

**REPORT OF**  
**THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**  
**AND**  
**THE VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**ON**  
**A RICHMOND REGIONAL FARMERS' MARKET**  
**TO THE**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**  
**AND THE**  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION**  
**AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
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FOREWORD

This study on a regional farmers' market in the Richmond metropolitan area was made in response to the recommendation of the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources as outlined in House Document No. 21.

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SUMMARY

In response to a directive from the 1975 General Assembly, representatives of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University have considered improvements needed at the present Richmond Farmers' Market, the feasibility of representative locations, and type of building best adapted to meet the needs of a regional farmers' market in the Richmond metropolitan area. Representatives of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, the City of Richmond, Henrico, Chesterfield, and Hanover Counties, and the Atlantic Rural Exposition assisted in the study and preparation of this report.

The legislative history was reviewed and findings of legislative committees conclude that there is a need for a regional farmers' market in this area and that a properly located, constructed, and publicized market in the Richmond metropolitan area would be beneficial to the consumer, farmer, and community.

The purpose of a regional farmers' market in the Richmond area would be to provide marketing facilities for producers, wholesalers, and consumers in the metropolitan area and surrounding communities. A survey of fruits and vegetables produced within fifty miles of Richmond indicates an adequate supply of produce is available. Population data show more than one-half million people live in the Richmond metropolitan area. This compares favorably with the population in other areas where markets are operated successfully.

Based on information obtained from other markets, criteria were developed for a Richmond Regional Farmers' Market. These criteria included accessibility of the location, land area needed, utilities available, traffic patterns, and site visibility. The present location and three other representative locations were considered in relation to these criteria. Establishment of a regional farmers' market at either of these locations was considered feasible, if the necessary area could be acquired. A more detailed

study would show a number of other locations in the Richmond metropolitan area would meet these criteria.

The facilities at the Virginia Beach Market and its financial history are included in this report as an example of the type of marketing facility considered suitable for the Richmond metropolitan area.

Based on data relating to the present Richmond Farmers' Market, comments of producers, wholesalers, other interested groups, and information obtained from other markets, a building 48 feet wide and 220 feet long, with open sides and space for 42 producer stalls is considered adequate for this market. The cost of this facility, excluding land, is estimated at \$141,664.

An estimated annual budget was prepared and daily market fees for the present and several higher levels of use were determined for break-even operation. Based on these estimates, an increase in use of 1.5 to 2.5 times the present would enable the market to break even with daily market fees in line with those charged at similar markets.

#### INTRODUCTION

The Richmond Farmers' Market has served as a market place for farmers, merchants, and consumers for more than 180 years. This market is located on Main at 17th Street in downtown Richmond. This area is maintained by the City of Richmond and daily marketing permits are issued to producers who use the facilities.

During recent years several problems have been encountered with the present market site. Flooding has occurred on several occasions, security is inadequate, the only sanitary facilities that are available have been provided in the back of a restaurant across 17th Street from the market, lighting is poor, customer parking space is inadequate, and parking space for medium and large trucks is virtually not available. Use of the market has declined due to these conditions and due to shifts in marketing channels for produce.

Attempts have been made by local farmers, merchants, and interested citizens to upgrade the market facilities or establish a more adequate facility at another location. These efforts have included consideration of a larger retail market as well as facilities for wholesale trading. To date no acceptable plan for moving or improving the market has been found.

#### LEGISLATIVE ACTION

In 1974, supporters of an improved Richmond Farmers' Market turned to the Virginia General Assembly in their efforts to accomplish their objective. The result was House Joint Resolution No. 114 which stated: "Resolved by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Delegates and the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Natural Resources of the Senate are directed, jointly severally, to make a study and report on methods of improving the present Richmond

Farmers' Market, or if such improvements are deemed ill-advised, the feasibility of establishing a regional market in the Richmond metropolitan area."

Pursuant to the study directive, a committee was appointed for the purpose of conducting the study. In its study, the committee learned of the origin, operation, and success of the Virginia Beach Farmers' Market, the experience of farmers' markets in Columbia, South Carolina, and Raleigh, North Carolina, with respect to their origin, organization, financial status, facilities, size, and the degree of usage by consumers and farmers and considered a report entitled, "Analysis of Supplies of Virginia Produce for the Richmond Farmers' Market", prepared by Dr. Bell and Dr. Johnson of VPI & SU.

During the course of the several meetings and hearings, various groups and individuals emphasized that there is a definite need and desire by both the farmer and consumer for a properly constructed, conveniently located, and well publicized market in the Richmond area. It was eminently clear to the committee that this same need has been recognized and successfully met in several neighboring communities and states where the implementation of farmers' markets has benefited the farmer, consumer, and state. The committee also learned that these markets are self-sustaining from an operational standpoint.

The minimal amount of business transacted at the present Richmond Farmers' Market was attributed to inadequate facilities, limited space, security problems, and a general lack of consumer interest or knowledge of the market. In this vein the committee heard it stressed many times that location is the primary consideration for a successful market. It must have accessibility, ample parking space, sanitary facilities -- and a rail siding and refrigeration if wholesalers are to be included. Equally important is a location which assures safety for the farmer and consumer.

The consensus of the committee was that a properly located, constructed, and publicized market in the Richmond metropolitan area and other areas would be beneficial to the consumer, farmer, and state. That there is a definite need has been ascertained.



LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its study, the committee made three recommendations, as follows:

I. That a bill be drafted to amend Chapter 9 of Title 3.1 of the Code of Virginia to provide for retail sales under a produce market authority; to permit such an authority to be established regionally when a majority of the governing bodies located in a designated area wish it.

II. That the Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University be directed to work with various local groups, including but not limited to, the Atlantic Rural Exposition and the Richmond Planning District Commission in making a feasibility study to determine the location and type of building best adapted to the area's needs.

III. An interest and need have been demonstrated by agri-business people and the committee is convinced a properly constructed, properly located, and well advertised market in Richmond and other areas would be of benefit to the consumer and farmer. However, they believe the feasibility study in Recommendation II should first be completed.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Acting on the recommendation of this committee, the 1975 General Assembly amended Chapter 9 of Title 3.1 of the Code of Virginia to carry out Recommendation I.

In response to Recommendation II, representatives of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University have worked together and with representatives of the Atlantic Rural Exposition, the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission, local representatives of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, representatives of the City of Richmond, representatives of local governments in the Richmond area, and other interested persons in an attempt to develop methods of improving the present Richmond Farmers' Market. If such improvements are deemed ill-advised, the feasibility of locations within the Richmond metropolitan area and the type of building best adapted to the area's needs have been considered.

#### GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

This study group first attempted to develop the purpose of and general requirements for a regional farmers' market. Managers of the Raleigh and Virginia Beach Markets reported that the markets drew customers from a wide radius and that the location drew people going somewhere else (shopping, going to work, etc.). The key factor seemed to be traffic accessibility. They also stated several factors which contributed to the use and success of the market were good accessibility, a location where people travel, ample parking, and high visibility.

#### PURPOSE OF THE MARKET

The purpose of the Regional Farmers' Market is to provide marketing facilities to be used by producers, wholesalers, and consumers. Groups expected to use the market and the types of service anticipated are discussed below.

