



## a (draft) vision for creating a farmer's market



A draft vision for a small Thursday evening Farmer's Market we host out in the parking lot of Zingerman's Roadhouse.

### WEST SIDE FARMER'S MARKET

It's the longest day of the year; the sun is at its pinnacle of warmth and light. Throngs of people are milling around the Roadhouse parking lot on this Thursday afternoon, amazed and excited at the abundance of locally produced goods and services ranging from several gorgeous varieties of tomatoes to hand made soap and artisan crafts, to herbs and plants, plus a very strong synergy of Zingerman's items – cheese from the Creamery, breads from the Bakehouse and the ever energetic Roadshow crew caffeinating all the vendors and customers. Every vendor is selling the best of what there is to offer, growing or producing themselves what they sell. There's a tangible truth patrons have come to trust- that all these products have a story and none of them traveled very far to get here. Tents and awnings cover the stalls, creating a colorful and festive mood. There are 15-20 vendors at the Market, so it's accessible and maintains variety but remains magnetic and welcoming.

The WSFM continues to provide our customers with the best products available and serves as a catalyst for community development by offering an educational component and a local music scene. We have space reserved for weekly scheduled acts, including local musicians, demonstrations and educational activities. Several people recognize the Roadhouse Chefs selecting vegetables from the Market's vendors for the weekend's menus at the Roadhouse. The market is a family event, where parents bring their children after school and meet to shop for fresh produce. After shopping, families enjoy a snack from the Roadshow at our picnic tables. Guests are thrilled with the produce, the chance to visit with neighbors, and best of all, connect with the farmers who actually grow their food.

This year, WSFM planning committee is helping to generate interest and support throughout the area business community for the Market. Local businesses hang posters or hand out flyers about the Market and participate in promotions that encourage their customers to visit the Market. These companies recognize the potential for the Market to draw additional patrons to the area and increase business throughout the Westside. These developing relationships with area businesses and the Westside neighborhood at large are enabling the WSFM to become a more self-sustaining entity. While Zingerman's remains an active and essential supporter of the Market, the WSFM is a self- sustaining entity.

The WSFM planning committee operates under an inspiring mission statement and is taking steps toward making the WSFM a fiscally independent operation. Our market manager is working closely with the Zingerman's liaison to ensure organization and success, from honing job descriptions to developing and proposing paid WSFM positions. We have a great group of vendors working together who are already excited to build on these successes for next year. Visions and action steps are laid out for the coming years at our annual WSFM debrief.