



City of Seattle
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

April 30, 2008

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City expands options for Farmers' Markets and P-Patch Farmers

SEATTLE - Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels today announced new policies to ensure that farmers' markets will remain a vital part of our city, and low-income farmers will be able to sell the produce they grow in the city's P-Patches.

"Buying locally produced food is a small step that can make a big difference in our fight against climate disruption," said Mayor Greg Nickels. "Local food is more nutritious, tastier, and light on packaging, and buying local also helps reduce those greenhouse gas emissions produced by fertilizing and transporting food."

Due to widespread redevelopment in Seattle's neighborhood business districts, farmers' markets are struggling to keep, or locate on new, privately owned sites large enough to stage their markets.

The city's new policies will allow the Parks Department and Transportation Department (SDOT) to issue permits to farmers' markets so they can continue to operate on publicly owned land.

The new permit process for eligible farmers' markets allows market operators to:

- apply for permits once a year instead of every month for street closures; and
- pay reduced fees for both street closures and use of parks' land based on the many public benefits provided by the markets.

Fees for markets located on SDOT property will drop by 50 percent. The Parks Department will reduce charges up to 70 percent, depending on market sales. The Ballard Farmers' Market, for example, will benefit by having to apply for only one annual permit instead of monthly permits, and their street-use fees will be lowered from about \$8,500 to \$4,000.

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Farmers' markets serve as important community gathering places and generators of economic activity in Seattle's neighborhood business districts. More than 530,000 people attended 11 neighborhood farmers markets in 2007, resulting in more than \$7.5 million in sales, and more than 70,000 pounds of food donated to local food banks.

The city is also developing a plan to allow residents making 80 percent of median income (about \$43,000 for a single person), to sell organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs grown in city P-Patches. This will increase the amount of locally grown produce available in Seattle.

Visit the mayor's Web site at www.seattle.gov/mayor. Get the mayor's inside view on efforts to promote transportation, public safety, economic opportunity and healthy communities by signing up for The Nickels Newsletter at www.seattle.gov/mayor/newsletter_signup.htm