Farmers -- Small farmers primarily from north and east of Richmond use the market to sell produce directly to consumers, retail stores, institutional buyers, and other wholesalers. The number of farmers on the market ranges from none on certain winter days to 50 to 70 during peak selling days in the summer. With improved facilities and/or location, it is anticipated that the number of farmer users would increase. Farmers want the market to be in a location and to have facilities that will attract the buyers that will maximize sales opportunities for them.

Small Dealers -- Although Richmond has no small dealers currently operating on the market, such businesses would offer some benefits to the market. Small dealers buy small lots from farmers and allow them to return home after selling the bulk of their produce. Small dealers provide a continuing source of supply on the market for consumers who may visit the market, regardless of the time of day. A market of this size may be expected to support 4 to 6 small dealers. Small dealers require some enclosed space and want maximum consumer traffic.

Consumers -- Consumers in the Richmond area have expressed an interest in purchasing produce which is fresh and locally produced. For consumer convenience, the market should be located near an arterial highway with easy access to this highway. The market should be attractive and provide adequate parking for consumers. Continuing availability and consistent quality are important to consumers.

Wholesale Buyers -- Although few wholesale type buyers can be expected to count on the farmers' market as their primary source of supply, some restaurants, retail stores, wholesale houses, and chain stores will buy some quantities of produce from the market. These buyers need to have easy access to the market and the market should have adequate space to handle the wholesalers' trucks.

The study group then developed specific criteria for a Richmond Regional Farmers' Market. These criteria are as follows:

<u>ACCESS:</u>	Must be accessible to trucks; Location on or near major thoroughfare highly desirable; Close proximity to interstate desirable
<u>LAND AREA:</u>	Minimum three (3) acres up to ten (10) acres; 10,560 sq. ft. for 220' x 48' building; (42 stalls), office, restrooms and storage area .  54,000 sq. ft. paved parking area; 42 truck parking spaces; 70 auto parking spaces  57,000 sq. ft. for expansion and overflow; Land should be suitable for supporting traffic and reasonably level
<u>SERVICES:</u>	Electricity: enough service to supply: (a) lights and accessory for 220' x 48' building; (b) parking lot lighting
<u>VISIBILITY FROM TRAFFIC PATTERNS:</u>	Good -- excellent

SEWER: Connection to service, two (2) restrooms with  
commodes as required by building code

WATER: Enough water to support restrooms, janitor's  
sink, and four (4) water hydrants

CITY CLEANING  
SERVICES:

SECURITY: Adequate (6' hurricane fence around property  
desirable);  
Arrange to have periodic patrols by local police

PRESENT MARKET

The present Richmond Farmers' Market is located between Main and Grace Streets at 17th Street (see Figure 1). It consists of two areas separated by Franklin Street. That area (A) between Main and Franklin bounded on the east by the northbound lanes of 17th Street and on the west by the southbound lanes of 17th Street is, including the adjacent sidewalks, approximately 340 feet long and 65 feet wide and containing approximately 22,000 sq. ft. A shed has been erected along the northbound lanes of 17th Street which partially covers a wide sidewalk and a portion of the area between the two sections of 17th Street. This overhead cover provides cover for pickup trucks which are backed into the area perpendicular to 17th Street and producers have the opportunity to display their produce under cover along the northbound lanes of 17th Street. There are 29 spaces under cover for use by producers. At times an overflow of pickups are parked parallel to the southbound lanes of 17th Street on the west side of the lot. This creates congestion and makes it difficult for trucks to move in and out of the covered spaces.

A second section (B) is available between Franklin and Grace Streets. It, too, is bounded on the east by the northbound lanes of 17th Street and on the west by the southbound lanes of 17th Street. Although approximately the same length, this area is not as wide and is used by larger trucks, which normally park at an angle. This area is approximately 50' x 340' and contains 17,000 sq. ft. There is no cover in this area and producers normally sell from the tailgate without having an area in which to display their produce. The total area is approximately 39,000 sq. ft. or 0.90 acres.

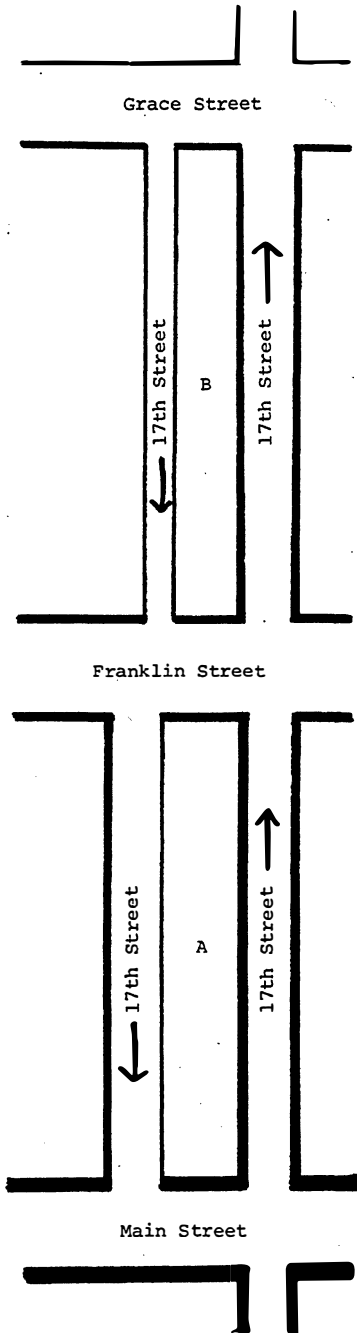


FIGURE 1

This market is operated and maintained by the City of Richmond for local producers and customers who desire to sell or purchase at the market. Producers who use this market pay a marketing fee of 75 cents per day. Table 1 shows the Richmond Farmers' Market 1974 monthly data on revenue, the number of sellers, and an estimate of the annual cost of operating this market. The 1974 income amounted to only \$2,625, compared with operating costs of \$14,000. As it is currently being operated, this market is far from being operationally self sufficient.

Based on the transactions that take place at a farmers' market, farmers' markets are generally classified as predominantly retail, predominantly wholesale, or a combination of both. Observations made at the Richmond Farmers' Market by study group members and a survey of wholesalers in the area indicate that most users sell predominantly in retail units. Major wholesalers who purchase from the present market report their purchases are very small. They further indicate that they probably would purchase more from growers if the produce was properly graded and packaged. This information would indicate that plans for the Richmond Regional Farmers' Market should be based on a retail operation but provision should be made for expansion of the purchases by wholesalers and institutions in the area.

#### VIRGINIA BEACH MARKET

The Virginia Beach Farmers' Market was opened for business on June 4, 1964, to alleviate problems very similar to those now existing in the Richmond area. A brief review of this market's situation and progress should be helpful in planning the Richmond Regional Farmers' Market. The initial facilities consisted of a paved area 150 feet wide and 600 feet long. This paved area provided space for 60 trucks along one side of the paved area and 35 trucks with 20 small dealer stalls along the other side of the area. Two 30-foot driveways were located just inside each of these parking areas with the center section -- 36 feet wide -- used for auto parking by customers who came to the market.

In addition to the space provided for producers and customers, an office building, including restrooms, was provided in the area.

