youth performances for locals, seasonal cultural celebrations for visitors, etc.).
2. Leverage staff and AI tools to measure the effectiveness of changes to the user experience.
 - a. Routinely measure (twice annually) long-term indicators of user experience, including: duration of customer visits, vendor applications and turnover and report to board and staff.
 - b. Measure short-term indicators of pilot success, like: programming attendance, vendor sales during pop-ups, and digital advertising engagement.
3. Staff the market to support growth strategies and evolving user experiences
 - a. Evolve Manager of Cultural Activation position to refocus on cultural curation and user experiences of the market in line with the original job description (See page 73 of [FMC's Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#)).
4. Leverage partnerships to: increase ease of access to the market, attract more and new audiences as customers, vendors, and performers, enhance the experience and physical environment of the market, fund market growth. (See [Partnership Guide](#) in Appendix)
 - a. Leverage partnerships to attract new customers to the market: parking, transit, arts organizations, schools and performing organizations, cultural groups.
 - b. Establish routine partner updates on the latest happenings in the French Market.
 - c. Seize opportunities for connection (associations, networking events, coalitions, etc.).

STRATEGIES

2 | POSITIONING

Establish a unique identity for the French Market, and leverage storytelling opportunities to increase awareness, reputation, and knowledge of the market among user groups.



INITIATIVES:

1. Create a refreshed, authentic brand for the French Market that appeals across users and bridges celebration of the past with a modern attraction.
 - a. Partner with a marketing contractor to evolve brand identity, including logos and key messaging points.
 - b. Reinvent social media strategy to curate an interactive and lively online experience that reflects the new brand and market vision and features stories of real people, and their cultures, that define the market experience.
2. Launch a new brand and related marketing plan that elevates perception of the French Market via modern and creative content and channels.
 - a. Leverage media and PR to promote a consistent stream of happenings and newsworthy announcements and stories.
 - b. Invest in multi-modal content creation (photos, text, video, audio, and graphics) to enhance storytelling and remind users of the significance and authenticity of the market.
 - c. Use messaging and content to demonstrate a new era for the French Market and to reset expectations and perceptions.
 - d. Partner with tourism organizations to source influencers to visit and promote the market to visitors and locals.
 - e. Leverage the new brand to clearly communicate the value of vendorship to local creatives, artist and entrepreneurs and provide information on the recruitment and application process.

STRATEGIES

3 | PRODUCTS

Curate an intentional , elevated product mix that enhances the market's identity, reflects a diversity of cultures, and provides unique and fun products.



INITIATIVES:

1. Audit vendor products, based on [product rubrics](#), every three months to understand assets and gaps in the product mix.
 - a. Monitor vendor products daily over the course of three months leveraging new technology e.g. AI image analysis.
 - b. Compare vendor product registration to the actual products sold to gain a realistic view of what is displayed day-in, day-out, as well as any seasonal patterns.
 - c. Determine gaps and areas of oversaturation to inform solicitations and adjustments or refinement of the moratorium list.
2. Evolve product application process and criteria to targeted solicitations that focus on specific categories and high quality, handcrafted art and goods.
 - a. Develop product criteria and timing to achieve ideal mix that prioritizes handmade, quality goods (see [Appendix](#) for rubrics). Gain Public Markets Committee approval and update policy manual.
 - b. Redesign the application and vendor review process to issue calls for specific vendor or product types.
 - c. Build partnerships with organizations and agencies connected to the types of vendors needed, e.g. arts nonprofits, maker spaces, crafts guilds, and art schools, small business support organizations, and more.
 - d. Host quarterly info sessions for interested vendors to learn about the application process.
 - e. Create a list of interested vendors to invite to apply, once there are vacancies in that category.

STRATEGIES

4 | PROGRAM

Evolve the market experience into a living museum that offers full sensory experiences by designing daily, routine, consistent activation throughout the market in a way that appeals to different user groups.



INITIATIVES:

1. Establish standards for programming decisions that move FMC toward the ideal vision.
 - a. Finalize a rubric of program criteria to guide decision-making and gain approval by public markets committee (see [Appendix](#) for full rubric).
 - b. Update programming policies with the addition of the programming selection rubric.
2. Create a rhythm of events and attractions that bring new and repeat customers into the market.
 - a. Create a master calendar of cultural holidays and milestones, seasonal produce and celebrations, and special interest themes, and build out a corresponding phased programming plan.
 - b. Map out known major events and relevant themes for the next 18 months (e.g. any major conventions, concerts, etc.) to share with vendors and inform programming.
 - c. Pilot smaller, routine programming and pop-ups to attract specific types of users, such as youth, seniors, and other special interest groups and measure results and learnings (see appendix for pilot recommendations).
 - d. Incorporate successful routine programming into the daily market flow (tours, second lines, make cooking demonstrations more visible).

