



neighborhood exchange evaluation device  
measuring the social impact of a public market

## **Social Capital Impact Study**

Prepared by Market Umbrella  
for  
The Crescent City Farmers Market  
October 11, 2012

This study was created using the Neighborhood Exchange Evaluation Device (NEED), a methodology developed by Market Umbrella.



*Market Umbrella is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit devoted to cultivating the field of public markets for public good. For more information about Market Umbrella, please visit [www.marketumbrella.org](http://www.marketumbrella.org).*

### **What Is Social Capital?**

Social capital encompasses the relationships and networks that create the trust that undergirds civil society. Social scientists identify two kinds of cohesion-building activities, or activities that increase social capital: Those that “bond” homogeneous community members to each other and those that create “bridges” across different groups. For example, transactions between buyers and sellers at a market with a narrow demographic build bonding cohesion, while farmers markets that increase positive interactions among diverse individuals and groups build “bridging” cohesion. The latter help bring together groups that otherwise would have little reason or opportunity to interact: urban with rural, immigrant with native, old with young, black with white.

According to the World Health Organization, “the social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system.” According to Yellow Wood Associates, who specialize in the economic development of rural areas, investments in bridging across groups can lead to shared experiences and connections between otherwise unconnected individuals and groups. Investments in bonding social capital strengthen relationships within groups. Further, Investments in social capital can lead to improved education and health outcomes. Farmers markets have the opportunity to improve social capital in the communities they serve and thus positively change the social determinants of health.

## **What Is NEED?**

Influenced by the public health thinking concerned with the social determinants of health, Market Umbrella developed the Neighborhood Exchange Evaluation Device (NEED) to analyze social transactions in farmers markets. Such transactions are key indicators of the ability of markets to promote trust. The more connections and associations a person has, and the more varied those connections are, the stronger the sense of cohesion, or trust, he or she has with the community.

Farmers markets provide numerous opportunities for individuals to interact with others. Whereas the modern grocery store experience is designed to minimize social contact, farmers markets' appeal hinges upon it: There are no self-check-out lines in farmers markets. Market Umbrella hypothesized that the many transactions occurring in public markets help bridge social groups and create bonds within groups.

## **NEED Methodology**

Using the NEED methodology, Market Umbrella evaluates how often and with whom farmers markets facilitate social trust: among and between shoppers, vendors, and neighbors. Trained research teams conduct intercept surveys with a representative sample of shoppers on one or more representative market days and compile quantitative and qualitative questions about their experiences at the market.

## **Measuring Social Capital at the Crescent City Farmers Market**

NEED measures the social ties that broaden social networks, improve access to valuable information, and create a sense of belonging. These are building blocks for healthy communities.

Market vendors who trust the market staff to operate fairly and with integrity can grow their businesses in the safety of the market. Similarly, shoppers who trust the market to prevent price collusion among vendors or who trust vendors to provide safe, healthful, and good-tasting produce may invest more time and money as loyal shoppers.

How successful is the Crescent City Farmers Market in promoting social ties within its community of vendors, shoppers, and neighbors?

## Summary: NEED Study of the Crescent City Farmers Market

**Survey Findings:** Survey respondents (shoppers, vendors, neighborhood residents) were asked the following questions. Aggregated responses for all markets are below.

**Shopper Survey Data Set:** In March 2012, the NEED research team, including pollsters from the Policy and Research Group in New Orleans, interviewed adult shoppers at the Crescent City Farmers Market’s three locations:

- 142 adult shoppers at the Tuesday, Uptown market on Broadway Avenue
- 130 adult shoppers at the Thursday, Mid-City market on Orleans Avenue
- 155 adult shoppers at the Saturday, Downtown market on Magazine Street

**TOTAL: 427 surveyed shoppers**

### Shopper Survey Responses

1. How long did you stay at the market today (in minutes)?

Response	Number	Percent
1-29 minutes	351	82.2%
30-59 minutes	64	15%
60-89 minutes	10	2.3%
90-120 minutes	2	0.5%
	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>

