

Shoreline Farmers Market Mid-Season Update: July 1, 2019



Overview

The Shoreline Farmers Market is entering its 8th season as the only farmers market in Shoreline. The market continues to support local agriculture and small businesses, expand community programs, and provide an inclusive space for the community to gather. The first 4 markets have seen an increase in customers, vendor quality, sales, and customer satisfaction. With a year-round Market Manager working full-time in Shoreline City Hall and additional funding from the Port of Seattle Economic Partnership Program for marketing expansion the market is gaining recognition and momentum within the community.

Funding

The City of Shoreline continues to be the main financial support of the market, supporting us at the \$37,000 level with additional in-kind donations including office space and staff support. The City of Shoreline contributed staff hours to secure the Port of Seattle Economic Partnership Program Funding for the Shoreline Farmers Market budget. This Program Funding includes \$23,000 to be spent on marketing, staffing, and program expansion for the farmers market. The City of Shoreline will distribute these funds in receipt of the mid-season and annual reports (July, November). In addition to these funds, the market has secured \$16,800 in community sponsorship, an increase of nearly \$4,000 from 2018.

Staff

In 2019 Shoreline Farmers Market made the decision to hire additional on-site staff to manage the PoP Kids Program and assist the Operations Manager. These hires added a mere \$5000 to the budget but is proving to be an invaluable decision. These new staff members were volunteers in past seasons and will have proven dedication to the market and will add to the sense of community the long-term staff contribute to the market.

Marketing

While the Shoreline Farmers Market has committed customers who support the market all season long it is a continual goal to bring in new customers. With the upcoming Shoreline Place CRA the market is aiming to secure customers that will sustain us through the inevitable growing pains of the CRA redevelopment in the current market location.

In past years the market has focused its marketing on poster distribution, social media, banner placements, and word of mouth. Armed with additional funding from the Port of Seattle Funding the market contracted a graphic design agency to create an impactful image that will be displayed on the highly visible billboard at 152th and Aurora for the month of July. The billboard is not only a marketing prop but displays a commitment to the community. Other marketing strategies include increase in social media paid marketing, online ad placements, and direct mailings to over 5,000 Shoreline residents.

Programs

PoP Program: Our most popular program at the Shoreline Farmers Market is the PoP Kids Program. Last season we served 826 unique participants and have a goal to increase participation to 1000. In 2018 the program began the transition from giveaways to educational activities. The PoP Manager and Market Manager have created a full season of educational activities for the PoP Program including an herb taste

testing, pollinator bee learning, and vegetable seed identification. Each participant will receive \$2 in PoP Bucks that can be spent on fresh fruits and vegetables at the market. The Everett Clinic has generously supported the PoP Program for 4 years and is essential to the success of this program. To date the market has distributed \$1404 PoP Bucks that is spent at our farmers booths.

Chef Tent: At the end of 2018 the future of the Chef Tent was unclear. With the assistance of the Port of Seattle funding the Chef Tent will be able to continue on through the 2019 season. Resident Chef Naomi volunteers her talents turning local farmers market ingredients into delicious dishes that can be sampled. She engages with customers to discuss cooking techniques, provide season product information, and budget shopping tips at the market. On an average market day Naomi will distribute 135 samples to market customers. Her recipes are uploaded on the Shoreline Farmers Market website weekly and shared widely with our market customers.

Musical Performances: The live music offered at the Shoreline Farmers market is one of the key elements that sets us apart from neighboring markets. In past years providing funding for 36 musicians has proved difficult with the market offering a stipend as small as \$15 for their time. The Port of Seattle Funding allows us to pay a generous stipend of \$50 for each musical performance. The reaction thus far has been overwhelming gratitude and appreciation. To quote fan favorite musician Chris Kenji, "this makes all the difference".

Sales and Revenue

At the mid-season point last year vendors had reported sales of \$76,000. This season they have reported an additional \$17,979 in sales. Increased sales for vendors correlates to increased revenue for the market. To date we have collected \$8,945 in revenue from vendor fees.

Mid-Season Reflection

With 14 markets remaining marketing and outreach will continue to be the focal point of staff energy. The Market Manager is continually nourishing vendor and customer relationships adjusting the market with the ever changing needs of these groups.