STRATEGIES

4 | PROGRAM (CONT.)

INITIATIVES (CONTINUED):

3. Develop programs to encourage and reward loyalty, repeat visits, and increased spending.
 - a. Test a loyalty passport to incentivize customers to visit more vendors during their visit and return more frequently to unlock discounts and rewards.

STRATEGIES

5 | PLACE

Enhance the sense of place in the market to ensure all users have safe, carefree experiences.



INITIATIVES:

1. Invest in smart and beautiful infrastructure, signage, and other improvements.
 - a. Identify opportunities for short-term beautification on the plaza through furnishings, plants, public art, shade solutions, and other upgrades.
 - b. Identify a few areas where minor renovations to market spaces can contribute to the 'living museum' atmosphere, for instance, photo opportunities, plaques, signage, and visual differentiators of space.
 - c. Research and seek grant, government, or other funding for infrastructure improvements.
2. Prioritize cleanliness and neatness of all market spaces, including common areas and vendor setups.
 - a. Set a seasonal cleaning and maintenance checklist that ensures accountability.
 - b. Add display standards that require hidden storage to reduce visual clutter, for instance through the use of floor length tablecloths, reduction of allowable height of displays, and banning signs made from cardboard and markers.
 - c. Add sample images to the vendor policy manual that exemplify great vendor setups and that demonstrate issues.
 - d. Explore daily storage solutions for vendors to place back-up inventory while vending.

STRATEGIES

6 | POLICIES

Leverage policies to enhance the identity of the market and create fair, enjoyable, and safe experiences for vendors of all tenures.



INITIATIVES:

1. Enhance market policies, practices, and vendor standards for clarity, effectiveness, transparency, and ease of compliance.
 - a. Clarify specific areas of the Public Market Policy & Operations Policy as noted in the policy review appendix and add new policies implied by the growth plan, such as changes to vendor solicitation, display standards, and new vendor orientation.
 - b. Establish a 90-day trial period for new policies that affect existing vendors to establish expectations, socialize the changes, and provide guidance for how to come into compliance before fines, penalties, or consequences are enacted.
2. Redesign vendor representation and interaction with market administration, leadership, and board.
 - a. Formalize (as possible within organizational bylaws) a standing vendor liaison to the Public Markets Committee, who interfaces regularly with FMC Leadership.
 - b. Install a Public Markets Committee representative in regular vendor meetings to solicit real-time feedback and input from vendors.
 - c. Implement bi-annual vendor surveys and quarterly vendor town halls.
 - d. Develop a bi-monthly bulletin to keep vendors informed.
3. Leverage technology to establish efficient, effective, and consistent market management.
 - a. Adopt and train market leadership, staff, and vendors on new market management platform (Market Spread).



Action Plan



*The actions and tasks that bring
strategy to life*



ACTION PLAN

TURNING STRATEGY INTO ACTION

Naming and sequencing actions is key to the sustainability of any plan. Therefore, an [Action Plan](#) accompanies this growth plan. The action plan should be used to execute activities and should be updated both quarterly and annually to track progress. Below is a snapshot of the action plan and its elements.

