



Sustainability Plan 2015

Lexington Co-op & Sustainability

Lexington Cooperative Market is a community owned natural foods grocery store. The co-op opened in 1971 when people had limited access to locally grown and whole foods. The co-op sells fresh produce, meats and dairy, bulk foods, packaged groceries and prepared foods in a 4,500 square foot building in Buffalo's Elmwood Village. We employ 80 people, and the store is owned by over 11,000 Western New Yorkers.

The co-op is governed in part by seven cooperative principles. Cooperative principle seven is "Concern for Community," which is interpreted by the Co-op's Board of Directors and Staff, to include concern for the environment as well as the Western New York community and our industry and supplier relationships. Commitment to and building of our sustainable practices is a component of Lexington Co-op's BIG Direction – our long term plan for creating a world that reflects our values.

Lexington Cooperative Market

807 Elmwood Avenue Buffalo, NY | lexington.coop



Sustainability Thus Far

Our business is rooted in sustainability. The co-op's founders created their business as a way to source sustainable foods, and using sustainable practices in the co-op's operations is an expectation of our owners, customers and Board of Directors.

To Date

The co-op has and continues to minimize the environmental impact of store operations through policies and practices, detailed below.

The BIG picture

- Building and supporting local farms and businesses by selling local produce, prepared and packaged foods for resale and use in the Prepared Foods department.
- Board oversight and prioritization of sustainable measures
- Merchandising and educating consumers about the benefits of bulk and organic foods
- Use of local distributors

Day to day in-store operations

- Food scrap composting in Produce and Prepared Foods departments
- LED lighting throughout building and store fixtures
- Unsellable foods donated to local soup kitchens (Food Shuttle program)
- Maximum building insulation
- All renewable energy electricity source
- Recycling
 - Most/all unwaxed cardboard
 - Most/all glass
 - Most/all metal
 - Most plastics
- Recycled or recyclable repack materials.
- Compostable silverware for prepared foods.
- BPA free receipt tape

Future Opportunities

- Strategic relationship building with local farmers/producers to source more local products
- Water conservation
- Expansion of in-store composting to staff and/or customer areas
- Build internal culture building around sustainable practices
 - Staff education around recycling, composting and water conservation opportunities
 - Staff break room & work areas

Long term sustainability goal

We are committed to becoming a net zero business by 2050.

Waste

What we do now

Presently, the co-op recycles 57% of waste annually via various means outlined below.

- a. Unwaxed cardboard: Recycled commercially, 5 dumpster pickups weekly
- b. Metal: Municipal recycling weekly
- c. Glass: Municipal recycling weekly
- d. Plastic: Municipal recycling weekly
- e. Food scraps: Composted via PUSH Buffalo, three ~50 pound bins picked up daily during winter season and up to 6 during local produce season
- f. Encourage the use of reusable bags by giving them to new owners

Trash

- a. Landfill dumpster, 6 dumpster pickups weekly
- b. Waxed cardboard: Currently disposed of in landfill dumpster

Challenges & Opportunities

- a. Unwaxed cardboard landfill diversion
 1. PUSH Buffalo or another composter may be able to compost shredded waxed cardboard
- b. Shrink wrap/thin plastic
- c. Additional food scrap composting internally
 1. Create community compost drop off
 2. Staff break room compost
- d. Plastic bag recycling
- e. Hertel Avenue store demolition/construction/planning
- f. Staff education of opportunities for internal waste reduction, recycling and composting
- g. Recycling more cardboard by arranging for Saturday's cardboard pick up to be recycled and not sent to a land fill
- h. Decrease use of plastic bags by further encouraging the use of reusable bags or discouraging the use of plastic bags
- i. Hire a Sustainability Coordinator
- j. Reduce shrink (unsellable food) by refining ordering and systems

Priorities for 2015

- a. Hertel Avenue store development; build and plan with sustainability as an objective
- b. Staff education
 1. Glass/plastic/metal recycling/waste reduction
- c. Staff break room composting

Waste cont'd.

