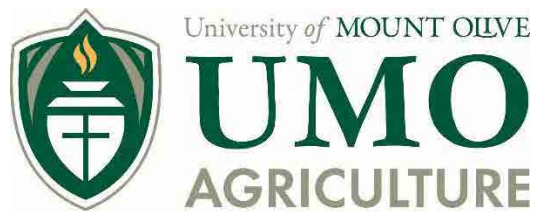


Franklin County Farmers' Market

Feasibility Study

Completed by:



Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center

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This study was written by Dr. Sandy Maddox and Mr. Edward Olive. Dr. Maddox has an Ed. D. from N.C. State University and served with N.C. State University in both research and extension. She additionally served the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in the Research Stations Division until retirement in 2007. Since that time she has provided leadership to the Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center at the University of Mount Olive and serves as chair for the Division of Agriculture at the university. Mr. Olive earned a MBA from Regent University, specializing in marketing, and serves as the Associate Director for the Agribusiness Center. The following agencies and individuals assisted with the development of this study:

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- Franklin County Board of Commissioners
- Franklin County Manager and staff
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- Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center, University of Mount Olive
- The citizens, farmers and agribusinesses of Franklin County





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Executive Summary

The Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center at the University of Mount Olive was enlisted by the County of Franklin and the Franklin County Farm Bureau to undertake a Farmers' Market Feasibility Study through 2017. This study was completed in late 2017 and results presented in April of 2018. The goal of the study was to determine if the existing market was adequate to meet the needs of vendors and consumers in Franklin County or if a new market was warranted. Additional information was gathered to determine what factors would ensure the potential success and the location best suited for the development of a farmers' market.

The study made no assumptions about location, type or utility of the market. Surveys and interviews were used to collect data related to the supply chain capability and product demand in Franklin County. Additional demographic and socio-economic data from Franklin County as well as research data compiled for farmers' markets were used to determine the feasibility of a viable market in Franklin County.

The study determined that the supply chain, being the most critical issue related to a farmers' market's success, was large and committed enough to provide the consumer market with a consistent, high quality and diverse product selection. The study's demographic and survey data indicated that the market would most probably be successful if located in the community of Youngsville. The data designated that the location be located outside of the city limits and preferably along a main thoroughfare in this region of the county.

Data indicated that a minimum of five acres should be purchased, as the market type would be an enclosed or open shelter market of approximately 8,000 square feet with enclosed office, storage and additional space for meetings or a commercial kitchen. Adequate space is needed for parking and to allow the facility to be expanded or used for multiple purposes in addition to the market.

Funding for the market should come from multiple sources. A vast majority of potential vendors and consumers supported the use of county funds for the purchase of land and construction of a market in Franklin County. Additionally, data indicated that the facility should be used for events or occasions that would allow for year-round utility by public and private entities.

Introduction

In 2016, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension (NCCE), Franklin County Center was awarded a grant from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to complete a Feasibility Study for the Franklin County Farmers' Market. Franklin County Farm Bureau supported the measure and provided funds to be used to complete the Feasibility Study. The existing market consists of a metal shelter and gravel base with sixteen vendor spaces. The Franklin County Farmers' Market is owned by the County of Franklin and administered by the NC Cooperative Extension – Franklin County Center. The Franklin County Farmers' Market is operated weekly on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday. No fee is charged to vendors selling at the existing market. The Farmers' Market is managed by a part-time Market Manager under the direction of the NCCE Franklin County Center Director.

The purpose of this Feasibility Study is to review the current market and its utility as well as to determine the overall need for a Farmers' Market within Franklin County. This study also evaluates the types of a market that are determined as most desirable for stakeholders based on a number of factors including accessibility, location etc. and assesses the needed amenities of each market type.

Through the use of supply and demand survey instruments, both vendors and residents/customers were provided the opportunity to express their preferences for and support of a farmers' market in Franklin County. The demand survey was designed for all residents of Franklin County. The responses received were from residents that were customers of the existing market as well as others who had not visited the existing market but had an interest in the opportunity to provide input on a farmers' market in Franklin County. The supply survey was provided to area agricultural producers. Several of these were current vendors at the farmers' market while a number of others were contacted as potential vendors based upon their operations and commodities produced. Surveys were created through a survey website and completed online through the Franklin County and Cooperative Extension websites or in print. Several information sessions were held throughout the county to promote survey completion by both supply and demand interest groups. Survey links were also provided to residents and vendors through various media channels.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the feasibility of a farmers' market through an expressed desire to support the current market or a new Farmers' Market facility based upon data collected. This feasibility study also provides a listing of potential funding sources for Farmers' Market upgrades or new construction. Though this study makes specific recommendations it is ultimately the decision of the County of Franklin and other stakeholders to select the outcome. This study simply evaluates the feasibility of a farmers' market with specific amenities listed based upon different data parameters and survey results.

Market Analysis

Domestic Market Profile

The Domestic Market Profile for the Franklin County Farmers' Market is made up of residents and visitors to Franklin County and surrounding communities. According to the NC Department of Commerce, the estimated population of Franklin County was 62,989 in 2016. The population estimate for 2017 was 66,168 indicating a 5% increase in the population of the county in a single year. Data used in this study is from 2016 as it is complete in demographic information including age, gender, education and other parameters not available from the 2017 data. The AccessNC Franklin County Profile indicates that the age distribution of Franklin County's population is as follows:

- 25.4% ages 0-19 (16,038)
- 6.0% ages 20-24 (3,801)
- 11.2% ages 25-34 (7,026)
- 13.3% ages 35-44 (8,387)
- 15.0% ages 45-54 (9,443)
- 13.8% ages 55-64 (8,735)
- 15.2% ages 65+ (9,559)

Although a farmers' market would be available to all of these individuals, market research data indicates that there are specific demographic parameters that tend to indicate the utility and support of farmers' markets. According to research based on a California Farmers' Market published in the *Journal of Food Distribution Research* in March 2005, the largest percentage of farmers' market shoppers are in the age range of 25 to 44 years (35%), with 21 percent aged 45 to 54 and another 21 percent over the age of 60 (Wolf, et. al. 194). The research data referenced indicated that the age range of 25 to 54 year olds make up more than 58% of the farmers' market shopping public for the study conducted. This same age range as reported by AccessNC for Franklin County, accounts for 39.5% of the county's total population indicating a favorable demographic for market shoppers. There is no perfect way to accurately determine the number of people who would support a farmers' market, but this information indicates that there is a population base that research has indicated are more likely to support and shop at farmers' markets.

Research indicated that 64 percent of farmers' market shoppers were female (Wolf, 194). Census data for Franklin County shows the distribution of male and female is largely balanced. The 2010 Census reported 50.2 percent of Franklin County residents as female. This is another positive demographic indicator of potential customer base for a farmers' market in Franklin County.

Most farmers' market shoppers included in the research study (71%) were employed either part-time or full-time (Wolf, 194). Of the total 2016 population of Franklin County,

26,686 were employed. More than one-third of Franklin County residents who work are employed in Franklin County (36.6%), almost two-thirds (62.1%) of residents work outside of Franklin County with an additional 1.3% working outside of the state. The average travel time to work is 31.2 minutes for all workers. With the proximity of Franklin County to Raleigh and Durham, it is expected that the majority of these residents are traveling to Wake and Durham Counties for work.

Nearly eighty-three percent of Franklin County residents had at least a high school education, 8,205 or 19.4% had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2015 (Quick Facts: Franklin County, NC, np). Research data revealed that the largest percentage of farmers' market shoppers (55%) were college graduates including those with post-graduate work followed by 34 percent with some college and 10 percent with at least a high school diploma (Wolf, 194). While the data appears to indicate that college graduates are more likely to utilize a farmers' market than are non-college graduates, the demographics and survey results for Franklin County support a sustainable customer base.

The median income of Franklin County residents was \$52,848 in 2015 (Quick Facts: Franklin County, np). This is higher than the statewide median income of \$48,256 from 2012-2016 (Quick Facts: North Carolina, np). Information collected by Wolf, et. al. reported the distribution of income levels among farmers' market shoppers. Shoppers earning less than \$40,000 accounted for 32 percent while those earning \$40,000 or more made up 68 percent of shoppers in the study (194). Low income farmers' market customers spent an average of \$10.54 per visit, medium spenders spent \$26.81 and high spenders spent \$67.97 each visit (Gumirakiza, np).

In review of Franklin County's population demographics and those demographics exhibited by farmers' market research – Franklin County exhibits a demographic profile that has the characteristics and capability to support a farmers' market. Several factors including, but not limited to: product selection, quality, market location, hours of operation, and convenience also have a direct impact on farmers' market shoppers.

Target Market

In simple terms, the target market for the Franklin County Farmers' Market include customers who are willing to travel to the market to purchase fresh, local fruits and vegetables and other product offerings. Several factors influence the composition of the target market including, "makeup of the consumer population, lifestyles, incomes, and convenience of consumers." This is in addition to typical demographic information including the information referenced above (Govindasamy, np). Much of this information was reviewed in the previous section. The ideal target market, according to farmers' market research, is twenty-five to fifty-four year old females having earned a college education and working at least part-time with a reported family income of \$40,000 or more. Undoubtedly there are other customers who are interested in shopping at

farmers' markets outside of this generalization, but these parameters typically make up the bulk of farmers' market customers.

Franklin County is made up of four recognized municipalities including Bunn, Franklinton, Louisburg (county seat) and Youngsville and the recently unincorporated (2017) community of Centerville (Franklin County North Carolina, np). The county's website goes on to explain the suburban to rural lifestyle that is home to over 60,000 Franklin County residents. The webpage also boasts a government focused on its citizens and opportunities for lifelong learning. The Franklin County Economic Development Commission provided additional demographic data to be used for this study, based on each town or former town - in the case of Centerville, which is included in the following three tables. Table 1 shows demographics for a fifty mile radius of each municipality. Demographic data within a twenty mile radius is included in Table 2. Table 3 shares the demographic profile of a 10-mile radius surrounding each town or former town in the case of Centerville.