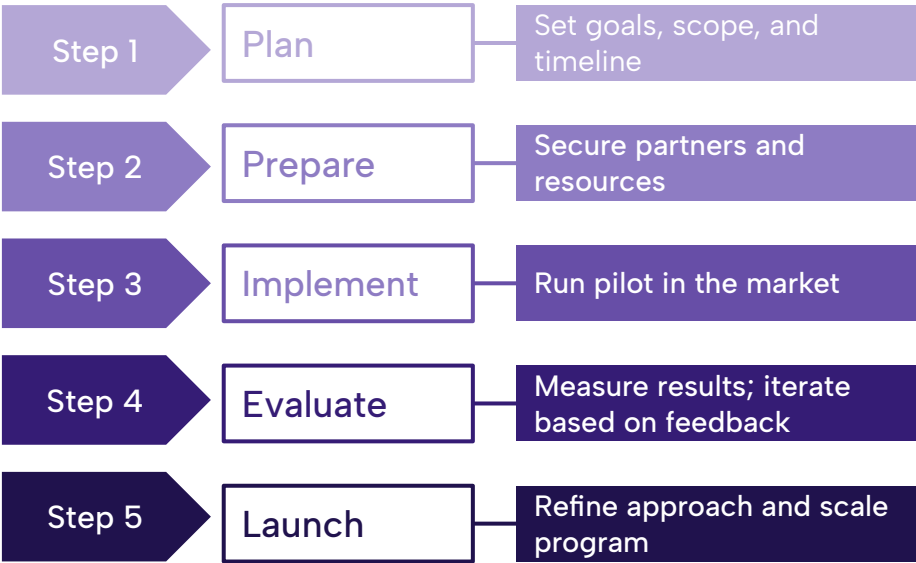
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Initiative	Action Items	Strategy Area	Start Date	End Date	Status
2	Clearly define what a great experience looks like for each type of user (locals, visitors, neighboring residents, vendors, etc.)	Leverage the stakeholder feedback to take actions to evolve the user experience and pilot new programming, products and other elements (see list of pilots).	1 People	Ongoing	Ongoing	On Track
3		Identify and promote the unique value (programming, products, dining) that the market provides to each user group (e.g. pop up markets and youth performances for locals, seasonal cultural celebrations for visitors, etc.).	1 People	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Not Started
4	Leverage staff and AI tools to measure the effectiveness of changes to the user experience.	Routinely measure (twice annually) long-term indicators of user experience, including: duration of customer visits, vendor applications and turnover and report to board and staff.	1 People	Q4 2026	Ongoing	Not Started
5		Measure short-term indicators of pilot success, like: programming attendance, vendor sales during pop-ups, and digital advertising engagement.	1 People	Q2 2026	Ongoing	Not Started
6	Staff the market to support growth strategies and evolving user experiences	Add a full-time Cultural Curator position to enhance the cultural activation and user experiences of the market.	1 People	Q3 2026	Q3 2026	Not Started
7	Leverage partnerships to: increase ease of access to the market, attract more and new audiences as customers, vendors, and performers, enhance the experience and physical environment of the market, fund market growth..	Leverage partnerships to attract new customers to the market: parking, transit, arts organizations, schools and performing organizations, cultural groups.	1 People	Q2 2026	Ongoing	On Track
8		Establish routine partner updates on the latest happenings in the French Market.	1 People	Q4 2026	Ongoing	Not Started
9		Seize opportunities for connection (associations, networking events, coalitions, etc.).	1 People	Q1 2027	Ongoing	On Track
10	Create a refreshed brand for the French Market that appeals across users.	Partner with a marketing contractor to evolve brand identity, including logos and key messaging points.	Positioning	Q3 2026	Q1 2027	Not Started
11	Launch a new brand and related marketing plan that elevates perception of the French Market via modern and creative content and channels.	Leverage media and PR to promote a consistent stream of happenings and newsworthy announcements and stories.	Positioning	Q2 2026	Ongoing	Not Started
12		Invest in multi-modal content creation (photos, text, video, audio, and graphics) to enhance storytelling and remind users of the significance and authenticity of the market.	Positioning	Q3 2026	Q3 2027	Not Started
13		Use messaging and content to demonstrate a new era for the French Market and to reset expectations and perceptions.	Positioning	Q3 2026	Ongoing	Not Started
14		Partner with tourism organizations to source influencers to visit and promote the market to visitors and locals.	Positioning	Q4 2026	Ongoing	Not Started
15	Audit vendor products every three months to understand assets and gaps in the product mix.	Monitor vendor products daily over the course of three months leveraging new technology e.g. AI image analysis.	Products	Q2 2026	Q4 2026	Not Started
16		Compare vendor product registration to the actual products sold to gain a realistic view of what is displayed day-in, day-out, as well as any seasonal patterns.	Products	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Not Started
17		Determine gaps and areas of oversaturation to inform solicitations and adjustments or refinement of the moratorium list.	Products	Q3 2026	Q3 2026	Not Started
18		Develop product criteria and timing to achieve ideal mix that prioritizes handmade, quality goods (see Appendix). Gain Public Markets Committee approval and update policy manual.	Products	Q2 2026	Q2 2026	On Track

PILOT INITIATIVES

TRYING OUT NEW PROGRAMMING AND PRODUCTS

As French Market evolves, leadership must seek to understand which opportunities might be successful before investing extensive financial, time, and staff resources. Testing ideas for new programming, products, and concepts through pilots (i.e. time-bound trial phases) will allow the French Market to gather feedback, identify potential pitfalls, and make data-driven decisions while minimizing financial risk. **Below are several high-potential pilot opportunities that emerged throughout the planning process.**

