

Salt Spring Island Market in the Park

Research Report

Spring, 2014



Introduction

- The Parks and Recreation, Economic and Transportation Commissions of Salt Spring Island expressed an interest to evaluate the Saturday Market in the Park experience from several community-stakeholder groups:
 - 1) Visitors
 - 2) Market Vendors
 - 3) Ganges business owners
 - 4) Salt Spring Island residents
- This information may help to better understand the community's experiences with the Saturday market and how to integrate the opinions and ideas to improve the Saturday market experience for everyone.

Survey Participants

Community Stakeholders	N	Male	Female
Island market Visitors (intercept surveys)	98	38%	62%
SSI Residents (web survey)	101	35%	65%
Market Vendors (web survey)	154	-	-
Ganges Business owners (in-person/mail survey)	37	-	-

- Surveys were tailored for each specific group.
- A total of **390 people** participated in the survey research between August – December 2013.

Overall Results

Aggregating the data across all groups revealed several key issues:

1. Parking at the market
2. Expanding market space
3. Market ease of access
4. Market vendor dynamics
5. Operating hours
6. Vendor organization
7. Vendor scheduling
8. Improvement fees
9. Epilogue – beyond the numbers

Parking at the Market

On average... **77%** of visitors and **87%** of residents travel to the market in a vehicle!

- **All groups** commented that parking around Ganges during the market days was a top concern.
- The Ganges **business owners** were the most vocal about this issue:
They identified 3 concerns:
 - 1) Market-related parking congestion competes for space for their regular customers;
 - 2) Their resident customer base avoid downtown Ganges during market hours;
 - 3) Some market vendors take the parking spaces usually left for customers.
- **Vendors** had mixed opinions on the matter:
 - Many vendors recognized importance of parking further away to allow parking space for their customers;
 - Other vendors commented on their need to have proximity between their stalls and vehicle as their products were are easily transportable by foot.
- **Residents:** about 2/3 did not find parking convenient in Ganges during market days.
- **Visitors:** about 40% of visitors thought parking at the market was convenient.
- Suggestions were to offer a complimentary shuttle service between the high school and Centennial Park.

Expanding the Market Space

"Make the space between some of the aisles larger so that customers don't feel so crowded in, I have overheard visitors complain during the busy times that they can barely walk through or see all the goods that are offered."
[vendor]

Expand market onto the street (ie: Fulford-Ganges Rd)

- Pending a temporary road closure and rerouting of traffic.
- Desire to integrate the market with the downtown Ganges businesses in the style of a slight "walking-tour".
- Other suggestion: Shift venue to other areas of Salt Spring Island (ie: Farmer's Institute).

A major issue for the **businesses**, the **residents**, the **vendors** and some **visitors** was the desire for expansion of market physical space.

The majority of respondents across all groups indicated their preference for holding the market at Centennial Park, but recommended:

- Review & revise the market space along the boardwalk.
- Use more of the green space around Centennial Park.
- Arrange some sort of indoor facility (ie: the fire hall).

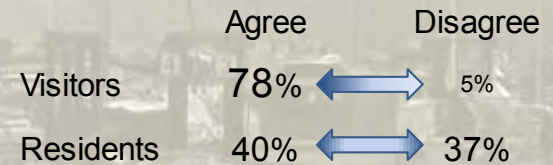
Market Ease of Access

Is accessibility for getting around the market good?

- Opinion was divided between **visitors** and **residents** regarding the ease of access around the market.

"I would just like to see better flow of traffic, so customers can stop and browse or shop without blocking the pathways." [resident]

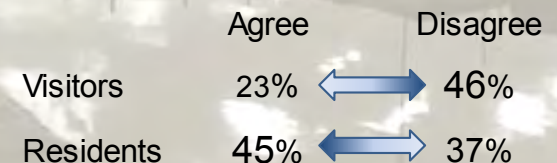
Is accessibility good?



Is the market too crowded?

- Some thought market was too crowded due to the limited physical space.
- Some thought the crowds and bustling activity of market-goers was an appeal contributing to its overall ambience.

Is the market too crowded?



Market Vendor Dynamics

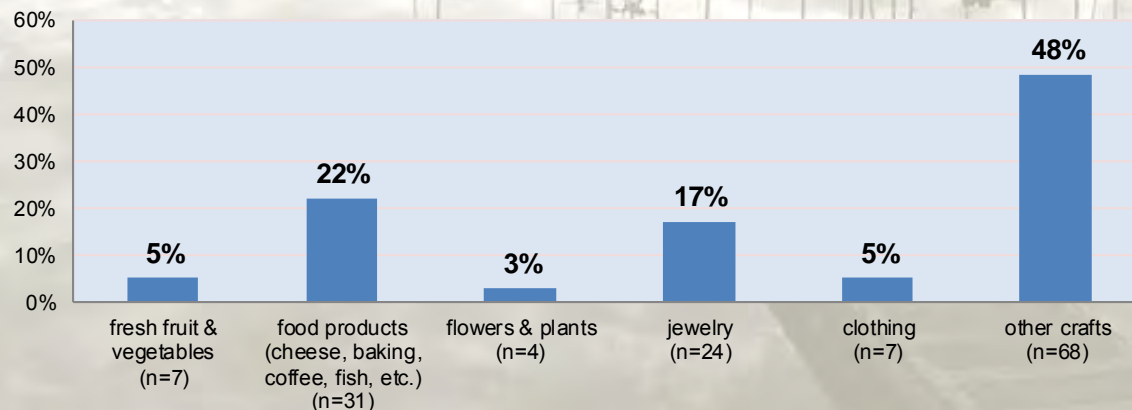
- The dynamic range of vendors is important for **all groups**.
- Most frequent comments pertained to:
 - the preference to increase the number of vendors;
 - adjust the eligibility criteria to become an established vendor.
- Many **residents** and **vendors** voiced their desire to see a wider range of vending products beyond the long-running stalls currently in position.
- This issue hinges on:
 1. the available stall space.
 2. format of managing the physical space of the Saturday market.

