

Memo

To: Traffic and Safety Commission
From: Nicole Almaguer, Environmental Specialist
Date: 1/21/2011
Re: Proposed Albany Farmer's Market

Background

The City issued a Request for Proposals to establish an Albany Farmers Market in June 2010, and has been working with the Ecology Center, a local nonprofit, to develop a farmers market customized to the City of Albany.

The City's Climate Action Plan calls for establishment of an Albany Farmer's Market to strengthen the regional food system and serve as a community resource. The overarching goal is to develop a market that attracts shoppers to the commercial sector of Solano and San Pablo, and serves as festive opportunity for the community to obtain quality local, organic foods and goods.

The Ecology Center has been operating local farmers markets since 1987. The Ecology Center offers a comprehensive approach to conducting a sustainable market including:

- Zero waste event
- Organic, local produce and goods
- Inclusion of Albany vendors and coordination with restaurants
- Informational/educational programs
- Support programs including Electronic Benefits Transfer System (EBT), WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition, and the Senior Nutrition Program

Proposed Event

The proposed site for the market is the 1000 block of Solano Avenue, west of San Pablo Avenue. The market would be seasonal, held between May – October, on Wednesdays from 3pm-7pm . The market would comprise of approximately 20 vendor booths. The intended "grand opening" is scheduled for May 4, 2011.

The Ecology Center has met with all businesses on the 1000 block of Solano to discuss the proposed site, and received support for the event. In developing the event concept, staff and the Ecology Center, worked with merchants and the Solano Avenue Association regarding location options that help add to Solano and San Pablo Avenue. The Ecology Center has also worked with the City's

Sustainability Committee, who has expressed strong support for establishment of the market. Additionally, a public meeting was held on December 7, 2010 to discuss the proposed event, and support for the market was expressed by attendees.

Traffic Management

The Ecology Center has developed a traffic control plan, which identifies how traffic throughout the area would be managed (attached). The Ecology Center staff oversees three farmers markets within the City of Berkeley, and has a significant amount of experience with road closures. Additionally, an encroachment permit is in process of being issued by Caltrans, to be received the week of January 24, 2011.

Next Steps

The Farmer's Market will be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission on February 8, 2011, and by the City Council on February 22, 2011.

Monitoring of the market will be conducted throughout the season (May-October) to determine whether accommodations need to be made should any issues arise. Additionally, a review of the market will be conducted following completion of the first season.

Attachments:

1. Ecology Center event proposal and traffic control plan



Traffic and Safety Commission
Proposed Albany Farmers' Market
January 27th, 2011

About The Ecology Center

The Ecology Center is a community-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit with 50 employees and an annual operating budget of over four million dollars. The mission of the Ecology Center is to promote environmentally and socially responsible practices through programs that educate, demonstrate, and provide direct services. The organization was founded in the lead-up to the first Earth Day in 1970 as part of the emerging environmental movement.



In addition to the Farmers' Markets, the Ecology Center's programs include: Berkeley's Curbside Recycling Program, Farm Fresh Choice, The Berkeley Food Policy Council, The Farmers' Market EBT Program, EcoHouse, The Climate Change Action Program, a Retail Store and Information Services.

The Markets

The Ecology Center has operated farmers' markets in Berkeley, California since 1987, and currently operates farmers' markets three days per week, year round, rain or shine. We operate markets one hundred and fifty times during the course of the year. Nearly one hundred different vendors participate in these markets. Most (83%) of these vendors come from within 100 miles. Combined, the farmers cultivate over 3,100 acres, with farms ranging in size from one third of an acre to 400 acres. At their peak, our markets attract over 10,000 customers in a week and during the course of the year, total customer attendance is approximately 400,000.

At the Ecology Center our markets have two primary goals: to support farmers and to make seasonal, local, organic produce available to city dwellers. Many farmers markets have become places for predominantly pre-prepared food purveyors and craft vendors with no assurances of who is making the product or where it is from, but not our markets.

We feel strongly that farmers' markets are a place for artisans rather than resellers. All vendors at the Ecology Center Farmers' Markets produce the product that they are selling at the market. In the case of farmers, they must grow all of the produce



that they sell. Non-agricultural vendors need to make the item that they are selling.

At our markets we strive to balance choice with diversity. Over the years, we have learned that when customers can reliably find a wide variety of products, the market becomes part of people's regular shopping patterns. As a result we pay particular attention to the vendor mix at our markets to make sure that items are represented in the right balance.