The Steps to Running a Successful Pilot



Objective	Description	Potential Partners	Success Indicators
Crafting & Cut Flower Night			
Increase visitor dwell time and create experiential programming appealing to locals and visitors (e.g. girls trips, bachelorette parties, families with teens and pre-teens)	A hands-on crafting event where participants build bouquets, flower crowns, or floral arrangements using locally sourced flowers. Could align with seasonal events such as the Garden Show or Art in Bloom or Mother's Day	Local flower farms; florists; garden organizations; event planners	Participation rates; Dwell time; Repeat attendance
Handmade Instrument Market & Music Programming			
Celebrate New Orleans musical heritage while attracting families and culturally engaged visitors	A themed event featuring instrument makers and music-related artisans alongside programming such as drum circles and demonstrations	Instrument makers; school music programs; cultural organizations	Attendance; Vendor and food sales
Cultural Heritage Market Days			
Highlight the range of New Orleans' cultural traditions and attract both local communities and visitors to experience an immersive slice of New Orleans culture	Small cultural experiences featuring food, crafts, performances, and storytelling that represent specific cultural groups such as the Isleños, Caribbean, or Latino communities	Cultural heritage organizations; community leaders; local chefs and artisans	Attendance; Vendor and food sales

PILOT INITIATIVES (CONTINUED)

Objective	Description	Potential Partners	Success Indicators
Food Truck Rallies			
Activate the market during evening hours and complement nearby neighborhood programming	Recurring food truck gatherings aligned with events in the surrounding area, encouraging visitors to extend their evening in the French Quarter	Food truck operators; New Orleans Jazz Museum (the Mint); Frenchmen Street businesses; Le Petit Theatre	Evening foot traffic; vendor sales; partnership engagement
Night Shed Activation: Performances & Film Nights			
Make productive use of underutilized infrastructure while increasing nighttime activity	Repurpose empty night sheds as flexible venues for small outsourced performances, theater productions, live music, outdoor film screenings, and family nights	Theater groups; arts nonprofits; film organizations	Event attendance; evening visitation; repeat programming
Second Lines Through the Market			
Highlight local culture while drawing visitors through the market	Routine second line parades that pass through the market, creating a lively and unmistakably New Orleans experience	Social Aid & Pleasure Clubs; brass bands; cultural organizations	Crowd participation; visitor traffic during events
Fresh Produce Pop-Ups			
Test demand for fresh, local food offerings while enhancing the market's food experience	Introduce small-scale, recurring pop-ups featuring fresh produce, prepared foods, and local vendors; designed to complement existing offerings	Crescent City Farmers Market; local farms and food producers	Attendance; vendor and stall sales
Youth Days - "Future Makers Market"			
Draw in young people (kids and teens), their parents, teachers, and neighbors to show off our community	Youth market (products for kids and families; items made by young local artists and makers; school band performances)	Local schools; youth-centered camps	Attendance; vendor and stall sales; participant feedback

PILOT INITIATIVES (CONTINUED)

Objective	Description	Potential Partners	Success Indicators
Market Tours			
Enhance storytelling and create a more immersive, guided experience that deepens engagement and encourages repeat visitation	Pilot small-group, recurring tours that highlight vendor stories, cultural history, and food experiences, with opportunities for direct interaction (e.g., tastings or demonstrations)	Local tour operators; cultural organizations; historians; food vendors; New Orleans & Company; hotel concierges	Tour attendance and repeat bookings; participant feedback; vendor participation and sales
Discounted Summer Parking Passes			
Reduce access barriers for local visitors and increase visitation during slower summer months	Pilot discounted parking during select summer periods, potentially paired with vendor validation or bundled offers, to test impact on visitation and spending	Parking operators; City of New Orleans; nearby garages/lots; local businesses; neighborhood associations	Parking utilization rates; increase in local visitation; vendor sales; repeat usage
Loyalty Program			
Increase repeat visitation and customer spending by incentivizing ongoing engagement with the market	Pilot a simple loyalty program (e.g., punch card or digital check-in) that rewards repeat visits or purchases across vendors	Market vendors; payment platforms or app providers; tourism partners; local businesses	Repeat visitation rates; participation levels; number of completed rewards; increase in cross-vendor purchasing
Visiting Exhibits			
Enhance an authentic experience and support driving visitors to regional attractions	Small exhibits or displays (staffed or unstaffed by partner institutions) of artifacts, art, or documents on loan from museums and cultural centers that give visitors reason to linger, enhance the cultural and historical significance of the market, and promote other destination attractions	Nearby museums, swamp and eco-tour operators, nature preserves, cultural centers	Visitor referrals, on-site bookings (where applicable), partner engagement



Appendices



*Tools and supporting
information to inform action*



PARTNERSHIP GUIDE

The French Market is an iconic establishment in its history, location, and international attraction. In order to achieve the space's full potential collaboration is essential and beneficial. Partnerships play an important role in the implementation of this plan. By building symbiotic relationships with several entities, French Market will thrive. Below are a **list of potential partners, the give/get of the relationship, and how to interact**. Much of this information was shared directly by these partners in several stakeholder meetings with local leaders.