Action

- a. Research options for improved weekend cardboard recycling pickup
- b. Appoint sustainability watchdog for second store development
- c. Develop plan for internal sustainability culture building
 1. Staff operational recycling awareness program
 2. Management education and buy in

Water consumption

What we do now

Presently, the co-op does not take measures to conserve water in day to day operations

Challenges & Opportunities

- a. Track/evaluate water consumption
- b. Identify opportunities to reduce water usage
- c. Identify economic savings of water conservation measures

Priorities for 2015

- a. Evaluate past water use
- b. Make recommendations for reductions

Action

- a. Evaluate water usage by store department
- b. Set metrics and goal for reduction
- c. Implement water savings strategies

Energy optimization

What we do now

- a. Use LED lightings in most of our fixtures
- b. Purchase 100% of our energy from renewable sources
- c. Walls are highly insulated to reduce use of natural gas for heating

Challenges & Opportunities

- a. Increasing sales while decreasing or maintaining our electricity and natural gas usage

Priorities for 2015

- a. Lighting and insulation for our new store on Hertel Avenue
- b. Decrease in Sales per KWA (Electricity Used) and Sales per MCF (Gas Used)

Action

- a. Consider energy efficiency in Hertel Ave store planning & Co-op construction.
 - 1. Encourage landlord to invest in energy efficient lighting fixtures.

Community investment

What we do now

- a. Provide organic food to WNY consumers: *Organic food production reduces chemical fertilizer and pesticide runoff into our waterways, protects farm workers from disease, and grows healthy, nutrient-dense soil.*
 1. Produce is over 60% organic
 2. Store is 25% organic overall.
- b. Provide bulk foods to WNY consumers
- c. 80 great jobs: Staff benefits, community service hours
- d. Charitable donations
- e. Education of the community
 1. Canning classes (15 annually)
 2. Cooking classes (varies)
 3. Food issues communication (GMO labeling, farmland conservation, etc)
 4. Newsletter: six editions annually
- f. Sponsorships: Farmer's Market EBT Program, World on Your Plate event
- g. Participation in the Food Shuttle of WNY program
- h. Commitment to local vendors
- i. Support new and growing cooperative businesses

Challenges & Opportunities

- a. Refine community service hour system
- b. Track organic food sales
- c. Set donation/sponsorship pars and goals - change system to be proactive
- d. Create opportunities for owner involvement in sustainable initiatives
- e. Create cooperative development endowment

Priorities for 2015

- a. Staff community service hours system improvements
- b. Plan and build Hertel Avenue store
- c. Track and promote organic food sales

Action

- a. Cooperative development endowment
- b. Evaluate Community Service hours system issues
- c. Expand the co-op to North Buffalo
- d. Develop metric and goals around sales of organic foods

Who's helping? Sustainability stakeholders

Owners & shoppers

Co-op owners have high standards for their business, and expect the co-op to maintain and constantly improve environmental sustainable and socially responsibly systems and practices.

Board of Directors

The Co-op Board's end policies state that the co-op operate with concern and respect for the environment and provide socially responsible goods. The Board is responsible for holding the General Manager accountable for compliance with their interpretation of the bylaws. In addition to the goals laid out in the bylaws, many Board Members are personally invested in sustainability, and request specific sustainability measures.

Management and Staff

Store managers and staff are responsible for bringing sustainability measures to life in their everyday work.

Suppliers, vendors and farmers

The businesses and people we buy from are an extension of our impact on the world around us. Whenever possible, we strive to buy from people whose practices are in line with our values and we actively support our partners in their sustainable initiatives and growth.

Neighbors and Co-ops

We work to be a great neighbor to our residential and small business neighbors in the Elmwood Village and WNY co-ops.

Service Providers

Trash: Republic Waste Company

Water: City of Buffalo

Gas: National Grid

Electric: Energy Co-op of America

The Bottom Line

Sustainability is in our core. It's part of our BIG Direction, and a consideration in the decisions we make every day. We're finding the best options to meet our owners' needs and honor our responsibility to the environment.

We're committed to responsible stewardship and constant improvement.