Table 1
Demographic Information to Determine Prospective Farmers' Market Customers Located
within a 50 Mile Radius of Municipalities

	Bunn	Centerville (former)	Franklinton	Louisburg	Youngsville
Population, 2017	2,414,734	1,844,992	2,346,733	2,324,676	2,384,027
Number of Households, 2017	927,917	716,344	904,740	895,185	917,754
Median Household Income, 2017	\$55,652	\$53,022	\$56,824	\$56,457	\$56,839
Median Age, 2017	36.9	37.3	37.1	37.1	37.1
Number of Males, 2017	1,178,188	900,940	1,014,876	1,132,974	1,163,046
Number of Females, 2017	1,236,546	944,052	1,073,719	1,191,702	1,220,981
Percent of Population with a post-secondary degree, 2017	47.5%	44.2%	48.5%	48.2%	48.3%
Employment Percent	94.2%	94.1%	94.5%	94.4%	94.5%
Total Expense of Food at Home	\$4,670,208,993	\$3,444,104,070	4,623,374,429	\$4,562,779,141	\$4,678,851,847
Average Expense of Food at Home	\$5,033.00	\$4,807.89	\$5,110.17	\$5,097.02	\$5,098.15
Total Expense of Food Away from Home	\$3,127,364,137	\$2,280,739,952	\$3,099,680,452	\$3,055,580,245	\$3,140,378,855
Average Expense Food Away from Home	\$3,370.31	\$3,183.86	\$3,426.05	\$3,413.35	\$3,421.81
Total Expense Entertainment/Recreation	\$2,865,917,757	\$2,098,458,023	\$2,842,939,497	\$2,802,723,522	\$2,878,628,143
Average Expense Entertainment/Recreation	\$3,088.55	\$2,929.40	\$3,142.27	\$3,130.89	\$3,136.60
Average Disposable Income per Household, 2017	\$59,840	\$56,933	\$60,787	\$60,558	\$60,772

Source: Franklin County Economic Development Commission, Census Data

Table 2 Demographic Information to Determine Prospective Farmers' Market Customers Located within a 20 Mile Radius of Municipalities					
	Bunn	Centerville (former)	Franklinton	Louisburg	Youngsville
Population, 2017	321,581	118,134	434,403	264,275	688,581
Number of Households, 2017	116,720	44,658	162,818	96,866	265,010
Median Household Income, 2017	\$58,118	\$39,133	\$60,509	\$55,163	\$61,860
Median Age, 2017	37.6	41.2	38.5	38.6	36.9
Number of Males, 2017	157,356	58,447	211,887	128,923	334,812
Number of Females, 2017	164,225	59,686	222,516	135,351	353,769
Percent of Population with a post-secondary degree, 2017	42.7%	24.0%	47.6%	41.0%	52.2%
Employment Percent	94.5%	91.8%	94.7%	94.4%	95.0%
Total Expense of Food at Home	\$567,489,036	\$168,360,532	\$867,333,329	\$467,731,565	\$1,433,381,682
Average Expense of Food at Home	\$4,861.97	\$3,770.00	\$5,237.01	\$4,828.65	\$5,408.78
Total Expense of Food Away from Home	\$380,268,102	\$103,278,972	\$583,677,341	\$309,543,417	\$976,414,382
Average Expense Food Away from Home	\$3,257.95	\$2,312.66	\$3,584.85	\$3,195.58	\$3,684.44
Total Expense Entertainment/Recreation	\$352,507,105	\$100,477,317	\$539,059,587	\$289,531,107	\$888,351,892
Average Expense Entertainment/Recreation	\$3,020.11	\$2,249.93	\$3,310.81	\$2,988.99	\$3,352.14
Average Disposable Income per Household, 2017	\$58,997	\$43,590	\$63,821	\$57,894	\$64,848

Source: Franklin County Economic Development Commission, Census Data

Table 3 Demographic Information to Determine Prospective Farmers' Market Customers Located within a 10 Mile Radius of Municipalities					
	Bunn	Centerville (former)	Franklinton	Louisburg	Youngsville
Population, 2017	42,544	13,342	75,466	36,533	148,066
Number of Households, 2017	16,238	5,280	27,435	13,895	53,021
Median Household Income, 2017	\$46,643	\$36,530	\$55,606	\$43,211	\$71,771
Median Age, 2017	41.1	42.8	38.6	41.0	37.7
Number of Males, 2017	21,359	6,561	36,919	17,988	71,816
Number of Females, 2017	21,185	6,781	38,546	18,545	76,250
Percent of Population with a post-secondary degree, 2017	28.9%	20.8%	43.0%	30.5%	54.8%
Employment Percent	92.4%	91.2%	94.3%	91.6%	95.6%
Total Expense of Food at Home	\$68,248,963	\$18,677,173	\$127,855,231	\$54,892,979	\$301,371,655
Average Expense of Food at Home	\$4,203.04	\$3,537.34	\$4,660.30	\$3,950.56	\$5,684.01
Total Expense of Food Away from Home	\$43,376,190	\$11,244,504	\$85,256,116	\$34,521,256	\$208,325,669
Average Expense Food Away from Home	\$2,671.28	\$2,129.64	\$3,107.57	\$2,484.44	\$3,929.12
Total Expense Entertainment/Recreation	\$41,293,709	\$11,069,863	\$79,372,005	\$33,145,695	\$191,893,655
Average Expense Entertainment/Recreation	\$2,543.03	\$2,096.56	\$2,893.09	\$2,385.44	\$3,619.20
Average Disposable Income per Household, 2017	\$49,447	\$40,192	\$56,933	\$46,707	\$69,856

Source: Franklin County Economic Development Commission, Census Data

Information provided by the Franklin County Economic Development Commission provided trends and data to track the makeup of Franklin County communities, their purchasing behavior and income levels. This data was helpful in measuring the existing potential for financial support of a farmers' market beyond the data collected through surveys and interviews.

Each of the municipalities offer demographic and socio-economic indicators that are congruent with target market research data. Of the four primary municipalities there were significant differences in the total customer base available to support a farmers' market. Total population data within a certain radius of each municipality demonstrated a large difference in potential customer base. However as mentioned, other demographic and socio-economic factors should be considered when looking at market sustainability and availability of supply.

When data in Table 1 was evaluated, making a comparison of each municipality across a single demographic did not reveal a significant difference between the values reported for each individual municipality. However, Table 2 and Table 3 clarified the results with more concentrated demographic information within 20 and 10 mile radii, respectively.

Table 2 data revealed the twenty mile radius surrounding Youngsville had the highest population of all Franklin County municipalities by more than 250,000. Table 3 denoted that the total population within a 10 mile radius of Youngsville was nearly double the population of Franklinton, the community with the second highest population total.

Additionally, Youngsville had the highest median income in all three radii and was the only municipality with a median income above \$70,000 in any of the data tables. This data clearly indicated that Youngsville ranked highest in meeting the desired target market followed by Franklinton, Bunn, Louisburg and Centerville in rank order. Socio-economic and demographic data for Youngsville led other studied municipalities in all parameters in both ten and twenty mile radii comparisons.

As a component of this study, information and data was sought to further verify the viability of a farmers' market in Franklin County. In an effort to do this, it was imperative to gather data which would indicate the type of market that would best satisfy the consumer preferences and afford vendors an outlet for multiple product offerings. Questions were raised to evaluate if the current market was adequate for both consumers and vendors or if a new market needed. The current market's vendors sell items including fresh fruits and vegetables, honey, eggs and value-added products such as jams, jellies, pickles and salsa. Meat products are prohibited due to an agreement with the existing market landowner. Information was collected to determine if the supply side of the equation was adequate to increase product diversity and was there consumer interest in this diversification of product which is currently limited at the

existing site. Numerous other data was also collected to determine support and utility of the existing or a new market and this data follows.

Overall Market Feasibility

Data collected from surveys and interviews with Franklin County farmers and stakeholders, including agricultural professionals, public officials and potential customers, indicated a farmers' market was capable of being supported and a feasible investment for Franklin County to consider. With this data additional information was sought to answer the question, *what type of market will offer the most benefit to Franklin County residents*. Results obtained supported that a market was needed and it was clear that location was a key factor to be considered with regard to a market's success.

The implementation of restrictions on products sold was noted as a major hindrance to consumer utility. Residents participating in the study, both vendors and consumers, indicated overwhelming support for the agricultural community in the county and subsequently a farmers' market. Results of the demand (consumer/resident) survey is summarized in the following section. While numerous factors must be evaluated to determine market feasibility, consumer support is crucial to not only the eventual viability of a market, but also for county leadership and public/private partnerships to desire to support the initiation of new or continuing support of a farmers' market in Franklin County.

