



## Downtown Port Colborne BIA

Board of Management

MAIL: PO Box 272 | Port Colborne, Ontario L3K 4W1

OFFICE: (289) 836-9006  
[www.exploreportcolborne.ca](http://www.exploreportcolborne.ca)

# Downtown Port Colborne Strategic Plan Proposal

## TO: City of Port Colborne

## RE: Port Colborne Farmers Market, February 2021

### Summary

Greetings Port Colborne Mayor, Council & Senior Staff,

In follow up to our conversations of February 9, 2021 the Downtown Port Colborne BIA wishes to formally express our interest in taking over the operation and management of the Port Colborne Farmers Market. As indicated in our meeting we are developing a new direction and strategic plan at the Downtown Port Colborne BIA to move us forward as a vibrant and responsible steward of our Community and of the merchants we represent. Our BIA is looking for a project and vision to make the core base of our Downtown community and of our operational efforts. We believe that taking over the operations of the Port Colborne Farmers Market give us that core base needed to use as a pedestal and building block for future development, growth, marketing and events promoting the Downtown Core, The City and Engaging the Community. The market requires a vision and direction beyond what the city can provide. Farmers markets can not afford to be an afterthought or an ancillary project that is downloaded to a staff member without the proper training, resume, contacts and experience to manage and operate it. Farmers Markets go well beyond simply signing up vendors and having them set up on a Friday. There is a passion on both the coordinator and the farmers side of things that is unlike most industries. Writing to you as the chair of the BIA and as a Restaurateur and Event Manager, we do not get into these businesses with the expectation of huge financial success. We get into this for passion, creativity and community. With the resume and Market Management experience of our Executive Director, Mary-Lou Ambrose-Little we feel we are the best group for the task of elevating our market to the next level of success and leading it into the future.



## Our Current Farmers Market

- The Port Colborne Farmers Market is 207 years old established in 1813.
- At times, Ports Market was a destination market year round for locals, American cottagers and tourists alike.
- Over the past few years the emphasis on sustainable local food sourcing has become the hottest topic in the culinary industry.
- More and More travelers are making farmers markets destination spots to seek out and check out the offerings of the local communities they visit.
- Niagara is rich in all artisan sectors from our wine and craft beer to our farm produce, cheeses and meats.
- A farmers market is a living, breathing entity. There is history, culture, pride and loyalty all built into it.
- The current COVID-19 Climate has had its impact on markets throughout Ontario and the Port Colborne Market requires some stabilization and revitalization.
- In speaking with stakeholders, community members, residents and businesses, there is some concern that our market has been lacking over the past few years. Our intention would be to restore these opinions and help foster the growth and rebirth of our market.
- Only 18% of current farmers markets are in Ontario are municipality run. All other are run by BIA's, Non-Profits, Community Groups and Vendor Associations.

## Our Vision for The Market

Our strategic plan vision is to take the market and restore it to its former glory. From there our goal is to grow and built it to be the best market in Niagara. Our vision is to use it as the baseline catalyst of all our efforts for downtown. As an offshoot of the market we can provide an infinite number of promotion, event, tourist and economic development opportunities.



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## Benefit

- Offers a perfect spring board for all marketing and advertising initiatives. Radio, Print, Etc.
- Gives us a built in captive audience to appeal to and make Downtown a Friday and even by extension, weekend destination.
- In making us a weekend destination will encourage and promote tourism, Bed & Breakfasts, Lodging, Boating, Cycle tourism, Etc.
- Arts & Cultural Tie-In – Roselawn, Art Crawl, Sports Fest, Etc.
- Makes for a perfect stop with the Friendship trail and cycle tourism.
- Makes for an excellent business case for sourcing grant and private sector funding dollars for CIP infrastructure upgrades in the downtown.
- Spring board for Shop Local campaigns.
- Easy transition to Online & Virtual in the winter seasons utilizing technology.
- With a regular recurring reason to go downtown every Friday make a smooth and streamlines transition into advertising our private businesses and other community assets.
- Economic Development – Utilization of market space as a test space / proof of concept for new businesses looking to set up shop in Port Colborne.
- Job Development – Through a partnership with Port Cares Job Creation Program we would be looking to develop a Market Coordinator position under the BIA's Employment and the supervision of our Executive Director.

## BIA Responsibilities

- Assume responsibility of vendors recruitment, retention and coordination.
- Provide Quarterly Reporting to City Hall.
- Ensure Compliance with Vendors Rules, City By-Laws, Health & Safety, Fire and Public Health Compliance.
- Actively Manage and staff the market.
- Provide community engagement and liaise with city staff.
- Curate Market Vendors in compliance with Farmers Market Ontario Guidelines and give preference to returning vendors, local to Port Colborne Vendors and Local to Niagara Vendors.
- Maintain comprehensive records of vendors, attendance and documentation.
- Any and all other day to day marketing and administrative considerations.



## City of Port Colborne Responsibilities

- Continue to provide maintenance and support services to the Market Square with Street Sweeping, Garbage Collection, Seasonal Snow Removal, Pavement Maintenance and Grounds keeping of King George Park.
- Provide City staff and / or Summer Students for COVID-19 related crowd control.
- Allow the expansion of the market onto the section of Charlotte Street abutting the Market Square and City Hall contained by Catharine Street and King Street in the event that more space is required to grow the market.
- Be an active participant in quarterly meetings to actively monitor the success of this pilot project.
- Actively Promote the Farmers Market and related activities through city resources including the City's Communications Coordinator, Website and Social Media.

## Financials & Terms

The BIA agrees to budget event funding towards stabilizing and growing the market from its current status. With the income of vendor fees and some initial seed funding through the Joint Ventures section of our budget as approved by the city, we believe we can make the market cover its cost of operation for the first year with hopes of growth and self sustainability by Year Two. At present we have a \$5000.00 Joint Ventures / Special Project allocation in our budget. Our ask would be for initial approval to access \$2500.00 of that at this time for the launch of the market season.

We propose a Pilot Project period of 18 months bringing us to the end of our board term and bringing City Council to the end of their elected term. At which point a reassessment of the partnership and a renewal of a new MOU can be established.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jesse William Boles | Chair  
Downtown Port Colborne BIA