"Emerging artists, fresh ideas and things to discover." [resident]

Market Vendor Dynamics

- **Residents and Visitors** are attracted to the market for:
 - 1st for fresh produce and food products.
 - 2nd the appeal of the overall ambience.
- Market-goers seek the vast spread of vendor products and not just an exclusive category or goods.
- Nearly half of the vendors themselves described their goods as “other crafts” compared to the typical options.

Distribution of vendor product categories



Market Operating Hours

- Changing the Market Hours?
 - The vast majority of **vendors** and **business owners** indicated their preference to keep the Saturday market at its current hours of operation from 8:30am until 4:00pm.
 - There was a small demand for the market to extend its closing hours.
- Changing the Market Days?
 - An option to operate on different days
 - 1st Sunday morning
 - 2nd Friday evening
 - 3rd Saturday evening – least popular choice

Vendor Organization

Product Randomization vs Clustered

- Is there a preference to organize the market vendors either by:
 - A. Random distribution of goods;
 - B. Cluster similar vendor products together.

“To randomize products or not to randomize, that is the question”

~Answer: Randomize!

- The majority across **all groups** indicated their preference for vendor product types to be randomly distributed.
- There was a minority of preferences for the market to be organized and clustered into vendor product types.

Vendor Scheduling

- There is a current practice of vending stalls being appointed based on seniority points.
- A proportion of vendors are eager to participate in the market but have no consistent means of being awarded a vending stall on Saturday morning.
- The Solution:
 - Many vendors suggested establishing an on-line system where on Friday evenings, the vendors could “check-in” to their allotted stalls.
 - ✓ Would make it clear ahead of time who gets to participate in the Saturday market.
 - ✓ Would avoid the “wait-and-see” frustration of showing up Saturday morning and avoid participation uncertainty.

Improvement Fees

- The **vendors** had the opportunity to comment on:
 - A. whether they would support an increase in fees;
 - B. what these fees should go towards.
- Only about 33% of vendors supported an increase in fees.
- Approximately 40% of vendors indicated possibly supporting it.
- A majority of vendors indicated that if there were to be an increase, they would be willing to pay no more than up to a 10% increase.
 - Vendors commented that an increase of fees should go towards:
 - **the market infrastructure**
 - better toilet facilities
 - electrical and power source options
 - **marketing campaigns and advertisements**
 - online advertisements
 - signage and directions
 - **other suggestions included**
 - public seating
 - childcare
 - sidewalk improvements
 - garbage bins
 - water fountains

“allocating space so that it can be done the night before so that vendors will know if they have a spot, where that spot is, thus allowing them to set up first thing in the morning and be selling by the time the market opens to public.” [vendor]

Epilogue – beyond the numbers

- The Saturday Market in the Park is a key economic driver and a crucial pillar of island life for the community on Salt Spring Island.
 - ❖ For **visitors** - the market is a cornerstone attraction and a conduit for island tourism.
 - ❖ For **vendors** - it is their public stage to showcase their dynamic range of products and talents.
 - ❖ For **Ganges businesses** - it is an opportunity to boost customer traffic at their business.
 - ❖ For **Residents** - the market serves as a social hub for the community.
- The Saturday market has implications for all community stakeholders.
- Very few individuals will be unaffected by its influence.
- It is a chance to celebrate what the island community can achieve.
- The Saturday market should celebrate its tradition and roots within the community of Salt Spring Island as well as grow and shape to the changing needs and visions of those enjoying its experience every Saturday in downtown Ganges.

The Saturday Market:
*Make it,
Bake it,
Grow it!*

The Saturday Market is...

always **amazing** among annoying areas around artistic artists asset **avoid** awesome baking begging
beneficial better boring bothers breads browsing **bustling busy** buyers buzz cars casual challenge
chaotic chatty cheerful colourful coffee colourful **community** congested connected
connection corner costly crafts **creative** cross **crowded** delicious
diverse eclectic energizing enjoyable entertaining excellent **exciting**
expensive fair feeling food **friendly** friends **fun** get
good **great** guests hectic **inspiring** interactions **interesting** joyous kids
lot love market old organic overwhelming **parking people** personal positive
produce quality **relaxing** salt saturdays see **social** special spirit spring
tasty time **unique** vendors vibrant vital way wonderful yummy

Top 5 words used by **residents** to describe the market:
fun, friendly, crowded, social, community

The Saturday Market is...

always **amazing** ambience amusing appealing aromatherapy artistic atmosphere atmospheric
attractive **authentic** awesome **busy** charming cheese class clean **colourful** community convenient
crafts **creative** crowded culture **delicious** different **diverse** ease eating eats **educational**

enjoyable enjoying **entertaining** entwining energizing ethos excellent
exciting expensive experience extremely festive filled first flirty food freedom fresh

friendly **fun** good grand gratifying **great** groovy

happy healthy high impressive incredible informative **inspiring**

interesting intimate joyful liked lively **local** love lovely magic

magical new nice open organic peaceful **people** perfect **pleasant** priced products proud

reasonably relaxed **relaxing** satisfying sensorial simulating space special stimulating **tasty**

unique variety wet wonderful yummy

Top 5 words used by **visitors** to describe the market:
fun, interesting, enjoyable, friendly/great