

# Chapter 16

## PRODUCE MARKET

In the process of formulating the Master Plan, which is concerned with encouraging the most effective uses of land for all necessary purposes, public and private, certain types of land use called for special study. The wholesale fruit and vegetable market, requiring as it does specialized facilities within a rather limited area, falls in this category. In addition, the market's present location is within the area covered by the Central Riverfront Redevelopment Plan and its relocation is therefore a necessary corollary of that Plan.

Wholesale produce marketing operations in Cincinnati are now concentrated chiefly in that part of the riverfront known as the "central bottoms." They have gravitated there over the years due to access to all the railroads, and relatively low rents and taxes. *Their only association with the river occurs when floods disrupt their operations.* Frequent inundations, other inconveniences and inefficiencies and the fact that other uses are more appropriate for the riverfront, give added weight to the desirability of transferring these marketing activities to a more commodious and flood-free site.

### Economic Importance of the Market

One of Cincinnati's outstanding activities is wholesaling, marked by an unusual concentration in the field of fresh fruits and vegetables. It is highly important that Cincinnati maintain and if possible expand its position in this field.

During recent years the total supply of such products distributed from this market has averaged around 25,000 carloads per year. This means an average of over 1,000 tons per day the year around. In periods of heavy seasonal receipts, and on certain days of the week, probably as much as 2,000 tons are handled in one day. Railroad unloads have ranged between 14,000 and 18,000 car loads annually. No record is made of motor truck receipts.

The Cincinnati market serves a wide trade territory in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia. Rail unloads here have greatly exceeded those of most comparable cities. The larger total of rail unloads,

however, may have been offset to some extent by smaller truck receipts in the local market.

### Railroad Facilities

Railroads serving Cincinnati are the Southern, B. & O., L. & N., New York Central, Pennsylvania, C. & O., and N. & W. All maintain team tracks in the produce market district.

### The Flood Problem

Although the market has no necessary connection with the river, its location subjects it to periodic inundation by Ohio River floods. Floods interrupt activities, destroy or contaminate supplies on hand, complicate or prevent receipts, and cause considerable capital and maintenance cost to dealers, property owners, public utilities and the city. Local protection measures have been declared uneconomic. The only alternatives presented are to tolerate flood damage or move to a flood-free site.

### Wholesale Marketing Area Today

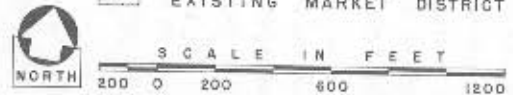
Distribution to retailers is conducted at several widely scattered places. The present district is in the central riverfront bottoms south of Second Street, between Vine Street and Central Avenue. Most of the primary receivers have stores along lower Plum Street or in that vicinity. One group of jobbers is on Pearl near Sycamore, another on Sixth, and a few stores are on Court, between Central and Plum. A farmer's market uses city-owned property at Twelfth and Central.

The major physical job is a *big moving operation*. Within a few hours hundreds of tons of perishable products must be unloaded and moved to various places within the market for display, sale, and delivery to buyers. The products are bulky and heavy. Many are tender and easily bruised. To send these foods on their way to consumers in the best possible condition and with a minimum of loss and waste requires the most efficient and convenient handling facilities.



# CONSOLIDATED PRODUCE MARKET

 PROPOSED MARKET  
 EXISTING MARKET DISTRICT



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
CINCINNATI OHIO

FIG. 54

## Present Facilities and Methods

Present facilities and methods are not well adapted to supplying needs of retailers. Most of the store buildings were originally built for other purposes and few have adjoining trackage. The streets are narrow and problems of traffic congestion will probably become more serious. Most sales and deliveries are made at railroad cars nearby. Refrigerator cars are really used as display, selling and storage space for receivers and much of the supply is trucked by each receiver to his own store or to the buyer's truck or store. The total selling costs of a dealer are probably greater than if all sales could be made at his store. Despite handicaps the local market is believed to be doing a more efficient and less costly job than markets in many other cities. Nevertheless, the new market proposed would be more satisfactory to sellers and buyers, making material savings in distribution cost of foods in Cincinnati and its trade territory.

