

THE BACKYARD MARKET FARM & AT ERIN MILLS

In Partnership with The Daniels Corporation

Strategic Plan Draft for Circulation and Discussion

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This document summarizes current thinking as the community moves towards a final Strategic Plan to be completed by the 2018 AGM early next year. Comments are welcome at jane@hoffmannhayes.com.

Vision

To grow interconnected, resilient communities rooted in healthy urban food systems.

Mission

To enrich lives and foster social change through the creation of a healthy urban food hub.

We strive to create and advance a project that is patronized by local people, partially funded by and bringing high value to the communities built by Daniels at the SW and NE corners of Erin Mills Pkwy and Eglinton Ave W, and also partially funded by accomplished core programs. The project is run by paid staff, loved and supported by knowledgeable volunteers, and sustained by engaged members. The project inspires many and deeply affects some, helping to build a healthy food culture and community right where people live.

Values

We invite others to join us in taking a journey to healthier selves, healthier communities, and a more sustainable local food system. Our values are expressed along a spectrum that ranges from the personal to the communal, social, and environmental.

Our values are

- Health — Personal, Social, Environmental
- Community — Fun, Engagement, Leadership
- Quality — Food, Experience, Relationships, Diversity, Sustainability

Our HEALTH value acknowledges that people often connect to bigger social and environmental concerns through their own personal health concerns (e.g., access to healthy food for themselves and (or) their families). We go beyond the personal, too, giving people a chance to connect with a healthy social environment (e.g., being with others who are interested in healthy food) and contribute to making their communities

environmentally and ecologically healthier (e.g., providing opportunities to become market volunteers or gardeners).

Our COMMUNITY value is set along a similar continuum, from personal interests (fun) to larger-scale social impact (engagement and leadership). The same goes for our QUALITY value, which moves from food — the thing people are coming to the Backyard Farm & Market for — to a valuing of quality experiences, relationships, diversity, and sustainability.

Our mission and values were discussed and agreed upon in a series of community meetings in 2014 and 2015, and reaffirmed through the development of our constitution and at our first AGM in 2017.

Permaculture Principles, Process & Practices

We aspire to our Vision, collaborate to meet our Mission, and animate our Values. We are guided in the choices we make by permaculture ethics and principles. The project — including its systems, programs, and physical expressions and our working processes — was designed with permaculture ethics and principles in mind.

Permaculture Ethics

- Care of people
- Care of land
- Create abundance / redistribute surplus

Permaculture Principles

1. Observe and Interact
2. Catch and Store Energy
3. Obtain a Yield
4. Apply Self-Regulation and Accept Feedback
5. Use and Value Renewable Resources and Services
6. Produce No Waste
7. Integrate Rather Than Segregate
8. Design From Patterns To Details
9. Use Small and Slow Solutions
10. Use and Value Diversity
11. Use Edges and Value The Marginal
12. Creatively Use and Respond to Change

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Breakthrough Objectives 2018–2020

BACKGROUND: GROW, FUND & COMMUNITY LED

The Backyard Farm & Markets' 2018–2020 Breakthrough Objectives are an evolution of the project's 2014–2017 Breakthrough Objectives. See Appendix 1 for 2014-2017 Objectives. Our objectives are challenging, and we know we may not always meet them. We have also tried to keep them to three main categories that we can all remember, agree to, and understand.

LOOKING FORWARD: SUSTAIN, MOVE, GROW

The 2018–2021 Breakthrough Objectives (still in draft form) were arrived at through discussions with board members, staff, and volunteers throughout 2017. We'll continue discussions with vendors and members to ensure we are fully on track and can bring closure to our process and final wording at our 2018 AGM.

Our direction and Breakthrough Objectives for the next three years are summarized by the words **Sustain, Move, and Grow**. The objectives are somewhat sequential. We are primarily focused in 2018 on: (1) sustaining our project's integrity and diversifying our funding sources for long-term resilience; (2) planning and preparing to move the project to our permanent home in 2019; (3) securing board members and the appropriate roles; (4) identify board committees and set up appropriately. In 2019, we'll move to our new home and stabilize. Sustainability work will continue, and we'll consider adding part-time program staff to help balance the hours of staff and board members. By 2020, we aim to be in a position to grow the market and programs.

