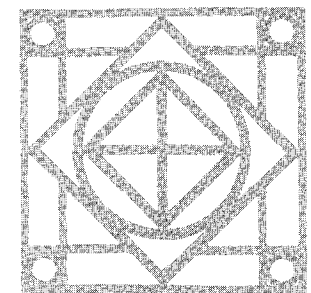
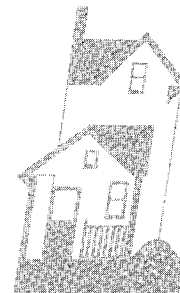
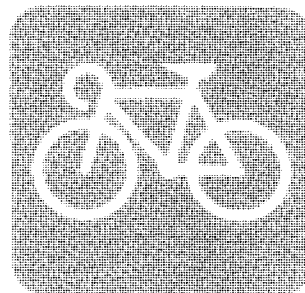
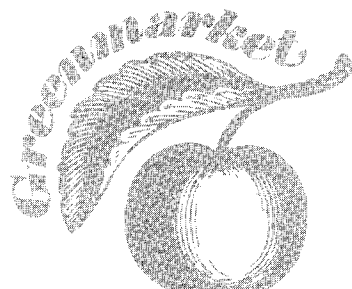
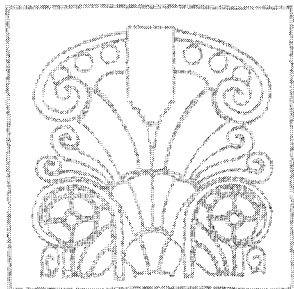


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CONNECTIONS: CREATING URBAN EXCELLENCE

Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener



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GREENMARKET New York City

INITIAL SELECTION COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Initial Reasons For Including Greenmarket as a Finalist

- It provides a very important service to the city in fresh, reasonably priced food.
- It preserves farmland and the farming way of life.
- It unites city and country.
- It revitalizes urban spaces.

Selection Committee Concerns and Questions

- Who is served by the markets?
- How important is Greenmarket to the farmers? Would farms have folded without it?
- Is a city-country bond fostered?
- What are the markets like when empty? Does the sense of community decrease?
- Are the markets completely temporal/impermanent or do



Buyers and sellers.

they have a lasting impact on the space they occupy?

- Where is the program going; what are its next steps?
- What innovative financing has the market used?

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

What It Is

- A program of farmers' markets in New York City and farmland preservation in nearby rural areas.

Who Made Submission: The Greenmarket program of the New York Council on the Environment.

Major Goals

- Provide less expensive, fresher, higher quality produce for New York residents.
- Preserve farmland and the small farming lifestyle in the metropolitan region.
- Transform urban spaces:
 - by the character of the market events
 - by physical improvements to (some) market spaces.
- Bring farmers and consumers together to build bonds and better mutual understanding.
- Reconnect urban dwellers with "real" food, the growing process, and seasonal variations.
- Support regional self-sufficiency for seasonal locally grown foods.

Accomplishments

- Developed program of 25 markets per week (i.e., 25 market days) at 18 sites in three boroughs, including year-round markets at several sites.



GREENMARKET 1990

MANHATTAN

City Hall (*Park Row*)
Tues. & Fri., Year Round

World Trade Center (*Church & Fulton St.*)
Tues., June 5 - Dec. 18; Thurs., Year Round

