

# City Market/Onion River Co-op Opens South End Store

BY DAVE GUTKNECHT

Vermont's City Market/Onion River Co-op, formerly a large single-store operation, will open its second location in late fall 2017. This year, City Market's downtown Burlington location generated \$42 million from 12,000 retail square feet.

The new South End facility will have 15,000 square feet of retail, plus an additional 10,000 square feet (25,000 total) on the ground floor, including a café with seating for 40. On the mezzanine there will be another 8,000 square feet for offices, teaching kitchen, community space, and lease space. Initial sales for the new store are projected at \$15 million in each of the first three years.

City Market/Onion River Co-op will complete its 45th year in 2018 and with the additional store expects to continue growing its membership of more than 12,000. The co-op received the Retail Excellence award in 2017 at the CCMA conference (as reported in *Cooperative Grocer* 191, July-August).

City Market staff and contractors are working hard to meet the planned mid-November opening. The co-op will add another one hundred positions to its workforce in bringing the new store to Burlington's South End, a burgeoning creative district that was all but abandoned 30 years ago. Fast forward to 2017, and the area has transformed its vacant lumberyards, auto supply shops, and military facilities into innovative makers spaces, incubators, apartment buildings, international companies, breweries, restaurants, and more.

The catalyst for this growth? Art. Burlington's South End grew almost exclusively out of the annual South End Art Hop, a three-day celebration of local art that attracts more than 30,000 people each year.

"This expansion has been in the making for a long time and is such an amazing milestone moment in our co-op's history," says John Tashiro, general manager of City Market/Onion River. "We are so deeply grateful for the incredible support and belief throughout the years of our wonderful members and board, the unbelievable dedication of our staff, and the strong partnerships with the City of Burlington, our hundreds of unbelievable farmers and vendors, and fantastic community organizations, which have all been instrumental in our evolution. Ultimately, this expansion will enable our co-ops to better serve our members, customers, and the broader community." •



Mayor and manager at the site: Burlington's mayor, Myro Weinberger (left) and City Market's general manager, John Tashiro—*photo by John Donahue*

City Market's new store site, Lake Champlain to the west, and downtown Burlington less than two miles away—*photo by Matt Benedetto, Vermont Aerial Photo*

## Co-op Ecosystem

Changes to the co-op ecosystem affect us all, particularly when a new store opens or a long-standing one goes out of business. What happens when a community loses a co-op? What are the effects on quality of life? Conversely, what is mobilized when a community rallies around the vision of a startup team, working together to open a new co-op? We are interested in hearing more on this topic, and invite you to share stories of loss and gain as they reflect the realities of the current situation in your retail market. Contact [admin@grocer.coop](mailto:admin@grocer.coop) or log onto CGN to share your perspective.