2. Do you live or work in this neighborhood?

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	242	56.7%
No	185	43.3%
	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>

3. What else do you like about the market besides shopping?

Response	Number	Percent
Support locals	250	58.6%
Atmosphere	61	14.3%
Meeting people	38	8.9%
Eating	34	8.0%
Nothing	4	0.9%
Other	40	9.4%
	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>

4. Once finished shopping, do you find yourself hanging out at the market?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	329	77%
Yes	98	23%
	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>

5. Several vendors at the market are selling the same quality tomatoes. Where are you most likely to purchase your tomatoes?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Favorite vendor	184	43.1%
Best price	135	31.6%
Most convenient	33	7.7%
Don't know	75	17.6%
	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>

6. Are you Hispanic/Latino?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	408	95.6%
Yes	19	4.5%
	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>

7. How do you primarily identify yourself?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White	319	74.7%
Black	41	9.6%
Hispanic/Latino	20	4.7%
Asian	8	1.9%
Other	39	9.1%
	<b>427</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Vendor Survey Data Set:** In March 2012, the NEED research team, including pollsters from the Policy and Research Group in New Orleans, interviewed vendors at the Crescent City Farmers Market’s three locations:

- 28 vendors at the Tuesday, Uptown market on Broadway Avenue
- 11 vendors at the Thursday, Mid-City market on Orleans Avenue
- 24 vendors at the Saturday, Downtown market on Magazine Street

**TOTAL: 63 surveyed vendors**

**Vendor Survey Responses**

1. What is it about this market you like?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>I like the people</b>	39	61.9%
<b>Make more money</b>	17	27%
<b>This market needs support</b>	4	6.4%
<b>Don't know</b>	3	4.8%
	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

2. What kinds of benefits besides sales do you get from this market?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Meeting new people</b>	30	47.6%
<b>New business opportunities</b>	22	34.9%
<b>Support the market</b>	4	6.4%
<b>Support the Neighborhood</b>	3	4.8%
<b>Don't know</b>	4	6.4%
	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what degree do you feel a sense of community when you come to the market?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Strong sense</b>	44	69.8%
<b>Solid sense</b>	12	19.1%
<b>Some sense</b>	7	11.1%
<b>Weak sense</b>	0	0%
<b>No sense</b>	0	0%
	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

4. Do you let any customers purchase on credit?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Yes</b>	35	55.6%
<b>No</b>	28	44.4%
	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

5. Gender

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Female</b>	34	54%
<b>Male</b>	29	46%
	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

6. Are you Hispanic/Latino?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	59	93.7%
<b>Yes</b>	4	6.4%
	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>

7. How do you primarily identify yourself?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>White</b>	53	84.1%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	4	6.4%
<b>Black</b>	3	4.8%
<b>Other</b>	3	4.8%
	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Neighborhood Resident Survey Data Set:** In March 2012, the NEED research team, including pollsters from the Policy and Research Group in New Orleans, interviewed residents of the neighborhoods around the Crescent City Farmers Market’s three locations:

- 35 residents at the Tuesday, Uptown market on Broadway Avenue
- 42 residents at the Thursday, Mid-City market on Orleans Avenue
- 63 residents at the Saturday, Downtown market on Magazine Street

**TOTAL: 140 surveyed shoppers**

**Resident Survey Responses**

1. Would you consider yourself a resident, a worker, the owner of a local business, or a visitor at this particular address?

Response	Number	Percent
Resident	64	45.7%
Worker	49	35.0%
Visitor	21	15.0%
Owner	6	4.3%
	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

2. Do you know about the local farmers market<sup>1</sup>?

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	116	82.9%
No	24	17.1%
	<b>140</b>	<b>100%</b>

3. Do you shop at the market?

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	78	67.2%
No	38	32.8%
	<b>116</b>	<b>100%</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Tabulation for questions 3–7 include only respondents who answered “Yes” to question 2 (*Do you know about the local farmers market?*).