Federal Plaza (*B'Way & Thomas St.*)
Fri., Year Round

Washington Market Park (*Greenwich & Reade St.*)
Wed. & Sat., Year Round

St. Mark's Church (*10th St. & 2nd Ave.*)
Tues., June 5 - Dec. 18

West Village (*Gansevoort & Hudson St.*)
Sat., June 2 - Nov. 17

Union Square (*17th St. & Broadway*)
Wed. Fri. & Sat., Year Round

Roosevelt Island (*Bridge Plaza*)
Sat., Year Round

Sheffield Plaza (*57th & 9th Avenue*)
Wed. & Sat., Year Round

IS 44 (*West 77th St. & Columbus Ave.*)
Sun., Year Round

West 102nd St. (*Amsterdam Ave.*)
Fri., June 15 - Dec. 21

West 125th St. (*Adam Clayton Powell Blvd.*)
Tues., July 10 - Nov. 20

West 175th (*Broadway*)
Thurs., June 7 - Dec. 20

IS 52 Inwood (*Broadway & Cummings St.*)
Sat. Aug. 4 - Dec. 22

BRONX

Poe Park (*Grand Concourse & E. 192nd St.*)
Tues., June 12 - Nov. 20

BROOKLYN

Cadman Plaza West (*Montague St.*)
Tues. & Sat., Year Round

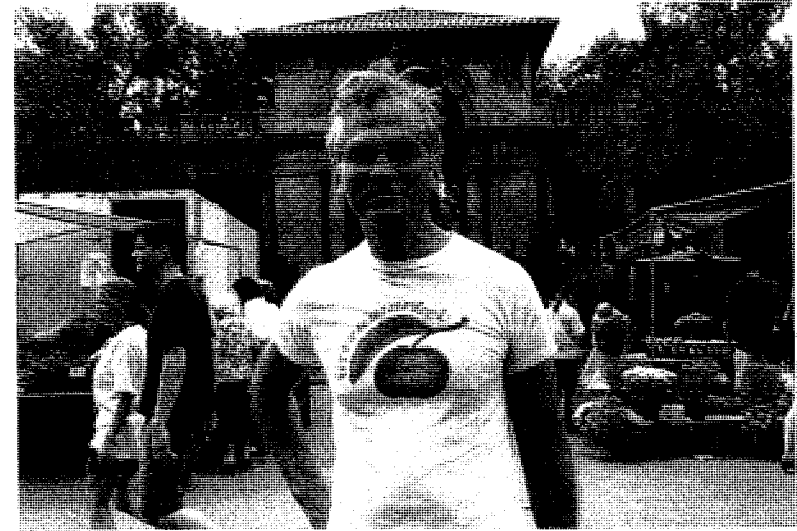
Grand Army Plaza
Sat., Year Round

Albee Square (*Fulton St. & Dekalb Ave.*)
Wed., July 11 - Nov. 21

- About 150 farmers/producers participate from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. They earn about \$10 million annually; provides the primary or sole market for 70%.
- Helps keep about 8,000 acres in production (about 10% of the region's total for this type of farm).
- Serves an estimated 40,000 people per week at peak season.
- Provides \$182,000 worth of food coupons to ±11,000 low income children and 2,400 seniors.
- Has good working relationships with city agencies and strong support from shoppers, community groups and politicians.
- Supported redevelopment of Union Square Park and the surrounding neighborhood.

Issues That Could Affect Its Selection as Winner

- Few permanent changes have been made and **no structures built** to support Greenmarkets.
- The markets are ephemeral: "here today, gone tomorrow". Does an **event** which is present in an urban space from 3% to 40% of the time (depending on each market's frequency and how you calculate it) constitute an excellent urban place?
- Major **impacts on urban space is limited** to Union Square and, to a lesser extent, Harlem. Other markets (World Trade Center, Federal Plaza, Grand Army Plaza, etc.) have rather little impact.



Barry Benepe, Greenmarket Director.

PROCESS

Chronology

- 1975: Barry Benepe, co-founder of the Greenmarket, proposed feasibility study to show economic viability of farmers' market in NYC but was encouraged to start market, not study it.
- 1976: Benepe enlisted NYC Council on the Environment as sponsor. Planning Department proposed first site on E. 59th Street.
- 1984/85: Union Square park is improved with \$3.5 million project that turned park around.
- 1986: Union Square street and parking areas are improved for Greenmarket.
- 1990/91: 25 markets at 18 sites.



Greenmarket seeks out farmers.

Process

- Benepe and the Greenmarket organization functions as a coalition builder bringing diverse interests together around and for the markets.
- To open the first market required recruiting farmers, negotiating with the city, and overcoming a supermarket chain's resistance.
- Site selection is "opportunistic" as sites are suggested or markets are requested; Greenmarket has no overall or strategic plan. For example, the Harlem State Office Building's superintendent asked Greenmarket to locate in their plaza.
- Growth in occupied spaces is about 8% per year for the entire program. Major growth started after markets began to be held year 'round.

- About 20 sites have been tried and closed for various reasons over the years.