Table 1 - Number of Market Permits Sold and Market Revenue from the Richmond Farmers' Market, 1974

<u>Month</u>	<u>Number of Permits Sold</u>	<u>Income</u>
January	84	\$ 63.00
February	94	70.50
March	143	107.25
April	94	70.50
May	161	121.00
June	191	143.00
July	707	530.00
August	781	585.75
September	531	398.25
October	295	221.25
November	178	133.50
December	<u>241</u>	181.00
Total	3,500	\$ 2,625.00

Estimated Annual Cost of Operating the Richmond Farmers' Market, 1974 1/

Toilet Facilities - Paid to Main Street Grill for use of facilities, \$45.00/month	\$ 540.00
Salary for Market Manager - 40 hours per week (7 hours weekdays, 5 hours Saturday)	10,000.00
Assessment for Street Cleaning	3,000.00
Maintenance and Supplies	500.00
Total	\$14,040.00

1/ Based on estimates of the City of Richmond

A sketch of the layout of this market is attached as Figure 2.

This market began operation on June 4, 1964. By June 30, 1974, the total capital outlay amounted to \$72,254.16. Between its opening and June 30, 1974, the gross receipts amounted to \$169,970.51 and gross expenses amounted to \$116,447.69. The expenses represented operating expenses only and did not include capital outlays. Thus, the excess of operating receipts over operating expenses for the period ending June 30, 1974, was \$53,522.82, leaving only \$18,731.34 of the capital outlay, without interest, to be repaid to the city. The financial record of the Virginia Beach Market is attached (Table 2).

While the potential sales area for a market is difficult to determine since roads, traffic patterns, shopping patterns all affect sales potential, the one thing essential for all trade areas is population. Population in the immediate area of the Virginia Beach Market was more than one-half million according to the 1960 census. By comparison the population of the Richmond metropolitan area in 1970 was 480,840 and is projected to increase to 558,000 by 1980 (Table 3).

From a supply standpoint, the number of vegetable farms in the Virginia Beach area at that time was reported to be 1484. All of these areas were considered high density vegetable production areas, meaning they had vegetable sales of more than \$25 per 100 acres of total land in the county. Of the total, 412 were classified as large, meaning they had sales of \$2500 or more per farm. The remainder, 1072, had sales from \$500 to \$2499 per farm.

The fact that this farmers' market has operated successfully for a period of ten years leads the study group to recommend that it be studied closely in planning for the regional farmers' market in the Richmond area.

The study of the Virginia Beach Market shows that:

- it is conveniently located in relation to potential retail and wholesale customers;
- ample parking space is available and is designed for easy pickup of quantity purchases by customers;



Layout for Virginia Beach Produce Market

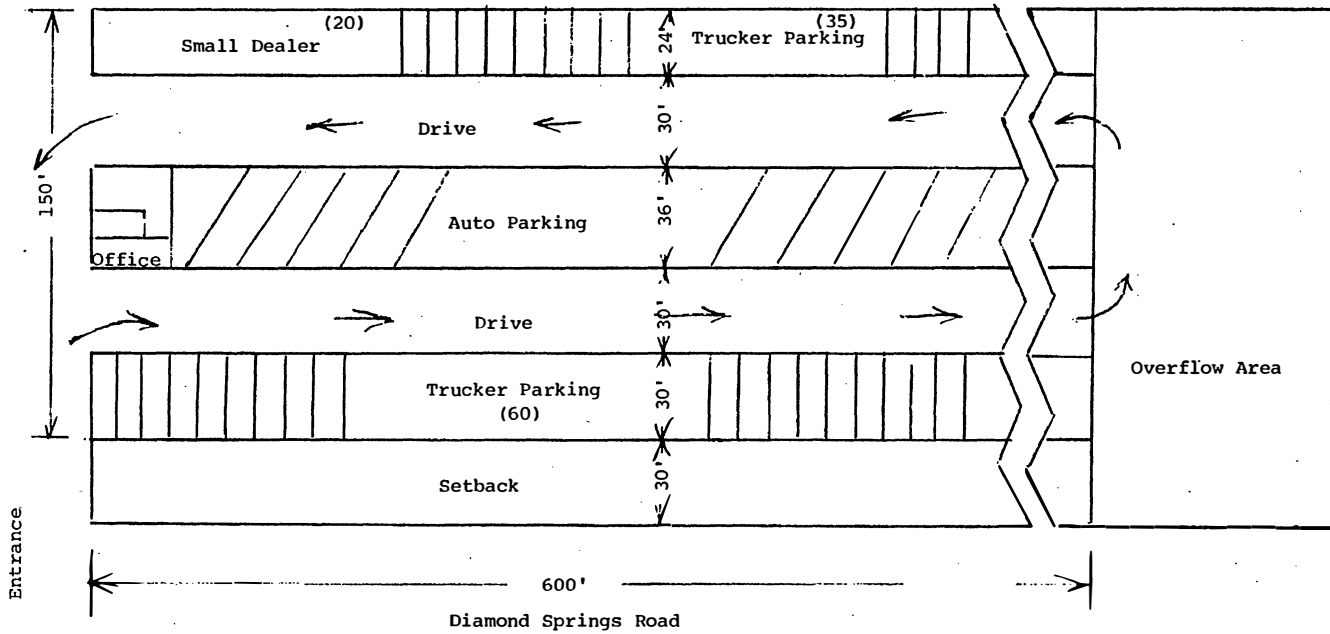


FIGURE 2

Table 2  
 VIRGINIA BEACH PRODUCE MARKET  
 FINANCIAL SUMMARY  
 June 4, 1964 --- June 30, 1974

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Profit</u>	<u>Investment</u>
6/4/64-6/30/64	\$ 308.00	\$ 00.00	\$ 308.00	\$ 00.00
7/1/64-6/30/65	15,612.00	9,691.43	5,921.17	\$ 7,953.10
7/1/65-6/30/66	13,893.00	8,586.49	5,306.51	24,742.06
7/1/66-6/30/67	12,601.00	9,446.36	3,154.64	00.00
7/1/67-6/30/68	10,969.62	9,170.69	1,798.93	00.00
7/1/68-6/30/69	11,481.52	9,419.17	2,062.35	00.00
7/1/69-6/30/70	16,155.11	11,551.72	4,603.39	16,167.00
7/1/70-6/30/71	17,038.11	10,408.95	6,629.16	19,175.00
7/1/71-6/30/72	20,369.09	14,475.43	5,893.66	1,217.00
7/1/72-6/30/73	23,742.47	15,980.76	7,761.71	3,000.00
7/1/73-6/30/74	<u>27,799.99</u>	<u>17,716.69</u>	<u>10,083.30</u>	<u>00.00</u>
	\$169,970.51	\$116,447.69	\$53,522.82	\$72,254.16

Table 3 - Population of the Richmond Metropolitan Area, 1970 and 1980 Projections

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980 Projection</u>
Henrico	154,364	203,000
Richmond	249,430	240,000
Chesterfield	<u>77,046</u>	<u>115,000</u>
TOTAL	480,840	558,000

Source: Division of State Planning and Community Affairs.

it is designed to meet specific needs of producers, customers, and wholesalers in that area;

the facilities are designed for easy cleaning and maintenance;

ample toilet, sanitation, and service facilities are provided; and

the facilities are designed so that farmers can properly merchandise their produce.