Partner Type	Plan Area	FMC Provides	Partner Provides	Communications Recommendations
Regional Chambers, Tourism Associations, and Neighborhood Management Ex: New Orleans Chamber, FQMD, NOCO	People	Updates of new and recurring programming and themes at the market	Amplification and connection to small business community, residents, and visitors	Curate and send all partners a bi-weekly email newsletter of updates in and around the French Market
Concierge	People	Updates of new and recurring programming and themes at the market	Direct comm. to visitors to drive their interest in and visits to the market	Curate and send all partners a bi-weekly email newsletter of updates in and around the French Market
Councilmembers	People + Products	Opportunities for residents to vend at the French Market	Ability to reach new vendors in various districts	Connect with councilmembers to present FMC opportunities at their district meetings
Small Business Support Orgs Ex: Propeller, Stay Local	People + Products	Pipeline for small business incubation (vendor spaces and food stalls)	Creative and food entrepreneurs with products that meet FMC criteria	Set one-on-one meetings to begin to map out collaboration opportunities
Food & Beverage Incubator Ex: JEDCO	Products	Vendor space for featured 'Louisiana Marketplace'	Connections to shelf stable food and beverage companies	Hold individual check-ins and food and attend beverage industry events
Performing Arts Organizations Ex: Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Theater Companies, Night Market Orgs.	Program	Venue + ticket revenue	Programming + audience	Set one-on-one meetings to begin to map out collaboration opportunities

PARTNERSHIP GUIDE (CONTINUED)

Partner Type	Plan Area	FMC Provides	Partner Provides	Communications Recommendations
Media + Press	Positioning	Launch of new Phase II Strategic Growth Plan	Amplification and promotion, reputation building	Build a press release template and curate a list of media contacts for e-blast when plan launches
Office of Nighttime Economy	Programming + Place	Venue space and opportunities for night vendors	Drop-in night programming (night market) + connections to night vendors looking for day space	Connect directly with Nighttime Economy lead to discuss further opportunities
Office of Cultural Economy	Place	Space and opportunities for creatives and artists	Funding for place-based improvements, like exhibits, murals, to bring the 'living museum' to life	Connect directly with Cultural Economy lead to discuss further opportunities to fund and commission beautification projects

EVALUATION RUBRICS

Context: Product & Programming Rubrics

The following rubrics are designed to support **consistent, transparent decision-making** around vendors and programming at the French Market. They translate the priorities of this Strategic Growth Plan into practical tools that can be used in day-to-day operations.

Both rubrics are intended to guide leadership and board conversations, not replace them. They help ensure that decisions align with the Market's goals of becoming a more **culturally authentic, high-quality, and consistently activated public space**.

How to Use the Rubrics

1. **Score each category (1–3 scale):** Use the descriptions to assess alignment across key criteria.
2. **Review total score and discuss:** Use scoring guidance to inform decisions, while allowing space for committee discussion and context.
3. **Prioritize alignment over perfection:** Not every product or program will score highly in every category. Focus on overall fit with the Market's direction.



PRODUCT SCORING GUIDANCE

Total Possible: 21

- **18–21** → Strong priority; highly aligned with market vision
- **14–17** → Accept; solid fit with minor gaps
- **10–13** → Conditional; consider with adjustments
- **<10** → Do not accept

Note: Products scoring a **1 in Handmade Integrity or Quality** should not be accepted without revision.



PROGRAM SCORING GUIDANCE

Total Possible: 15

- **13–15** → Strong priority; aligns with vision and should move forward
- **10–12** → Promising; refine design before launching
- **7–9** → Lower priority; consider only if capacity allows
- **<7** → Do not pursue

Note: Programs scoring a **1 in Strategic Fit or Vendor Impact** should not move forward without revision.

PRODUCT RUBRIC

Goal: To ensure the market prioritizes handmade, high-quality goods while maintaining a balanced, inclusive, and compelling vendor mix.