Key Participants

- Barry Benepe, Director of Greenmarket (plans and manages program).
- NYC Council on the Environment (official sponsor of Greenmarket).
- NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (provides space in parks and plazas where Greenmarket operates).
- NYC Department of Transportation (provides space on streets, sidewalks, and parking lots where Greenmarket operates).
- About 150 metropolitan region farmers and food producers.
- Farmer-Consumer Advisory Committee (2/3 farmers, 1/3 shoppers; provides policy forum, resolves disputes, and disciplines farmers).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Vendors

Many vendors at the markets are small entrepreneurs who sell their produce, cheese, bread, meat, fish, (etc.) at several of the markets, often hiring staff for sales (as well as production assistance; sales staff usually are city residents). Some are family operations (one Amish family staffs various locations with its numerous children).

For farmers, Greenmarket clearly provides an important outlet and source of revenue. A few reported it to be their **only** outlet, while others use a wide variety of outlets (farm stands, u-pick,

wholesale markets). For about 70% of farmers, it is their sole or primary market.

The director of the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program called the Greenmarket program "terrific...a very important adjunct to our attempts to maintain farms in New Jersey." The first farmer to sell development rights to the state of New Jersey is a Greenmarket regular.

Many farmers and producers have tailored their production to market demand for types and varieties of produce, organic products, and products which extend their selling season. One New Jersey farmer now grows 60 varieties of peppers to respond to the varied tastes of his customers.

Hard economic data about sales and income are impossible to get.



In Spring, some farmers bring in baby animals.

Vendors are not required to make reports to the Greenmarket and, as cash businesses, they may be prone to under-reporting of income. However, Greenmarket clearly provides a very important outlet for many participants, some of whom affirm that it has allowed them to remain in farming or switch to it from other careers because of the outlet it provides.

Greenmarket is quite rigorous in insisting that vendors sell only what they grow or produce. The Farmer-Consumer Advisory Council adjudicates disputes which arise about origins of production. The overt goal of this policy is for sales to support the maintenance of farmers. Several vendors and customers, however, felt that this approach also improved the quality of the market, the goods, and the experience of shopping.

Greenmarket introduces farmers to the city. Farmers who would otherwise never enter the city spend time there, experience its environments and meet its inhabitants. They are probably less awed and frightened of the city, if not necessarily totally enthralled by it. Those we interviewed were more than happy to return to the country at night.

Customers

Many customers are enthusiastic (and some are rapturous) about Greenmarket. It draws some "participants" who are only looking, others who buy for immediate consumption, and some who buy in considerable quantity, loading up their shopping carts or backpacks. Regular customers know the farmers they buy from and there is considerable conversation often about how the products are grown, types of chemicals used or avoided, how to prepare the food, and what types of produce will be harvested next.

The most enthusiastic customers feel that Greenmarket reintroduces essential qualities that are otherwise missing from the city. People spoke of it as:

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Arugala												
Asparagus												
Basil												
Beans												
Beets												
Broccoli												
Cabbage												
Carrots												
Cauliflower												
Celery												
Collards												
Corn												
Cucumbers												
Eggplant												
Leeks												
Lettuce												
Lima Beans												
Jerusalem Artichoke												
Onions												
Okra												
Parsley												
Peas												
Peppers												

TASTE OF THE SEASON

Greenmarket[®] moves with the seasons. Beginning with the first early spears of asparagus and strong stalks of rhubarb in May, it opens its basket all through the summer until frost strikes the region in mid or late October. By then the last corn and tomatoes have been picked and we turn to apples, winter squash and brussel sprouts as cold, frosty mornings put a bloom on the fruit.

To enable consumers to better plan their menus, the Council on the Environment of NYC has prepared this seasonal harvest calendar. Since farmers come from within a two hundred mile radius and weather can be extremely variable, the seasons can vary from the calendar by a week or more.

Through shopping at a Greenmarket farmers' market you can enjoy the fresh taste of literally hundreds of different fruits and vegetables throughout the growing season—picked fresh, direct to you. The exotic colors, exhilarating aromas and delicious taste of produce freshly harvested across the seasonal rainbow cannot be equaled anywhere.



In Season

In Storage

Greenmarket is a farmers market program of the Council on the Environment of New York City, a privately funded citizens organization operating out of the Mayor's Office.



