

A woman with glasses and a colorful patterned jacket is pointing at a whiteboard. The whiteboard has a grid pattern and several colorful sticky notes attached to it. The sticky notes contain handwritten text such as "Ludlow gym", "Henry Street", "Maph cinema", and "Museum to Henry Street". The background is a plain wall with a door visible on the right.

BUILDING COMMUNITY AT THE NEW ESSEX STREET MARKET



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For over 75 years, Essex Street Market has been serving the Lower East Side community with fresh, affordable and quality food. In the fall of 2018, our historic public market will move from its current home to a new facility at Essex Crossing, providing us with the unique opportunity to bring on additional vendors and gain access to a state-of-the-art demonstration kitchen, as well as a public event space.

As we embark on this transformative development, Essex Street Market vendors, community-based partners, City agencies and elected officials all recognize the importance of preserving what makes the Market a special Lower East Side institution. To help determine what elements of the current market we should preserve, and how our community members want to utilize the new teaching kitchen and event space, the Essex Street Market Vendor Association conducted customer surveys, focus groups, and a community visioning workshop.

Through this research, we have been able to highlight the community's main concerns as they relate to the Market's move, which include affordability, current vendor vitality and changes to neighborhood character. These concerns form the basis for three key recommendations to help address uncertainty surrounding the transition. Finally, we consolidate feedback from the community visioning workshop to showcase what type of educational, culinary, family-focused and community-based programming the neighborhood would like to see at the new Essex Street Market.

We hope that the information gathered in this report will help guide all interested parties in successfully opening the new Essex Street Market.



Anne Saxelby, Chair
Essex Street Market Vendor Association

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INTRODUCTION

New Market, Same Mission

In 2018, Essex Street Market will move to a new home that lies at the cornerstone of Essex Crossing, a mixed-use development project that will transform the Lower East Side with 1.9 million square feet of residential, commercial and community space over the next decade. This larger, more modern space invites a variety of new vendors and restaurants to join the Essex Street Market family.

In addition to 12 new food vendors and 2 full-service restaurants, the new Essex Street Market will be situated directly next to a beautiful, light-filled mezzanine space which will host a variety of community events, including nighttime talks and vendor tastings. There will also be a state-of-the-art demonstration kitchen, fully equipped and designed for recreational cooking classes, as well as special event rentals.



NEW MARKET FEATURES

- 12 New Vendors
- 2 New Restaurants
- Demonstration Kitchen
- Public Event Space

Community Outreach & Engagement

The quality of vendor-shopper relationships at Essex Street Market makes it a unique community space and more than just a shopping destination. Programs and events that support the interests of both vendors and neighborhood residents are essential to maintaining and cultivating a sense of community. As the Market transitions into its new home, the Essex Street Market Vendor Association (ESMVA) will continue to collaborate with community stakeholders to ensure Essex Street Market remains a community-driven public market that offers programming and events benefiting the well-being of Lower East Side residents.

THE GOALS OF OUR ENGAGEMENT PROCESS WERE TO:

- 1) Ensure the programs and events at the new Market reflect values of community stakeholders.
- 2) Identify outreach and marketing strategies to inform community residents about the move.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Process Overview

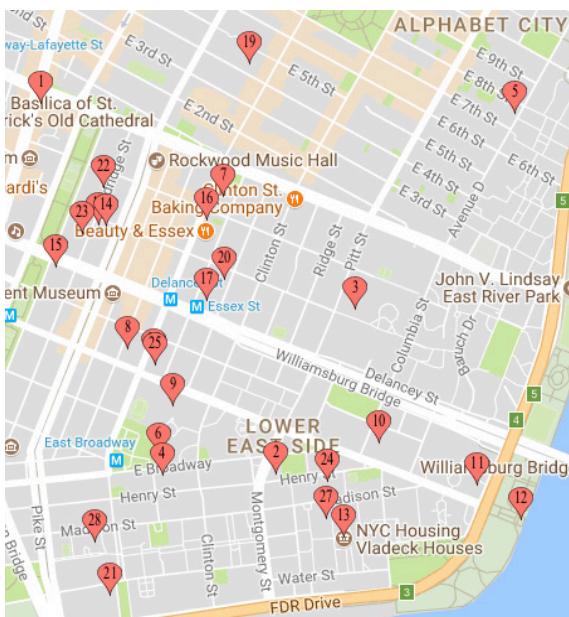
We began our engagement process by conducting customer surveys inside the Market to identify the reasons why residents enjoy shopping there, as well as to gauge what information they already knew about the Market's move. We also collected this information from community stakeholders through tabling events and focus groups at several partner organizations.