Each of the three markets that the Ecology Center operates has its own distinct character and flavor, reflecting the neighborhood that the market is located in as well as the community of shoppers and vendors that have evolved over the years:

South Berkeley (Tuesdays) 2pm-7pm

When a loose collection of volunteers brought the idea to the Ecology Center in 1987, the City of Berkeley offered a lightly trafficked stretch of Derby Street between Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Milvia Street. The market started with just a handful of vendors selling produce out of the back of their trucks on a street that had been closed to traffic. Over the years, the market has grown into



a year-round event that covers all of the available length of Derby Street, with forty different vendors and 2,500 customers a day during the peak of the season. The easy parking and position early in the week makes the South Berkeley market a favorite with restaurants.

Downtown Berkeley (Saturdays) 10am-3pm

Just three years after the Ecology Center started the market on Derby street, there was enough interest to justify opening a second market. In the twenty years since the market opened, it has grown into the largest of our three markets, attracting 65 vendors and 5,000 customers weekly at the peak of the season. The Downtown Berkeley market is a destination market, attracting visitors from all over the bay area and

attention from national media. In 2008, the New York Times recognized the market in its *36 Hour* travel segment, saying, "It's tough choosing from the many farmers' markets in the Bay Area, but for the real deal, head to the Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market."

North Shattuck Market (Thursdays) 3pm-7pm

The newest of our markets, the North Shattuck Market is still maturing, although vendors tell us that for a new market, sales are very strong. While the market has maxed out its available physical space with 25 vendors at the peak of the season, the number of customers continues to grow rapidly. At peak season the market attracts approximately 2,700 people each week.

Proposed Market Location and Details



1000 block of Solano Avenue (between San Pablo Avenue and Adams st.)

As the major business artery in Albany, Solano Ave is a logical choice as a location for the market. The block is centrally located, making it within walking or biking distance of most Albany residents, and is well served by public transportation. The market would be highly visible to traffic coming down Solano towards the market, and to drivers passing by on San Pablo. The proximity to retail on both Solano Avenue and San Pablo Avenue should benefit both the businesses and the market.