Council on the Environment of New York City
51 Chambers Street, New York, NY 10007

Greenmarket helps educate city people about their food.

"transforming neighborhoods"

"making life livable"

giving an *"infusion of new spirit"* to the city

being an *"explosion of flowers"*

and providing an informal social gathering place where friends meet and acquaintances are made. Some customers valued the connection to the country and the source of food with which they otherwise had "lost touch." (At two smaller markets we visited on Saturday, farmers had brought in baby animals (chicks, ducklings, goat, lamb, piglet) for children and adults to see and touch.) More than one informant suggested there would be:

"woe to anyone who threatens Greenmarket"

(over 7,000 signed a petition to keep the market in Union Square).

While Greenmarket serves a great many shoppers, they account for only a small (perhaps very small) percentage of New Yorkers (40,000 shoppers in a peak week — perhaps 100,000 including their households — out of about 8 million people or about 1%; far less in the off-season).

Markets appear to prosper and remain where they can draw on upper middle to mixed income neighborhoods. While, Greenmarket makes a concerted effort to reach poorer and ethnically diverse shoppers, it finds it harder to maintain markets where these shoppers predominate. Harlem is an exception — but has only a seasonal market one day a week. Reasons given include the relatively high cost of fresh produce (compared to canned or frozen — even though prices are cheaper than supermarkets), culturally defined eating habits, and lack of knowledge about certain foods. A state-sponsored Farmers' Market coupon system (using federal "Women, Infants and Children" program funds) helps draw poorer people. Cornell Agriculture Extension agents sometimes operate a booth at the

Harlem market to educate buyers about preparation and storage. Farmers are also said to be generous in giving food to the hungry.

Union Square Market

The largest, most successful market is at Union Square. It operates year round, three days per week and accounts for over half of sales. Some local residents attribute part of the reinvigoration of the neighborhood (the park had become a "drug infested needle park") to the Greenmarket, which is mentioned as a neighborhood amenity in leasing brochures and corporate relocation information packages.

Its presence and success may have contributed to the City's interest in improving Union Square Park (though only a small portion of the improvements directly affect the market). In season, some restaurants in the area feature Greenmarket produce on their menus and it seems to have attracted some restaurants and other businesses to the area. When the market is not operating it is conspicuously not there. Several customers and residents noted that its presence is strong enough that its absence is felt on non-market days.

Spaces

The markets are held in spaces which were made for other uses. These include parking lots (Union Square), plazas (Harlem - 125th Street, City Hall, Borough Hall), sidewalks (Federal Plaza), streets (Grand Army Plaza), and empty lots. While some spaces are better suited to farmers' markets than others, relatively few physical changes have been made to accommodate them. The greatest changes have been made at Union Square where a street was realigned and parking meters removed. Nearby public restrooms and other park amenities are useful to the market (though many sites do not have them).

In some locations, the markets transform an otherwise drab,

barren and/or vehicle-dominated space into what amounts to a street fair. Union Square is most successful in this regard. Bearing in mind that we observed these spaces in early spring, well before the peak of market activity, it seemed to us that in other spaces there were too few vendors, too large a space, or too much nearby traffic to have a very positive effect.

When the markets are not functioning, the spaces revert to prior uses with no visible sign of the markets' presence. There are, for example, no market structures or posted signs that might indicate that a Greenmarket takes place there on certain days or in certain seasons (perhaps because days and hours change from time to time). While the market director would like to see structures supporting (sheltering) the market some day, the borough Parks Department felt that the lack of structures was a strong positive feature of the program, allowing certain spaces to remain as parks, without intrusion. They see the parks as the permanent features, with the markets being only one among many legitimate but ephemeral uses. Only Union Square market could perhaps be said to have a more lasting impact when not operating in the sense of having helped attract some restaurants to the area and encouraged improvement of the park.

Economic and Financial Performance

- Greenmarket started with \$35,000 annual budget in 1976 (mostly foundation grants).
- Its 1990 budget was \$635,000
 - 85% from vendor fees (\$540,000)
 - 15% from grants and city provision of some overhead (\$95,000).
- Thus, it is nearly self-supporting (and could be entirely self-supporting with increases in fees which are kept intentionally low — especially in more marginal locations).