#### SUPPLY OF PRODUCE IN RICHMOND AREA

Data relating to the supply of produce for the Richmond Farmers' Market was taken from a report prepared by Drs. James B. Bell and Joseph M. Johnson of the Department of Agricultural Economics, V.P.I. & S.U., Blacksburg, Virginia.

This analysis shows that more than three-fourths of the producers using the market come from an area within a 50-mile radius of the Richmond Farmers' Market. This area was defined in this report as the primary supply area for a farmers' market in Richmond and was sub-divided into those counties that lie within a 25-mile radius of the market and those which lie between 25 and 50 miles of the market.

During 1969, 3226 acres of vegetables and melons were produced on 329 farms by farmers who reside in counties of the primary supply area. This acreage was about evenly divided between those counties which were less than 25 miles from the market and those that were 25 to 50 miles from the market (Table 4).

The summary of the report states that adequate volumes of produce are available within a 50-mile radius of Richmond to supply an expanded regional farmers' market, but production within this area is declining. This decline is sharper in those counties within a 25-mile radius of the market. The report also states that farmers have indicated they would expand their use of an improved marketing facility. Improved marketing facilities could be expected to encourage increased production.

#### FINDINGS OF STUDY GROUP

Since House Joint Resolution No. 114 adopted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1974 directed that a report be made on methods of improving the present Richmond Farmers'

Table 4 - Acres of Vegetables and Melons on All Farms Within a 25-Mile and a 25 to 50-mile Radius of Richmond, Virginia, 1969 and 1964

County	1969		1964	
		Acres	Farms	
----- Within 25 miles -----				
Charles City & New Kent	14	228	28	491
Chesterfield	20	64	15	60
Goochland	13	13	4	132
Hanover	93	1,299	154	1,981
Henrico	7	33	22	79
King William	10	74	13	68
Powhatan	7	81	4	28
Sub-total	164	1,792	240	2,837
----- 25 to 50 miles -----				
Amelia	6	3		
Caroline	19	767	34	169
Cumberland	3	4	2	1
Dinwiddie	28	60	14	93
Essex	6	21	29	170
James City	17	359	26	686
King & Queen	26	85	73	374
Louisa	4	2	3	7
Nottoway	13	8	9	12
Prince George	22	52	20	57
Spotsylvania	6	4	3	9
Surry	8	21	7	28
Sussex	7	48	6	45
Sub-total	165	1,464	226	1,651
Total	329	3,226	466	4,488

Source: U. S. Department of Commerce, 1969, Census of Agriculture, Part 24, Volume 1, Sectional, Summary Data

Market, the study group considered the present Richmond Farmers' Market in relation to the criteria established by it for a regional farmers' market in the Richmond area.

From the standpoint of accessibility, the 17th and Main Street location is good; however, large trucks normally used to bring produce from distant production areas would, because of the present street network adjacent to this location and the traffic on these streets, find it difficult to use this location. Interstate 95 passes nearby and has an exit within two blocks of this location. The downtown expressway will connect with Interstate 95 just south of this location and Interstate 64 enters Interstate 95 only a few blocks to the north of this area. Thus, this area would be linked to all parts of the city and metropolitan area either by interstate or high speed roads.

The land area currently in use at this location is considerably less than the minimum considered needed by the study group for a regional farmers' market. Customer parking facilities are currently limited to curbside and are not adequate for the number of customers needed to support a successful operation. This area could be expanded by the acquisition of adjacent areas. Several alternatives appear to be available. A vacant lot west of Area B (Figure 1) across the southbound lanes of 17th Street would provide parking for 60 customer cars. One-half of the block north of Grace Street between 17th and 18th is currently owned by the City of Richmond and might be considered, if a decision is made to develop a regional farmers' market at this location. These two areas cover about 1.5 acres. Each of the blocks east of 17th Street between Main and Grace cover approximately two acres. Acquisition of one of these blocks or the western half of both blocks would increase the land area at this location to the minimum considered necessary for a market.

All needed facilities and services are available at this location.

Market visibility is fair in relation to prospective customers traveling the main arteries nearby. Signs would have to be posted along these main arteries to direct prospective customers to the market.

Security of this area has been poor but it could be improved by installation of a

fence around the area, limiting traffic within the area to market users, and by periodic police patrols.

The study group concluded that improvements to the present Richmond Farmers' Market for use as a regional farmers' market would be ill-advised unless sufficient funds were made available to acquire a land area sufficient to support a regional farmers' market. The study group then considered the feasibility of representative locations for a regional farmers' market in the metropolitan area to fulfill the purpose established by the study group for such a market.

#### STUDY OF OTHER LOCATIONS

At the request of the study group, the transportation section of the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission prepared a report in which a number of location criteria for three other areas within the Richmond metropolitan area were considered. One of the areas considered is on Laburnum Avenue in the vicinity of the Fairgrounds (Figure 3); a second is in the Parker Field area (Figure 4); and the third is the Broad Street Station area (Figure 5). These areas were felt to represent the type of area needed for a regional farmers' market and no attempt was made to consider all such areas in the metropolitan area. Further, no attempt was made to determine the availability of specific sites within these areas for a regional farmers' market. These areas were considered according to traffic counts in the vicinity; accessibility to producers, consumers, and interstate and arterial highways; local wholesale establishments; visibility of sites; compatibility with neighboring land use; parking; security; and sanitation and utilities. This report is summarized and made a part of the report of the study group. The complete report can be made available to those persons who request it.

Traffic counts (7:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M.) during January-March, 1975, near these sites are as follows:

<u>Fairgrounds</u>	
Laburnum, at North Avenue	18,489
Laburnum, west of Route 360	20,075
Meadow Bridge Road, at City Limit	5,841