Consumer Survey and Demand Analysis

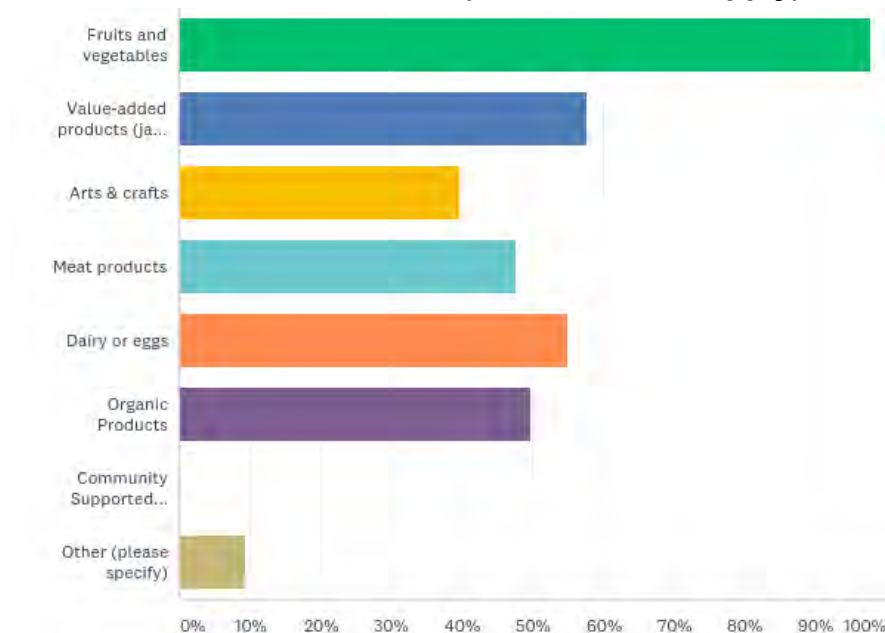
Review and Analysis of Survey Results

A lengthy survey was used to evaluate the perceptions about and utility of a farmers' market in Franklin County. The survey was distributed at local meetings that were held in multiple locations across the county. Additionally, a link to the survey was provided through county government website links and numerous announcements encouraging participation were distributed via various media sources. Use of targeted survey distributions were considered, but not utilized so as to avoid any perceived bias.

The results reflected a snapshot of the consumer demand potential of Franklin County residents, as the number participating in the survey represents a very small sample of the total county's population. Four-hundred thirty-three consumer surveys were submitted to assist with data collection for this effort. Eighty-three percent of respondents did choose to use the online survey as a way to provide their input about the need for and use of a farmers' market in Franklin County.

When asked about their awareness of an existing market at Shannon Village in Louisburg, seventy-five percent acknowledged they were aware of the existing market. However, seventy-one percent of respondents indicated they had rarely or never used the current market with only 4 percent indicating they visited the market more than once a week. Conversely, when asked if a new market was built in Franklin County, only 6 percent of these same respondents indicated they would rarely or never use a new market. Seventy percent indicated a desire to engage with a new market at least once a week. Figure 1 illustrates the products that residents would like to see offered at a new market.

Figure 1: Which Products Would You Be Most Interested In Purchasing From The New Farmers' Market? (Check All That Apply)



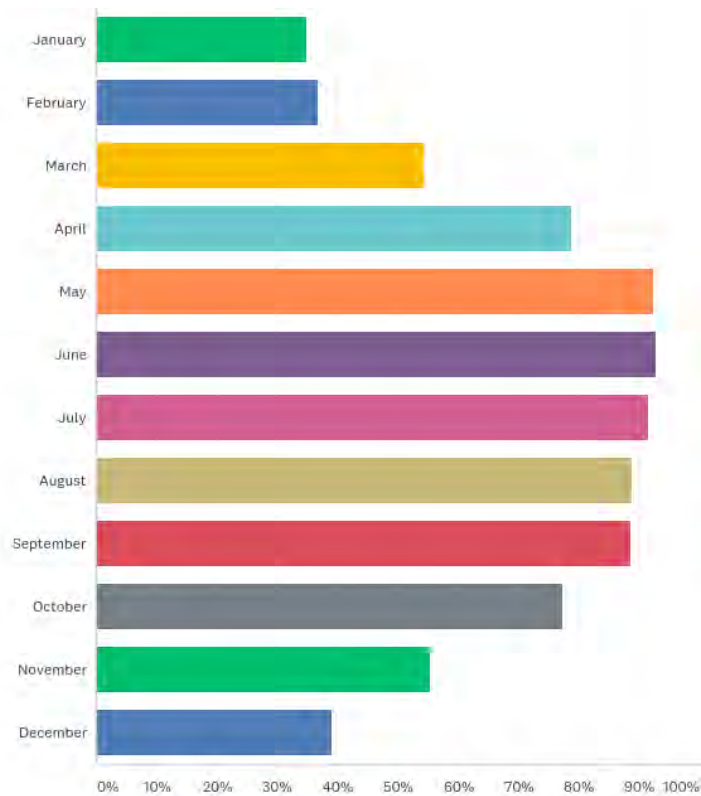
Source: Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

The diversity of products desired ranged from 98 percent wanting fruits and vegetables, followed by 58 percent interested in value-added products; 55 percent desiring eggs and dairy; 50 percent noted organic products would appeal to their needs and meat products were indicated to be of interest to purchase by 48 percent of respondents. Arts and crafts were also desired by 40 percent of those that indicated they would use a new market. The desire for products by consumers matched very well with producer desire to provide as noted in the vendor survey. Consumer respondents also encouraged that plants to include herbs, ornamentals, flowers, bedding plants be considered as well as possibly feed and seed options.

When asked where these items are currently purchased, over ninety percent of respondents indicated they bought these items at grocery stores, thirty-five percent shopped at large retail stores and thirty-four percent said they shopped for many of these items at other farmers' markets or produce stands. Interestingly, only fifteen percent of vendors in Franklin County indicated that they marketed product through grocery stores and no vendors marketed product through large retail stores.

Respondents were asked to indicate the months of the year they would be most likely to shop at a market located in Franklin County. Figure 2 illustrates the months of interest for visiting and buying product from a market. This monthly consumer demand distribution matches very well with the monthly vendor supply distribution reported in the vendor survey results.

Figure 2: What Months Would You Most Likely Purchase Products From The Franklin County Farmers' Market (Check All That Apply)?



Source: Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

Consumers were also asked what days of the week would they be most likely to visit a Farmers' Market and more than a quarter of consumers indicated they would use the market every day of the week including Sunday. Table 4 provides the consumers daily desire to use the market, with Saturday overwhelmingly the day of choice followed by Friday and then by Sunday.

Table 4. What Days Of The Week Would You Be Most Likely To Visit A Farmers' Market (Check All That Apply)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Monday	27.66%
Tuesday	29.79%
Wednesday	35.93%
Thursday	33.57%
Friday	56.97%
Saturday	79.67%
Sunday	41.84%

Source: Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

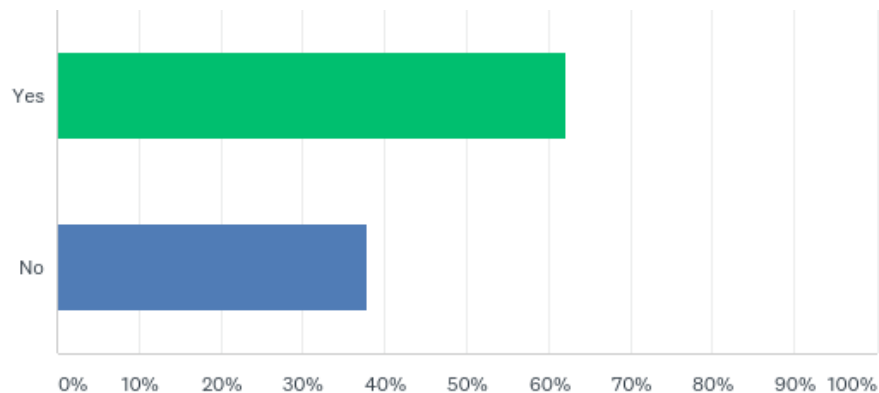
Consumers were asked what the preference for hours of operation would be for a market. While times suggested ranged from 8am to 7pm, the most apparent desire is to ensure that the market stays open so that working residents can have access to the market. The feeling was that some days could provide earlier hours possibly 8am to 4pm and other times to include hours that stayed open until at least 7pm.

When asked the type of market that consumers felt would be adequate to meet their needs for shopping, consumers were evenly split between an enclosed market with doors and an open shelter. When asked the potential location desired for a market the majority, 38 percent, felt it should be located on a major street or road outside of town with the next most desired location being noted as a downtown area, 28 percent, and the current location was desired by 24 percent of potential consumers. The majority of consumers' desire for the market to be on a main road in the county was in keeping with the vendors' desire for location.

Consumers were asked if they believed the farmers' market should be a multi-purpose facility that could be used for other events and programs such as weddings, family reunions, and other interactive public and/or private functions. Figure 3 illustrates that the majority of consumers agreed that use of the facility for more than a market would

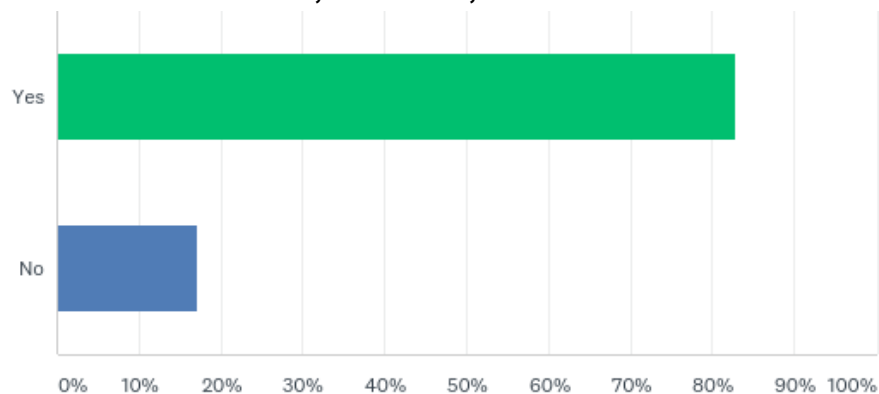
be desirable. Vendors strongly believed this would be an appropriate use of the facility and supported this diversified use of the market. Vendors additionally felt that they would attend other events that would be held at the facility. Consumers also suggested they would attend events should the facility afford the opportunity for other events to be held at the market,

Figure 3. Do You Believe The Farmers' Market Should Be A Multi-Purpose Facility That Could Be Used For Other Events And Programs Such As Weddings, Family Reunions, Birthday Parties, Etc.?



