



The Friends of Central Market

Frequently Asked Questions: PUBLIC MARKETS and FRIENDS OF MARKETS

WHAT IS A PUBLIC MARKET?

As stated in the Central Market Master Plan (and universally accepted,) a public market is much more than a conventional retail business operation. A public market is both an institution and an enterprise (typically food retailing) that is legally held in the public trust. The function, operation, and management of public markets are typically guided by a mission that holds the market and its management accountable to broad public interests.

The legal instruments that establish Central Market as a public market are the 1730 land grant by James Hamilton (which created the marketplace) and the 1742 Royal Charter.

PUBLIC MARKETS PRODUCE PUBLIC GOODS--WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Public goods refer to those things, considered human necessities and often determined as a legal right, that widely and equally benefit the public-at-large. These might include

- free and open access to a commonly-held place
 - community health
 - historic and cultural resources (guaranteed to citizens by the PA State Constitution)
 - healthy, affordable food
 - clean water
 - clean air
 - a locally-controlled economic system (ie, an economy in which a community's wealth is generated primarily from the local production and exchange of goods and services.)
- etc.

Public goods are distinct from, but not necessarily incompatible with, the private benefits that also occur at public markets, such as business profits made by individual vendors. To use an example found in the Master Plan: whereas conventional retail operations use conventional business logic for management decisions (focusing on narrow and limited groups of customers, and choosing to decide not to serve certain markets), a public market has an overarching legal obligation to balance its operations to meet public needs.

One of the key public functions of markets (but not the only one) is ensuring that urban populations retain their access to affordable, healthy food. This function is a legally established right of municipalities in the state of Pennsylvania.

DEFINE THE KEY PUBLIC FUNCTIONS OF CENTRAL MARKET.

Central Market provides

- ❖ A publicly-held, regulated space used for the direct sale of fresh foods to metro area consumers,
- ❖ A site that contributes to the regional farm and urban economies by giving owner-operated, locally-owned food businesses and Lancaster County growers a place to sell their products directly to consumers,
- ❖ A site that gives urban residents the option of using their food dollars to directly support Lancaster County farmers,

- ❖ An environment that can promote social and economic integration between and among Lancaster citizens,
- ❖ A nationally recognized landmark of Lancaster's, and Pennsylvania's, regional history and as a continuing source of civic pride and community identity.

WHAT ABOUT CENTRAL MARKET AND THE CENTRAL MARKET TRUST?

With the formation of the Central Market Trust, the city has provisionally given the management of the public functions of Central Market to a private non-profit corporation comprised of local citizens, while nominally retaining the responsibility for the building. This follows a general trend in public market management since about the late 1980s, refining a public-private retail management model invented by James Rouse for so-called festival markets.

This does not necessarily mean that Central Market necessarily ceases to function as a public market. It no longer has the distinction, however, of being the oldest publicly owned and operated farmers market in the United States.

WHERE DO THE FRIENDS OF CENTRAL MARKET FIT IN?

Our mission complements and enhances the charge of the Central Market Trust.

The Friends of Central Market is a private non-profit corporation [501(c)(3), founded by Lancaster citizens and Market customers. The FoCM works as citizen-stewards on behalf of the Market's public functions. We are not in charge of Market management and operations, but support, through initiatives, education, research and advocacy, a public mission that ensures the Market remains a genuine community resource.

In this sense we are similar to such organizations as the Historic Preservation Trust, the Lancaster Farmland Trust, and the Lancaster Conservancy, with the key difference being that we are dedicated to a single, public institution.

IS THIS WHAT FRIENDS OF MARKET ORGANIZATIONS TYPICALLY DO?

This depends on the type of market and the community where it is located. Examples can be found of Friends of Markets organizations doing everything from operations to events planning.

Spurred by the mixed track record of public markets to meet community needs however, there has been growing national recognition for the need to have independent citizen-advocates involved with public market operations. The National Agricultural Law Center formally made such a recommendation 2 years ago.

Given the historic significance of the Lancaster Central Market, the Friends of Central Market was nationally recognized as a model for Friends organizations by the Public Market Collaborative in 1998.