FIGURE 3

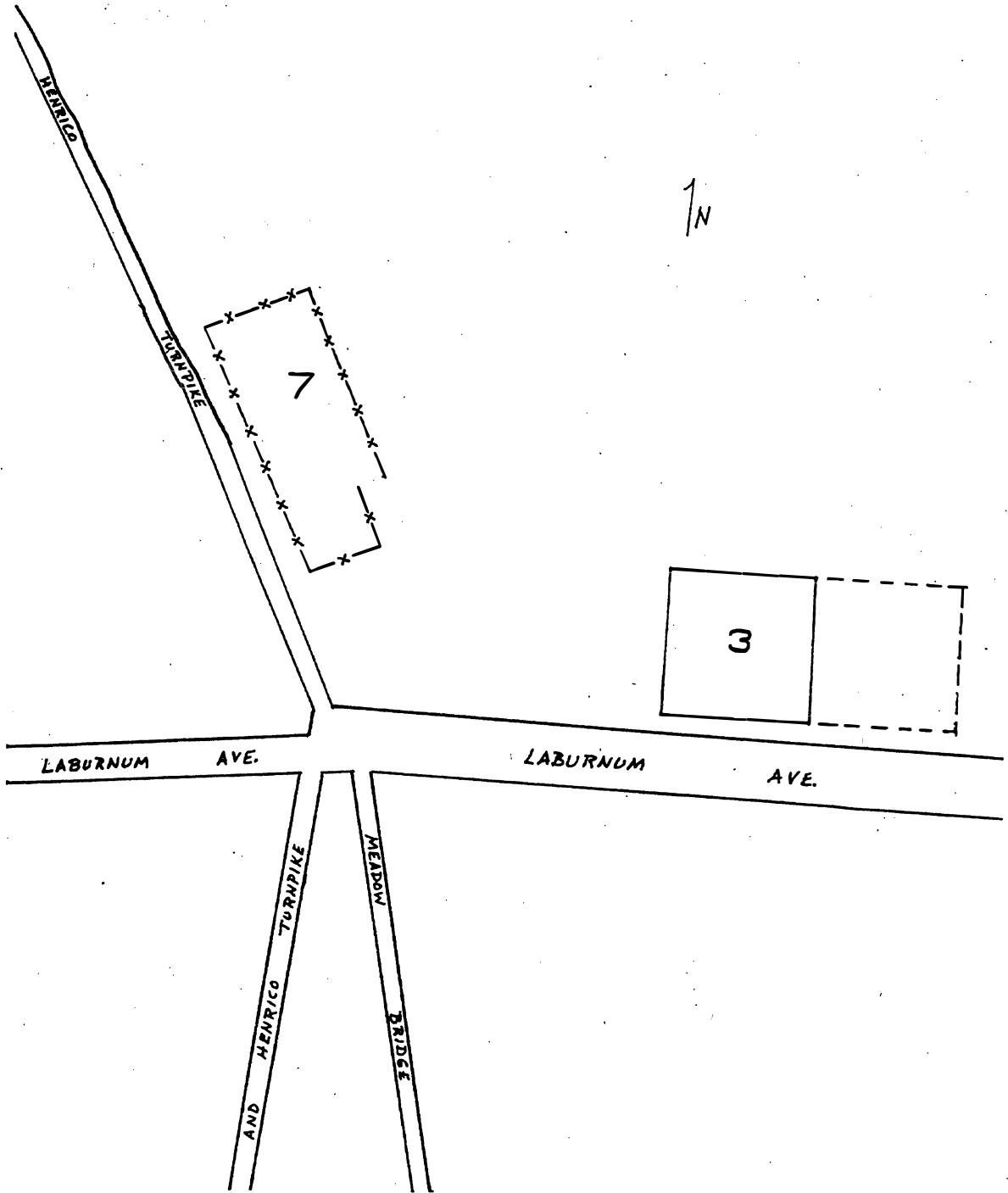


FIGURE 4

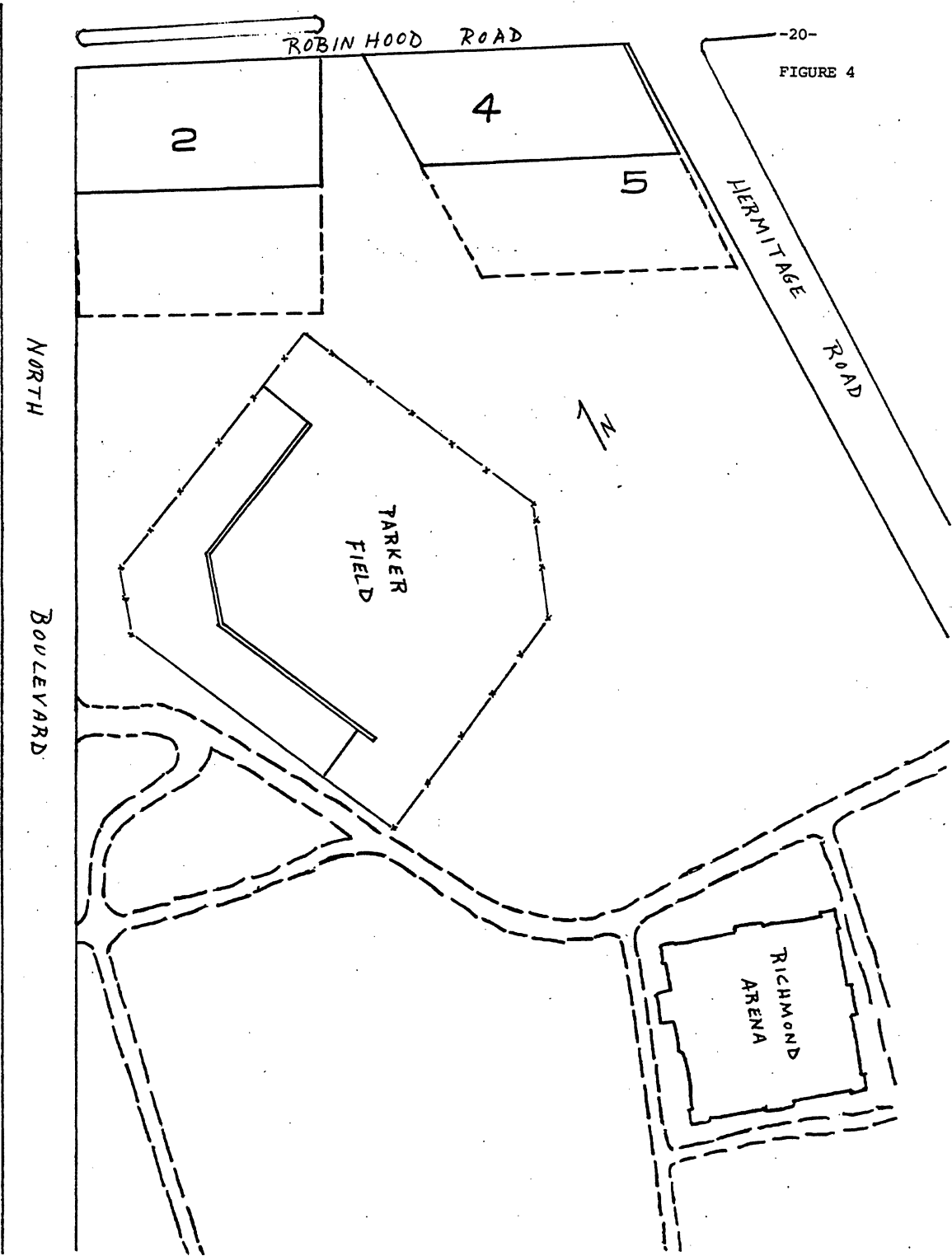
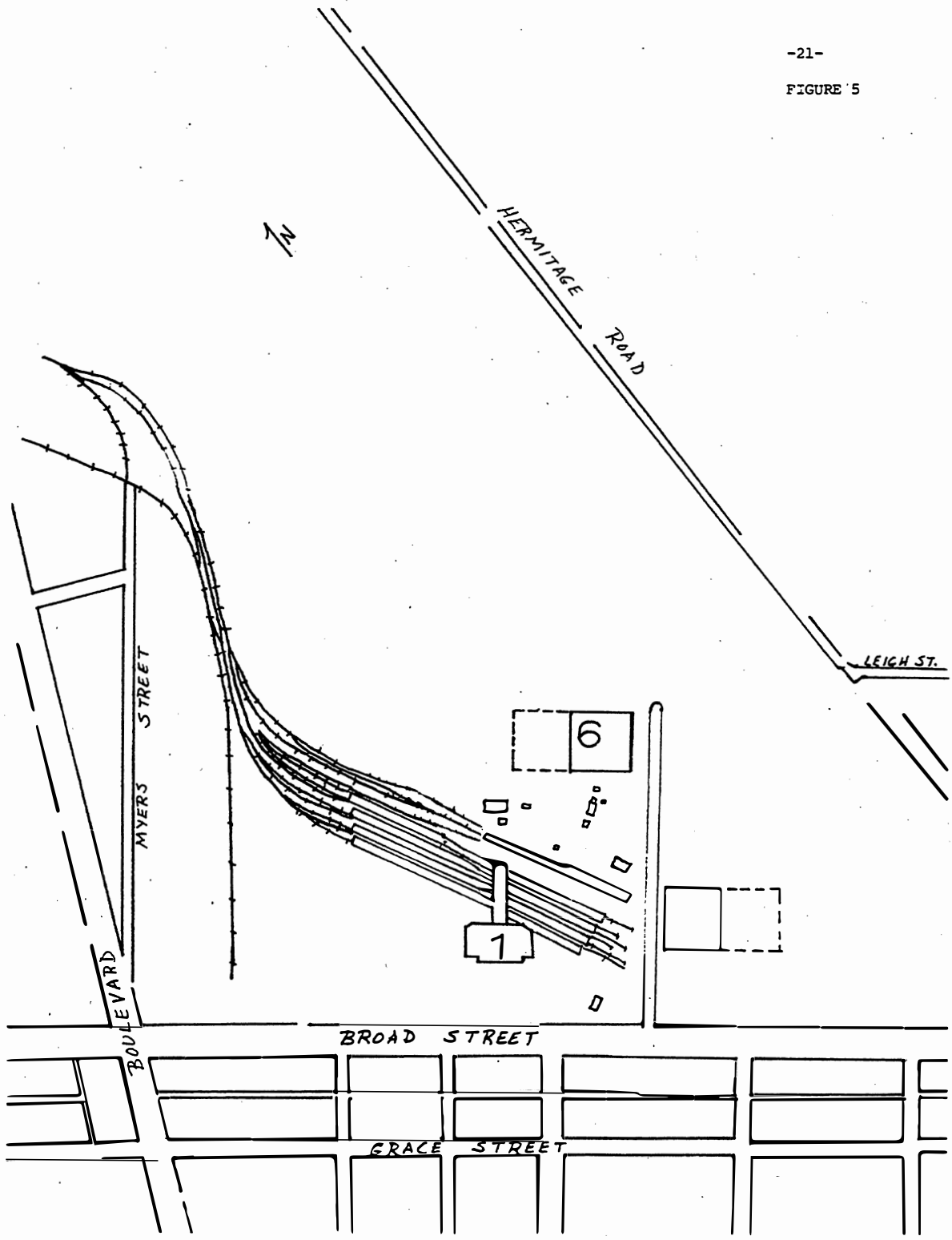