Source: Source: Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

Figure 4. Would You Attend Other Events At The Facility Such As Meetings, Concerts, Festivals, Etc.?



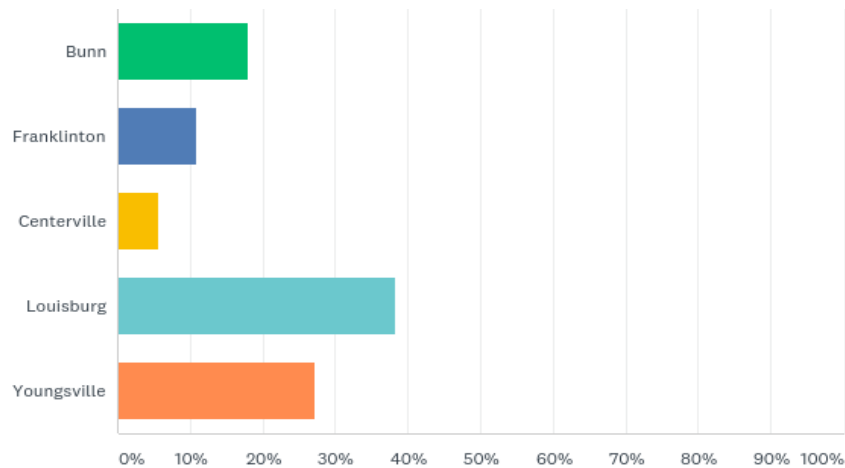
Source: Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

When consumers were asked if they would consider renting the facility for events if it were available to the public, 55 percent indicated that they consider renting the facility. The number of vendors indicating rental usage for personal use was reported at

seventy-nine percent. A higher percentage of consumers, 65 percent, indicated a desire for the location of the facility to be near other attractions including shopping centers, businesses, schools etc. and again this was in keeping with supply chain respondents.

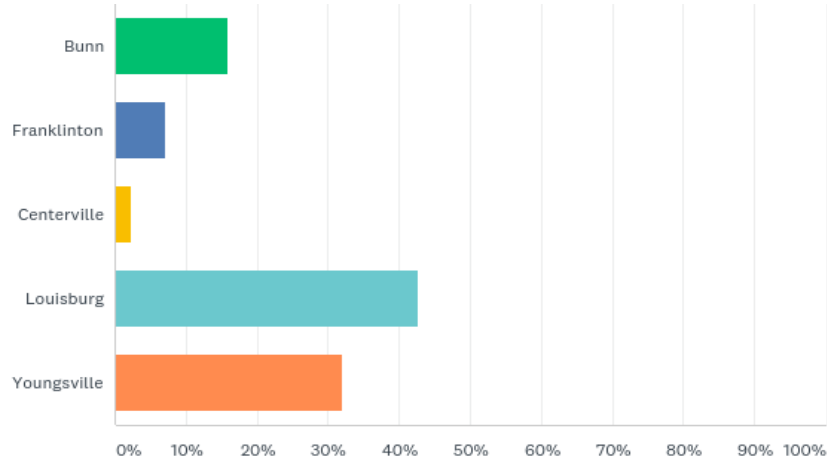
The geographic distribution of where responding consumers live or work is noted in Figures 5 and 6 respectively. While Louisburg represented the highest percentage of respondents when asked where they live and work, the distributions do show interest from most regions of the county.

Figure 5. What Town (Or Former Town) Is Closest To Where You Live?



Source: Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

Figure 6. What Town (Or Former Town) Is Closest To Where You Work?



Source: Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

When asked, how far are you willing to travel to visit a market, the majority of consumers surveyed, 49 percent, indicated they would travel up to 10 miles, followed by 27 percent of respondents indicating up to 20 miles. Table 5 below shows the distance between each of the designated municipalities or former municipalities in Franklin County.

Table 5. Distance (in miles) between Franklin County Municipalities (Current and Former)

	Bunn	Centerville	Franklinton	Louisburg	Youngsville
Bunn		23.3	19.3	10.9	15.8
Centerville	23.3		22.8	12.4	30.7
Franklinton	19.3	22.8		10.4	6.6
Louisburg	10.9	12.4	10.4		18.3
Youngsville	15.9	30.7	6.3	18.3	

Source: Mapquest.com

When consumers were asked if they supported the utilization of county funds to pay for a new farmers' market if necessary, an overwhelming majority, 90 percent, indicated they would support the use of public funds for the facility. The support of county funds to be used for the facility is in keeping with the response of the supply chain respondents.

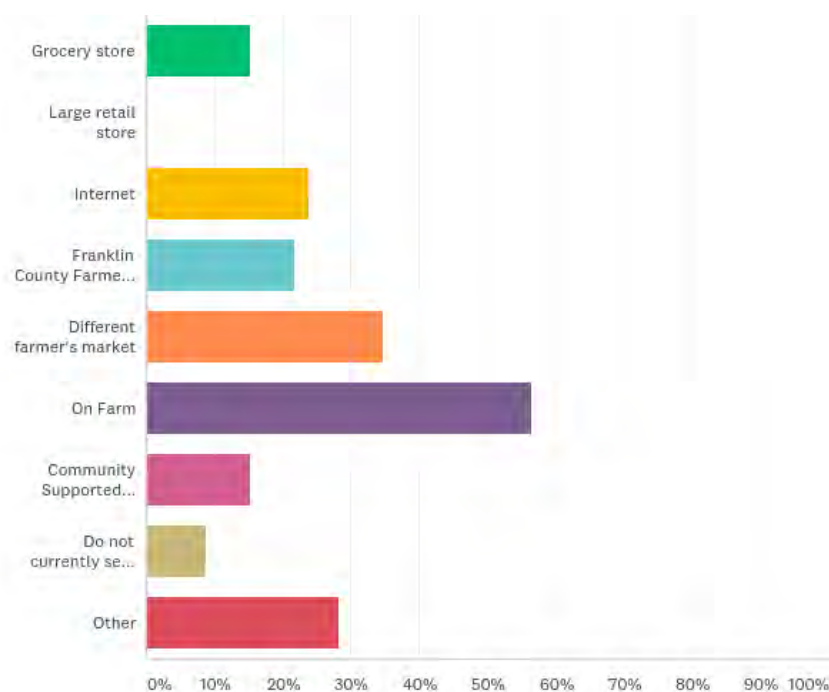
Consumers were asked if they would have an interest in selling product at the market and while the majority, 79 percent indicated they would not have an interest, 21 percent indicated they would, with products ranging from arts and crafts to meat, vegetables, flowers, nursery stock to eggs and numerous other items. This indicated some interest in consumers joining the supply chain should a market with a desirable location be considered.

Producer Survey and Supply Analysis

Review and Analysis of Survey Results

Franklin County has a diverse farming community that offers consumers a diversity of products from meat to mushrooms. The county identified 51 farming operations within the county that would be potential market vendors. Of the number identified, forty-six responded to surveys or participated in an interview conducted by the study team. When these vendors were asked where they currently marketed their product the responses were varied. Almost 60 percent noted that they sold their product on farm with 35 percent reported as selling at farmers' markets other than the existing Franklin County Farmers' Market. Twenty-four percent of vendors indicated a use of the internet for the sale of product and twenty-two percent noted they sold product at the existing Franklin County Farmers' Market (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Where Have You Sold Products In The Past Year (Check All That Apply)?



Source: Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

No vendors sold product at large retail stores and only 15 percent sold to grocery stores. The majority of vendors were marketing product directly to consumers. When asked how often products were sold at the existing Franklin County Farmers' Market the majority of vendors, 64 percent, reported they did not sell at the market. Eleven percent indicated they rarely sold at the market, this indicating that three quarters of the vendors

participating in the study were not using the existing market as a marketing channel for their products. Only thirteen percent used the market more than once a week. In an effort to determine if a market was not a venue preferred by vendors, they were asked if they would use a new market and how often. Results are reflected in Table 6.

Table 6. How Often Would You Sell Products at A New Market

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
More than once a week	35.56%
Once a week	26.67%
Once a month	22.22%
Rarely	11.11%
Never	4.44%

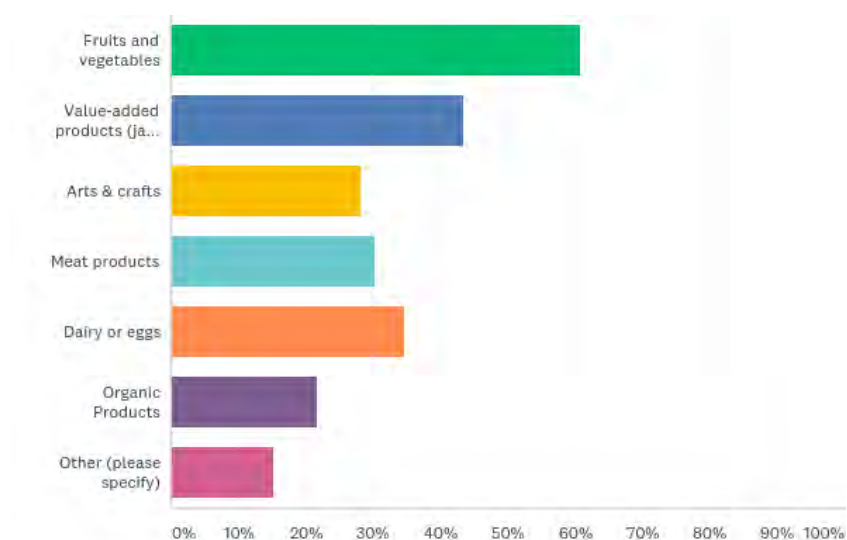
Source: Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

The percentage of vendors unwilling to use the current Franklin County Market declined from 75 percent non-users to 15 percent non-users if a new market was located in Franklin County. When asked what months they would use the market, vendors indicated greatest use would be April through December, but product would be available year-round. Additionally, while Friday and Saturday were the primary days indicated for use, vendors indicated that the market would be of interest for use Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday as well with lower percentages noted.

