

Transform Lexington Market

Frequently Asked Questions - Updated August 10, 2020

In this document, we do our best to lay out the frequently asked questions we receive every day. There are some questions that we simply don't have answers for—either because they may pertain to something that is out of our control, or because we are still working on finding the right answer. If you have a question, and do not see the answer to it on this page, it is likely to be one of those. In that case, we hope you'll continue to engage with us, provide your feedback, and we commit to you that our ears and inboxes are open. We will continue to update this document as we are able to answer some of these tougher and long-term questions, and in the meantime please reach out with further thoughts and questions to hello@transformlexington.com.

General – Lexington Market Redevelopment and Seawall

Who owns Lexington Market?

The City of Baltimore owns Lexington Market, along with five other city-owned public markets in the city, and they operate it through their nonprofit, Lexington Market, Inc. The City of Baltimore will retain full ownership of the market before, during, and after the project to transform Lexington Market is completed.

What are the other markets in Baltimore owned by Baltimore Public Markets?

Baltimore Public Markets owns The Avenue Market, Broadway Market, Cross Street Market, Hollins Market, and Northeast Market, along with Lexington Market.

What is Seawall's role as developer in the Transform Lexington Market project?

The City of Baltimore selected Seawall as the developer to oversee the transformation of Lexington Market after a competitive RFP process in 2018. As developer, Seawall will oversee all aspects of the design, construction, financing, leasing, and marketing of the new Market, with the direction and management of Lexington Market, Inc. and the City of Baltimore.

Seawall's scope of work for the project includes the specifics and the construction of a new South Market building and the selection of vendors to fill it, as well as the community input that will go into informing that work. While we acknowledge the interconnected nature of any project, their direct scope of work does not include the West Market building, surrounding retail businesses, or the phase II redevelopment of the East Market building.

Who is Seawall?

Seawall is a Baltimore-based community development company that believes in re-imagining the real estate industry as we know it. They are a team of passionate social entrepreneurs who believe that all facets of the built environment can be used to empower communities, unite our cities, and help launch powerful ideas that create important movements.

Seawall has focused its time and energy on developing housing for teachers, collaborative office space for non-profits, creative charter schools, and spaces for local entrepreneurs and makers. Seawall works both on projects and properties they own, as well as a trusted partner to non-profits and organizations looking to launch or grow their work through real estate. Some of Seawall's Baltimore development projects include Miller's Court, Union Mill, R. House, Baltimore Design School, the Center for Urban Families, Green Street Academy, the Parkway Theatre, and the Union Collective.

Will this be another R. House?

No, it will not be. While Seawall is the owner of R. House (a food hall in Remington), Lexington Market is a public market, and it will remain one. Public markets are a one-stop-shop that sell everything from fresh foods, to hot, prepared food, to non-food items. Although Seawall brought the R. House project to life, they were not selected for the Lexington Market project to simply replicate that concept.

Another major difference in the Transform Lexington project, compared to R. House, is its funding and ownership structure. R. House is privately owned and thus, has different business demands. Lexington Market will remain publicly owned, which allows for a different set of operating goals, mainly, a wider range of available price points (including many vendors accepting SNAP benefits).

What is the timeline for the Transform Lexington project?

We expect that construction will start in early-2020 and a new Lexington Market building will be open in early 2022.

How and why was the decision made to build a new market building, not redo the current building (the East Market) where the majority of vendors currently operate?

The decision to build a new Market building was ultimately made after years of feasibility studies and conversations with community members. The cost of renovating the current East Market building to meet modern-day market standards is greater than the current budget for the new building. The plan for redevelopment selected by the City of Baltimore and Lexington Market, Inc. calls for a new market building to be built on the current south parking lot, the arcade building to be demolished to make way for a pedestrian plaza on Lexington Street, and the East Market building to be salvaged for a phase II redevelopment.

When will the demolition of the Arcade structure take place?

The demolition of the Arcade structure will take place at the beginning of 2020, prior to groundbreaking on the new Market building on the south parking lot. This demolition allows for Lexington Street to be reopened as a public plaza when the new Market building opens. The East Market will remain fully operational with the Market's current vendors and a dividing wall will be built on the south side of the East Market where the Arcade formerly stood.

What will happen with the East Market building once the Transform Lexington Market project is completed and the new market opens?