FIGURE 5



<u>Parker Field</u>	
Boulevard, north of Broad Street	23,124
Hermitage, between Robin Hood Road and Overbrook	7,960
<u>Broad Street Station</u>	
Broad Street, between Lombardy and Hermitage	24,512
<u>17th Street Site</u>	
Main Street, east of 14th Street	8,783
18th Street, at Franklin Street	7,636

The majority of the producers using the present market are from Hanover, King William and King and Queen Counties. The travel time in minutes from points on the northern and northeastern fringe of the metropolitan area to the locations under consideration was developed as a measure of the accessibility of the locations to the producers. These data are as follows:

Travel Time in Minutes from Fringe Points to Locations

	<u>Fairgrounds</u>	<u>Parker Field</u> (Minutes)	Broad St. Station	17th Street
U.S. 1 North	17.07	15.60	16.41	23.08
I-95 North	16.68	15.21	16.02	22.69
301 North	9.06	13.30	14.23	17.96
Mechanicsville Pike	10.74	16.26	17.21	17.34
AVERAGE TRAVEL TIME	13.39	15.09	15.77	20.27

When the travel time from the farm to the fringe points is added to the above average times, the difference in total travel times to the different locations is relatively small. These small differences should be a minor factor in site selection.

Convenience to the customer, whether wholesale or retail, is of greater importance to the success of the market than convenience to the producer. Data were developed showing the population within 5 and 10 minutes travel time and the average travel time from all zones in the metropolitan area to each of the locations being considered. These data are as follows:

	Population(1970) within 5 minutes Travel Time	Population(1970) within 10 minutes Travel Time	Average Travel Time from all zones in Metropolitan Area
Fairgrounds	47,796	163,916	15.55 minutes
Parker Field	73,425	216,645	13.35 minutes
Broad Street Station	76,225	199,331	13.11 minutes
17th Street & Main	44,144	191,394	12.80 minutes

The ease of reaching the regional farmers' market would, in addition to the time required, have a bearing on the use of the market. The accessibility of the proposed areas to interstate and arterial highways is presented as a measurement of the ease by which each of the proposed locations may be reached. This information is as follows:

The Fairgrounds are on the major four-lane arterial, Laburnum, within 1.3 miles of U.S. 1 and 301, 1.7 miles of U.S. 360 East, 2.5 miles of I-95 and I-195, and within 5.5 miles of I-64 East via Laburnum;

Parker Field is within 2 blocks of the Boulevard Interchange of I-95 and within 1.4 miles of I-195;

Broad Street Station is within 1.4 miles of the Boulevard Interchange of I-95 and within 1.4 miles of I-195 at Broad Street;

17th Street is within four blocks of I-95, 7 blocks of RMA's Downtown Expressway, and within 0.9 miles of the I-64 Interchange.

This information shows that all locations under consideration are readily accessible to interstate and arterial highways.

Prospective sales to independent wholesalers in the Richmond area would probably be reduced by moving this market out of its present location. A directory of produce wholesalers shows that the produce district is firmly anchored in the vicinity of Franklin and 17th Streets (the location of the present market). Small commercial customers would also lose convenient access to full line produce wholesalers to supplement their purchases from the regional market, if it is moved from the present location.

With regard to the visibility of the market site within each of the locations under consideration, an on-the-spot survey shows that visibility from the main thoroughfares would be determined almost entirely by the actual siting of the market. None of the possible sites within these locations is particularly visible from the interstates. Members of the study group are of the opinion that most of the purchases at a regional

farmers' market will be planned purchases and visibility to the passing motorist would not be as important as accessibility and convenience. The lack of visibility could be overcome by suitable directional signs and promotion of the use of the market.

With regard to compatibility with neighboring land use, the study reveals the following points:

The Fairgrounds area is in a rapidly developing residential area with supermarkets, drug stores, service stations that are readily available to users of a regional farmers' market to supply needs that are not available at a regional farmers' market.

Parker Field is in a commercial area. Retail and warehouse operations in this area would make a regional farmers' market compatible with neighboring land use.

The Broad Street location is in a commercial district adjacent to the residential area of potential retail customers. The use of the Broad Street Station building structure itself as a combined regional farmers' market, produce store, flower shop, garden supply shop, and canning supply shop could be explored. Development of this structure as a regional farmers' market could, thereby, preserve it for its historical value. Reports from other cities indicate that this approach has been successfully used.

With regard to parking, the study group feels that where sufficient land area can be made available to meet the minimum requirements, sufficient parking for both producers using the market and consumers would be available conveniently.

The key to security is the recommended single entrance, fenced area with adequate lighting. The 17th Street site, if it continues to be divided by Franklin Street, even though fenced, would still be more difficult to protect than the other sites. A Broad Street site behind the Station and below street level would not enjoy the protection of passing traffic as it would at Parker Field. The Fairgrounds site would also enjoy the protection of passing traffic although it is somewhat removed from neighboring commercial activity.

