



For Immediate Release

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ORTONVILLE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IS IN THE PLANNING STAGES FOR A FARMERS MARKET IN DOWNTOWN ORTONVILLE

Ortonville, MI December 17, 2018 – The Ortonville DDA is seeking to launch a Farmers Market in 2019. The goal is making fresh produce available to residents because there are limited options in the area. The Farmers Market will give residents additional reasons to come downtown on a regular basis and provide the opportunity to collaborate with other events and activities in an attempt to encourage people to discover our businesses and spend their money locally.

How it started...On May 3, 2018 a small group, representing the DDA visited the Oakland County Farmers Market and spent time with the Market Manager trying to better understand the operation of a farmers market. This visit prompted the groups to form an organizing committee that has been meeting every two weeks since August, focused on several planning steps.

Step #1...Engaging the Community...In mid-August, the DDA circulated a survey to the community; evaluating the likelihood of a successful Farmers Market in our community. The objective was to get a better understanding of what the community wants from a market. The survey was distributed by email and social media and received 386 responses. Overall, on the 3 main questions in the survey, the responses were:

- 66% of the respondents preferred Saturdays for the Farmers Market
- Nearly 60% of the respondents preferred mornings for the Market
- 67% of the respondents indicated that Fruits & Vegetables vendor were most important

Based on the survey, some additional research of surrounding communities and discussion in the committee, the recommended launch of the Market will be Saturdays from 9am-2pm – start date still to be determined.

Step #2...Identifying a Location/Layout...After reviewing several options, the committee settled on a strolling market through Downtown by spreading the market out in small clusters of vendors throughout Downtown. That way all businesses get exposure and parking will be spread out. It will give people the opportunity to walk throughout Downtown. This type of layout also supports picnic tables all through town for seating. The DDA will incorporate another up-coming initiative – the Downtown mobile app - to help people navigate the market with information and location of all the vendors. This layout will make the Farmers Market unique, stand out from other markets, and make it a destination.

Step #3...Cultivating Farmers/Vendors...One of the early efforts was to identify/attract a core group of farmers/vendors who the committee is inviting to participate in the planning. These include, but are not limited to: Porters Orchard, Goodrich; Spratt Farms, Goodrich; Polk Farm, Ortonville; Cook's Dairy Ortonville, Wojo's Greenhouse, Ortonville; Ashtons Orchard, Brandon Twp; Middleton Berry Farm, Ortonville and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms.

Step #4...Start Up Funding...Although the aim is for the market to become self-sufficient, start-up funds will be needed for expenses associated with the planning and lead up to the market opening. While the DDA has budgeted some of these funds, it is important for the DDA to seek out alternative revenue sources. Recently the DDA was awarded the [Main Street Placemaking Grant](#) through Main Street Oakland County and Flagstar Bank which will support some of these initial expenses.

Step #5...Market Manager...The DDA is launching a search for a Market Manager. This is a part-time contracted position with primary responsibility being the day-to-day operations of the Farmers Market. This will include an on-site presence at the Market during all market hours, as well as off-site work during non-market hours. In addition, the Manager will represent the Market to the market's vendors, the consumers, and to the community. Visit www.ortonvilledda.org for more information on the position. Qualified applicants should email their resume, with a cover letter, to – director@ortonvilledda.org by January 18, 2019 or until position is filled.

The planning will continue and the committee welcomes volunteers to help. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/ortonvillefarmersmarket> for the latest information and to join the conversation.

About Ortonville Downtown Development Authority

The Ortonville DDA is dedicated to promoting economic revitalization, supporting local businesses, and preserving the natural and historic heritage of the Village of Ortonville. We advocate a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and development of Ortonville's unique characteristics. The Ortonville DDA advocates for businesses and the community by assessing current needs, customizing resources to meet those needs, collaborating with community groups, developing special promotions, and providing technical expertise. To learn more about the DDA, visit www.ortonvilledda.org.