

Subject:

**Feasibility Study and Business Case for an Eastern Ontario Local Food
Aggregation/Distribution Centre - Focus Groups Invitation**

To whom it may concern,

We are excited to invite you to help shape our region's future food industry opportunities. Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development (PKED) has identified the Agri-Food sector as a key driver to not only Peterborough County's economy but for the Eastern Ontario region as well. It is important that we hear from key leaders throughout this region to understand the opportunities and risks associated with our goal to expand the local food ecosystem.

PKED is currently evaluating the feasibility to develop a Local Food Aggregation/Distribution Centre (Local Food Centre) in Peterborough County. The Feasibility and Business Case Study will assess the need to establish a wholesale marketplace that will facilitate the aggregation, storage and distribution of locally produced food to wholesale buyers in the Eastern Ontario region.

This process involves gathering opinions, ideas and visions through focus group discussions from food producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, distributors, educational institutions and other stakeholders involved in the Eastern Ontario food ecosystem.

To support the information gathering process, you are invited to participate in one of our three, 90-minute focus group sessions organized and managed by our consulting group, Explorer Solutions, to ensure that your voice and insights have a meaningful impact.

Below is the information regarding the date, time, and location of the focus group to be held in your area:

Focus Group #1 – Peterborough, Haliburton, Northumberland, Simcoe Counties, City of Kawartha Lakes, Durham and York Regions

Date: January 21st, 2020

Time: 10:00AM-12:00PM

Location: Peterborough, Venture North: Lower Level Board Room at 270 George St N, Peterborough, K9J 3H1

Focus Group #2 – Hastings, Lennox and Addington, Lanark, Prince Edward and Frontenac Counties

Date: January 22nd, 2020

Time: 10:00AM-12:00PM

Location: Frontenac County Administrative Offices (in the Frontenac Room), located at 2069 Battersea Rd, Glenburnie, ON, K0H 1S0

Focus Group #3 - Renfrew, Prescott and Russell, Stormont Dundas & Glengarry, Leeds and Grenville Counties, Ottawa Region

Date: January 24th, 2020

Time: 10:00AM-12:00PM

Location: Sandfield Centre at Island Park, 102 Derby Street West, Alexandria ON K0C 1A0

Please RSVP for the focus group most convenient for you:

Focus Group #1, Peterborough: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/85129702231>

Focus Group #2, Frontenac: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/85142131407>

Focus Group #3, Alexandria: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/85530121897>

You are also invited to participate in a short online survey to share your opinion about a range of topics related to local food supply and distribution.

- Link to access the Local Food Producers Survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PFMFPKH>
- Link to access the Local Food Buyers/Processors Survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PCC9S8F>

All your responses will be kept confidential. They will only be used for statistical purposes and will be reported only in aggregated form.

We sincerely hope you will participate in this consultation and survey process to help us identify opportunities in the food industry for our region. For more information about this initiative please contact the **Project Lead: Gabi Dragomir, Rural Economic Development Officer at PKED at gdragomir@peterboroughed.ca or 705-743-0777 ext 2160.**

Questions regarding the survey should be addressed to **Explorer Solutions: Jason Kipfer, at jason@explorersolutions.ca or 833-221-9055.**

Sincerely,

Suzanne McCrimmon
Director of Business Development
Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development
smccrimmon@peterboroughed.ca