When asked preference for hours of operation, 9am – 1pm was the desire of most. Other options offered were to open earlier, 8am – 1pm and to stay open later 2pm – 7pm to appeal to after work traffic during the week.

Figure 8 illustrates the wide range of products that vendors most desired to sell at a new market.

Figure 8: Which Products Would You Be Most Interested In Selling At A New Farmers' Market?



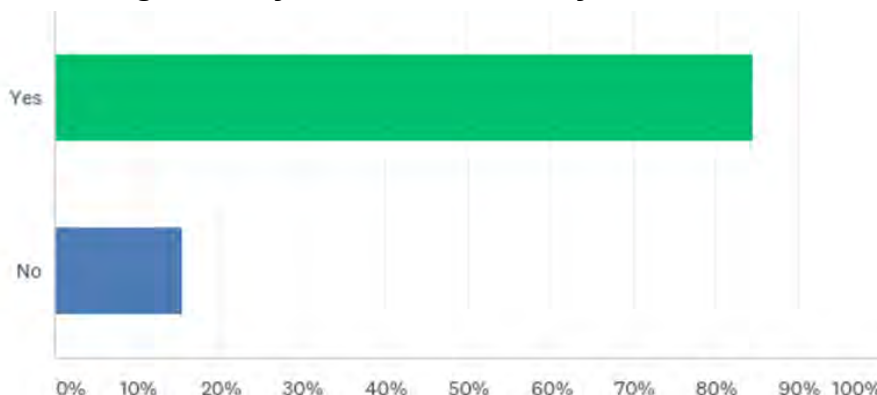
Source: Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

When vendors were asked to describe the type of market best suited for the sale of their products the majority, 75 percent, selected an enclosed structure with doors. Slightly over half (53%) of vendors selected an open shelter as their second best suited market type. Interviews of vendors as well as results from vendor surveys indicated that location, marketing (signage) and advertising were crucially important to the success of a market. Signage and marketing opportunities had been noted as a challenge at the current market. Local restrictions require that only temporary signage can be used during hours of operation.

The most desired location indicated (67%) was on a major road or highway within the county with only 18 percent suggesting a downtown location and 13 percent suggesting the current market location be retained. Eighty-one percent believed a market would be more successful if the market was near other attractions to encourage traffic and increased customer base.

When asked if the market should be a multi-use facility that could be used for events and programs as well as a market, Figure 9 illustrates the response of vendors which was overwhelmingly supportive of a multi-purpose facility.

Figure 9: Do You Believe A Farmers' Market In Franklin County Should Be A Multi-Purpose Facility That Could Be Used For Other Events And Programs Such As Weddings, Family Reunions, Birthday Parties, Etc.?



Source: Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

Table 7 reveals the intended use by market vendors of a multipurpose facility in addition to their use as a market outlet.

Table 7. Would You Attend Other Events At The Facility Such As Meetings, Concerts, Etc.?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	95.35%
No	4.65%

Source: Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

The majority of vendors indicated a willingness to pay rental fees for use for a facility designed for a market with multiple use options. Over ninety percent of the vendors interviewed or responding indicated that they would be willing to pay a reasonable rental rate for market space for a multi-use type of market. Over seventy-nine percent also stated they would consider renting the facility for personal events if the site was made available to the public. Sixty-five percent would additionally desire to use the site if a commercial kitchen was available for use. The majority of existing vendors expressed support financially through rental use of the market and other multiple use opportunities.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents also expressed support of county funds being used to pay for the market facility. Vendors recognized the need for multiple funding sources

to fund the facility. A majority of supply side sources believe the development of public and private support would be necessary for the development of a successful market.

Figure 10. Do You Support Utilizing County Funds to Pay for the New Farmers' Market If Necessary?

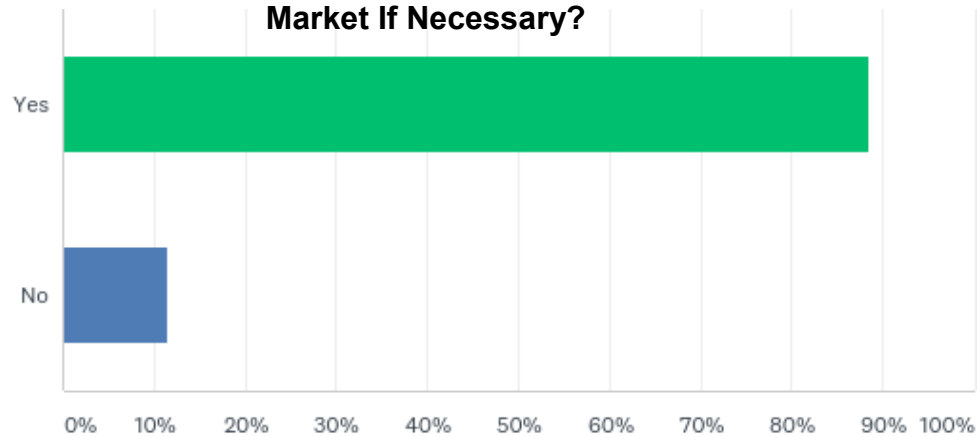


Figure 10. Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmers' Market Feasibility Study

Of the vendors responding to surveys and interviewed, 91 percent owned a farm or business located in Franklin County. Fifty-two percent of these operations were located closest to Louisburg, with other operations located near Bunn and Youngsville. Sixty-five percent of vendors expressed they would be willing to travel 20 or more miles to sell product and when asked, 58 percent of vendors believed that only Franklin County farmers or businesses should be able to market products at a farmers' market in Franklin County. Those interviewed believed that Franklin County farmers should be given first opportunity for selling at a market and that the number of vendors of similar products should be limited until the market share increased sufficiently to support others.

When vendors were asked to share additional comments and to share the one thing that they felt was essential to a successful farmers' market four main needs were noted.

- The most important factor was that the market must be in a readily accessible location
- A strong customer base was noted as the second most important factor.
- Marketing and advertisement were noted to be crucial to get the word out to potential customers both residents and those non-residents that are traveling through the county. This would include signage, social media and other marketing and advertising strategies.
- Lastly, the vendor base needs to be able to deliver a variety of consistent, high quality, year-round products.

Organizational Analysis

Organizational Capacity Analysis

The current Franklin County Farmers' Market is managed by a part-time market manager, an employee of the County's Cooperative Extension Center. Paid, part-time market managers employed by Cooperative Extension is the case with a number of the farmers' markets that were visited to gain information for this study. Most are housed on county property in a county-owned structure that has been built as a result of a combination of grant funds, county appropriations and private donations through corporations, individuals and non-profit organizations. All markets visited that were managed by part-time and very dedicated personnel expressed a need to increase marketing and advertising whether through signage or local and social media outlets. This was the one consistent concern expressed by managers interviewed.

Most county-owned markets utilize a county-appointed board of directors to oversee the farmers' market. Typically these are made up of vendors, customers and other members of the community. This oversight is helpful in anticipating issues and setting realistic rules for market vendors and rentals.

Numerous markets were visited and investigated, but to get a regional evaluation of market utility and operations, the survey team visited the Vance County and Rocky Mount Farmers' Markets. Both of these venues are also run by part-time managers. Both are located on county property purchased from the original owners and while differing in acreage both are relying on neighboring or public parking options or traffic control for busy market days or public and private events. The Vance County market is located on a 9 acre tract, however not all of that tract is being used or would be usable in its current state. The Rocky Mount location is located on 1.5 acres and the existing buildings and parking uses all of the available acreage and adjacent street and private parking.

Both markets were originally constructed as metal open air structures, but both have since found additional funding for enclosure of the facilities with roll up doors and the Vance Market and one building of the Rocky Mount Market are heated. Both facilities consist of a Manager's office space and each have additional space for restrooms, storage, and Rocky Mount has been renovated to include a concession kitchen area serving the open area of the facility. Notable information gleaned from visiting these and other site visits would be to encourage that adequate space for expansion be acquired initially. Should land be purchased or otherwise acquired ample acreage should be sought, thereby not limiting the potential for expansion and diversification of use of the facility.

Operational Scenarios

It is not the role of this study to determine or create the rules for a farmers' market but it can share the input provided in the survey results. This information is included below.

