

ANC6B EMCAC REPORT

October, 2020

The highly anticipated strategic plan that for the Eastern Market that commenced in 2019 has now been released and is available for public viewing and comment. ANC Commissioners can/will/should review it at <http://easternmarket-dc.org/about/eastern-market-strategic-plan/>. The plan represents a much more satisfying planning effort than Capitol Hill residents are accustomed to receiving from consultants and organizations: it is the result of aggressive outreach and sophisticated analyzes, and it makes an effort to link each recommendation in a transparent manner to actual data gathered in surveys and studies. One innovation that merits reading by all members of the community is the comparative analysis – governance, marketing, operations – between the Eastern Market and five similar markets around the Nation

It is a large plan of some 150 pages. It includes 52 “actionable strategies” and many more recommendations – some incredibly specific – but organizes them in terms of likely impact, cost, and the degree of difficulty to implement.

A central recommendation is to establish the governance of the Eastern Market as a private-public partnership. The report notes that this is different than previous proposals that appear superficially similar. Modifications in the role of EMCAC would make this body responsible for running the market rather than having DGS try to do so. Included in the new role: hiring and evaluating the market manager, arranging leases, and marketing – everything but capital expenses. Also, the present EMCAC membership would be revised to give a more meaningful voice to vendors and would include market experts in addition to community representatives.

Readers will find 12 areas of strategic recommendations:

- (1) Transition to a nonprofit public-private partnership;
- (2) Follow a capital improvement plan that balances historic preservation and energy efficiency;
- (3) Establish tenant agreements that balance small business security and management flexibility;
- (4) Incorporate online shopping experiences in a way that enhances the in-person experience;
- (5) Create a customer hub;
- (6) Enhance the vibrancy of the indoor market;
- (7) Attract and retain more local farmers;
- (8) Manage outdoor market layout to increase density, vibrancy, functionality, and access;
- (9) Incorporate and communicate a variety of short-term parking options that allow for efficient pickup of purchases and a range of accessibility needs;
- (10) Centralize efforts to create a unified Eastern Market District;
- (11) Enhance marketing efforts that are centered around events, outreach, and education;
- (12) Activate public spaces using signage, urban design, and lighting.

The report concludes with this admonition:

Decisive action is crucial for Eastern Market and the EMSUA to not only remain the heart of Capitol Hill, but to thrive as an economic and culturally sustainable public market for Washington DC and its region. The authors of this strategic plan have no control over implementation. It is now up to stakeholders, government entities, and the public to take action, lobby for change, and motivate the refinements and improvements that will ensure Eastern Market’s success into its next century.

How will this ambitious plan come about? Strategic Plan recommendation 1.1 is to form an “implementation group” to coordinate implementation of the recommendations. The group will be made up of government representatives, Eastern Market business owners, and community stakeholders. To express interest in becoming a member of the implementation group one has to complete the Priorization Survey located at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/easternmarketplan>.

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An important historical note of appreciation: funding for the strategic plan was provided by the DC Council at the request of Ward 6 CM Charles Allen. The plan was developed by architrave p.c.architects, located on Capitol Hill.