Proposed Day and Time: Wednesday 3pm-7pm

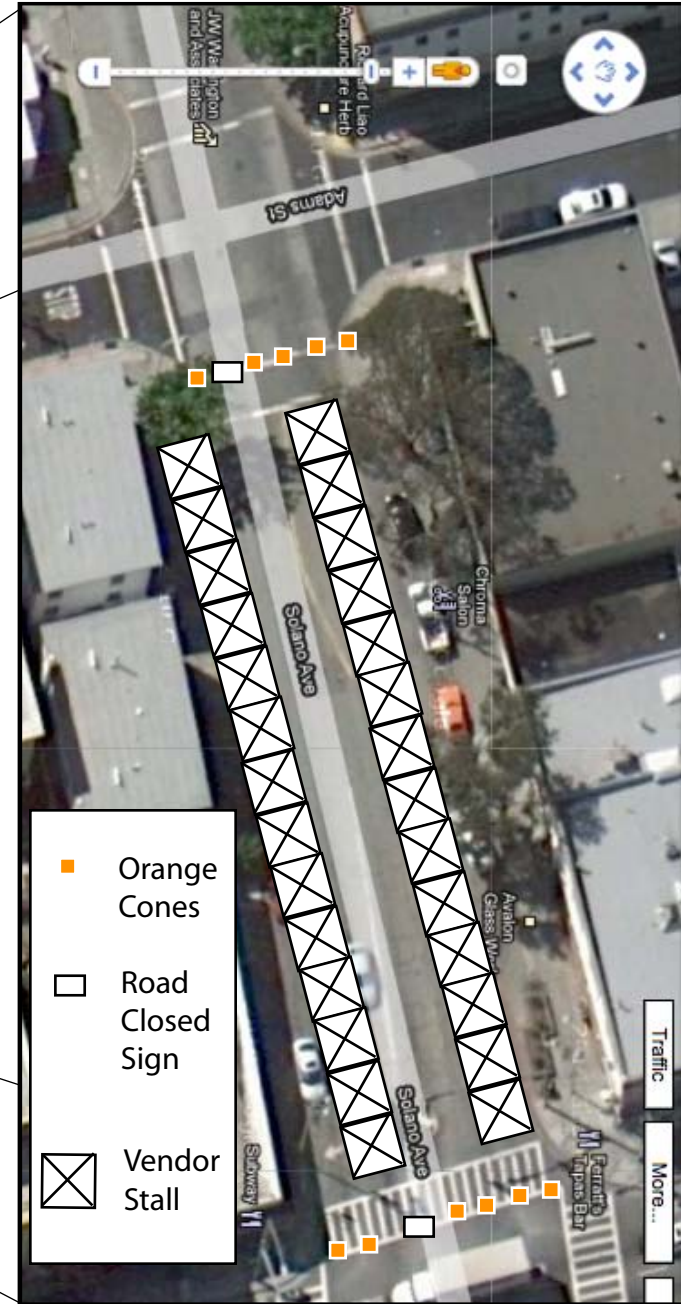
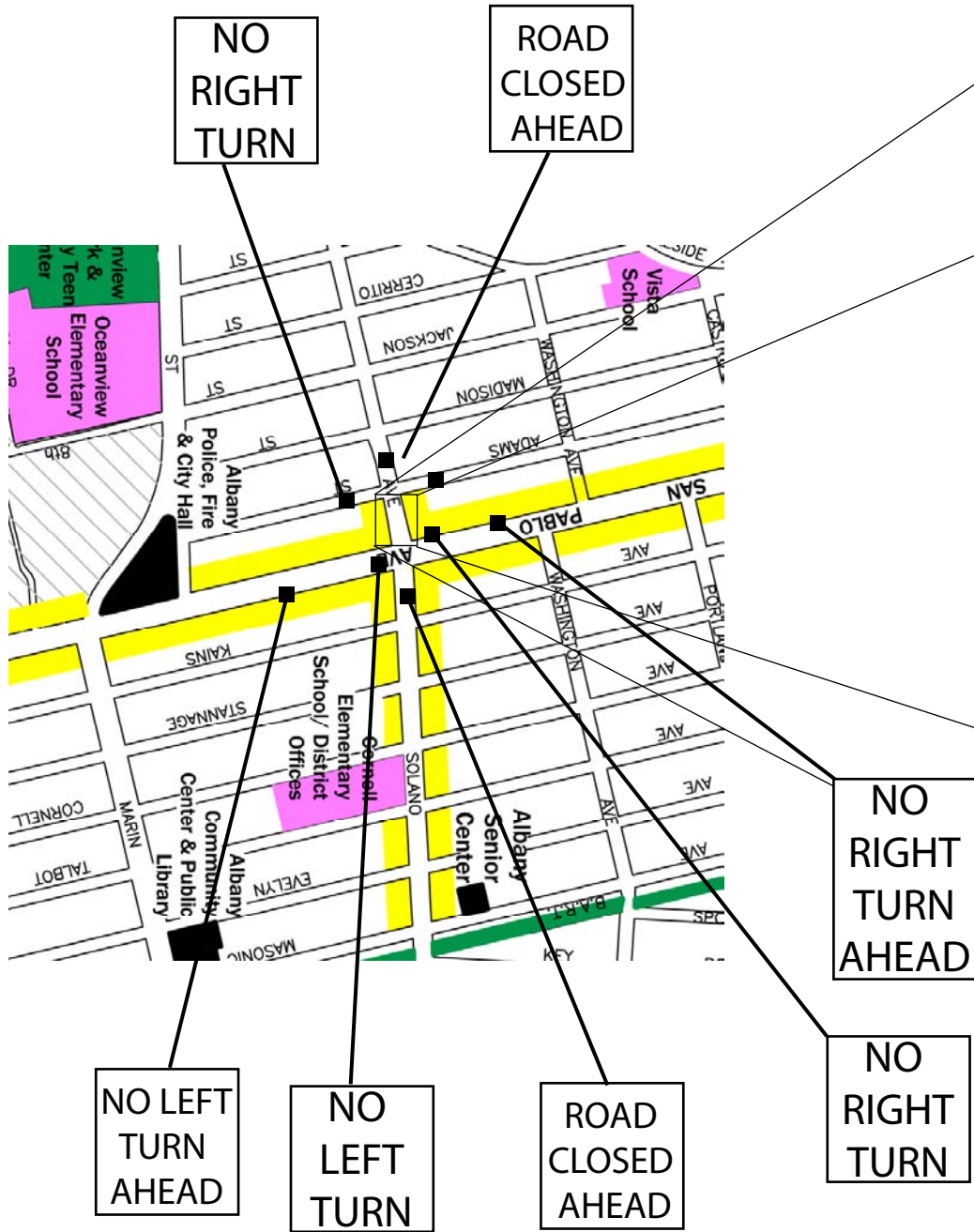
Season: May-October



Size: 200 feet by 50 feet (40 ft at Adams). Space for approximately 35-40 stalls

Programs and Services:

- Credit Cards and food assistance programs such as EBT and WIC would be accepted.
- The market would operate on the principles of Zero Waste. Customers would be encouraged to bring their own bags; vendors would use compostable bags and packaging.
- Genetically Modified food products and crops grown using Methyl Bromide would be allow for sale.
- Frequent Shoppers could have a card stamped each week, with prizes when cards are complete.

Traffic Control Plan -Albany Farmer's Market (Version 1, 1/5/2011)



-  Orange Cones
-  Road Closed Sign
-  Vendor Stall