Our specific Breakthrough Objectives and Targets are:

1. SUSTAIN: To stabilize and enhance the sustainability of the project.
 - Develop, package, and promote at least one and up to three programs as opportunities for funder investment. Develop sustainable (long term, able to be sold to different funders over time, measureable) income streams for the project:
 - 2018: Market Bucks program (2018)

- 2019+: Healthy Eating Eco-Kitchen program
- 2019+: Urban Agriculture Business Incubator program
- Recruit at least one qualified Board member or committee member to sell the programs
- Stabilize a volunteer time / energy budget for the project at a regenerative and (or) sustainable rate. Create sustainable local jobs.

The draw on volunteers and staff was high as we built the project, transitioned to community leadership, built a board of directors and a new non-profit. We have a large transition ahead (moving to the market's permanent home in 2019), requiring extra hours in 2018 and 2019 (moving and stabilizing the market). We have a better understanding of what the work takes, having piloted several models, and now know how to tweak the project to reduce and stabilize our energy budget:

- Eliminate burdensome volunteer and staff work, as well as project dependence, on unproductive and (or) time-wasting processes. Replace volunteer work with paid work for core tasks and (or) more creative, fulfilling, and productive volunteer work. Evaluate internal and external asks for work against the strategic plan.
- Breakthrough Target (2018): Create three part-time paid jobs for a total of five part-time jobs. Replace 800 hours of volunteer work with 500 hours of paid work (three part-time jobs) to do critical tasks in 2018.
- Breakthrough Target (2019 / 2020): Create one additional part-time job (program staff).
- Sustain (or improve) the number, the quality, and diversity of vendors
 - Number: Sustain the number of vendors (average per market 8, per season 15)
 - Quality: Sustain rigorous process of sourcing vendors and confirming where and how fresh food and livestock is grown / raised and processed. To ensure that each of these products is being represented using transparency with the public. Each product must meet standards of being local as well as organically grown, and (or) free of preservatives, antibiotics, hormones, and genetically modified organisms.

- Diversity: Based on customer needs, determined through community engagement, identify and sustain a mix of vendors, including artisans, growers of seasonal vegetables, and producers of most of the following as available: fruit, breads, jams, pickled products, honey, maple syrup, eggs, meat, cheese, coffee, prepared snacks.
- Sustain (and after the move, grow) the amount of money people spend on local, healthy, and sustainably produced food. Chart reflects average customer spend.
 - Breakthrough Target: Maintain the same number of dollars spent at the market by the same numbers of people in 2017 through 2018, and 2019.

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
\$8.07	\$7.75	\$13.84	\$12.85	\$15.99

"Sustainable development is a dynamic process which enables people to realise their potential and improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the earth's life support systems" (Forum for the Future)

The question of sustainability must ultimately be addressed wholistically - it is a social, economic, ecological / environmental, and cultural question.

"In essence sustainable development is about five key principles: quality of life; fairness and equity; participation and partnership; care for our environment and respect for ecological constraints - recognising there are 'environmental limits'; and thought for the future and the precautionary principle". (From Making London Work by Forum for the Future's Sustainable Wealth London project)

- Stabilize the amount of work it takes to maintain vendors within a season and from season to season. Continue to evaluate how much time is involved to train first time vendors and businesses and whether we continue to be an incubator market helping them with their business development.
 - Breakthrough Target (2020): Move from 600 hours to 400 hours.
- Sustain an inspiring and engaging food-growing aspect of the project

