

**Community FARM MARKETplace™  
A Model for Agricultural Development in Pennsylvania**

**Final Report**  
to  
**Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**  
by  
**Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture**  
regarding  
**Ag Project Contract ME# 440662**

**November 5, 2001**

This final report provides the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture with an update on activities and accomplishments toward establishing the Community FARM MARKETplace™ in the South Side neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

Much work has been completed in laying the groundwork for the market development. [The enclosed *Business Plan* and *Site Feasibility Study* include the results of extensive technical reviews and investigations compiled by P ASA with the help of Albertin/Vernon and other partners with the aim of realizing a permanent marketplace for fresh farm products in the chosen location. .

Following is a synopsis of the most important issues and resulting actions that have occurred during the period of the contract:

**Traffic Study**

At the beginning of this project, Tom Cox, Deputy Mayor, City of Pittsburgh, expressed concerns about the market's impact on traffic patterns in the Southside section of the City. With our input, the City Planning Department issued an internal draft traffic study with findings of no significant impact from the project and with this study and subsequent discussions the City is more comfortable with this aspect of the project.

**Community Support**

The City also made their support for the project conditional on the development of local support by the community. Toward this end, the South Side Local Development Corporation (SSLDC, one of our partners) launched a community planning process which featured the Marketplace as the centerpiece of the plan to strengthen the character of the Bedford Square district. This plan was presented to the Southwest Pennsylvania Commission (SPC, another partner) for endorsement by local community leaders. P ASA, Albertin/Vernon, SSLDC and SPC spent much of the contract period further promoting the project with the City including several meetings to resolve issues that remain.

## **Senior Center**

The South Side Market House is currently used as a senior center, and an alternative location for this center must be identified in order for the Marketplace development to proceed. The senior center director is conditionally supportive of the proposal to relocate to a new facility subject to the identification of an alternate site. Local foundations have assured the City that funding for the senior center renovations and relocation is an area where they could be helpful; funding should be available if an alternate site can be identified. It is important to note that there are a number of elements of the Market House structure that do not make for an ideal senior center facility.

The project team and City are currently investigating several nearby locations for a new center. The relocation does have to be complete before any renovation of the Market can Proceed.

## **City Parks**

Another interesting aspect of the Market House building is that the City Parks department operates a gymnasium on the second floor, which serves the local community. We were surprised at a June (2001) meeting to find that they would be interested in including use this space with the lease for the Market House. While presenting an additional, relocation challenge for the city, the space offers PASA an alternative to conduct special events as part of the Market House routine. Such events could include social mixers for farmers and their customers, folk music and dance events, public interest forums, and fundraisers to benefit ongoing operation of the market. We look forward to exploring these possibilities more completely if this project moves ahead.

### *Business Plan & Site Feasibility Study*

The primary focus of our contract with PDA was to complete these two studies before moving on to implementation of the plan. They are both substantial pieces of work, and are enclosed with this report -they speak for themselves. We are greatly indebted to Albertin/Vernon, our primary partner on this project, for successful and timely completion of this very complex phase of the planning process. Their work included:

1. Architect selection.
2. Preparation of architectural plans for site development, code analysis, and cost estimates.
3. Development of financial pro formas to reflect cost estimates and start up and operating costs.
4. Meetings with key constituents including farmers who have expressed interest in being vendors.
5. Refinement of organizational structure for development, ownership, and operations.
6. Ongoing consultation with the City of Pittsburgh to resolve their issues.
7. Final production and distribution of the documents.

Other PASA personnel who participated in this final stage of the project (i.e. the PDA contract period) were Lamonte Garber (Interim Director), Allen Matthews (Southwest Program Director), Lauren Smith (Administrative Director) and Brian Snyder (Executive

Director as of 5/1/01). Expenses reimbursed by PDA during the contract period are summarized in the three attached invoices as previously submitted. The two enclosed documents have been distributed to our partners already identified in this report (i.e. Albertin/Vernon, SSLDC, and SPC) as well as to a few additional sources of financial support for the project.

### **Conclusion**

PASA did not anticipate the delays that occurred in this project, but the project stakeholders have made considerable progress in addressing the City's concerns and other issues. At this point, we await word from officials of the City of Pittsburgh as to how and when they would like to proceed. In the meantime, the experience, knowledge and data collected as part of this project, and embodied now in several substantial documents, are there to serve us on other potential projects in the Southwest region of Pennsylvania. A spate of articles in the popular press toward the end of the recent summer season indicate strong support of the public and of farmers for permanent farm market locations in and around Pittsburgh -it is only a matter of time before this dream Becomes realized.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian W. Snyder", followed by a horizontal line and the date "11/5/0".

Brian W. Snyder  
Executive Director, PASA