

Greenway farmer's market opened last Friday

The Bethlehem Gadfly Southside August 2, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the Southside 

Gadfly apologizes for the late notice but hopes you will take note and patronize this great addition along the Greenway.

Tip o' the hat to all involved!

A new farmer's market is coming to Bethlehem starting this Friday [July 31] from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The market will be at the South Bethlehem Greenway's Polk Street entrance. There is no official street address. The Greenway at Polk is located between Mechanic and Fourth Streets. (April Gamiz/The Morning Call)

from Christina Tatu, "New farmers market to debut Friday at South Bethlehem Greenway." Morning Call, July 29, 2020.

Starting Friday [July 31] south Bethlehem's Greenway will host a new farmers market that will feature food and merchandise from South Side business owners.

The concept was cultivated in the midst of the pandemic, when the Community Action Development Corp. of Bethlehem was looking for ways to promote South Side businesses, said corporation Director Yadira Colon-Lopez.

"We wanted businesses to be able to get out and sell their products, sell their food and really help sustain themselves and be a little bit more creative during this time," Colon-Lopez said.

The city's rail trail park, the Greenway, is a nearly 2-mile rail trail the follows the former Norfolk Southern line through the city's South Side neighborhoods. It begins just north of Lehigh University and ends just outside Saucon Park.



The market will be held at the Polk Street entrance of the Greenway from 2 to 6 p.m. Friday and will continue every Friday through Sept. 25.

The Community Action Development Corp. has been around for 25 years with the mission of revitalizing the city's formerly industrialized South Side. This is the first time the group is organizing a farmers market on the Greenway, which will continue next year, Colon-Lopez said. There will be five vendors to start on Friday, with more anticipated in the coming weeks.

There are also plans to bring in family-oriented entertainment later this summer, such as singalongs and puppet shows.

William Seixas, who runs the Couchpota-doh Food Truck with his wife, Marylou Seixas, is excited for the new market. "It's something we've been advocating for in the area," William Seixas said. He lives about three blocks from the Greenway Farmers Market. While the Lehigh University market has been popular, Seixas believes the Greenway location will encourage people to walk around and explore other areas of the city. He and his wife have been operating their food truck for five years, making Ecuadorian food from family recipes that have been passed down over the years. Their specialties include oversized empanadas and fried mashed potatoes topped with a fried egg and a red onion salad.

Jill Matthews, co-owner of Dinky's Ice Cream on East Third Street, hopes the market provides the push her business needs. She and her husband, Norman Matthews, also own a location in Bangor. They opened the Bethlehem store about six weeks ago, but because of the pandemic, things have been slower than expected. "The farmers market is literally going to be in our backyard. I hope this lets people know we are here and what we have," she said.

Shannon Van Wert, owner of the Bananarama food truck, said her sales are at a third of what they were last year, since the big festivals she normally attends — such as Mayfair at Cedar Crest College and Blues Brews and Allentown's Blues Brews and Barbecue Festival — have been canceled. Van Wert, who makes dairy-free sundaes out of whipped, frozen bananas, won't be at the Greenway this Friday, but plans to be there starting next week. "I'm definitely excited to be on the South Side of Bethlehem. It's not easy for us to find places to vend in the city and it's really nice of them to be thinking of vendors who don't have an outlet," she said.

The new farmers market is made possible by Southside Vision 20/20, a six-year revitalization program of the Community Action Development Corp. of Bethlehem and the city. Last week, city officials approved a roughly four-block area from Webster Street to Pierce Street for the market. Colon-Lopez anticipates eventually having up to five vendors per block.