



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** May 4, 2020

**To:** Members of the Metro Council

**From:** Tasha Kennard, Executive Director of the Nashville Farmers' Market

**Re:** FY21 Budget Questionnaire

Thank you for your continued dedication, commitment and leadership to keep our city running and providing essential services during these unprecedented times. We understand the difficult decisions ahead and have outlined responses below regarding Mayor Cooper's FY21 budget and its impact on our department's services and programs.

**Question 1:** What is the amount of the proposed funding decrease from the previous fiscal year?

**Answer:** The FY21 budget for the Nashville Farmers' Market is flat year over year, totaling \$2,052,300.

**Question 2:** Please provide a statement regarding the impact the proposed reductions will have on your department's operations. Specifically, please be sure to address the following questions: a. What services currently provided by your department do you anticipate will be reduced/eliminated? b. What impact will such reduction or elimination have on the residents and businesses of Davidson County? c. How many department employees do you anticipate will be impacted by the reduction in funding?

**Answer:** Insurance, internal service charges, LOCAP, facility contract service fees and utility expenses are projected to increase year over year and administrative operations have been adjusted in our FY21 budget. Our department is committed to maintaining a flat budget year over year by renegotiating facility maintenance contracts and fees and freezing one full time position for Q1 to maintain flat operating expenses. If cost reduction goals are met, the position will be filled in Q2 and will not reduce our headcount or ability to maintain services in FY21.

In response to COVID19, the Nashville Farmers' Market closed its facility to the public and launched a drive thru farmers' market and curbside delivery to maintain essential services to the community. In addition, the department has launched an ecommerce app that will enable the department to shift and expand its services and programs offering online shopping, curbside and delivery options to merchants and customers during and post the phased reopening of the facility.



We anticipate that the Nashville Farmers' Market facility will reopen in Phase 1, the Azafran Park Farmers' Market will operate as a curbside, pre order market for the duration of the season and Vanderbilt Farmers' Market will launch as a curbside, pre order market in July with the goal of reopening as a walk through market once all partners are prepared to do so. The ecommerce app will enable the Nashville Farmers' Market and its partners to maintain access to fresh, healthy food and *may* enable the Market to expand this program to additional at-risk communities and hospital campuses once the hiring freeze concludes.

Additionally, the garden center and Market House restaurants and shops are pivoting their operations to adjust for COVID19 including online shopping, curbside and to-go only delivery and pre-packaged essential groceries and meal kits. The leadership team is prepared to respond quickly to any lease termination requests from merchants that are not able to recover from the economic impact of COVID19 and continues to work with merchants by offering rent deferrals and assistance with relief resources and opportunities.

**Question 3:** Regarding the number of FTE employees in your department: a. How many budgeted employees do you have for the current fiscal year? b. How many unfilled FTE employees does your department currently have? c. How many FTE positions are included in the Mayor's proposed budget?

**Answer:** The Nashville Farmers' Market is budgeted for seven FTE and one PTE. We currently have one vacant position on contract and two vacant positions frozen until end of fiscal year due to hiring freeze; no impact in Mayor's proposed budget. We are a lean department and it is critical that we are able to fill vacant positions as quickly as possible as demand for our essential services continues to increase.

**Question 4:** Regarding your department's "departmental savings": a. What is the amount of your department's 'targeted savings' for FY2020? b. What was your department's budget for FY2020 after the targeted savings? c. How does that compare with the Mayor's proposed FY2021 budget?

**Answer:** The Nashville Farmers' Market's FY21 budget request is flat year over year, however insurance, internal service charges, LOCAP, facility contract fees and utility expenses are projected to increase. Our department is committed to maintaining a flat budget year over year by renegotiating facility maintenance contracts and fees and freezing one full time position for Q1 to maintain flat operating expenses.

While our department was not provided savings targets in FY20, our team identified and met operating reduction targets by freezing positions, travel and reducing marketing expenses during FY20 Q4.



The Mayor's proposed FY21 budget for the Nashville Farmers' Market is flat year over year and administrative operations have been adjusted to cover increased expenses.

**Question 5:** Regarding any previous audits in which your department has participated: a. What operations or expenditures have been audited within the last three years? Five years? Ten years? b. Has any capital spending been audited during the last five years? Ten years? c. Are there any prior audit recommendations still shown as pending/outstanding? If so, please identify these recommendations and provide a response regarding your department's plan to address the recommendation(s).

**Answer:** The Nashville Farmers' Market operations and expenditures were audited in FY17 by Metro Internal Audit. The audit found that the Nashville Farmers' Market has controls in place to help assure operational objectives are being met. However, the operational goal to be financially self-sufficient has yet to be met. The audit recommended the Nashville Farmers' Market should: leverage technology to enhance financial and operational processes (complete); develop a more robust billing and accounts receivable system (complete); communicate aging reports and fee waivers to the Board (complete); establish a retention policy for original applications and other material documentation (complete).