

# City of Charlotte

## Beach Market Proposal – November, 2016

The City of Charlotte, in cooperation with the Friends of Beach Market non-profit organization, is proposing to renovate and refurbish the historic Beach Market in downtown Charlotte.

Beach Market is an historic, open-air market the community hopes to revitalize with a combination of historic preservation, and tasteful, complementary renovation. The project would activate this venerable public space, breathing new life into a place that could truly enhance our quality of life.

We believe that Beach Market, if restored and carefully upgraded, can serve as a community-builder, finding its highest and best use as a re-born farmer's market, public event center and entertainment venue.

Today, Beach Market is owned by the Charlotte Lions Club, but it has had a number of owners and caretakers over the decades. The Lions Club has formed a unique partnership with members of the Charlotte Rotary Club, and the community at large to create a special 501(c)3 organization that will be the new, long-term owners of the market. The 'Friends of Beach Market' will be responsible for its use, its promotion and its preservation.

The City of Charlotte is seeking historic preservation funds from the Community Development Block Grant program to repair and refurbish those elements of the Market that need significant help. This includes new roofing material, a new concrete floor, extensive masonry repair, and the installation of new bathrooms.

The organization would then raise private funds to create a pavilion-like roof structure over the open, central part of the market space. It would also replace the historically inappropriate brickwork along the north and east perimeters with more complementary, period-appropriate masonry columns and walls. The City itself would work to make supporting improvements near the market when it renovates the adjacent public parking area.

Beach Market will be a contributing property to Downtown Charlotte's new listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Project organizers are working with an architect familiar with the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act to ensure this project protects the historic integrity of the existing building, and that any future new construction meets CDBG requirements.

Once completed, Beach Market will become home to the community's downtown Farmer's Market twice each week, and will be host to special events and activities throughout the year. The improvements will allow the market to better serve as an open-air special events center featuring food, music and other entertainment. Several annual local festivals will be able to make use of the space, and expanding the roof will help event organizers better manage the effects of weather. Bathrooms on site will increase the practicality of holding events at the market significantly.

The market got its start in the early 1920's when Charlotte businessman Fitch Beach conceived of, and built, a public market he hoped would benefit both the citizens of Charlotte, and the farmers of the surrounding countryside. According to the local newspaper, Beach chose a site "directly across from the Post Office, and a very short block from the center of the business section of the city," two statements that remain true today. Mr. Beach's philanthropy remains well-known in the community, with Hayes Green Beach Hospital, Beach Municipal Airport and other local landmarks and institutions still bearing his name.

Beach Market was originally owned by the city, but has since changed hands several times, with its most recent care-takers being the Charlotte Lions Club. It operated as a farmer's market into the 1970s, but since then struggled to attract sustaining uses. It has been home to Boy Scout Christmas Tree Sales, rummage sales, personal trunk sales, BINGO, and many other small and infrequent uses. In just the past 5 years, community groups have started using it for entertainment, but without bathrooms, good lighting or enough roof area, the limitations are severe.

If approved, this proposal would help accomplish several important things:

- The new non-profit organization would become permanent caretaker and manager of the facility.
- The facility would become far more useful and attractive to event organizers.
- An important historic resource in the community would be enhanced and preserved.
- Quality open space for the public would be created and activated for the benefit of the community.

We hope you will consider this proposal.