The East Market building will be part of a phase II redevelopment, and the City of Baltimore, who are the owners of all Lexington Market properties, will provide future direction. Work has already begun with the community to determine what complementary uses for the East Market building could be so that it works together with Lexington Market.

Market Operations and Vendors

Will the Market remain open during the construction of the new market building?

Yes. As the longest continuously operating public market in the country, it was essential that Lexington remain open throughout construction and that it continues to provide food access to all of its customers. All vendors will operate in the current East Market building before and during construction, with some of them moving into the new Market building when it opens.

What will parking options at the Market be like once construction begins?

Despite losing the surface parking spaces on the South parking lot once construction starts, the Market still has ample parking options for Market customers. The West Market parking garage (located at the corner of Paca and Lexington Streets) has more than 1,000 parking spaces and is less than a block from the Market.

How is this transformation being paid for? Is money already committed?

The project is expected to cost between \$35 and \$40 million. The City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland have committed \$19 million in funds for the project. The remainder of the financing will come in the form of loans and New Markets Tax Credit equity.

Will there be non-food vendors in the transformed Lexington Market?

We have clearly heard from current vendors, Market customers, and community members that it is important to have space for non-food retail vendors in the transformed Lexington Market. We are still figuring out how much space will be devoted to these kinds of vendors and are keeping all options open, whether in the form of permanent, temporary, or pop-up spaces.

How will vendors be selected for the new market?

Vendors are the heart and soul of Lexington Market. Selecting vendors for the new Market is an important part of the transformation process, and we have assembled a panel of experts, current Market vendors, and Market customers to work on the recruitment, support, criteria, and selection of vendors for the new Market. Round one of the new Lexington Market vendor application launched on August 11, 2020 and will run until October 2, 2020. All updates about this process will be housed on the [Transform Lexington website](#).

Will Lexington Market remain a place that welcomes and has options for low-income people?

Yes. Lexington Market has always been a public market that meets the needs of any and all Baltimorean, and it will remain that way even after the transformation project is complete. The Market is publicly owned and will continue to prioritize accessible food and retail options that can meet the needs of all types of customer. When selecting any new vendors for the market, implementing community programming, and designing gathering spaces within the market, every effort will be made to seek the input and advice of Market customers who will help ensure it remains a welcoming place for all.

What is Lexington Market and Seawall's position on SNAP benefits?

Lexington Market is a source of fresh foods for thousands of Baltimoreans each week, and SNAP availability is an essential service for market clientele. Lexington Market and Seawall have been and will continue to be advocates for SNAP benefits for market vendors, and the new market will prioritize many vendors that offer SNAP. [See Lexington Market and Seawall's recent statement about SNAP benefits at the market here.](#)

Community Engagement and Contact

What is the community engagement process for Transform Lexington Market?

The Transform Lexington Market community engagement process gathers input from community members from the surrounding areas, Market customers, and area stakeholders to create a vision for Lexington Market. Below are four ways individuals can share their feedback.

- o *Town Hall Meetings* – These are community meetings open to anyone and will focus on collecting input on the work and plans developed by Transform Lexington Market work groups. They happen once every quarter; the next meeting is October 9 from 6 pm - 7:30 pm at Lexington Market
- o *Community Listening Tour* – Contact pickett@seawall.com to request a visit to your community group or association
- o *Community Survey* – Take the survey by visiting www.lexingtonmarket.com/transform
- o *Focus Groups* – Contact pickett@seawall.com if you are interested in participating in a focus group at Lexington Market

An overview of the community engagement process can be found [here](#).

Where and how can I give my feedback and concerns about the project to Transform Lexington Market?

Together with Baltimore Public Markets and the City of Baltimore, Seawall will facilitate the community engagement process to ensure that the voices of community members and stakeholders are heard and incorporated into the new market. Quarterly town hall meetings will be held and open to any and all community members. The Transform page on Lexington



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Market's website (www.lexingtonmarket.com/transform) will have all up-to-date plans, surveys, and community feedback. And the public can reach out directly to the Transform Lexington team at hello@transformlexington.com.

Can a representative of Seawall come to my community's or organization's meeting to talk about the Transform Lexington project?

Absolutely. Please reach out to pickett@seawall.com to schedule a time for a presentation and Q&A.