Adequate sanitation and utilities could be installed at all of the areas included in this study. The cost will vary but will not be a significant portion of the capital

cost of the entire project.

The study group has not attempted to locate specific sites in any of these locations. However, a survey of these locations indicates that there are sites in each of the general locations that would meet most of the location criteria discussed earlier.

A second part of the work of the study group dealt with consideration of the type of building considered to be feasible for a regional farmers' market, its cost, estimated annual expenses, and cost to the farmer at several levels of utilization.

#### SUGGESTED MARKET FACILITIES

The facilities suggested by the study group are based on data relating to the use of the present Richmond Farmers' Market, comments of producers, wholesalers, and other interested groups and information collected from visits to markets in other parts of the state and country. Assistance was provided by the Agricultural Research Service, USDA, in developing the representative plans. Estimated facilities costs are based on standard construction costs in the eastern United States. Prior to constructing a market, a more detailed analysis of market requirements will be needed and architectural plans will need to be developed. However, the committee feels these facilities costs are accurate enough for policy making decisions concerning the establishment of a Richmond Regional Farmers' Market.

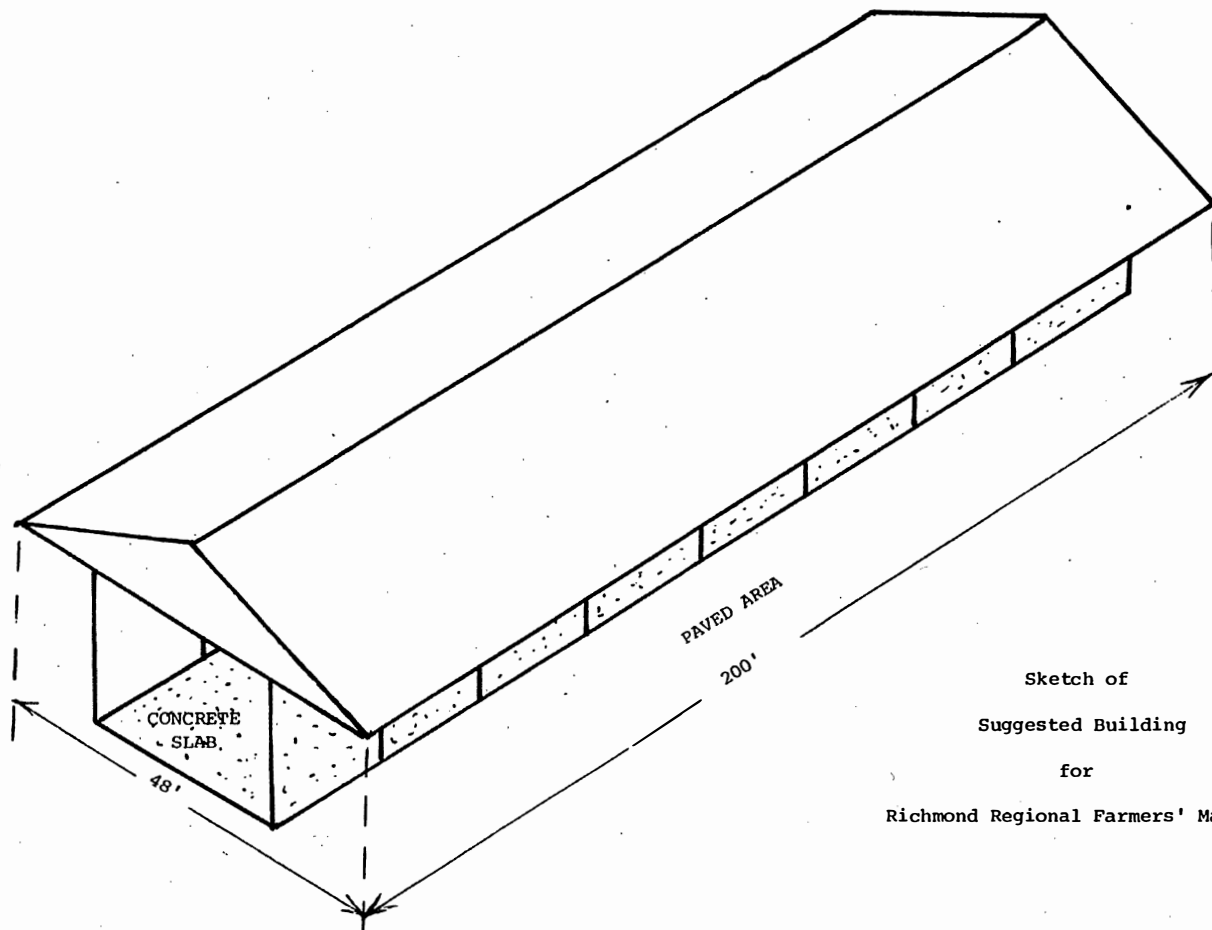
The proposed market would provide covered sales spaces for 42 farmer stalls. This size facility is suggested since the average use during the peak period in 1974 was 31 marketing permits per day and potential users suggested that a more adequate, convenient farmers' market would be used to a greater extent than the present one. Some of the 42 stalls could be converted to semi-permanent small dealer retail units, if desirable. Additional space would be paved to accommodate another 20 retail sales spaces. This area would not be covered. An overflow area for another 70 sales spaces would be available at the site. This area would not be paved initially but would probably be covered with gravel. Fencing would be provided around the entire site. Adequate lighting would be provided

The study committee recommends that a farmers' market building of 48' x 220', with 15' eaves be constructed (Figure 6). The sides of the building would be open and the building would be supported on columns 20' apart. Thus, the roof truss would be a cantilever extending 12' on each side of the supporting columns. A 24' x 20' section of this building would be enclosed for use as restrooms, storage, and office space. A 24' x 220' long concrete slab would be provided under this building. The building will provide forty-two 10' farmer stalls. The cost of this facility is estimated at \$141,664 as shown in Table 5.

No land acquisition or rent cost was included in the proposal. These costs will vary substantially depending on the location of the site. Land for all farmers' markets in Virginia is provided by a local government and no attempt is normally made to recover a return on the land investment. Based on these experiences with other markets, it is recommended that the Richmond Regional Farmers' Market be provided land without a rent or investment payback charge.

#### OPERATING COSTS

Depending on the arrangements with the local governments, operating costs for a market may vary somewhat. For example, the salaries may be shared in some instances and the local government may provide supplemental employment during off-season periods. Certain additional costs may be incurred, which are not shown, if they are not provided by local governments. Security, street sweeping, and garbage removal are examples of these costs. The costs as shown in Table 6 are estimated based on typical operating arrangements in Virginia. However, adjustment in this budget may be needed based on specific policies of the local government or governments. Under the assumptions of the study group, it is estimated that the annual operating cost of the market will be \$14,283. In addition, the fixed costs for interest and depreciation are estimated at \$9,917, making the total annual cost \$24,200.



