

Belfast Community Co-op Launches Historic Project

Belfast, Maine, January 5th - The Belfast Community Co-op is about to embark on a historic project - a full renovation of the building it has owned and occupied in downtown Belfast since 1993. Co-op member-owners are invited to meet, greet, and receive an update on the renovation plans and financing for the project at the Hutchinson Center on Friday, January 13th from 5:30 PM – 7:45 PM. The meeting will also be available over Zoom.

After six years of market and feasibility studies; extensive review by industry experts; exploring options from building new to relocating; and member-owner forums, focus groups, and open meetings, the Co-op Board decided the top priorities for the renovation are:

- Reopening the much-missed café and making it better than ever, with new services, new equipment, an updated menu, and an improved seating area, while keeping the natural light and materials everyone loves
- Continuing the Shop For Me curbside pickup service, which allows us to expand our accessibility
- Adding an additional 33% of retail square footage by relocating offices, prep spaces, coolers, and vents to other locations off the sales floor
- Doubling the bulk department selections
- Reorganizing the parking lot to make it more pedestrian-friendly
- Investing in our infrastructure to keep the facility safe for all

Partners on the project will include architecture firm Woodhull - formerly known as Caleb Johnson Studio, and builder Warren Construction. Both have experience designing and building retail businesses and will stage construction so that the Co-op remains open throughout the process.

General Manager Doug Johnson commented, "After years of work, the Co-op is excited to say that we're finally at a place where we have an affordable project that will meet the current and future needs of the Co-op and our community."

Board President Susan Cutting noted, "The Board is enthusiastically supporting this project. We see the Co-op as at the heart of our community and local economy. We are committed to ensuring the future of our community's primary source for healthy and sustainable foods and supporting our region's farmers and other local producers."

Zoom participants can register via a link at www.belfast.coop/january-13-owner-forum.

Member-owners planning to attend in person can RSVP via email to board@belfast.coop.