Category	1 – Weak Fit	2 – Moderate Fit	3 – Strong Fit
Handmade Integrity	Primarily mass-produced, wholesale, or minimally altered goods	Some handmade or locally assembled elements; partial originality	Fully handmade or significantly hand-produced; clearly distinct from mass-produced goods
Quality & Craftsmanship	Low-quality materials or construction; limited durability or care	Adequate quality; some attention to materials and finish	High-quality materials and craftsmanship; durable, well-made, and thoughtfully produced
Cultural Variety & Representation	Generic product with no clear connection to place or culture	Some local influence or theme, but limited depth or clarity	Deeply rooted in and representative of a variety of New Orleans culture, traditions, or lived experience; clear story or origin
Originality & Design	Common or easily found in typical retail/tourist shops	Some distinctive elements, but not highly unique	Unique, artist-driven, or highly distinctive; not easily found elsewhere
Local / Independent Business	Not locally made; primarily resale or non-independent production	Some local connection or small-scale production	Locally made and/or independently produced; supports regional makers
Product Mix Contribution	Does not add variety; duplicates existing offerings or oversaturated category	Fits within current mix but does not significantly expand it	Enhances curation and diversity; fills a gap or strengthens overall mix
Price-to-Value Alignment	Price does not reflect quality; overly cheap or commoditized	Generally aligned, with some inconsistencies	Price reflects craftsmanship, quality, and target audience

PROGRAMMING RUBRIC

Goal: To ensure programs at the market create a dynamic, sensory, and repeat-worthy market experience.

Category	1 – Weak Fit	2 – Moderate Fit	3 – Strong Fit
Strategic Fit	One-time or sporadic event; limited connection to ongoing programming; does not support a “living museum” feel	Aligns with some elements of the vision; could be repeated but not designed as part of a consistent rhythm	Designed as repeatable programming; builds a regular cadence; clearly contributes to an immersive, everyday market experience
Cultural Variety & Representation	Generic or not tied to place; limited cultural relevance	Includes local elements or themes, but storytelling is surface-level or not central	Represents many facets of New Orleans culture; enables active storytelling, demonstration, or cultural expression and/or learning
Audience Value	Primarily appeals to tourists or one-time visitors; little reason to return	Appeals to a mix of audiences (locals, visitors); may generate interest but limited repeat draw	Creates a clear reason for locals and visitors to attend; encourages longer stays or repeat visits; attracts a new audience (i.e. local families)
Vendor Impact	Disrupts vendor operations, visibility, or sales; creates friction (e.g., noise, setup conflicts, sight lines)	Limited disruption but minimal benefit to vendors	Supports vendors by increasing traffic, visibility, or sales; integrates smoothly into daily operations
Operational Feasibility	Requires significant new resources, staffing, or complex setup; difficult to repeat	Achievable with coordination or partnerships; some complexity	Easy to execute with current or near-term resources; can be delivered and repeated consistently
Return on Investment	Needs high investment of dollars and will likely not generate enough revenue to cover expenses	Expected investment and potential revenue are about even	Requires little to no investment OR requires investment that will most likely lead to a significant amount of additional revenue (surplus)

POLICY REVIEW

SECTION	POLICY REVIEW
ADDITION	Recommend having a quick reference chart by vendor type that summarizes the key policies and how they differ.
ADDITION	Recommend revisiting and clarifying all instances of Crescent City Farmers Market and mentions of fresh produce.
ADDITION	Recommend sharing overall philosophy, growth vision, and identity of the market at the beginning, then creating specific product selection criteria based on this identity.
ADDITION	Recommend creating a set of policies specific to performers to ensure consistent standards of behavior and stall set-up.
ADDITION	Recommend introducing and describing the purpose of the vendor committee and providing contact information.

SECTION	CURRENT POLICY LANGUAGE	POLICY REVIEW
I. A	"MISSION AS A PUBLIC MARKET... and expand fresh food vending in the French Market with an emphasis on the sale of regional farm produce and locally made foodstuffs."	The mission is core to the identity of the market, and this statement causes confusion without context of the market's evolution away from fresh food and produce. If possible, the mission statement should be revised to deemphasize fresh food. If not possible, add context about the market's shift in focus and identity to other products (and away from produce).
I. B	"Farmers Market Vendor: A Farmers Market Vendor is an individual or company working as either a farmer or food producer who sells fresh food or agricultural products, including fresh fruit and vegetables, meat products, dairy products, grains, baked goods, and other freshly prepared foodstuffs."	Recommend shifting this definition or adding another type of person to cover packaged food with longer shelf life.

