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Farmer's Market Research & Recommendations

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Farmer's Market Research & Recommendations

ENVI 460 | SP 2021

Conservation and Sustainability of Natural Resources

Dr. Jim Speer

College or Department

This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the Indiana State University Sustainable City Program for the City of Sullivan. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from Indiana State University. All information provided is not subject to publication.

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Mayor Clint Lamb, *City of Sullivan*

ABOUT SC

The Sustainable Cities (SC) Program is an experiential learning partnership focusing on sustainability and cities in Indiana. Disciplines across the institution are tasked with addressing sustainability issues in a specific community by integrating these into experiential projects for ISU students. These problems range from strategic planning recommendations to community needs assessment, and understanding the impacts of waste strategies to mapping trail systems, and many other issues.

This is a year-long partnership, in which students and faculty in courses collaborate with one specific community partner on these projects. Communities throughout Indiana have leaders who want to make real change. These leaders are passionate about moving their cities forward into the future, but are often limited by lack of resources, staff, and budget.

The SC Program utilizes the innovation and energy of students and faculty to provide ideas that will address these issues. This relationship reinforces and strengthens our Indiana communities.

Each ISU course and community partner will produce tangible and relevant outcomes for the community partner while providing ISU students with real world project completion. This report serves as this outcome.

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ABOUT SULLIVAN

Sullivan, IN is the county seat of Sullivan County and serves as a hub for the towns of Carlisle, Dugger, Farmersburg, Hymera, Merom, and Shelburn. Sullivan, IN was founded in 1853 and became the county seat. The total city limits is 1.88 square miles, but there are more residents living outside of this area that contribute to the community of Sullivan. Today, Sullivan has the largest estimated population as an incorporated town in Sullivan County.

Sullivan faces many similar social, environmental, and economic challenges to other rural Hoosier towns and others that are unique to the city itself. There are approximately 8,500 people available for the labor force in Sullivan County. Since 2009, the unemployment rate has steadily decreased in the county. There's approximately 2,500 people that live in Sullivan but work in other counties. Some of the major employers in Sullivan are Raybestos Powertrain LLC, Hoosier Energy Emergency, Peabody Energy Corp., Sullivan County Community Hospital, and Raybestos Products Co.

A common thought among Sullivan community members is that students that go to college graduate and don't return to Sullivan. The highest degree attainment of folks 25 and older in Sullivan County is a high school diploma. Trade programs and certifications are a community concern from folks.

Sullivan has a vast history and many points of interest in the community. The Sullivan County Public Library is one of 1,679 libraries designated as a Carnegie library. The Sullivan Civic Center was recently renovated to provide a central location for community member sin Sullivan. The Heart of Sullivan is a civic organization that hosts many large events throughout the year. One of the largest events hosted in Sullivan is the Sullivan Annual Rotary Corn Festival.

This community is full of potential and is being led through a strategic plan intended to bolster its standing for Hoosiers. The ISU Sustainable Cities program intends to help reach that potential.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Sullivan's Quality of Life plan indicates a need for a local farmer's market and other community gathering spaces. ENVI460 students were tasked with putting forth recommendations for a community farmer's market space that would meet the needs of Sullivan, IN. Students recommended operational procedures for the 3 N. Section Street in Sullivan as the farmer's market. They also provided construction and multipurpose use recommendations to enact.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Sullivan has a master Quality of Life plan intended to improve areas of need in Sullivan. A farmer's market and community gathering space is needed to fulfill the needs of the population within this area. Identified goals for a successful farmer's market according to Sullivan's Quality of Life plan is promoting local sustainability, local economy, greater access to fresh food, preserving American rural farmland, fun social experience, and an essential post-COVID necessity. ENVI460 students are tasked with providing recommendations for a farmer's market in the downtown area of Sullivan.

Many communities are searching for ways to bring locally grown and organically produced food to areas where there is a lack of access to healthy alternatives. Sullivan intends to attract people in Sullivan and surrounding areas to an area and leverage the farmers market to attract these people. One challenge for this vision is how the markets may be integrated into the community and used for collaborative purposes.

Farmer's markets are becoming a large avenue for farmers to sell their good directly to consumers (Thilmany, 2005). The amount of Indiana farmer's markets had grown by 222% over a period of ten years in 2004 (Hoffman & Dennis, n.d.). Other vendors such as boutiques and bakeries can also reap benefits from farmer's markets. Farmer's markets stimulate the local economy while

providing a sense of community among its guests (Brown & Miller, 2008). These benefits are recognized by the City of Sullivan and bolster the need to implement one.

The City of Sullivan recognizes the boost to the local economy that a farmer's market can bring. Money spent at a local farmer's market impacts the city's economy, even in rural communities local markets return more than three times as much of their sales to the local economy than chain competitors (Farmers Market Coalition). However, there is no plan for an actualized and operational farmer's market in Sullivan. The students in ENVI460 were tasked with researching and compiling recommendations for the City of Sullivan.

OPERATIONS

Farmer's markets help disperse a more sustainable way of buying foods throughout the community. In creating an easy way for community members to buy local and fresh food the city would establish a more sustainable food system. The establishment and operations of the farmers market needs to be identified first. The following are proposed suggestions for setting up operations for a farmer's market in Sullivan:

LOCATION

3 North Section St. identified as a central downtown location for the proposed farmer's market location. This location is ideal due to its central location to residents in the community and to the city's revitalization efforts. It is also a brownfield site currently owned by the neighboring Speedway.

