



OregonLive.com

Everything Oregon

Buying in on a public market



By The Oregonian Editorial Board

on August 08, 2012 at 7:43 AM, updated August 08, 2012 at 12:17 PM

It's a measure of food's power to attract.

For years, the San Francisco Ferry Building, at the foot of Market Street where the city opens out to the water, stretched quiet and almost empty, despite its location on some of the most spectacular real estate in the world. Steps from the Financial District, it could have been across the bay.

Today, after an overhaul completed in 2003, an upscale food market crammed with cheesemongers, bakeries and restaurants, with a blooming farmers market several times a week, is jammed with both tourists and financial analysts escaping the Dow for lunch. The market is an attraction strong enough to compete with San Francisco Bay.

The Ferry Building, an upscale private operation, isn't a precise model for Portland's proposed James Beard Public Market, but it's a vivid reminder of the power of food to draw and define. And it provides lessons as the Beard market planning goes forward.

Earlier this summer, Multnomah County agreed to sell a space at the west end of the Morrison Bridge to the Melvin Mark Co. to build the market and a 17-story office building. To set up a nonprofit market with a planned 110 booths and a restaurant, the project has three years to raise \$25 million to \$30 million, drawing on public economic development funds and private philanthropy. With the location deal in place, it's now time to start looking actively for the money.

"Our model reflects the true composition of the community," says Ron Paul, executive director of the project, envisioning "a hybrid between a farmers market and a public market," including space for "a Mexican tacqueria and the Vietnamese baker from Northeast Sandy."

Paul sees an operation closer to the diversity of Granville Market in Vancouver, B.C. In both price points and deep local identity, the project can also evoke Philadelphia's Reading Market.

It's an alluring vision, especially for a city with a rising national food profile, a city whose food carts put it on the cover of national magazines. The market is a goal with both a considerable payoff and a considerable challenge.

"The tenant mix is highly important," says John Cornyn, a Portland restaurant consultant. "You can't have just farmers, you have to have some final products."

And some of them might appear, in the most visible Portland fashion, in the form of food carts.

Cornyn notes another comparison: In San Francisco, the bay comes almost up to the tables; in the Portland vision, the Willamette is across the street.

"There are restaurant operators who will tell you, water is magic," he points out. "How that is developed, how (the market) intersects with the Willamette is important."

(Viewing the Ferry Building with a professional eye, Cornyn notes another lesson useful for Portland public market planners: It's a bad idea to have a ladies' room line that stretches to the Bay Bridge.)

The James Beard Public Market has already been a long time in the planning, from a planned 2001 fundraising kickoff dinner that was rescheduled for 2002 after 9/11, to journeys through multiple proposed locations before finally landing next to the bridge.

Yet during that time, its case has gotten steadily stronger, as Portland has become a prominent food destination -- reflected in next month's Feast Portland festival -- as Oregon wineries and distilleries have expanded their reach, as the Food Network has raised the entire country's food obsession, and as locations such as the San Francisco Ferry Building have shown the possibilities.

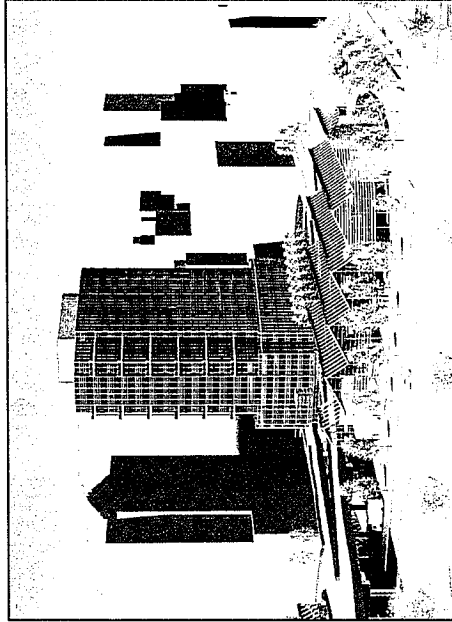
If the project stays on schedule, it should open at the end of the term of the mayor elected this November. It would be an ornament to his city.

© OregonLive.com. All rights reserved.

MAKING THE VISION A REALITY

The Historic Portland Public Market Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, grew out of a task force that started meeting in 2000, made up of a diverse group of Oregonians committed to creating a public market to showcase the state's bounty and honor Oregon native James Beard. The foundation worked tirelessly for more than a decade to bring its vision to life.

More recently, Multnomah County Commissioners approved the sale of the property at the west end of Morrison Bridge to Melvin Mark Development Company, the foundation's partner, for the development of the Morrison Bridgehead Project which includes the nonprofit market and a neighboring 18-story, iconic tower.