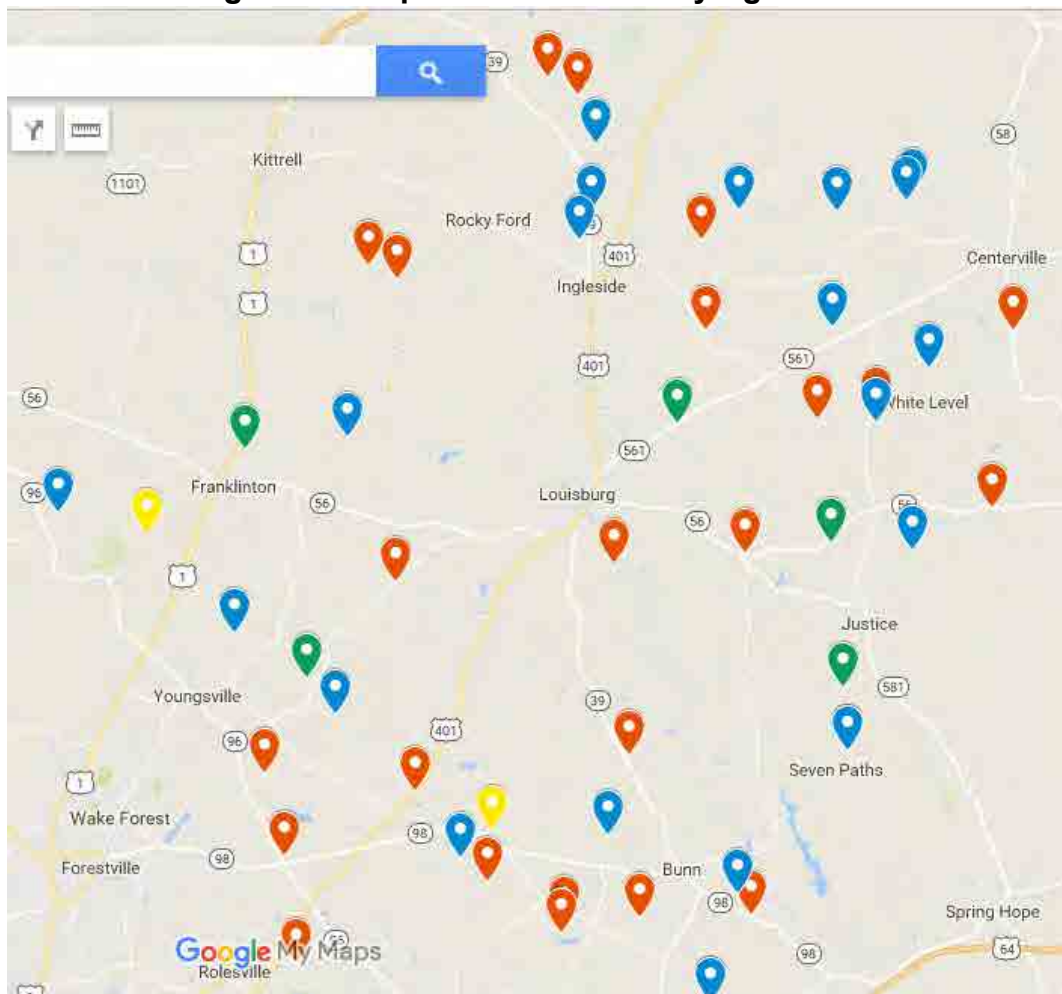
- There is customer support for a year-round market, but the peak months are April through October. This is identical to the trend from the producer survey as well.
- Saturday was the primary choice of day for farmers' market shoppers followed by Friday. Other days were evenly distributed. Saturday and Friday, respectively, were the first choice of vendors with Tuesday ranking above other remaining days.
- Evening hours were suggested by many customers but 8am – 5pm was the most popular choice. Most vendors preferred morning hours through early afternoon. In interviews this time was suggested because that is when produce is freshest. Some also suggested Friday evening times for the market.
- Customers prefer the market to be enclosed or open shelter with slightly higher preference for the open shelter. Vendors were very supportive of the enclosed market option with the open shelter receiving less support. Vendors were also more willing to pay rental for an enclosed area than for an open shelter.
- Two-thirds of customer survey respondents and nearly 90% of vendors reported that it should be available for special event rentals.
- The market should be on a major road outside of town located near other attractions according to customers and vendors alike.
- There is support from both groups for utilizing county funds to pay for a farmers' market. As stated, vendors are also willing to pay reasonable rental rates for a new market facility.

Transportation and Processing Analysis

Map of Producer Locations

Franklin County is home to many farmers of various horticultural or agronomic commodities, livestock and other value-added products. Figure 11 is a map of farms located in Franklin County. This map of producers was provided by the NC Cooperative Extension- Franklin County Center. Though this is not an all-inclusive list – it contains the majority of farmers that participate in extension activities. The farms are fairly widespread. The red marked locations denote fruit and vegetable producers, blue is livestock and hay farms, yellow locations are mushroom farms and green map points mark pecan or tree farms and nurseries. The farms included in the map are distributed fairly evenly across the county. Over 90 percent of identified producer locations fall within 20 miles and 100 percent within 30 miles of any potential market placement site.

Figure 11. Map of Franklin County Agricultural Producers



Source: NC Cooperative Extension – Franklin County Center, entered in Google Maps

Supply Limitations

In interviews conducted for this study as well as in survey comments –residents and vendors both noted that Louisburg has not been a viable site for the farmers’ market. Lack of support by the community of the existing market or the absence of an expressed desire for options to support the market were noted. Additionally, limitations on product diversity imposed by the landowner and the inability to utilize signage due to regulations imposed by the City of Louisburg were noted as key factors limiting the utility of the existing market. Numerous producers providing input, stated that unless the market moved from Louisburg, they would not participate in selling at the Franklin County Farmers’ Market due to the lack of community support and other reasons including lack of ability to expand the market, lack of ease of ingress/egress with product, lack of parking, signage regulations and other expressed concerns.

Throughout this process the study team has worked hard to provide a venue for impacted residents, whether vendors or consumers, to have an opportunity to express their concerns and ideas. Innovations as well as criticisms are important to share. Some ideas that might need to be considered when selecting a location and the appropriate size of the property on which the market may be located include expansion options and innovative opportunities. Whether creating a market that could also include shipping options for farmers to ship produce in boxes or meals to customers; or considering a general store type of option where farmers could provide products to be sold without having to commit to being at the market all the time; or offering the space for public and private rental for events, it is clear that the site should allow for the ability to expand. Having visited both the Vance and Rocky Mount Markets it becomes quickly apparent that space limitations are faced as utility of the market space increases.

The study team evaluated the utility of both the Vance and Rocky Mount Markets. This information may lead to the consideration of a multi-use facility to encourage utility of the investment year-round. The Rocky Mount Market opened in 2005 and evaluated days to open settling in 2011 on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8am – 1pm June through August and only on Saturdays April - May and September – November. Average vendor numbers and customer numbers are noted below for 2005 and then from 2011 to 2017 when consistent days and hours of operation were determined.

Table 8. Rocky Mount Farmers' Market Historical Customer Counts

Year	Wednesday	Wednesday	Saturday	Saturday
	Customers	Vendors	Customers	Vendors
	Total #	Avg.#	Total #	Avg.#
2005			10,190	18
2006			11,855	16
2007			14,485	21
2008			18,220	21
2009			21,495	22
2010			24,350	29
2011	1,106	11	25,145	29
2012	1,998	12	32,523	31
2013	1,733	9	34,921	26
2014	2,314	10	36,071	25
2015	1,464	7	40,794	24
2016	1,404	5	36,794	24
2017	1,691	6	35,408	26

Table 8 data exhibits customer visitation and vendor numbers from 2005 to 2015. From 2015 to 2017 a slight decline in customer numbers is noted, but customer numbers and vendor numbers exhibit a 250% increase since its opening in 2005.

The Vance County Market opened in 2014. Hours and days of operation are from 7:30am until 1:00pm Wednesdays and Saturdays from May to October and Saturdays from 8:00am – 1:00pm in April and December. Table 9 illustrates the vendor and customer numbers for the market.

Table 9. Vance County Farmers' Market Historical Customer Counts

Year	Total Customer Number	Avg. Number of Vendors
2014	9,915	9
2015	9,120	9
2016	8,337	8
2017	8,284	10

Table 9 illustrates customer numbers for the Vance County Market. A slight decrease is noted in customer numbers, but has stabilized as expected and vendor numbers have increased slightly.

Regional market data indicates a consistent and supportive use of the markets over time. This data and the consideration of facility uses beyond the scope of this study is believed to be warranted. This study is specific to traditional farmers' markets. It would be wise for farmers' market leadership to research additional options that might help this market stand out from others in the area. A certified commercial kitchen was also a suggestion which was supported by nearly 70 percent of survey respondents.

Geographical Location, Market Construction Options, and Transportation Availability

Franklin County, located in Central North Carolina, has the second fastest growth rate of surrounding counties falling behind Wake County which is home to the state capitol. Franklin County's population has experienced an increase of over eight percent since the 2010 Census. The state average for that time period is 6.5%. Many sources indicate that the growth is coming, primarily, from the southern part of the county (Franklin County Demographics, 4) near the Youngsville area which is likely due to the proximity of Wake County.

According to the Planning and Inspections Department 386 single family building permits were issued in 2016. This was an increase of 88% since 2009 and an eighteen percent increase from 2015. A total of 27,526 housing units are in Franklin County. An average of 3.86 people are moving into Franklin County each day (Franklin County Demographics, 7).

Municipalities within Franklin County for the most part are within 20 miles of each other. Data indicated that a majority of people were willing to travel 20 miles to access a farmers' market. Data additionally indicated that many vendors were willing to travel more than twenty miles, but 20 miles based upon current data is a good boundary for planning purposes. Travel distances from town to town in Franklin County are illustrated in Table 5. United States Department of Agriculture research has shown that rural residents, not adjacent to a Metro area are willing to travel 19.2 miles to a farmers' market and vendors typically travel 23.2 miles (Lohr, et. al. np). The proximity of municipalities to one another in Franklin County and the data provided in this research indicate that most residents of Franklin County would be within or very close to these expressed delineations.

A result of increased development along the US 1 Corridor has resulted in the plan to further develop the highway into a freeway. This will provide better access to Franklin County from Raleigh, Interstate 85, 540 and other major roadways within Franklin County. A study is currently underway to continue to consider opportunities for growth and development of the US 1 corridor to better serve travelers (US 1 Corridor Study – NC DOT). The study is also considering the Southeast High Speed Rail that is planned to connect Washington, D.C. to Atlanta, Georgia (US 1 Corridor Study – CAMPO).