POLICY REVIEW

SECTION	CURRENT POLICY LANGUAGE	POLICY REVIEW
I. B	"Cross Market Vending Allowed"	Clarification needed on why this policy is important, meaning, what issue is it trying to prevent?
I. C	"Farmers Market Pavilion:... In the event day stall spaces are available in the Farmers Market then those Flea Market Vendors who have been pre-approved may elect to set up in the Farmers Market Pavilion."	Clarification needed on how to get "pre-approved" to vend in the Farmers Market Pavillion and what the benefit is of doing so. Additionally, how does this work with the stall lottery system?
I. D + I. E	"MARKET STALL RENTAL" + "STALL SELECTION PROCESS"	Throughout this process, vendors have shared that they are able to select stalls for longer periods than one day. Can this be clarified? These policies will also need clarification once new market management software is implemented.
I. M	"APPLICATION TO THE MARKET"	Recommendation to shift the application process to set periods throughout the year, perhaps quarterly, and to solicit specific product/service categories. Recommendation to share the soon-to-be-developed criteria for products and goods here of elsewhere in the manual.
II. A	"MERCHANDISE, GENERALLY... Mass produced items and items with heavy saturation in tourist-focused retail stores around the city are discouraged."	Recommend pausing the acceptance of any mass produced items until criteria for products is set and subsequently shared in this document.
II. E	"PROHIBITED MERCHANDISE" Upon application to the Market, all Flea Market Vendors are provided a list of Prohibited Merchandise and Merchandise Restricted by Law."	Recommend linking to the current list of prohibited items in this document to increase transparency and decrease potential for "not knowing."

POLICY REVIEW

SECTION	CURRENT POLICY LANGUAGE	POLICY REVIEW
III. B	“VENDORS MERCHANDISE OFFERINGS The FMC encourages each Farmers Market Vendor to have a general theme associated with the goods offered for sale which must be approved by the Market Manager prior to starting at the market.”	Recommend clarifying what it means to have a theme (expectations of display, vendor knowledge, dress, and product curation), perhaps with examples or images.
III. E	“WEEKLY SPECIALTY MARKET VENDORS”	Recommend clarifying that this is currently inactive.
IV. A	“MERCHANDISE AND ADMISSION”	Recommend clarifying the process for application and who manages and decides. Also recommend sharing common criteria for arts market vendors and how that differs from daily market vendors.
V. A	“DEFINITION”	Recommend boosting tenure for vendors who vend more frequently, in addition to basing it on their first day of vending, e.g. a vendor score that factors in their first date and the total number of days vending since then.
V. B	“MAINTAINING TENURE...a Farmers Market Vendor must scan in and make a bonafide attempt to vend and have the stall attended the entire Market Day as defined per that day of the week in the Market a minimum of four days within the previous calendar year to maintain tenure.”	Recommend to classify this type of vendor based on fresh food products to provide market management more options on who can occupy the space. If/when packaged food vendors take these spots, the policy may need to include their goods as a separate category, or they may be able to fall under the Flea Market Vendor sign-in policy.
V. B	“Cross-Market Vendors are licensed as Farmers Market Vendors and only receive credit towards Farmers Market Tenure.”	Recommend clarifying this statement. It is confusing to someone not intimately familiar with the operations of the Farmers Market and may not serve the market as it shifts away from fresh produce products in the short term.

POLICY REVIEW

SECTION	CURRENT POLICY LANGUAGE	POLICY REVIEW
V. C	"LOSS OF TENURE... In order to maintain Tenure, Vendors are also required to achieve a ratio of 110% sales to rents paid for a period of one calendar year commencing on January 1 and expiring on December 31 of that same year."	Recommend clarifying this or showing a calculated example. As written, it is confusing.
VI. A. 1	"Stall Assignment Flea Market Vendors can have a Market Stall pre-assigned via a Lottery Selection process. The order of assignment will be determined by Flea Market Tenure. The length of assignment for each Lottery is determined by the Executive Director and will be posted at the time of Lottery Stall Selection Process. To participate in the Lottery Stall Section Process, the Vendor or a Vendor's chosen representative from the Vendor Committee must be in attendance at the drawing at the time their name is called for an assignment and present a valid Vendor ID card."	As written this is unclear to someone who has not been through it before, and may be a barrier to application. This should be clarified with a visual or video tool to explain how stall selection works from the vendor experience of it. Where does one go for stall selection? At what time? How does it actually work?
VI. A. 2	"Number of Stalls Allowed To Be Selected... a Flea Market Vendor may preselect up to two adjacent stalls in Rows A, B, C, or D."	A map or visual aide should be added to demonstrate this point more clearly. Additionally, define "preselection and how it is accessed.
VI. A. 3	"Rental Payments For Assigned Stalls"	There is a need for clarification. Previously, the policy states that stall selection happens daily, but here it states payment happens weekly. This is confusing. Additionally, linking to the General Leave section where referenced would be helpful.