## Requirements of a New Market

The Master Plan report on Wholesale Produce Market contains a detailed study of the physical facilities required in a new market to fit the needs of Cincinnati. A good market should be complete as to goods and services rendered, made available to all types of buyers, sold and delivered in the shortest time with minimum rehandling. All facilities should be at one location.

The fundamental requirements are (1) a large tract of land; and (2) a series of large covered platforms at truck-bed height, with direct rail connections, accessible on all sides for loading and unloading motor trucks. On such platforms products can be unloaded directly from incoming carriers and reloaded into outgoing vehicles without being lowered to sidewalk or street level only to be lifted up again. The platforms should differ in size, shape, and arrangement according to the needs of their users, but all would be intended to serve the same purpose whether divided into stores for wholesale dealers, or unloading and display platforms for auctions, or loading and unloading platforms for growers and truckers.

## Design for New Market

The detailed Plan in the Wholesale Produce Market report shows wholesale dealers' stores arranged in a row on each of two parallel rectangular concrete platforms. Each store has a full complement of the desirable facilities and appurtenances including full basement, mezzanine office, refrigerating rooms, etc.

Direct unloading from refrigerator cars into stores is provided by double tracks alongside store platforms.

Streets past both ends of each row of stores permit trucks to park at right angles, with space for free movement of other vehicles.

Team tracks are located conveniently back of the row of larger stores, at an angle to the rear platform.

An auction building, a covered truck loading platform, parking areas, traffic regulations, fences and gates are provided for in the Plan.

## Criteria for Site Selection

From the standpoint of location the market has three fundamental requirements; (1) accessibility to all transportation; (2) the shortest average time distance to local buyers, and (3) sufficient area at reasonable cost. It need not be in the central business district.

## Suggested Site for Relocation

The facilities shown in the illustration in the Wholesale Produce Market report and suggested in the Master Plan as a possible new layout, would occupy 49 acres. The site would take in the area between Third and Sixth Streets, and extend from John Street and the Millcreek Expressway westward nearly to Linn Street projected. An irregular western boundary leaves undisturbed several existing large buildings and plants. This site provides adequate space for all local requirements, with considerable margin for expansion. About half of the total area would be occupied by team tracks. (See Fig. 54.)

Within the limitations imposed by Cincinnati's hills the proposed site is perhaps as centrally located as any in the area served by the market. That area includes the nearby cities in Kentucky. Streets and highway connections are excellent. An underpass below Sixth Street and gateways at Fourth and Fifth Streets provide unobstructed access. The site adjoins the Millcreek Expressway which will furnish the best possible connections to local points and major highways. Located at the end of the C. & O. Bridge it is directly accessible to points across the river and south.

All railroads except the Pennsylvania now have tracks or connections in the immediate vicinity. The Pennsylvania has a single track across the central riverfront from the east. This would be retained for interchange with other lines west of the central bottoms.

Because this site is flood-free, satisfies all requirements of a modern market site and is now occupied largely by one of the city's worst slums, relocation of the market here would reclaim the area for what is probably its highest and best use.

## Responsibility for Development

Development of such a market should not be undertaken by any agency or person who would be in a position to control its inherently monopolistic activities. This could be avoided through its establishment by one of several methods:

(1) A private corporation could be formed, subject to restrictions similar to those found in public utility franchises. The corporation would develop and lease the facilities, but should have no hand in the operation of the market.

(2) A corporation could be set up by the local government as a Market Authority. It should possess about the same powers as a similar private corporation, but would be conducted in the public interest rather than for private gain. Such Authority should be managed by a non-political board.

(3) A department of Markets under the City Manager might be created as an administrative branch of the city government. All of the powers, duties and responsibilities previously mentioned would be vested in the City Manager.