Sketch of  
Suggested Building  
for  
Richmond Regional Farmers' Market

FIGURE 6

Table 5 - Representative Capital Investment for a Richmond Regional Farmers' Market

<u>Items</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Land Use - Investment Allocated (Assumed that these costs would be borne by sponsoring governments or organizations)	(            )
Building for 42 Market Spaces (220' x 48' -- 10,560 sq. ft. @\$6.00)	\$63,360
Concrete Slab for Building (220' x 24' -- 5,280 sq. ft., or 586 sq. yds. @\$9.00)	5,274
Market Office, Restroom and Storage (Enclose a 20' x 24' bay and install facilities)	10,000
Paving - Blacktop Approximately 1/2 Site Area, Less Slab Area (54,000 sq. ft., or 6,000 sq. yds. @\$6.50)	39,000
Site Improvement (Grading, fill, drainage)	3,000
Street Lights	1,000
Fencing - (if needed) (361.5 x 4 -- 1446 ft. @\$5.00 ft.)	7,230
Contingency Allowance	12,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 141,664</b>



Table 6 - Representative Annual Cost for a Richmond Regional Farmers' Market

<u>Operating Cost</u>	
Salaries	\$10,000
Secretary	
Legal	200
Telephone	250
Utilities and Fuel	2,400
Office Equipment	200
Supplies	200
Insurance	175
Travel	100
Repairs & Maintenance (.5% x \$141,664)	708
Advertising	50
Sub-total	\$14,283
 <u>Fixed Cost</u>	
Interest (8% x 1/2 x \$141,664)	5,667
Depreciation (3% x \$141,664)	4,250
Land (no cost allocated)	
Sub-total	<u>9,917</u>
Total cost	\$ 24,200

BREAK-EVEN LEVELS OF MARKET OPERATION

One concern of the study committee was whether and how the Richmond Regional Farmers' Market would generate adequate funds to meet the cost of operating the market. According to the records of the City of Richmond, 3500 rental permits were sold for the Richmond Farmers' Market during 1974 (Table 7). Analysis indicates that 43 per cent of the total permits were sold during July and August and the remaining 57 per cent were sold during the other ten months of the year. January through May are particularly low-use months. If adequate facilities are provided to meet peak needs during late summer, then the facilities will be under utilized during much of the remainder of the year. Programs to encourage off-season use would obviously be helpful.

The average number of daily fee collections by months, required to generate the \$24,000 annual operating cost, are shown in Table 8. The monthly use pattern was assumed to stay the same during 1974 in this analysis.

If a use level remained at the 1974 level, an average daily rental of \$6.91 per stall would be required to generate sufficient revenue to pay the total cost of the market. An average daily rental of \$4.08 would be required to defray the operating cost. Alternative use levels, A, B, and C, assumed to be 1.5, 2.5, and 3.5 times the 1974 use level, respectively, were assumed. It will be noted from Table 8 that the average daily market fee required for break-even operation declined proportionately to about \$2 under Alternative C when total costs are considered and \$1.16 when only operating costs are considered.

The proposed facilities would seem to be more than adequate to meet the need under Alternative A (1.5 times the 1974 level of use). Virtually all sellers should be able to be accommodated in the covered area in the building, with only occasional use of the non-covered paved area during the summer. The average daily marketing fee for this alternative would be \$4.60 to generate sufficient income to cover total costs and \$2.72 when only operating cost is considered.

Table 7 - Permits Sold on the Richmond Farmers' Market, 1974

	Number of Permits Per Month	Average Permits Per <u>Day*</u>	Per Cent of <u>Total</u>
January	84	3	2.4
February	94	4	2.7
March	143	6	4.1
April	94	4	2.7
May .	161	6	4.6
June	191	8	5.6
July	707	28	20.2
August	781	31	22.3
September	531	21	15.2
October	295	12	8.4
November	178	7	5.1
December	<u>241</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6.9</u>
	3500	12	100.0

\*Based on 25 market days per month.

Table 8 - Average Number of Daily Market Fee Collections Required to Break Even at Alternate Use Levels for a Richmond Regional Farmers' Market

	<u>Alternative Use Levels</u>			
	<u>1974</u>	A	B	<u>C</u>
Ratio of 1974 to Projected Use Levels	1.0	1.5	2.5	3.5
	(Average number of daily market fee collections)			
January	3	5	8	12
February	4	6	9	13
March	6	9	14	20
April	4	6	9	13
May	6	10	16	22
June	8	12	19	27
July	28	42	71	99
August	31	47	78	109
September	21	32	53	74
October	12	18	29	41
November	7	11	18	25
December	10	14	24	34
Number of Fees Per Year	3,500	5,250	8,750	12,250
Daily Market Fee Required for Break-Even Operation Covering:				
Total Cost	\$6.91	\$4.60	\$2.76	\$1.97
Operating Cost	\$4.08	\$2.72	\$1.63	\$1.16

Under Alternative B (2.5 times the 1974 level of use), the average daily marketing fee required for break-even operation covering total cost would decline to \$2.76; and if only operating cost is considered, \$1.63. Average daily use would vary from 8 per day in January to 78 per day in August. This level of use would suggest that the market building would accommodate the users during most of the year, but a number of sellers would be required to use the non-covered paved area and some use of the unpaved non-covered area would be required during July and August.

The highest level of use assumed, Alternative C (3.5 times the 1974 level of use), would reduce the break-even average daily market fee to \$1.97 for total costs and \$1.16 for operating costs. Under this assumption, average daily usage would vary from 12 per day during January to 109 during August. The proposed facilities would not be adequate to meet the needs of farmers if this level of use materializes. Less than one-half of the users would be provided for within the covered sales area during the peak months. Extensive use of non-covered paved as well as non-covered unpaved overflow area would be required.

If different facilities are offered to users, for example, small dealers are provided enclosed areas, then the market fee may vary. However, the average collection per user per day would have to be as shown.

The study committee has not had an opportunity to make an in-depth study of whether or not the number of farmer users could be expected to increase from 3,500 to over 8,000 if well-lighted, attractive market facilities were available and the market fees were raised to approximately \$3.00 per day. Farmers have expressed the opinion in meetings that they would be willing to pay for adequate facilities. However, this has not been supported by a survey of farmer users. Other markets, such as the Virginia Beach Market, do have daily use fees in this range and maintain an adequate level of use.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The study group concurs in the conclusion reached by the legislative study committee a properly located, constructed and publicized regional farmers' market in the Richmond metropolitan area is needed and would be beneficial to the producer, consumer and community. Information available to the study group indicates there is a sufficient supply and sufficient customers to enable a well-managed and advertised regional farmers' market to be successful.

2. The study group considered the present location and three other representative locations in relation to the criteria it had established for a regional farmers' market and concluded that either of these locations or other locations in the Richmond metropolitan area, meeting these criteria, would be a feasible site for a regional farmers' market.

3. After reviewing the facilities available at other farmers' markets, the study group concluded that a building of the general size, characteristics, and construction as the one suggested would be adequate to serve as a regional farmers' market in the Richmond metropolitan area.

4. Establishment of a regional farmers' market in the Richmond metropolitan area at the location of the present market or at some other location will require action by one or more of the local governing bodies as provided for in appropriate legislation.

If a regional farmers' market is established in the Richmond metropolitan area by a produce market authority, favorable consideration by one or more local governing bodies is necessary. In this connection the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Commerce and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University would be pleased to supply any available information to any interested city, county, or combination thereof and the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission has the role and expertise required to develop regional participation in this project.

It is recommended that this report be presented to the governing bodies in the Richmond area and to the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission for their consideration.

