

# Kitsap Sun

## NEWS

# Poulsbo Farmers Market could expand as city plans sale or lease of public works site



**Ava Manning**

Kitsap Sun

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A year-round farmers market may soon be available in Poulsbo, as the city is taking steps to sell the old Public Works property to Poulsbo Farmers Market organization.

A letter of intent from the city, which would serve as a non-binding agreement between the city of Poulsbo and Poulsbo Farmers Market to begin negotiation for a lease or sale of the former public works property at 710 NE Iverson St., will be considered by the city council on April 17. If the council approves the letter Mayor Becky Erickson will begin negotiating with Poulsbo Farmers Market, and any agreement on a lease or sale would come back to the council for approval.

The farmers market is currently held Saturday morning in the parking lot of Gateway Fellowship Church, from late March through December. The market has in located in many temporary locations through the years, but has sought a permanent home since 2011, according to an email sent to the Kitsap Sun. The acquisition of the old public works property would allow them to hold a year-round farmers market as well as encourage and support small businesses, and the market's board has been pursuing a potential move to the city property for several years.

The organization, a nonprofit that was founded in 2003 and has hosted a weekly market the past 20 years, declined to immediately offer further comment on the proposal as it is

still in the process.

The property being sold is environmentally encumbered in several ways, making it difficult to advertise, Erickson said. Dogfish Creek, a protected salmon creek, runs through the property. Much of the property floods each year, and the majority of the land is not able to be further developed. In addition, as a municipal asset the property cannot be donated outright.

The buildings on the property are large, warehouse-like buildings with high ceilings. There are two main buildings, each with a funky and unique style. One of the buildings has community artwork painted all across the back, while the other is a repurposed quonset hut from World War II.

Poulsbo Public Works began moving a few years ago, when the staff and vehicles needed to maintain the city just became too large. As the population in Poulsbo has continued to grow, Poulsbo's Public Works has similarly grown to accommodate it. New laws and regulations in addition to this rapid population growth has caused the public works to outgrow their old location. Public works should be entirely moved out of the property by 2026, according to Erickson.

The Poulsbo City Council discussed the proposed letter of intent last week, with members nearly entirely in favor. Though one member shared that the Poulsbo Skate Park, an effort to rebuild a facility after an aging skate ramp at Raab Park was taken down, has expressed interest in the property. Any use that includes new facilities or structures being added isn't feasible, since the property cannot be built on or developed further.

Two years ago a similar proposal came before the council, with a plan floated in 2022 that would have split the property into several parcels and transferred them to community organizations, including the farmers market at the time.

The Poulsbo City Council meets at 5 p.m. on Wednesday at City Hall, 200 NE Moe Street.