The market would be classified a **small market** due to the size of Sullivan and surrounding community.



3 N. Section Street.

LEADERSHIP

Identifying a leadership structure for the farmer's market is a priority. It is recommended that a **committee structure** is used to oversee the site and typical operations. This should include active members of the community and those who will be vendors. Some committees have oversight from Chambers of Commerce, but that is not recommended due to this being a county entity. The City of Sullivan must identify willing committee members.

The committee will be responsible for all aspects, including recruitment of vendors and outreach to community members. It is recommended this committee create vendor applications and vendor agreement forms.

Finding sponsorship from community businesses or organizations will be necessary to cover advertising and upfront costs. Potential sponsors are important to think about for the committee as they should be included in the planning process of the farmer's market.

HOURS

Most farmer's markets operate in summer seasons on Saturdays. Some recommend that farmer's markets operate with two days in a week to accommodate those that work during one day's hours (i.e. Saturday and Wednesday). It is recommended that **at the beginning this farmer's market operates biweekly or monthly**. The hours are typically morning to early afternoon, such as 8AM – 12PM.

VENDORS

Most markets allow a variety of vendors to increase interest in community and value to businesses. It's recommended to **allow a variety of vendors** to sell their goods. Vendors should follow a set of rules, and some of these are recommended in Appendix A. The committee can allow community vendors without goods to set up information booths.

STRUCTURE & SITE

The site identified at 3 North Section Street is an empty parking lot and will require planning for space and usage. The City of Sullivan is looking for a new structure that can be multi-purpose use in addition to the farmer's market. The following section represents recommendations for structure construction and site usage.

CONSTRUCTION

The student's identified needs from the City of Sullivan for this site and structure. An **open-concept structure with a roof** is recommended. This can be used year-round and increases multi-usage ability.

An overhead weathering roof, or a form of shelter can include area for fire pits/outdoor heaters. Planning for energy efficiency and consumption is essential. Including solar paneling on the roof will provide more than enough energy for the structure. About 14 panels of 3.5 km cover an annual average of 4,954kWh and can provide energy sourcing for areas in downtown. A south facing roof will maximize passive solar. Additionally, a roof slope angled at 30° will allow an annual saving of \$1,094. This roofing and paneling recommendation will optimize energy usage for the farmer's market.

It's recommended that **staging** is included in the construction. This will increase usability of the space and open it to more community opportunities.

With an open-concept structure there will need to be forethought in **walling**. One feature that offers versatility in fluctuating weather is roll down walls similar to a garage door around the building.



Valparaiso Open Roof

To increase the sustainability of the site, **vegetation and rain harvesting** is recommended. Restore about 40% of the site with the natural habitat that existed previously by planting vegetation in the middle and outward portion of the structure. Implement a rain harvesting operation with gutters that channel water into downspouts and then to a tank.

MULTIPURPOSE USE

It is recommended that a construction build for a farmer's market space also include planning for other uses. This will prolong the sustainability of the site and its use while promoting the farmer's market.

Other attractions will help draw folks in.

Other farmer's markets have things like small basketball courts, picnic areas, event space, and more. This encourages things like basketball competitions, corn hole tournaments, or even Zumba classes.



Valparaiso Central Plaza idea.

It's recommended that the site is **offered to the community to rent out for personal events**. Additional revenue can help with upkeep of the site.

Utilizing the space for **existing festivals and community events** will bolster its connection to the community.

Having a stage area built into the farmer's market space will allow music events and other stage-using events. There could be further park space if desired.

CONCLUSION

Keeping in mind the Quality of Life goals and needs for the farmer's market, students in ENVI460 provided recommendations around operation, construction, and usage. The primary focus for the students was ensuring the site had multi-purpose and not just the farmer's market, so that the community became invested in the space. Students also provided some sustainable build recommendations to increase efficiency of the space. Overall, this is a necessary project that will bolster the Quality of Life plans if incorporated into the community.

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APPENDIX A.

Participant and vendor agreement example.

Participant and Vendor Agreement: Rules of the Farmer's Market

- Vendor's must have proper license and certifications depending on the type of business
- Vendor's must comply with all federal, local, and state health and safety ordinances.
- Producers should only sell products they have grown themselves. No reselling of store bought produce allowed.
- Reselling of any kind, for any vendor is not allowed.
- All vendors are responsible for keeping their booth space clean and up to code
- Vendors supply their own materials such as display tables, signage, chairs, and any other equipment needed
- Vendors should use recyclable and compostable materials and avoid using plastic when possible.
- Inclement weather- Market Master has final decision on days of inclement weather and will communicate to vendors. Vendors can still choose to participate in the market even if the market master chooses to close the market. In this case, the vendor is completely reliable for anything that may happen.
- If a vendor needs electricity this should be coordinated through the market master at least 2 days in advance of each market date.
- Set up and tear down of vendor booths responsibility falls onto the vendor. Cleanliness of vendor space after departure also is vendors responsibility.
- Signage and price lists should be used when possible and clearly displayed
- Vendors can potentially be fined for breaking any of these rules
- First offence to breaking any rules is a verbal warning, second is a written warning and fine, third is temporary suspension from market, fourth offence will result in termination from the market
- No discrimination of any sort, profanity, inappropriate gestures will be tolerated
- Application fee \$25

Figure 4. Participant and Vendor agreement and rules of the Farmer's Market