



THE PORT TOWNS FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays 10am-1pm | June 11 through October 3, 2015
Corner of Emerson St. & 58 Ave. Bladensburg, MD 20710

Mailing Address: c/o ECO City Farms, 6010 Taylor Road,
Riverdale, MD 20737

About the Port Towns Farmers Market

The Port Towns Farmers Market (PTFM) is a new market in a very diverse and densely populated, predominantly working class neighborhood of Bladensburg, Maryland. The area was officially designated a “food desert” by the USDA Food Atlas in 2014 because access to healthy food has been so limited up to now.

Located on a large grassy hill at the corner of Emerson Street & 58 Avenue, adjacent to the Port Towns Elementary School, Rogers Heights Elementary and Elizabeth Seaton High School and near two Senior residences, the PTFM is at the crossroads of community life. It is also just one block south of ECO City Farms’ Bladensburg farm at 6100 Emerson Street. ECO’s two Port Towns farms are anchors of the market and grow healthy vegetables year-round for Port Towns residents.

Open from 10am – 1pm every Saturday from July 11 to October 3, 2015, the PTFM has the potential to reach thousands of families in nearby apartments and homes.

The Port Towns Farmers Market is a result of many years of hard work on the part of the Port Towns Community Health Partnership—a collaboration of residents, municipalities, schools, community and faith-based organizations, and funders—all working to create a thriving Port Towns community where families have access to affordable, healthy food and where active lifestyles are encouraged and supported. The Partnership seeks to halt, and ultimately reverse, the rise in food-related preventable diseases, like diabetes and heart disease.

In its initial years, ECO City Farms will manage the PTFM and work to attract a range of culturally diverse farmers and vendors. At this time, the market is soliciting local farmers and healthy food producers within a 125-mile radius of Bladensburg. Prince George’s County farmers and vendors are given top priority, followed by Maryland farmers, in the selection process.

Weekly programming at the market will include cooking demonstrations and food sampling, nutrition education, community information tables and child-oriented activities. In addition to fresh farm produce, the PTFM will offer delicious and diverse prepared food. All foods offered for sale at the PTFM be made with healthy, nutritious ingredients, and vendors will be encouraged to use locally grown produce whenever possible. Local artists and craftsmen are also encouraged to sell at the market and when possible, local performers and musicians will be featured.

The market will process SNAP/EBT and WIC cards and accept vouchers from the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, along with Fruit and Vegetable checks and other government food benefits.

ECO is currently seeking donations to institute a double-dollar program that would double the amount of money a SNAP or WIC user could spend for healthy food at the market. A double-dollar program will make the market more attractive to residents on limited incomes and will guarantee vendors greater sales.

Soliciting matching funds & other support for 2015

There are many ways to support the market and assure its success.

Provide Matching Funds for Double Dollar Program: In order to pursue Maryland Farmers Market Association funding for the double dollar program called “Maryland Market Money,” the market must secure matching funding. ECO City Farms is soliciting tax exempt contributions from businesses, faith-based institutions and other groups and individuals concerned about hunger and health issues, with guaranteed community impact.

Promote and spread the word: The key to the success of the Port Towns Farmers Market will be getting customers there every week. Farmers and other vendors will only continue to bring their food to the Port Towns Farmers Market if they make sales. Talk about the market to other residents, promote it via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and email, and through other community outlets and networks. We can provide flyers, logos and any information about the market you may require in English and Spanish.

Make a pledge to shop there weekly: Pledge now to buy at least one item every week at the market. Your purchase will keep the market successful, especially during its first start up year, when as we try to establish a customer base. Bring a family members and friends along to also shop with you at the market weekly.

Community resource tables: If you have a community-based program or initiative that fits with the green and healthy objectives of the market, you will have an opportunity to market it at one of the community resource tables at the market.

Help us with ideas: Do you have ideas for programming, funding, promotional materials or outreach strategies that would help grow the market? Please let us know. We want the PTFM to be a dynamic community-building asset.

Volunteer: We are looking for people of all ages and descriptions who want to help with set-up, sales and cleanup weekly and/or to serve on the market’s steering committee.

Questions, ideas, or want to volunteer?

Contact Amanda West at ECO City Farms: amanda@ecocityfarms.org or 304 703 2380