Preliminary Findings

Our preliminary findings suggest that shoppers are particularly concerned about losing the Market's history and neighborhood connections in the new space. We have determined that one of the most effective ways to retain these elements will be through the type of public programming, classes and events offered at the new Market. To help determine specifically what local residents would like to see, we hosted a community visioning workshop to brainstorm possibilities for cooking classes, education events and family-focused programming.

OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS		
51 <i>IN-STORE SURVEYS</i>	149 <i>ONLINE SURVEYS</i>	800 <i>TOTAL REACHED</i>
3 <i>FOCUS GROUPS</i>	4 <i>TABLING EVENTS</i>	1 <i>VISIONING WORKSHOP</i>

Outreach Map



CANVASSING LOCATIONS

- University Settlement
- Henry Street Settlement
- Grand Street Settlement
- Manny Cantor Center
- Chinatown YMCA
- LES Girls Club
- Seward Park Library
- The Anna Silver School
- Seward Park High School
- Cooperative Village
- East River Housing Corporation
- LES Ecology Center
- NYC Housing Vladeck Houses
- Lamb's Church of the Nazarene
- Delancey Seventh-Day Adventist Church
- Community Healthcare Network
- Rivington Houses
- Village View Housing Corporation
- The Clemente
- Two Bridges Senior Center
- Vladeck Houses Community Center
- Seward Park Co-Op
- Vladeck Houses
- Rutgers Houses

KEY CONCERNS

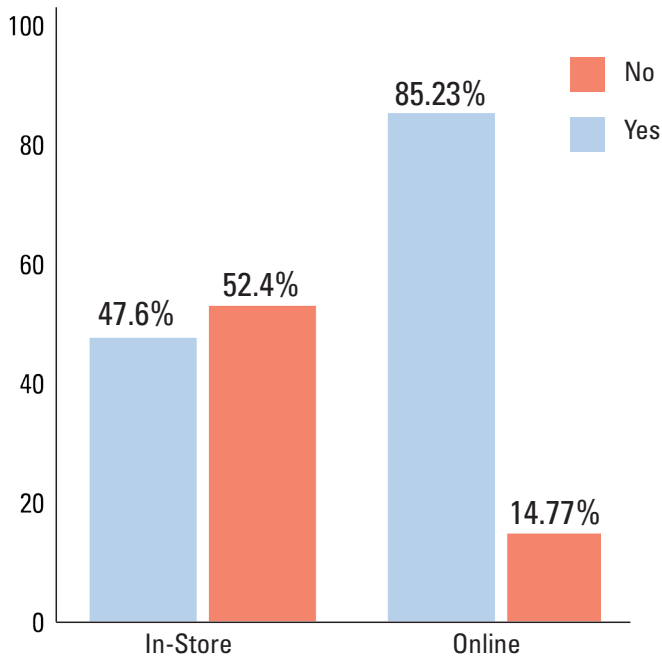
1) Lack of awareness regarding details of the move

A total of 200 surveys were conducted in-person and through online data collection. Only about half of in-store customers knew about the Market's move, compared to 85% of those who were surveyed online.

In-store respondents who knew about the Market's move were asked to provide what details they were aware of. The responses showed that knowledge was limited to the new location: 47% of those who knew about the move knew that the Market is moving across the street; 16% knew the facility will be larger; and 13% knew that the Market would have the same vendors.

This data suggests that although there is general awareness regarding the move, residents are not aware of the specific details.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE MARKET'S MOVE TO ESSEX CROSSING?



IF YES, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MOVE?

Key	# Responses	%
Location	15	47%
Facility Changes	5	16%
Vendors	4	13%
Other Development Changes (Lowline, Movie Theatre, Trader Joe's)	3	9%
Date of Move	2	6%
Same Prices	1	3%
No Details	2	6%

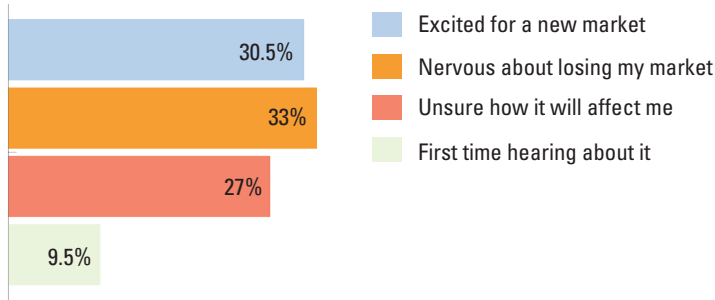
The table above categorizes respondents' knowledge of the move by what type of details they could name.

