

# UNION MARKET

WASHINGTON, D.C.

*A focus on food, social interaction, and entrepreneurship catalyzes development in a historic market area*

## LESSONS

- A popular food hall can serve as the cornerstone of a community and a catalyst for new, mixed-use development.
- The renovation of a historic market building can accommodate new, local vendors alongside neighborhood businesses with deep roots, thereby creating a beloved space that serves longtime residents and visitors alike.
- Developers have an opportunity to positively affect the mental health of visitors to their projects by creating places for people to gather and socialize.

## QUICK FACTS

### Location

1309 Fifth Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002

### Project type

Food hall/mixed use

### Development team

EDENS

### Project cost

Undisclosed

### Project size

22,000 square feet (2,044 sq m) of retail space,  
12,000-square-foot (1,115 sq m) event venue;  
85,820-square-foot (7,973 sq m) parcel

### Project status

Market opened in 2012

### Financing

Undisclosed

### Equity partner

Undisclosed

Union Market sees an average of 15,000 visitors per weekend and has hosted over 400 events. (Joe Flood)



**UNION MARKET** is an indoor food hall that opened in 2012 in a historic market space in Washington, D.C. It also includes pop-up retail space, an event venue, and numerous outdoor gatherings. The project developer and owner, EDENS, embraces Union Market's role as a hub for social interaction and works to actively facilitate opportunities for local chefs and food producers to open or expand businesses in and around the market.

As of 2016, Union Market sees an average of 15,000 visitors per weekend and has hosted over 400 events. The market will anchor a burgeoning mixed-use district that is being developed in the surrounding area.

## Features and Innovations

- **Indoor food hall:** Union Market is home to more than 40 local vendors and features space for visitors and neighborhood residents to socialize.
- **Support for local food entrepreneurs:** The market supports budding food businesses by creating opportunities for them to launch new concepts, including by facilitating connections among restaurateurs and with industry consultants.
- **Weekly farmers market:** A farmers market outside the main building, called FRESHFARM, represents more than 150 farmers from five states who cultivate over 9,000 acres (3,643 ha) of farmland.
- **Food-oriented events:** A variety of food-themed events create opportunities for guests to learn from vendors and to explore international cuisines. Some events benefit the James Beard Foundation and its executive education program for women in the culinary industry.

## Creating Value: People, Planet, Profit

When EDENS purchased the Union Market building in 2007, it sought to revitalize the facility and surrounding area, which have hosted food vendors since the 19th century, while also supporting the market's traditional role as a neighborhood gathering place that supports food-based entrepreneurship.

The revamped market, which opened in 2012, features more than 40 local food vendors, including a butcher shop that has been a part of the community since the 1930s. As of 2014, about 1,500 people were employed in food production or distribution associated with the market, and vendor sales had more than tripled in the two years since the space reopened.

Before reopening the market, EDENS engaged with longtime community members through sessions at nearby churches and schools. Through this process, EDENS learned about concerns over the market's higher prices and implemented a requirement that all vendors accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. Union Market also prioritizes local hiring and training for low-skilled workers.

Vendors at Union Market are all local or regional businesses, many with their first physical locations. Jodie W. McLean, chief executive officer of EDENS, explains: "Projects such as Union Market can serve as a catalyst for new development, but can also support existing residents and hyper-local businesses by facilitating new connections among entrepreneurs and customers, providing job training opportunities, and setting the stage for expansion of area businesses."

To aid emerging local food ventures, Union Market partners with Mess Hall, a nearby culinary incubator, and the Washington-based restaurant Ris on a business plan competition called Launch Pad. The winner of the competition has the opportunity to take over a space in the market for six to 12 months and receives free consulting services from industry leaders on how to grow the business. The winner of the 2014 competition gained immediate exposure and was able to expand into two new cities.

*"Social isolation and loneliness are becoming epidemics in the United States. People need community, and all community starts around the table. The real estate industry has the power to create spaces that foster community links and promote social interaction."*

Jodie W. McLean, Chief Executive Officer, EDENS

EDENS and a number of other developers are building on the success of Union Market by creating a mixed-use urban village immediately surrounding the market, which will feature retail, residential, restaurant, hotel, entertainment, and culinary incubator space.

As part of these plans, EDENS and codevelopers Level 2 Development and Trammell Crow Residential broke ground on an 11-story building with a planned 432 residential units in 2016. The building will also feature a 20,000-square-foot (1,858 sq m) Latin marketplace that is being developed in collaboration with Philadelphia-based chef Jose Garces, which will feature prepared foods, restaurants, bars, and a produce market that specializes in hard-to-find Latin groceries.