Based upon data received from Franklin County residents and vendors as well as demographic and socio-economic data from the county and existing research about farmers' markets, the location best suited to attract customers to a sustainable farmers' market in Franklin County is Youngsville. Planning and census data supports this decision because of the growing population in that portion of the county. Based on research geared to identifying target customers, Youngsville was determined to be the best location. Data from consumer surveys supported this location with 67 % of Franklin

County residents reported as willing to drive 20 miles to purchase products from a farmers' market. Sixty-five percent of vendors indicated they would travel this same distance to supply product. The population density within a 20 mile radius clearly indicates a population capable of supporting a market. Franklinton and Louisburg because of their central location and position near the main highways of US 1 and Highway 401 offer alternatives to this data driven decision.

For an accurate depiction of land availability and pricing in Franklin County, project staff was directed by Franklin County Economic Development to consult a local realtor. Property data acquired revealed that subdivisions are moving rapidly into the Youngsville area and all land prices – including retail, residential and commercial properties continue to escalate. In discussion with local realtors, it was noted that if the county were interested in leasing land, some landowners who are not currently interested in selling parcels might be willing to lease property to the county for the development of a farmers' market.

A search of for sale properties of 3 to 10 acres currently on the market was conducted. This acreage would provide adequate space for development, growth and adequate parking. Land prices in the Youngsville area have been on the rise in recent years due to development and growth in the area. Three to ten acre parcels ranged in price from \$34,900 to \$349,650 per acre. Franklinton land prices ranged from \$57,842 per acre to \$269,000. Sites outside of Louisburg included in the search ranged in price from 20,000 to \$136,612 per acre. Adjacent properties in Wake County are being sold for \$500,000 per acre. Site selection consideration should include looking for opportunities to locate a market site near an existing destination or in an area that could serve as an easily accessible location of interest. Those surveyed felt this would encourage a diversity of uses for and users of the facility.

Proper site selection for adequate market size and parking is essential to the success of a farmers' market. According to the Buellton Municipal Code one parking spot per 30 square feet of auditorium floor is required (np). This is important, especially if the facility will be used for other special events in addition to the farmers' market.

Construction costs for the Vance and Rocky Mount markets would indicate an approximate cost of close to \$2,000,000 for the construction of a similar facility with adjustments for inflation and increased construction costs. The Rocky Mount Farmers' Market started with a 7,500 square foot building with office space and bathrooms. The Vance Regional Farmers' Market is similar to Rocky Mount's building and is 500 square feet larger. Both are enclosed and heated with restrooms, office and storage space. This estimated cost is in addition to land purchase price and site preparation costs for the selected site. In both of Vance and Nash Counties, a private organization purchased the land and provided the land to the county for the Farmers' Market. Rocky Mount has since added a second 5,500 square feet building with only vendor spaces – no enclosed

office space or bathrooms because of the proximity to the first building. The Vance Regional Farmers' Market also planned to include a commercial kitchen, but transitioned the space to a classroom instead due to available funds.

According to Franklin County survey results, an open shelter or enclosed market would satisfy the needs shared by customers. Based on associated construction costs and the availability of funds, an enclosed area including office space, restrooms, a classroom or commercial kitchen and an open market area that could be enclosed in the future would be a viable option for residents and vendors. It would be recommended however that the cost of enclosure of the open shelter be estimated prior to construction to determine feasibility based on financial support for the project. It is recommended also that the entire project be designed and cost assessed prior to project initiation thereby allowing for phased construction. While the likely success of the market seems apparent, the utility of the structure to maximize year-round use should be evaluated. Market use only, limits the versatility and potential income to be generated by the facility's usage. Each market visited increased in size or amenities offered over the period from its initial construction to the present. The ability of leadership and community to develop a shared vision for this project will help to ensure the eventual success of the project.

Acreage purchased should be large enough to accommodate at minimum an 8,000 square foot structure, associated stormwater drainage acreage required and additional space, per specifications based on facility size, for approximately 250 parking spaces. It is recommended that additional acreage needs be evaluated to allow for expected facility expansion and diversification of usage whether by the county or other entities.

Financial Analysis

Financial Summary and Feasibility

It is expected that an enclosed farmers' market building with office space, restrooms and a classroom or commercial kitchen will cost close to two million dollars to construct. For practical purposes an acre can sustain about 150 parking spaces (Holland, np). A minimum of three acres of land will be needed and this does not allow space for outdoor events or growth. A minimum of five usable acres would be a minimum to allow for growth and future development.

Constructing a farmers' market in the Youngsville area is deemed feasible. Data confirms that farmers and other vendors are willing to supply products to the market and customers are willing to support the market. The public has expressed an interest in facility rental for special events. The culmination of all of these factors makes adding a Farmers' Market in Franklin County a feasible venture, but one that will need support from local government leaders, the public and other funding sources to ensure success.

Assumptions

There are assumptions that must be satisfied to make a new Franklin County Farmers' Market feasible. These are listed below.

- The County of Franklin is willing to support the facility, at some level, financially for construction, operation and general maintenance. Survey responses showed that there is support for the county's financial support of this effort.
- External funds are available to be used for building construction. Private or grant funds should be sought to supplement available funds provided by the County.
- Land is available and able to be purchased or acquired by the County of Franklin in the areas listed in this study for the purpose of locating a Farmers' Market.

Funding Sources

NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (NCTTFC) has supported several community and regional farmers' markets. According to their website hundreds of farmers and thousands of consumers have been impacted by facilities constructed with NC TTFC funds. Several farmers' market-based grants were funded in the most recent cycle of TTFC grants.

The Tobacco Trust Fund grant cycle opens in December or January and must be submitted by the beginning of March each year. NCTTFC funds projects based in tobacco-dependent communities; communities that have been adversely affected by changes in the state's tobacco industry and population that derive most of its income from agriculture. Funding priorities include community economic development, diversification initiatives and increasing farm profitability which can all be directly related to this project. Projects funded ranged from \$48,500 to \$160,000 in the past five years (Grants – TTFC). <http://tobaccotrustfund.org/>

Golden LEAF Foundation

The Golden LEAF Foundation was formed by the North Carolina General Assembly to, “promote social welfare and lessen the burdens of government to provide economic impact assistance to economically affected or tobacco-dependent regions of North Carolina... (Charter, np).” Golden LEAF Foundation has funded up to \$380,000 for farmers’ market and related projects in the past. Golden LEAF has a rolling grant cycle with applications reviewed and awarded year round. <http://www.goldenleaf.org/>

Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund

The Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund funded this feasibility study to determine the viability of a farmers’ market in Franklin County. Though the trust fund has not funded the construction of any farmers’ markets, it is possible that it would support components linked directly to preserving farmland. The deadline for ADFP grant applications is mid-December (NCADFP Home). <http://www.ncadfp.org/index.htm>

The Cannon Foundation

Local government agencies can apply for grants for the purposes of human services and community initiatives, among others. Four grant application periods are offered throughout the year (The Cannon Foundation, np). <http://www.cannonfoundation.org/>

The John Rex Endowment

The John Rex Endowment has a funding area that focuses on Healthy Weight. This area is aimed at battling childhood obesity in Wake County. This may be a good way to tie in adjacent Wake County and find additional funding for this effort. Funding requests

are continually considered for the John Rex Endowment (John Rex Endowment). <http://www.rexendowment.org/>

Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust currently has funding priorities of community-centered prevention including access to healthy foods. The combination of a farmers' market and Franklin County Cooperative Extension's education programs would be a good fit for this trust fund (Health Improvement in North Carolina). <http://kbr.org/>

USDA Farmers' Market Grant Opportunities

The purpose of the Farmers' Market Promotion Program (FMPP) is to increase domestic consumption of, and access to, locally and regionally produced agricultural products. To develop new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations serving local markets by developing, improving, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to, or assisting in the development, improvement, and expansion of, domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>

Additional funding exists for farmers' market and local food accessibility through USDA's Farmer Market Coalition Program. This effort is multi-faceted and supports everything from efforts to bring farmers' markets and organic food gardens to senior living communities to awarding grants to community development corporations (CDCs) and community development financial institutions (CDFIs) to fund farmers' markets, food hubs and other healthy food projects that create jobs and business development opportunities in low-income communities, especially food deserts. <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/funding-opportunities/>

The Rural Business Development Grant program is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>

The Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of new products. The goals of this program are to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, and increase producer income. <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>

Other sources of income whether through grants or loans may include:

The NC Rural Economic Development Center <http://www.ncruralcenter.org/>

W. K. Kellogg <https://www.wkkf.org/>

Z. Smith Reynolds <https://www.zsr.org/grants-programs/grants>

Overall Feasibility Evaluation

Summary and Conclusion

Franklin County began the process of laying the foundation for relocating and improving its farmers' market in 2016 by contacting the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to seek funding for the market. County leadership determined that to qualify for grant funding a feasibility study was needed to demonstrate and confirm the potential success of a farmers' market in Franklin County. Study results conclude that the construction of a new Franklin County Farmers' Market is feasible given that certain conditions are met. The market was determined to be feasible by evaluating county demographic data as it compares to documented research demographics of farmers' market shoppers. Additionally, survey and interview results from Franklin County residents and farmers were compiled to evaluate the existing and potential supply chain as well as the existing and potential consumer product demand. The specific conditions of this conclusion are included within this document.

Throughout the conversations with managers of other farmers' markets they reported that markets in our state are still enjoying significant customer support. Farmers' market managers have had to get creative to create events that interest and appeal to customers. It is noted that locating a farmers' market conveniently near other attractions is helpful to warrant success and utility.