KEY CONCERNS

2) Vendor vitality and price points

Survey and workshop participants frequently expressed concern for whether existing vendors would be able to compete at Essex Crossing. This is directly related to concerns that vendors' rent will increase and thus will charge higher prices for their food items.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE MARKET MOVING?



“I love Essex Street Market because the prices are low, and I’m afraid that this move will cause significant price increases.”

THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BE EXCITED...

- Have shopped at the Market for <5 years
- Are non-frequent shoppers
- Identify as newer residents
- Caucasian and Asian
- Are younger than 45

THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BE NERVOUS...

- Have shopped at the Market for >5 years
- Are frequent shoppers who shop at least once per week
- Identify as old-time residents
- Caucasian and Hispanic
- No significant association with age

Respondents were also asked to provide an explanation for their feelings about the move. The comments were analyzed using a word analysis to identify key themes of concerns and excitement. Despite the fear of prices rising, many residents are also looking forward to the new Market's assets. “It [will be] bigger, newer, and hopefully more noticeable to the general public. Current [Market] feels a bit hidden and understated,” noted one respondent.

Key Themes	# Mentions
Vendors	24
Prices	22
Gentrification	4
Character	12
Neighborhood	12
History	4
Facility	17
Programs	8

KEY CONCERNS

3) Loss of Market history and neighborhood character

Shoppers, especially those who have been patroning Essex Street Market for 10 or more years, enjoy the character of the current Market facility. For many immigrant residents, the Market resembles produce markets that they frequented back home. Residents indicated that a community and neighborhood feel is important to maintain.

"The Essex Street Market is the only place that keeps culture alive for Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Spanish, and Mexicans."

KEY WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE THE MARKET:

FRIENDLY	COMMUNITY
FRESH	OLD-SCHOOL
AFFORDABLE	CULTURALLY-RELEVANT
WELCOMING	AUTHENTIC
DIVERSE	SPACIOUS
VARIETY	LOCAL
MODERN	ACCESSIBLE
COMFORTABLE	HISTORIC
BRIGHT	INCLUSIVE



RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Support vendors' commitment to quality, affordable food

ESMVA plans to survey vendors to better understand how they foresee pricing structure to change – or stay the same – in the new Market. This feedback, alongside information regarding vendors' new permit conditions, will help determine what role ESMVA can play in ensuring that the Market's price points remain affordable. It is also important to share shoppers' feedback regarding concerns around food costs and offerings, particularly with the Market's grocers, fishmongers and butcher.

“There is no where else in this neighborhood that sells my culture's food. I [would] have to go to El Barrio or Brooklyn.”

2) Leverage community partnerships to ensure programs reflect neighborhood needs

Ongoing partnerships with Grand Street Settlement, Education Alliance, Henry Street Settlement, and nearby public schools have helped to raise awareness for Essex Street Market as a destination for free and reduced-price public programming. Food education is a clear area where market programs can fill in neighborhood service gaps; residents also shared their desire for intergenerational programming, kids cooking classes, and more (reviewed in the following section).



3) Identify targeted outreach to address residents' concerns

Survey results showed that long-term residents who have been shopping at Essex Street Market for 5 or more years are more likely to feel nervous about the upcoming move, with specific concerns regarding vendor retention and affordability. Conversely, newer residents who shop less frequently at the Market are more likely to be excited; still, this group is largely unaware of current programming and events. Outreach should focus on targeted messaging in both print and digital, with the former concentrating on how the Market will maintain its current makeup and the latter speaking to exciting developments around new vendors and event opportunities.



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Identified Community Values

On February 5, 2018, over 50 members of the Lower East Side community joined us at Grand Street Settlement's new center at Essex Crossing for a community visioning workshop. The goal was to determine what types of programs, classes and events community members want to see at the new Market's facility. We began our community visioning workshop by asking participants to share the top 3 values that they felt best reflect Essex Street Market.



