

Victoria Downtown Market Working Group: call for sub-committee members

When a group of community members and food sovereigntists met earlier this year to discuss the City of Victoria's need for a permanent central farmer's market, we were unaware of just how quickly the discussion would turn into a feasible endeavour. Promising talks between a downtown property owner and two very interested, community-minded business owners have launched conversations beyond 'what if' to 'how' in a very short time.

This is a very exciting opportunity for Victoria's food-eating citizens and for our local economy. Of course, the potential start up of a Farmer's Market also presents myriad questions on finance, operation and governance. For instance, should a Victoria market run as a non-for-profit? A co-op? Should it take a social enterprise model? What are the average annual operating costs? How much can we raise in donations and private financing? For which grants could this initiative be eligible?

At this juncture, we are calling for knowledgeable and passionate individuals from the community to come forth to help inform the discussion and move this initiative forward into an organized, fiscally responsible and celebratory force that will see a piece of our downtown transformed by our vision for a marketplace.

We are seeking individuals knowledgeable and interested in community economic development, governance models, farmers market operations, finance and fundraising. Individuals with communications, public relations and web design would also be helpful to the cause. Our vision and mission are below. If you are interested and know you can afford at least a few hours a month for the next 6-8 months (minimum) we would love to hear from you. Email us at victoriadowntownmarket@gmail.com.

Vision:

An exciting, year-round, family-friendly indoor/outdoor local food and artisan marketplace that serves the needs of residents and tourists, bolsters the local economy, increases local food production, accessibility and security, promotes sustainable practices, 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 of Greater Victorians and visitors alike, and act to complement both business and residential neighbors;
- act as a permanent hub of values-based, local food and artisan businesses;
- generate economic benefits throughout the entire region and provide fair wages to local food producers while also ensuring that local food is accessible to all;
- increase regional food capacity and promote sustainable practices through outreach, advocacy, and education;
- promote First Peoples and multicultural food-related initiatives/practices;
- be responsive to community needs and enhance overall community health and vibrancy.