

# Salt of the Earth: Site Furniture Revitalizes Market



**Project:** Grand Rapids Downtown Market  
**Location:** Grand Rapids, MI  
**Year of Installation:** 2013

**Products Used:** Dispatch Litter & Recycling Receptacle, Tecno RS Seating System, Trio Bike Rack, Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacle  
**Architect:** Hugh A. Boyd Architects, Progressive AE  
**General Contractor:** Pioneer Construction

## The \$30 million Grand Rapids Downtown Market is helping to reshape the urban fabric of Michigan's capital city after years of blight took its toll on a once vibrant neighborhood.

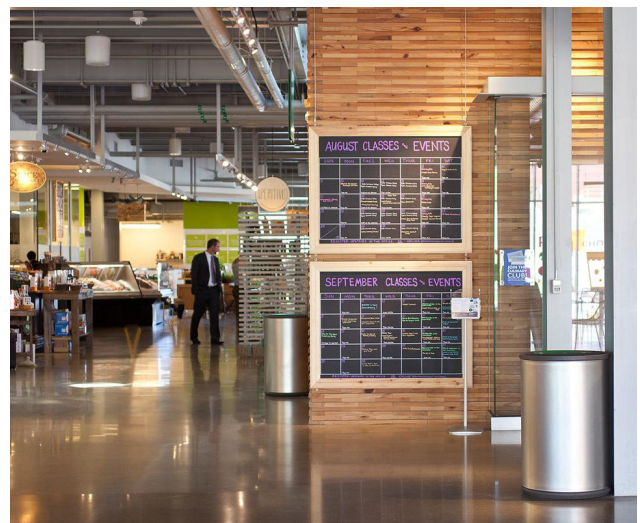
Rich farmland that surrounded Grand Rapids during the early 1900s resulted in the area having an abundance of crops along with one of the largest farmers' markets in the United States. However, decades of industrial use followed by a shrinking and aging population left the City's thriving urban core in a deteriorated condition without year-round access to fresh local food.

The push to bring a market complex back to the City's center began in 2010 when the nonprofit organization, Grand Action, commissioned Market Ventures of Portland, Maine to conduct a feasibility study. The consultant's site recommendation pointed to a historic property on the south side of the city, and the study's conclusion found ample reason to pursue the project.

To begin with, a market would generate more than 600 jobs and leverage economic development. Furthermore, Michigan is still one of the most agriculturally diverse states in the country with some 12,220 farms in the Grand Rapids region.

The commitment of community stakeholders, along with support from the clean Michigan initiative and tax credits from the state brownfield program, got the project moving. Michigan-based firm Progressive AE teamed up with New Jersey-based architect Hugh A. Boyd to develop the concept for the new Downtown Market.

In early 2012, demolition of six warehouse structures began on the property. The crew worked carefully to salvage existing materials for reuse as building components. Wood beams cut from 200-year-old Northern Michigan pine trees were preserved to become the design feature in the new structure. Concrete recovered on-site was saved for use as paving bases around the building.



*Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacles shown in 36 gallon, top opening configurations with bodies in Stainless Steel with Diamond finish*



*Tecno RS Seating System shown in four-seat, backed configuration with Silver Texture powdercoat; Dispatch Litter & Recycling Receptacle shown in 36 gallon, split-stream configuration with Silver Texture powdercoated lid, body and beverage container recycling inserts*

## Cream of the Crop

Landscape architect Pete Lazdins introduced Forms+Surfaces to the project. Lazdins said, “The project put a big emphasis on sustainability. The overall F+S commitment to all facets of sustainability was a factor in [our] decision [to work with the company].”

In addition to criteria aimed at supporting the Market’s goals set for efficiency and renewable energy use, site furniture selection was driven by aesthetics and durability.

Featuring a rustic yet polished industrial design, the Downtown Market was constructed to showcase wood and metal accents. Lazdins turned to F+S for “contemporary site furnishings that would tie into the look and feel of the building.”



*Tecno RS Seating Systems shown in four-seat, backed configurations with Silver Texture powdercoat; Dispatch Litter & Recycling Receptacles shown in 36 gallon, split-stream configurations with Silver Texture powdercoated lid, body and beverage container recycling inserts*

To maintain consistency with the design of the Market, the same site furnishings were also selected for an adjacent streetscape designed by landscape architecture firm O’Boyle, Cowell, Blalock and Associates (OCBA).

Quality materials were equally critical in selecting products for the Market project. Lazdins recalled, “High traffic and long-term maintenance considerations factored into [the] decision to specify all non-corrosive metals.”

Chris Thomas, Forms+Surfaces Territory Manager, added, “Several areas of the City were experiencing badly rusting furniture, so corrosion resistance in the cold, wet Michigan winters was very important.” Furthermore, Thomas said, “The furnishings needed to stand up to the effects of a high-use environment including vandalism, day-to-day impact and abrasion.”

Combining modern aesthetics and high-performance materials, F+S products were the perfect solution to the Market’s needs.

Inside, our sleek Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacles add to the market’s minimalist interior. Outside, robust Dispatch Litter & Recycling Receptacles are an ideal fit for the rugged conditions.

Also outside, our durable cast aluminum Tecno RS Seating System and Trio Bike Racks coordinate with the surrounding architectural features, encourage car-free commuting, and help create a welcome place for the community to gather.

## A Feast for the Eyes

The 132,000 square foot Downtown Market opened its doors to the public in 2013. The dynamic mixed-use facility brings together food production and processing, a commercial kitchen to provide an incubator for new businesses, and an education center to teach food preparation and healthful eating.



*Universal Litter & Recycling Receptacle shown in 36 gallon, top opening, split-stream lid configuration with "litter" and "recycling" graphics; body in Stainless Steel with Diamond finish*

Including a rooftop greenhouse, the three-level brick and glass building provides ample space for banquets, meetings, events and more than 60 vendors. Located adjacent to the building, the outdoor market is set up like a traditional open-air farmers' market with a canopy structure and heated sidewalks to provide safe, welcoming areas for year-round shopping.

Energy-efficient elements factored into the project design include:

- Fifty geo-thermal wells that address two-thirds of the building's heating and cooling needs
- An 8,000-gallon rainwater harvesting system for irrigation
- Rain gardens, green roofs and living walls that contribute to on-site storm water management
- LED lighting that saves \$18,000 per year in energy costs

### Fruits of Labor

Efforts to create a highly efficient building were achieved, gaining the project an ASLA Sustainability Merit Award. The Market also earned LEED Gold Certification, making it the first urban market in the country to receive the US Green Building Council (USGBC) standard.

During its first year of operation, the Downtown Market generated 215 new jobs and \$5 million in retail sales. Since then, it has fostered opportunities for local farmers and entrepreneurs that are predicted to help support and sustain economic revitalization in the Grand Rapids area.

Another measure of the market's success: developers have invested millions to add and convert buildings into residential, retail and office space in the neighborhoods closest to the Downtown Market.

George Aquino, Board Chairman of the Downtown Market, remarked, "Everyone involved with the Market brought vision, passion and remarkable teamwork to the project, and the finished creation is an absolute feast." We agree!

If you'd like to learn more about any of the products used here, please visit our website or contact us.



*Trio Bike Racks shown with Silver Texture powdercoat*

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