The current farmers' market is located in Louisburg, the seat of Franklin County. The data collected and demographic information available indicated that the best location for a farmers' market in Franklin County is in the southern part of the county in the Youngsville area. This area has experienced both building development and population growth that is expected to continue. The proximity of this area of the county to Wake County is also appealing. There is a strong customer base of Franklin residents traveling to work in Raleigh and others remain within convenient driving distances. Franklinton and Louisburg are also locations that could be considered, but the target demographics are not as strong as in Youngsville. The ability to locate a market along a main thoroughfare would ensure an expanded customer base beyond the existing residential base of the county. The Youngsville area offers the most likely location in the county for a successful market. A site adjacent to US 1 would offer an unusual opportunity to locate a market in the residential demographic area denoted by the data and afford the opportunity for access by the travelling public as well. Limitations to this highway access point would most likely be the market price of land shared in a previous section.

Another important part of the equation is availability of land. This study shows that an area of at least five acres is needed to adequately site the facility and allow for future growth and development of the market. Franklin County-owned land is limited and none

is available in these three areas. To build a new farmers' market the county must be willing to purchase the land needed unless another organization has adequate land it would be willing to provide to be utilized for the project. The land, if possible from a purchase price perspective, should be along a main road and fully visible from the road. Signage and destination or event opportunities that may be available at the market will only increase the potential returns and viability of a market.

Survey responses supported utilizing county funds to build a new farmers' market. Although there are several foundations and granting agencies that support farmers' market projects the county will need to provide some matching funds that can be applied to the project.

Recommendations

Study data indicated that a market is feasible and additional information has been provided to design the best scenario for the development of a successful market in Franklin County. County leadership and interested parties may elect to engage in the following action steps to proceed through the recommended process.

Action Step 1: Determine practical sites in the area designated by this study for the Franklin County Farmers' Market.

Action Step 2: Develop a budget for the land, building and associated costs to construct a new farmers' market.

Action Step 3: Secure land for the Franklin County Farmers' Market through public and/or private sources.

Action Step 4: Seek funding through grants/foundations/ and public/private partnerships to construct the Franklin County Farmers' Market.

References

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Appendices

Appendix I: Franklin County Farmers' Market Customer Survey

Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

1. Are you completing this survey online or at a meeting?
☐ Online using the link provided
☐ At a Meeting (include event and date) _____
2. Do you know that Franklin County has a Farmer's Market at Shannon Village in Louisburg?
☐ Yes
☐ No
3. How often do you purchase products from the current Franklin County Farmer's Market?
☐ More than once a week
☐ Once a week
☐ Once a month
☐ Rarely
☐ Never
4. If a new farmer's market were built in Franklin County how often would you visit to purchase products offered there?
☐ More than once a week
☐ Once a week
☐ Once a month
☐ Rarely
☐ Never
5. Which products would you be most interested in purchasing from a new Farmer's Market (Check all that apply)?
☐ Fruits and vegetables
☐ Value-added products (jams, jellies, canned items, baked goods)
☐ Arts & crafts
☐ Meat Products
☐ Dairy or eggs
☐ Organic products
☐ Other (please specify) _____

Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

6. Where do you currently buy these items (Check all that apply)?

- ☐ Grocery Store
- ☐ Large Retail Store
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Different farmer's market (include name and location) _____
- ☐ Directly from a farm
- ☐ Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program
- ☐ Raise, grow or make products at home
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

7. What months would you most likely purchase products from a Franklin County Farmer's Market (check all that apply)?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> January | <input type="checkbox"/> July |
| <input type="checkbox"/> February | <input type="checkbox"/> August |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March | <input type="checkbox"/> September |
| <input type="checkbox"/> April | <input type="checkbox"/> October |
| <input type="checkbox"/> May | <input type="checkbox"/> November |
| <input type="checkbox"/> June | <input type="checkbox"/> December |

8. What days of the week would you be most likely to visit a Farmer's Market (check all that apply).

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday
- ☐ Sunday

9. What would be your preference for hours of operation for a Farmer's Market?

- ☐ 8 AM – 5 PM
- ☐ 9 AM – 1 PM
- ☐ Noon – 5 PM
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

10. What type of Farmer's Market do you think would be adequate for Franklin County and make you more likely to shop at a farmer's market?

- ☐ Enclosed market with doors
- ☐ Open shelter
- ☐ Pop-up Tent Market

Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

11. In which general location would you prefer a market site to be?
- ☐ Downtown area
 - ☐ On a major street or road outside of town
 - ☐ In a rural area
 - ☐ Current location
12. Do you believe a farmer's market should be a multi-purpose facility that could be used for other events and programs such as weddings, family reunions, birthday parties, etc.?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
13. Would you attend other events at the facility such as meetings, concerts, festivals, etc.?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
14. Would you consider renting the facility for your event(s) if it were available to the public?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
15. Would you be more likely to visit a farmer's market if it was near other attractions such as shopping centers, businesses, schools, etc.?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
16. What town (or former town) is closest to where you live?
- ☐ Bunn
 - ☐ Franklinton
 - ☐ Centerville
 - ☐ Louisburg
 - ☐ Youngsville
17. What town (or former town) is closest to where you work?
- ☐ Bunn
 - ☐ Franklinton
 - ☐ Centerville
 - ☐ Louisburg
 - ☐ Youngsville

Customer Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

18. How far would you be willing to travel to visit a market?

- ☐ Up to 5 miles
- ☐ Up to 10 miles
- ☐ Up to 20 miles
- ☐ More than 20 miles

19. Do you support utilizing county funds to pay for a new Farmer's Market if necessary?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

20. Are you interested in selling products at a farmer's market?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. If so, what products are you interested in selling? _____

22. Please share any additional comments that you have regarding a Farmer's Market. _____

Appendix II: Franklin County Farmers' Market Vendor Survey

Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

1. Are you completing this survey online or at a meeting?
☐ Online using the link provided
☐ At a Meeting (include event and date) _____
2. Where have you sold products in the past year (Check all that apply)?
☐ Grocery Store
☐ Large Retail Store
☐ Internet
☐ Franklin County Farmer's Market
☐ Different farmer's market (include name and location) _____
☐ On farm
☐ Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program
☐ Do not currently sell products
☐ Other (please specify) _____
3. How often do you sell products at the existing Franklin County Farmer's Market?
☐ More than once a week
☐ Once a week
☐ Once a month
☐ Rarely
☐ Never
4. If a new farmer's market were built in Franklin County how often would you sell products at a new market?
☐ More than once a week
☐ Once a week
☐ Once a month
☐ Rarely
☐ Never
5. What months would you most likely sell products at a Franklin County Farmer's Market (check all that apply)?

<input type="checkbox"/> January	<input type="checkbox"/> July
<input type="checkbox"/> February	<input type="checkbox"/> August
<input type="checkbox"/> March	<input type="checkbox"/> September
<input type="checkbox"/> April	<input type="checkbox"/> October
<input type="checkbox"/> May	<input type="checkbox"/> November
<input type="checkbox"/> June	<input type="checkbox"/> December

Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

6. What days of the week would you be most likely to sell at a Farmer's Market (check all that apply).
- ☐ Monday
 - ☐ Tuesday
 - ☐ Wednesday
 - ☐ Thursday
 - ☐ Friday
 - ☐ Saturday
 - ☐ Sunday
7. What would be your preference for hours of operation for a Farmer's Market?
- ☐ 8 AM – 5 PM
 - ☐ 9 AM – 1 PM
 - ☐ Noon – 5 PM
 - ☐ Other (please specify) _____
8. Which products would you be most interested in selling at a new Farmer's Market (Check all that apply)?
- ☐ Fruits and vegetables
 - ☐ Value-added products (jams, jellies, canned items, baked goods)
 - ☐ Arts & crafts
 - ☐ Meat products
 - ☐ Dairy or eggs
 - ☐ Organic products
 - ☐ Other (please specify) _____
9. What type of Farmer's Market do you think would be best suited for Franklin County and make you more likely to sell at a market?
- ☐ Enclosed market with doors
 - ☐ Open shelter
 - ☐ Pop-up Tent Market
10. Would you be willing to pay reasonable rent for space in the type(s) of market selected above?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
11. In which general location would you prefer a market site to be?
- ☐ Downtown area
 - ☐ On a major street or road outside of town
 - ☐ In a rural area
 - ☐ Current location

Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

12. Do you believe a farmer's market in Franklin County should be a multi-purpose facility that could be used for other events and programs such as weddings, family reunions, birthday parties, etc.?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
13. Would you attend other events at the facility such as meetings, concerts, festivals, etc.?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
14. Would you consider renting the facility for your event(s) if it were available to the public?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
15. Would you use a commercial kitchen if it was available in or near a Farmer's Market?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
16. What products would you process if a kitchen was available for use?
-
17. Would you be more likely to sell products at a farmer's market if it was near other attractions such as shopping centers, businesses, schools, etc.?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
18. Is your farm or business located in Franklin County?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
19. What town (or former town) is closest to your operation?
- ☐ Bunn
☐ Franklinton
☐ Centerville
☐ Louisburg
☐ Youngsville

Vendor Survey for Franklin County Farmer's Market Feasibility Study

20. How far would you be willing to travel to sell at a market?

- ☐ Up to 5 miles
- ☐ Up to 10 miles
- ☐ Up to 20 miles
- ☐ More than 20 miles

21. Do you support utilizing county funds to pay for a new Farmer's Market if necessary?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

22. Do you think only Franklin County farmers or businesses should be able to market products at a Farmer's Market in Franklin County?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

23. If you could choose one thing that you feel is essential to a Farmer's Market what would it be? _____

24. Please share any additional comments that you have regarding the Farmer's Market. _____