COLLECTIVELY, THE TOP VALUES FOR ESSEX STREET MARKET WERE:

- 1) Diversity;
- 2) Community; and,
- 3) Accessibility.

OUR COMMUNITY DESIRES PROGRAMMING THAT IS...

<p>DIVERSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Education around a wide range of food cultures.</i> • <i>Celebrate Market variety by highlighting diverse food products.</i> • <i>Highlight the diversity of vendors.</i>
<p>COMMUNITY DRIVEN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Focus on the Market as a gathering space.</i> • <i>Keep programs vendor-led.</i> • <i>Opportunities for volunteering and mentorship.</i>
<p>ACCESSIBLE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Products should be available at various price points.</i> • <i>Consistent schedule of events with varied times during the day and evening.</i> • <i>Market design should be welcoming to different types of people.</i>

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Selected Ideas Suggested by the Community

In the second half of our workshop, participants were split into groups and asked to collaboratively brainstorm ideas for future programs based on the Market's values. At the end of the workshop, ESMVA and EDC team members compiled their respective groups' notes, which were then organized into the following themes.



COOKING DEMOS & CLASSES

- Vendor-led cooking demos (fish/meat butchering)
- Cooking techniques/kitchen hacks
- Cook-offs
- Provide recipe print-outs and cards; also put online
- Structured programming around seasons and holidays
- Focus on ingredients not offered at Trader Joe's
- Tie classes to charitable causes
- Baby food making classes
- After-school cooking programs for kids

FAMILY-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES

- Movie nights
- Health/fitness classes in mezzanine space
- Live performances
- Intergenerational programming (teen shopping for seniors, peer to peer homework tutoring)
- Language exchange program
- Apprenticeships, or opportunity for high school or middle school kids to shadow vendors

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

- Program to combat food waste and hunger by using high school volunteers to distribute leftover food
- Senior program where volunteers help pick up groceries
- Online calendar with the national food days, events and discounts
- Coupon days for seniors

EDUCATIONAL TALKS & TOURS

- Work with local artists to create market swag
- Create a map showcasing where vendors and food products are from
- Highlight vendor stories to inspire local entrepreneurs
- Team up with organizations like MOFAD to have food-inspired onsite activities such as 3D printing
- Implement a reusable takeout container program
- Have an ambassador at the door to welcome people inside (endorsed by Gale Brewer)

CONCLUSION

Next Steps for Community Engagement

As Essex Street Market prepares for an unprecedented transition to a new Market facility, it is now more important than ever to connect with shoppers and local residents to ensure that we preserve the Market's historic and community-driven identity.

The research collected over the last six months will help shape our community partnerships and future programming, which will in turn reflect the character and diversity of our neighborhood.

Thank you to all of our partner organizations and Lower East Side residents for participating in our community workshops, focus groups and surveys, and for your continued support of the Essex Street Market.

**LOWER
EAST
SIDE**



ESMVA



Office of the Manhattan
Borough President

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Margaret S. Chin
New York City Council, District 1



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 3

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
Council Member Margaret Chin
New York City Economic Development Corporation
Community Board 3
New York City Department of Small Business Services
Lower East Side Partnership
Henry Street Settlement
Grand Street Settlement
Manny Cantor Center
Educational Alliance
Seward Park Library
PS 20 PTA
Turnstile Tours

*For questions regarding this report, please contact us at info@esmva.org.
For more information regarding the Market's move, please visit essexstreetmarket.com/essex-crossing.*