POLICY REVIEW

SECTION	CURRENT POLICY LANGUAGE	POLICY REVIEW
VI. B. 1	"Vendors with Pre-Assigned Stalls... Monday through Friday Vendors with an assigned Market Stall may begin scanning in at 7:00 a.m. and must be finished scanning in by 8:30 a.m. The Vendor must be present in person and a valid Market Identification Card must be physically scanned."	This section is confusing on who is permitted to actually scan the card and when. Recommend clarifying whose card actually needs to be scanned: vendor or employee or both.
VI. B. 1	"Vendors with Pre-Assigned Stalls... In such instances where a vendor uses this remedy to announce a late arrival a Vendor must arrive by 9:00 am and must still physically scan a card on arrival. The ability to email the office to notify of intent to check-in should be considered an infrequent privilege. Vendors who habitually abuse this privilege, or who use this condition as an attempt to circumvent check-in procedures will lose the ability to email notice of intent to check-in."	Recommend putting a number around how many times a late arrival is permitted per year before it will be investigated (i.e. 7 reported late arrivals).
VI. B. 1	"Vendors with Pre-Assigned Stalls... If during the course of a calendar month a Vendor personally scans in and shows good faith towards satisfying the conditions required to maintain tenure, a Vendor may allow an Employee to scan in on other days of that month."	This is very confusing and not clear on the definition of what "good faith" means. It needs clearer definition.
VI. B. 1	"Vendors with Pre-Assigned Stalls... A Vendor who fails to scan in by the time designated will lose the use of their selected stall for that particular day."	Recommend adding "or contacts the office for late arrival..."
VII. A	"STALL SELECTION PROCESS... Until such time as demand dictates the need for a Lottery System, all Farmers Market Vendors will be pre-assigned spaces daily, according to Farmers Market Tenure, by the French Market's Farmers Market Manager."	Recommend explaining why the standards and policies are different for this area vs. the Flea Market.

POLICY REVIEW

SECTION	CURRENT POLICY LANGUAGE	POLICY REVIEW
VII. B	"WEEKLY CRESCENT CITY FARMERS MARKET... No French Market Farmers Market Vendors may vend on the day of the weekly Crescent City Farmers Market unless approved and coordinated by Crescent City Farmers Market."	Recommend explaining that there is not currently a CCFM market that occurs weekly.
VIII. C	"EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION CARD"	Recommend orienting vendors around the practice of using loaders and how they fit into this policy, also, clarifying if a person does not have a government ID are they ineligible to be an employee.
IX. A	"STALL SIZE... Stalls in the Parking Lot are 5 feet x 10 feet."	Recommend adding a map to show where the "parking lot" is and if the naming is still accurate.
IX. D	"DISPLAY BREAKDOWN... Vendors may not begin removing displays or merchandise earlier than 4:00 p.m., unless prior arrangements have been made with management."	Recommendation: pilot staying open later on certain days and seasons and adjust this policy for flexibility and to incentivize vendors to stay open later during those pilot times.
IX. J	"SIGNAGE"	Recommendation: Set stall stall set up requirements, including uniform tablecloths and signage that aligns with aesthetic standards, e.g. handmade signs must be artistic in nature and reflect the personality of the market, no handmade signs on torn or ripped cardboard. Use photos to show examples of acceptable and unacceptable signs and setups. Consider providing vendors the first tablecloth for free; all replacement tablecloths will incur a fee.
X. B	"GENERAL LEAVE... maintaining reservation of stalls selected in the Monthly Lottery Stall Selection process."	Seems to establish a different cadence of stall selection from sections B (daily) and VI. A. 3 (weekly payment). A central timeline feature up front could help clarify.

POLICY REVIEW

SECTION	CURRENT POLICY LANGUAGE	POLICY REVIEW
XI. B. 9	"OFFENSES SUBJECT TO OTHER DISCIPLINE... Excessive Written Reprimands: Vendors receiving three or more written reprimands for offenses outside of the items in this section are subject to further discipline."	Recommend expanding this section to state a code of conduct for vendors and expanding the formal complaint procedure whereby filed complaints (by any user of the market, including staff and leadership) are investigated, and three valid complaints within a two-year period leads to permanent dismissal from the market. It is essential to clarify that market leadership and staff may also make complaints about vendors who do not uphold the code of conduct in their presence.
XIV. C	"REVISION TO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES... The FMC reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policy or portion of this manual as it deems appropriate on an annual basis."	As FMC is piloting new programming, hours, vendor and product types, recommend changing this to more frequently, perhaps quarterly. Also recommend adding a 90-day trial period for new policies as possible, where infractions of the policy are casual warnings before penalties are officially enforced.
XIV. F	"COMMUNICATION"	Recommend adding contact details, normal response times, and contact info directly in this section.

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7. Novelo, Victoria: *Artesanos Artesanías y Arte Popular de México: Una Historia Ilustrada*; Aguilar Editores, S.L., Mexico: 1996.
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