4. Has the market benefitted this neighborhood?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Yes</b>	109	94%
<b>No</b>	7	6%
	<b>116</b>	<b>100%</b>

5. Gender

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Female</b>	67	57.8%
<b>Male</b>	49	42.2%
	<b>116</b>	<b>100%</b>

6. Are you Hispanic/Latino?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>No</b>	108	93.9%
<b>Yes</b>	7	6.1%
	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>

7. How do you primarily identify yourself?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>White</b>	84	73%
<b>Black</b>	18	15.7%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	7	6.1%
<b>Asian</b>	4	3.5%
<b>Other</b>	2	1.7%
	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Interpreting the Survey Findings

These survey results tell us a great deal about the market and its ability to create and enhance social capital.

**Shoppers:** While the market’s primary, advertised purpose is to facilitate trade, 91.1% of respondents said they like the Crescent City Farmers Market for reasons beyond shopping, such as supporting locals (58.6%), meeting people (8.9%) and soaking up atmosphere (14.3%). And 23%, almost a quarter of respondents, report “hanging out” at the market even after they have finished shopping. Also, 43.1% report a preference for shopping with “favorite vendors.”

We interpret these figures as indicating that the market is an important institution for facilitating both social transactions and market transactions with social components.

**Vendors:** Among Crescent City Farmers Market vendors, almost half (47.6%) of respondents said they benefited from meeting new people at the market. Over a third, 34.9%, reported benefiting from new business opportunities generated at the market. Also, 6.4% report benefits from supporting the market, and another 6.4% report benefiting from supporting the neighborhood.

Perhaps even more importantly, 69.8% report that they feel a “strong sense” of community. A further 19.1% report feeling a “solid” sense of community, and 11.1% report “some” sense of community. No vendors reported a “weak” sense or “no sense” of community.

A surprising 55.6% of respondents allow customers to purchase on credit, demonstrating a high level of trust between vendors and shoppers.

**Neighbors:** Among Crescent City Farmers Market neighbors, 82.9% of residents say they know about the market, and 67.2%—a large proportion—say they shop at the market. Interestingly, 94% of residents say they believe the market has a positive impact on the neighborhood (despite the occasional inconveniences of increased traffic, parking issues, and trash left in the area). This means that even residents who do not shop at the market still value the market’s presence in their neighborhood.

**Bonding and Bridging:** The high level of trust between vendors and shoppers, the reported sense of community among vendors, and the neighborhoods' positive attitude about the market all point to a market institution that is creating bonding and bridging opportunities for its participants and neighbors.

NEED studies of the Crescent City Farmers Market in 2007 indicated that the overwhelming majority of shoppers identified themselves as white (85%). After three-years of inventive community outreach programs to new audiences—seniors, WIC recipients, SNAP recipients, and children—a 2010 NEED study showed a marked increase in shopper ethnic diversity (from 15% non-white in 2007 to 24% non-white in 2010). In 2012, this percentage went up again, slightly, to 25.3%.

However, approximately 27% of surveyed neighborhood residents are non-white, as compared to the vendor base (15.9%) and the shopper base (25.3%). These figures speak to the ongoing challenge of improving bridging opportunities between market participants and the surrounding neighborhood.

Another figure, though, points to effective bridging: The number of shoppers who come from outside the neighborhood. About 43% of shoppers neither work nor live in the neighborhood where they attend the market. This means that while the market is obviously doing a good job of integrating the market into its neighborhoods, it is also creating bridging opportunities between market participants and residents from other parts of the city.


## **Conclusions**

The Neighborhood Exchange Evaluation Device (NEED) studies conducted in March 2012 demonstrate that the Crescent City Farmers Market in New Orleans increases social capital, primarily by

- creating a shopping environment with multiple opportunities for transactions that include a social component
- creating an environment in which vendors feel a sense of community among themselves and feel a strong sense of trust with their patrons
- creating a positive relationship between the market and its host neighborhoods

NEED thus underscores the value of the farmers market as a platform for improving trust and social cohesion, in ways that conventional grocery stores and big box stores, which are designed to minimize social activities, cannot. Farmers markets are places where consumers interact with each other and with food producers and form the kinds of ties that help build trust and that support civil society. The Crescent City Farmers Market thus influences the social determinants of health and positively impacts human capital in its community.