APPENDIX

Total Survey Responses

	TOTAL		In-Store		Online	
Gender						
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Female</i>	142	71	25	50.98	116	19.46
<i>Male</i>	54	27	26	49.02	29	77.85
<i>Other</i>	4	2	0	0	4	2.68
Ethnicity						
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	41	20.7	23	46.94	18	12.08
<i>African American</i>	10	5.1	2	4.08	8	5.37
<i>White/Caucasian</i>	108	54.5	21	42.86	87	58.39
<i>Asian</i>	28	14.1	2	4.08	26	17.45
<i>Other</i>	11	5.6	1	2.04	10	6.71
Age						
<i>19-25</i>	17	8.5	5	9.80	12	8.16
<i>26-35</i>	51	25.5	8	15.69	43	29.25
<i>36-45</i>	40	20	5	9.80	35	23.81
<i>46-59</i>	46	23	16	31.37	30	20.41
<i>60+</i>	44	22	16	31.37	27	18.37
Neighborhood Ties						
<i>Old-time resident</i>	46	30.9	—	—	46	30.9
<i>Newer resident</i>	47	31.5	—	—	47	31.5
<i>Not a resident, familial ties</i>	6	4	—	—	6	4
<i>Work in the neighborhood</i>	8	5.4	—	—	8	5.4
<i>Community member</i>	15	10.1	—	—	15	10.1
<i>Frequent visitor</i>	27	18.1	—	—	27	18.1
How often do you shop at the Essex Street Market?						
<i>Everyday</i>	5	2.55	3	6.38	2	1.34
<i>Several times a week</i>	47	23.98	19	40.43	28	18.79
<i>Once a week</i>	51	26.02	11	23.4	40	26.85
<i>Several times per month</i>	54	27.55	14	29.79	40	26.85
<i>First time</i>	39	19.9	0	0	36	26.17
How long have you been shopping at Essex Street Market?						
<i><1 year</i>	27	13.5	7	13.73	20	13.42
<i><5 years</i>	62	31	9	17.65	53	35.57
<i><10 years</i>	36	18	4	7.84	32	21.48
<i>>10 years</i>	71	35.5	28	54.9	43	28.86
<i>Rarely/Never</i>	4	2	3	5.88	1	0.67

	Total		In-Store		Online	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Have you heard about Essex Street Market's move to Essex Crossing?						
<i>Yes</i>	151	75.5	24	47.6	127	85.23
<i>No</i>	49	24.5	27	52.94	22	14.77
How do you feel about Essex Street Market moving?						
<i>First time hearing about it</i>	19	9.5	0	0	10	5.71
<i>Excited for a new market</i>	61	30.5	9	17.65	61	40.94
<i>Nervous about losing my market</i>	66	33	14	27.45	52	34.9
<i>Unsure how it will affect me</i>	54	27	28	54.9	26	17.45



SELECTED SURVEY COMMENTS BY THEME

VENDORS

- I want more options, but I don't want any chains.
- Hoping the change is beneficial for the community and the businesses.
- I love the local, easygoing feel right now and can easily do all my grocery shopping.
- I love supporting small business in my neighborhood!
- I am hoping that the larger space will facilitate more vendors, and bring greater food options to the Lower East Side.
- Hopeful that the vendors are all treated fairly and well throughout the transition but excited to see what the new space brings.

PRICES

- I hope rent will be low so vendors can afford it and we can continue to have a diverse collection of businesses.
- I'm worried prices will go up and it'll lose the community feel but it will feel nice to have new architecture.
- A true community market should continue to be for all income levels.
- Nervous more about price hikes than losing the Market. Also of it getting too crowded.
- Hoping Essex Street Market retains its affordable prices and neighborhood feel.

CHARACTER/HISTORY

- It is great that it will have a new space, but I am concerned about the character of the market and the impact it will have on the vendors.
- Thinking it might lose its charms, and get more expensive and commercial.
- I hope that Essex Street Market can retain its character and still remain a source for affordable produce.
- I like the old school feel and history of the current market.

FACILITY & PROGRAMS

- I just moved to the area and instantly felt welcomed at the current market.
- I'm hoping for better signage for navigation; brighter, clear vibe; and interesting events at the new kitchen space.
- I think it will reinvigorate the market in a much needed way!
- I'm looking forward to the new and more expansive space.
- It is right of outside of the subway which is super convenient. I am excited about more modern facilities and utilities.

Category	Excited	Nervous	Unsure	Totals
VENDORS	10	9	5	24
<i>prices</i>	2	9	11	22
<i>Total Vendors</i>				46
CHARACTER	0	7	5	12
<i>neighborhood</i>	3	6	3	12
<i>gentrification</i>	0	4	0	4
<i>history</i>	1	3	0	4
<i>Total Character</i>				32
FACILITY	9	3	5	17
<i>access</i>	1	0	1	2
<i>Total Facility</i>				19
<i>programs</i>	6	2	0	8



ASSET MAPPING

FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Ludlow/gym

Stoke Newington Community Centre

Korean language (ESN) → free

ethnographic cinema

Edwin on Blinck Street

Henry Street

SUPPORT THE MARKET

MON - SAT 8:00AM TO 7:00PM

SUN 10:00AM TO 6:00PM

**120 ESSEX STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10002**

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