- Provide community engagement opportunities around healthy food, organic growing, green and healthy living, permaculture, and growing a local community project.
 - Breakthrough Target: 10 Community Groups, 15 Farmers / Producers / Vendors, 10 Musicians, 40 Volunteers / Gardeners, 35 Members, 2500 Visitors.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Continue to administer and run Demonstration “Farm” / Community Gardens, May to November.
 - ~20 PLOTS, including community garden plots, Healthy Eating Eco-Kitchen plots, and demonstration gardens (limit to garlic only).
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Discuss ways to continue and (or) evolve the gardening program at our new home. Engage with Many Feathers Co-op.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Work with Daniels community resident gardeners to invite them into the discussion around designing or being part of the program.
 - Breakthrough Target (2019): Start piloting the program at the new site. Engage three Daniels community resident gardeners.
- Sustain Daniels Community funding
 - See GROW Breakthrough Targets
2. MOVE: To design and implement a community-led transition in 2019. To preserve, conserve, and build community energy and engagement as we move.
- Develop a move plan and move to new site that mitigates the loss of customers.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Develop a communications strategy by the summer of 2018.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Engage 40 people in planning and events related to move.
 - Plan (2018) and implement physical move logistics (2019)

- Breakthrough Target (2018): Determine whether materials and supplies are stored well enough, whether they can be stored better, and whether they need to be labelled more clearly.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Assess storage area in the Arc garage room (for market). Feasibility and logistics of moving down 40-foot ramp into room in parking garage.
 - Breakthrough Target (2019): Transplant and salvage plants for community gardens across the street.
 - Breakthrough Target (2019): Sell the shipping container.
 - Breakthrough Target (2019): Move to new site.
- Make a plan for and with gardeners about whether and how they will move with the project
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Meet with gardeners and other supporters early in 2018 to explore options.

3. GROW: To grow the economy and the impact of the project.

- Increase knowledge about percentage of cash spent by the project on local people and their goods and services. Aim to increase local spending.
 - 2018 Breakthrough Target: Establish a baseline estimate of 2017 project spending (whether money is being spent locally or not).
- Grow the Market Bucks program; Healthy Eating Eco-Kitchen program, and (or) a Vendor Incubator Program to bring in \$10,000 by 2020.
- Grow the annual market vendor sales from \$40,000 a year to \$50,000 a year in 2020. Best sales were in 2015 (\$57,844) this was the year we had a consistent vendor who sold meat, eggs and some water buffalo dairy products and a good selection of produce, well stocked.
- Offer a percentage of Market Bucks (tbd) in lieu of pay to volunteers and staff to increase local spending at market. 2018?

- Grow the engagement of members and Daniels resident stakeholders in the project.
 - a) To build community membership and membership program¹. Modest growth of membership is the goal for 2018 and 2019, as we are primarily focused in 2018 on (1) sustaining our project's integrity and diversifying our finances for long-term resilience and (2) planning and preparing to move the project to our permanent home in 2019. We also prefer a slow-growth model so we can better understand and tweak the membership process as need be before growing more quickly.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): 35 members (10 new members by Spring 2018 AGM).
 - Breakthrough Target (2019): 50 members (15 new members between 2018 and 2019 AGM).
 - Breakthrough Target (2020): 75 members (25 new members between 2019 and 2020 AGM).
 - b) To build local community engagement in membership and the project. Daniels' building residents are paying 1\$ per month per unit to the project. We aim to engage and build relationships with people in the buildings so we can serve them well with the project.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): Three members and (or) core volunteers from local Daniels buildings.
 - Breakthrough Target (2019): Five members and (or) core volunteers from local Daniels buildings.
 - Breakthrough Target (2020): Seven members and (or) core volunteers from local Daniels buildings.
- Increase community leadership skills in running a farmers' market and healthy food programs
 - Breakthrough Target (2018): One or two new board members engaging deeply in the project.

¹ As of Feb 2018, members had formal voting privileges at the AGM and nothing more. A membership program will build value for new members. We'll also connect a membership program with a loyalty program.

