

Victoria Downtown Market Working Group

Written by Jackie Kanyuk on behalf of the Downtown Marketplace Working Group coordinators: Jackie Kanyuk, Lee Fuge, Sonya Chandler and Philippe Lucas

Have you ever wondered why Victoria, the fair-weather, healthy population capital of BC does not have its own downtown permanent market?

Markets are often the first point of contact into city's culture. They are where local tastes and flavours come alive with bustle and scenery. That Victoria doesn't showcase the island's agricultural bounty in one central place is a veritable shortfall not only in how citizens and tourists experience our city, but also to our local economy.

A number of local citizens got together this summer to discuss just that. Our meetings have brought representatives from the Island Chefs' Collaborative, local butchers, students, city councilors, community economic development consultants, organic food distributors, and foodies alike together to go beyond wondering why, out of all the cities in Canada, Victoria is without a downtown permanent market.

At our first meeting, Brent Warner, president of Farmers Market Canada, provided a presentation on the intrinsic value of farmers' markets to local economies. The group crafted a draft Vision and Mission (see below) and discussed potential sites and additional participants for the process.

Our next steps are to continue reaching out to the community for support on this initiative by inviting more people to the table, to further hone the vision and mission statements and to work with interested stakeholders who can further this vision into a well-researched, fiscally grounded and feasible reality.

Fully recognizing that this endeavour is not an overnight project, we are meeting regularly to move the conversation further along and to keep this priority on the planning map by doing what community members do best: putting the right people together to leverage interests and achieve something extraordinary for our community.

If you would like to be part of this community-based initiative, and if there are other individuals or organizations you believe would add to the momentum and viability of this initiative, please contact us:

victoriadowntownmarket@gmail.com

Draft Vision and Mission for a Downtown Market in Victoria

Vision:

To create an exciting, family-friendly indoor/outdoor local food and artisan marketplace that serves the needs of residents and tourists, bolsters the

local economy, increases food accessibility and security, promotes regional agriculture, generates pride and local investment, and adds to the beauty and vibrancy of Victoria's downtown core.

Mission:

The Victoria Market-Place will:

- Enhance the health and community life for Greater Victorians and visitors alike;
- Act as a permanent hub of values-based, local food and artisan businesses;
- Generate economic vibrancy throughout the entire region;
- Support and increase regional food capacity;
- Foster First Peoples and multicultural food-related initiatives/practices;
- Be accessible, active and responsive to community needs;
- Act to complement both business and residential neighbours