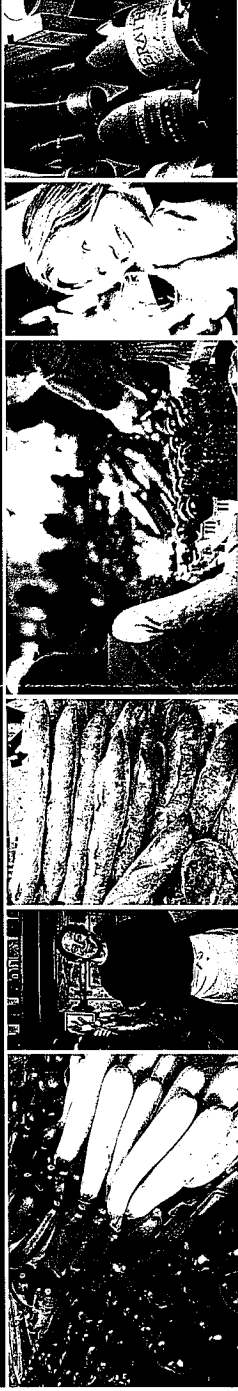


Please join us to help create the James Beard Public Market. Visit our website at:

www.jamesbeardpublicmarket.com

and click on the fundraising tab to make a tax-deductible donation.

Thank you for sharing our vision for Oregon.



THE JAMES BEARD PUBLIC MARKET



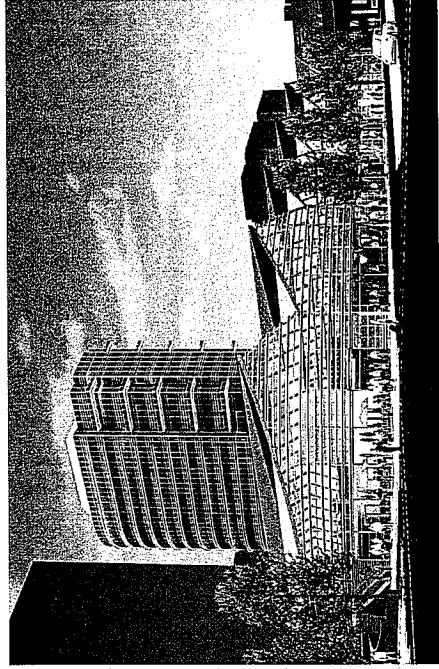
www.PortlandPublicMarket.com
PO Box 511, Portland, OR 97207

THE JAMES BEARD PUBLIC MARKET

THE JAMES BEARD PUBLIC MARKET: OREGON'S MARKET

Portland has gained a reputation as an exceptional food town, thanks in large part to the culinary community's ability to draw on the bounty of Oregon's lands and waters. The state boasts countless farms, vineyards, breweries, farmers markets and restaurants, but one key element has been missing for decades: a flagship public market to showcase the best of Oregon in one location.

That void is about to be filled by the James Beard Public Market, a daily, year-round, indoor-outdoor marketplace. The market, named in honor of the Oregon-born "dean of American cookery," will be located at the west end of the Morrison Bridge in downtown Portland and will feature 50 to 60 permanent vendors, 40 day tables, a full-service restaurant and a teaching kitchen.



CONNECTING, SUSTAINING AND GROWING IN OREGON

The James Beard Public Market will benefit Oregon in many ways. The market will create a sustainable delivery system for products sold by Oregon-owned small businesses and will strengthen the state's reputation as a culinary epicenter and a source of high-quality foods and beverages.

The market is expected to create approximately 350 jobs for Oregonians — 250 in the market itself and 100 in local agriculture. Tourism will add to the economic impact, as visitors will be drawn from across the country and around the world.

In addition to creating green local jobs, the market will promote innovation and sustainability through food recovery programs, cutting-edge technology for energy and water conservation, and deliveries by bike. The market will also provide educational opportunities for all ages, including classes by local chefs and nutritionists that stress the value of eating healthfully.

HONORING

JAMES BEARD'S LEGACY

James Beard, born in Portland in 1903, was the first champion of American cuisine and a staunch promoter of local products and markets. Shopping with his mother at Portland's public markets gave him an early appreciation for Oregon's culinary riches. He moved to New York and ultimately became America's foremost food critic, chef and teacher. He authored 22 cookbooks, created the first television cooking show and established the James Beard Cooking School.

After his death in 1985, the James Beard Foundation was established to celebrate, nurture and preserve America's diverse culinary heritage and future. Winning a James Beard Foundation Award and cooking at the James Beard House in Greenwich Village are coveted honors for American chefs. Portland's James Beard Public Market will be the only institution with his name on it outside New York.