Photo: Steven Borns

Federal Plaza Greenmarket.

- Capital improvements to parks, streets and parking lots paid by city (sometimes with state aid). These are minor, other than at Union Square, where \$3.5 million was spent on the park.

ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS...

...By Greenmarket's Goals

Provide Less Expensive, Fresher, Higher Quality Produce to City Shoppers

- Customers clearly appreciate the quality and freshness of Greenmarket produce. Cost savings vary by season and type of produce.

Preserve farmland and farming lifestyle

- Contributes to keeping about 10% of area's farmland in fruit and vegetable production. Some producers have entered farming/food production because of the markets. Encourages organic production.

Transform urban spaces

- Major transformation is during the time markets operate. Impact varies from market to market.

Bring farmers and consumers together

- Yes (see below).

...By Selection Committee Concerns

Who is served by the markets?

- A broad spectrum of users are served, but the greatest

numbers seems to be middle income. Supports and encouragement are offered to lower income shoppers.

How important is Greenmarket to the farmers? Would farms have folded without it?

- Greenmarket is of considerable importance to the farmers and producers and it is likely that survival (and certainly thriving as some seem to be) would have been more difficult for some or many of them.

Is a city-country bond fostered?

- Yes. People who shop in Greenmarkets value their contact with the growers (though many hire salespeople) and the produce. Growers also get expanded experience of city people and have an improved image of them.

What are the markets like when empty? Does the sense of community decrease?

- When empty, most spaces revert to their prior ambiance (empty or otherwise active urban plazas, streets, etc.). Some residents speak of their memory and anticipation of markets on other days or in other seasons.

Are the markets impermanent or do they have a lasting impact on the space they occupy?

- The markets are mainly impermanent. Union Square arguably has a more lasting impact on park and neighborhood improvements.

What innovative financing has Greenmarket used?

- No innovative financing is used, but the program is nearly self-supporting. It is innovative to use WIC money for farmers' market coupons, but this is a statewide or national program.



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THE FLOWER MARKET IN UNION SQUARE, NEW YORK.—DRAWN BY W. T. SUNDAY.—[SEE PAGE 38.]

...By Other Concerns

Is Greenmarket Unique? Does it Serve as a Model?

- Greenmarket is part of the nationwide farmers' market movement. While not the first, it may be the largest such program in the country. Unique or **exemplary features** of Greenmarket include:
 - Very strong **emphasis on the farmer/producer** and encouragement for small farmers (active recruiting program).
 - Strong **regulation and enforcement** of the "grow/produce your own" requirement to keep out peddlers (who buy and resell); this protects farmers. Actual visits are made to all farms for verification. While Greenmarket claims it is the most tightly enforced program other states do require at least certification (e.g., California).
 - It participates in a significant program (with State and Federal money) to **help lower income** families buy food at Greenmarket.
 - One individual suggested that Greenmarket served as a model for a small town in upstate NY. ("If they can do it in New York City...") There is little other clear evidence of its being a model.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee saw the Greenmarket as representing the future of urban planning in helping rediscover the connection of the city to its surrounding region. They appreciated the way the Greenmarket operates in several ways to achieve urban excellence. First, it provided an impetus for improvements in the changing neighborhood of Union Square (and to a lesser degree

other neighborhoods) by bringing to it the excitement and bustle of the market day. They noted that even though the Greenmarket is present only on certain days, it "transforms the space" when it is there, and has an impact which lasts beyond its physical presence. They drew an analogy to older English cities which developed around market days and squares.

Second, they applauded the Greenmarket's focus on preservation of farmland and its implementation of a program to help support and maintain regional family farms and a lifestyle built around small scale farming.

Third, the Selection Committee noted the impact of the Greenmarket in linking urban and rural elements of the region. It brings New Yorkers into contact with farmers and with the seasonal cycles of food. It brings farmers to the city and allows them to learn about city people as well as what kinds of products their market needs and wants.

The Selection Committee saw the Greenmarket as a positive response to the isolating effects of supermarkets and shopping malls, helping link the city to its broader region. They also noted that the Greenmarket could and should be significantly helped by more city support, especially through building shelters and other support facilities for the farm stalls at several of the sites.

For More Information...

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