## Appendix I: NEED Survey Form: Shopper

 <b>Neighborhood Exchange Evaluation Device</b> for measuring the social impact of a public market							SHOPPER EXIT INTERVIEW FORM	
1.	How long did you stay at the market today? (in minutes)	Do you live or work in this neighborhood? A: Yes B: No C: Not Sure	Did you come to the market for any reason besides shopping? If yes, why? A: No B: Atmosphere C: Local D: Meet E: Eat F: Other	If you found a valuable item (like a watch or necklace) at the market, what would you do with it? A: Give To Vendor B: Give To Staff C: Give To Shopper D: Give To Police E: Keep It	Several vendors at the farmers market are selling tomatoes. Where are you most likely to purchase your tomatoes? A: Best Price B: Best Looking C: Favorite Vendor D: First Vendor E: Other	How do you primarily identify yourself? A: Hispanic/Latino B: Asian C: Pacific Island D: A. American E: White F: N. American G: Multiracial	Gender A: Female B: Male	If you don't mind, would you please tell me your occupation or job title? (write in)
2.						Age Range A: 0-19 B: 20-39 C: 40-59 D: 60+		
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Pollster's Name:

Study:

Date:

## Appendix II: NEED Survey Form: Vendor

 <b>Neighborhood Exchange Evaluation Device</b> for measuring the social impact of a public market							<b>VENDOR FORM</b>	
1.	Describe product sold: (write in)	What is the main reason you come to this market? (choose one) A: Make money B: Meet people C: Support market D: Other	Are there other markets open today that could be a retail outlet for you? If yes, Why sell here? A: No B: Make money C: Meet people D: Support market E: At both/others F: Other	What kinds of benefits besides sales do you get from this market? A: New business opportunities B: Friends & atmosphere C: Support market D: Support neighborhood E: Other	On a scale of 1 to 5, to what degree do you feel a sense of community when you come to this market? 1: No sense 2: Weak sense 3: Some sense 4: Solid sense 5: Strong sense	Do you feel comfortable having other vendor(s) or someone else at the market fill in for you (for a few minutes)? A: Yes B: No	Gender A: Female B: Male	How do you primarily identify yourself? A: Hispanic/Latino B: Asian C: Pacific Island D: A. American E: White/Caucasian F: N. American G: Multiracial
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Pollster's Name:

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Date:

**Appendix III: NEED Survey Form: Resident**

 <b>Neighborhood Exchange Evaluation Device</b> for measuring the social impact of a public market						RESIDENT INTERVIEW FORM		
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10.	Would you consider yourself a resident, a worker, the owner of a local business, or a visitor at this particular address? A: Resident B: Worker C: Owner D: Visitor	Do you know about the local farmers market? A: Yes (next question) B: No (end interview)	Any reason besides shopping? A: No B: Atmosphere C: Local good D: Meet folks E: Eat F: Other	How do you think the market affects this community? A: No real effect B: Don't know C: Health benefit D: Social benefit E: Community Rep F: Convenience G: Economic benefit H: "Green" benefit	Has the market benefited this neighborhood? A: Yes B: No	How do you primarily identify yourself? A: Hispanic/Latino B: Asian C: Pacific Island D: A. American E: White F: N. American G: Multiracial	Gender A: Female B: Male	If you don't mind would you please tell me your occupation or job title? (write in)
	Why don't you? A: Convenience B: Don't need C: Unsafe D: Not interested E: No need F: Price G: Weather H: Cleanliness	Do you shop at the market? A: Yes (next question) B: No (skip to question "Why don't you?")	Why don't you? A: Convenience B: Don't need C: Unsafe D: Not interested E: No need F: Price G: Weather H: Cleanliness	If yes, whom would you complain to? A: Neighbors B: Market staff C: Friends/Family D: Neighborhood E: Other	Age Range A: 0-19 B: 20-39 C: 40-59 D: 60+			

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Pollster's Name:

Study:

Date: