

Flowers tower  
at Botanical  
Garden exhibit

Post-Kovalchuk  
Thrashers have  
void to fill

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

SANDY SPRINGS

## Locavore idea offers food for thought

By Jim Osterman

There are some folks who have come up with an interesting use for a piece of land — specifically the parking lot of the now-defunct Target on Johnson Ferry and Sandy Springs Circle.

Jeffrey Langfelder and Andrew Bauman are proposing an outdoor farmers market that would operate Saturdays from approximately March to November. While this would be new to us Springsteens, there are markets such as this around the metro Atlanta area.

At the risk of being labeled a locavore and stripped of my credentials as a junk-food connoisseur, I'm all-in on this.

One, it makes use of a large plot of land owned by the city that's sitting empty and useless, even if that use would be

only during the season when produce is available. And the lot is more or less centrally located in the city. It puts shoppers in walking distance of Heritage Green, the four-acre park in the middle of town.

Second, it would bring additional business. We're not talking the kind of economic impact the Super Bowl brings, but I think any nearby business would be willing to rack up a few extra sales on a Saturday from those who were in town to get their weekly quota of dinosaur kale and sunchokes.

Third, it bolsters the local economy when we're getting our produce from local growers.

But here's the No. 1 reason this needs to happen. In case it has slipped past you, the economy has been getting hammered. Two guys have done their homework and come up with a plan to make something positive happen. So unless there is a gaping hole in that plan that's discovered during the city's due diligence, we need to reward their initiative.

This is one of those seemingly small decisions that the city can make that can have some far-reaching implications. The message it sends is that our leadership is working on the solution during a period when so many seem content to bog down in the problem. Sandy

Springs is a place that recognizes entrepreneurial thinking.

And might I also point out that there is no shortage of large, empty parking lots attached to long-gone retail space. Here's what I know about land like that — it's not producing revenue. Give anyone with an idle piece of real estate a chance to turn a dime on it — if only during the growing season — and they'll jump on it like my dog Jake would attack a holiday ham.

Nothing makes a municipality so attractive to new businesses and companies as having a reputation for being open-minded and progressive. When the economy improves, and it always does, the degree to which Sandy Springs recovers will be proportional to the business it attracts. See, vegetables are good for you.

Jim Osterman lives in Sandy Springs.