- Breakthrough Target (2019 and 2020): Four board members engaging deeply in the project.
- To offer small-business coaching and incubation support to vendors, helping them get to market and grow their businesses.
 - Accomplish this primarily through vendor recruitment calls with all vendors at the start of the season, to review and educate vendors on how to be successful, and by doing weekly or monthly check-ins with each vendor.
 - Breakthrough Target (2020): 100 hours of coaching and support to three or more vendors. Note to be considered only if it aligns with our objectives to: i.) stabilize a volunteer time / energy budget for the project at a regenerative and (or) sustainable rate; and ii) grow this into a Vendor Incubator program / property to be funded.
- To grow the impact of the project by tracking and sharing information about the model and project with interested parties.
 - Breakthrough Target (2018–2020, annual): Communicate with 3000+ people each year about the project.
 - Breakthrough Target (2020): Continue to develop and share The Backyard’s Sustainable Farmers Market and Farmers’ Market Model, sharing aspects that are reflections of the unique community it serves and aspects that can be replicated.
 - Example of unique aspects: the gardens, the Erin Mills neighbourhood and its specific food needs and demographics. Example of replicable aspects: a funding model for small-scale farmers’ markets, some of the programs.
 - Increase ability to track and share metrics and stories about the health impacts of the project.
 - For example, consider further ways to:
 - Increase people’s awareness of and access to local, healthy, and sustainably produced food;
 - Increase the ratio of consumption of local, healthy, and sustainably produced food to less local, healthy, and sustainably produced food;

- Increase economic and social support of local, healthy, and sustainably produced food and the people who produce it.

Appendix 1: 2014-2017 Breakthrough Objectives

The 2014–2017 Breakthrough Objectives were achieved through a community process that also helped us to distill our Vision, Mission, and Values. While the Vision, Mission, and Values remain true, our 2014–2017 Breakthrough Objectives have changed as follows:

1. **GROW: To attract 15,000 visits to The Backyard annually by 2019.**

We revised this objective over time, as we realized The Backyard would never be a destination market. We recognized that we were very much an incubator market, helping vendors come to market and guiding them. Vendors choose to stay for various reasons: they have built up a clientele and their revenue is productive, the culture of the market is important to them, or they don't want to travel to markets too far from where they live. Other vendors will learn, grow, and leave to attend bigger markets. As a result of observing this pattern, a more relevant goal emerged, namely to grow the economy of the market so vendors would stay. We aimed to increase the dollars spent by visitors, and this did help vendors to stay. We also worked hard to make sure there was enough variety at the market to keep customers coming back. These efforts included allowing farmers to add up to 30% of product from like-minded farms so they can offer more selection, as well as allowing producers to sell additional artisanal products apart from what they have made. We have more work to do in this area, especially with a move to a permanent home at the base of the newly built condo across the street from our current location. For 2018, we aim to SUSTAIN, and in 2019 we'll MOVE.

2. **FUND: To secure \$45,000 funding annually for the project by 2019 (from sources other than Daniels).**

In 2014, we estimated the value of the project at \$90,000 (if all time worked was paid), although our metrics have come in at over \$100,000 each year since. We currently estimate that the baseline of the project requires about \$50,000 in cash

and up to \$20,000–\$30,000 of in-kind volunteer time. We've secured ~50% of the \$50,000 in cash annually in the setup of our model, wherein each Daniels' residential building being built is paying \$1 per unit per month to the market. In return for their investment in the market, condo investors and residents have a farmers' market that raises the resale value of their units and invests in healthy local food and programs at the base of their building each Saturday for 4 months a year. We have more work to do to build a project that is sustainable over the long run, but we have done solid work so far. Moving forward, our goal is to SUSTAIN and GROW.

3. COMMUNITY LED: To be predominantly community led by 2017.

The community has taken over most aspects over the project (established in 2013). The Backyard Farm & Market became a not-for-profit corporation in June 2016. Board development continues, as does the transition of the founders leaving, but this Breakthrough Objective is mostly achieved. To ensure the project remains community led, our goal is to continue engaging the condo community to learn about their needs, which will help direct the mix of vendors at the farmers' market.