

Kirkside Farm and Food Connect (KFC) Preliminary Business Plan The Inn at Kirkside, Roxbury, New York

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Member**

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I. Introduction

The following document is a preliminary business plan outline of the work needed to plan and implement Kirkside Farm and Food Connect (KFC). The components of this plan are drawn from conversations with local farm and food businesses and industry experts, my personal experiences and observations, and literature reviews. It constitutes a suite of recommendations that will be vetted, modified and approved by Peg Ellsworth and the Kirkside and Mark Boards before it constitutes an actual plan of action for KFC.

The “Preliminary Plan” is supported by the attached “KFC Consultant Observations and Recommendations Report.”

II. Profile of Virtual Food Hub (VFH) Business Community, B-to-B Needed Services and Potential VFH Offerings

- A. Profile of regional businesses (define catchment — “regional” — area, e.g. Central Catskills)
 - 1/ Farms
 - 2/ Food and beverage processors
 - 3/ Aggregators/distributors
 - 4/ Restaurants and event venues
 - 5/ Inns, hotels, AirB&Bs
 - 6/ Food and specialty retail

Note: Review and expand on hospitality and producer databases compiled by Wendy and include invitees to the 1/24/2023 focus group meeting.

B. Market Needs Assessment

- 1/ Draw on information and recommendations from initial surveys and from one-on-one interviews conducted by the consultant
- 2/ Once on board, the VFH coordinator should conduct additional one-on-one interviews of local businesses and industry leaders to gain additional information and to become grounded about the service needs of local businesses and VFH opportunities
- 3/ Conduct additional industry focus group meetings

C. Current Service Providers

Identify related services being provided by existing service providers (e.g. food hubs, agriculture assistance organizations, aggregators and distributors), and assess how well they are serving the identified KFC market (how well are they meeting market demand, identify any gaps and deficiencies, cost and minimal volume constraints, and potential service enhancements)

D. Develop Suite of KFC Services to Meet Market Needs: Filling Gaps and Offering New and Enhanced Services

1/ Profile anticipated service offerings based on preliminary needs assessment and profile of current service provider offerings. Anticipated KFC services to include in profile:

- a. Electric delivery van(s) for first and last mile pick-ups and deliveries
- b. Web portal to facilitate buyer/seller relationships, information sharing and transactions, including blockchain capabilities to facilitate direct/non-middleman transactions
- c. Broker/market and technical assistance services (face-to-face and phone support)
- d. Collaborations/strategic partnerships with existing service providers and with assistance organizations (governmental, CCE, NGO)

Note: Anticipated service offerings are presented in greater detail in the “Observations and Recommendations Report.”

2/ Identify and begin serving clients with initial service offerings (test markets)

3/ Research and develop additional service offerings based on refined assessments of needs, services being provided by other service providers and resulting from ongoing visioning process (see item X below)

III. Consider Options for the KFC Business Model (consider membership, collaboration and/or fee-for-service business models)

IV. KFC Outreach, Engagement and Marketing Plan

- A. Develop marketing, advertising, public relations plan for KFC integrated into related efforts for the Inn at Kirkside
- B. Consider similar marketing services to be offered to participating businesses

V. Revenue Generation Model for KFC (as an element of the Inn at Kirkside)

- A. Startup grant funding
- B. Membership dues and/or fees for services
- C. Ongoing grant funding (to subsidize continuous operation of KFC and to support development of new service offerings, focus on seeking grant funding for the provision of services that benefit the community at large, as well as participating businesses, and/or development of new services that will not immediately benefit existing businesses)

VI. Capacity Development

- A. Human resource development —hire staff and consultants (see Year One Action Plan below). Recommendation that a KFC coordinator be hired and several short-term, topic-specific consultancies and/or strategic partnerships be established to develop key KFC elements.
- B. Create a Kitchen Cabinet of 4 or 5 local food system thought/action leaders to meet monthly or bimonthly (See Year One Action Plan below)
- C. Web Portal — develop and facilitate ongoing operations and maintenance
- D. Physical space for office, vehicle(s) and peripheral equipment storage and maintenance and product storage (minimal and generally short term)

VII. Regulatory compliance, certifications and licensing

- A. Transport related
- B. Food storage and handling related
- C. Food processing and preparation related

VIII. Consultant Wrap-up Actions (through January 31, 2023)

I will perform the following actions to complete my consultant contract:

- A. Plan, execute and report on the January 24 B-to-B focus group meeting
- B. Present Draft “KFC Preliminary Business Plan” and “Hub Notes” to Peg and the Kirkside and Mark Boards and finalize documents based on received input
- C. Contact and recruit Kitchen Cabinet members (see below)
- D. Submit second (final) consultant services invoice

IX. Year One Action Plan

Actions to be carried out from 2/1/2023 (after completion of the initial consultant contract) to 1/31/2024, presented on a quarterly basis. Please note that as we are anticipating receipt of grant funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission in March/April 2023, the first quarter activities will consist entirely of voluntary actions by me and other community leaders.

A. First quarter

Convene a volunteer Kitchen Cabinet of 4 to 5 leaders from the local food system community who are committed to developing KFC. The group will meet monthly or bimonthly, depending on members’ availability. The purpose of this group will be to build on the work of the consultant (as profiled in this and the “Hub Notes” documents and earlier work by the Maps subcontractor to plan and implement KFC.

1/ Impanel group

2/ Conduct a white boarding exercise to begin mapping out approach.

B. Second quarter

1/ Continue monthly/bimonthly Kitchen Cabinet meetings

- 2/ Develop job description, advertise, recruit and hire KFC coordinator
- 3/ Develop 2 to 3 short-term consultant projects to support KFC development and/or several strategic partnerships with established local food system organizations
- 4/ Set up office space at Kirkside

C. Third quarter

- 1/ Continue Kitchen Cabinet meetings
- 2/ Train and provide orientation for KFC coordinator
- 3/ Convene a B-to-B focus group meeting to introduce the KFC coordinator and obtain input on a formal structure for the KFC (e.g. membership, collaboration or fee-for-service business models) and KFC service delivery recommendations
- 4/ Develop scopes of work and let short-term consultant contracts and/or formalize strategic partnerships

D. Fourth quarter

- 1/ Continue Kitchen Cabinet meetings to be led by KFC coordinator
- 2/ Convene a B-to-B focus group meeting to be led by the KFC coordinator
- 3/ Integrate findings, recommendations and working relationships resulting from consultancies, strategic partnership building and focus group meetings into KFC business plan and service delivery model
- 3/ Map out specific service offerings and plan for pilot offerings (e.g. delivery van, web portal, etc.)
- 4/ Initiate pilot service offerings

X. Ongoing Visioning and Business Development Process (including focus groups, design Charettes and long range planning)

- A. Background and context: This preliminary business plan is a point of departure to create and execute a vision for the future. To this end, it will be critical that an ongoing process be embraced and owned by the stakeholders (primarily, local farm and food businesses) who will be the most directly impacted by and share in the success of this endeavor).
- B. Craft a visioning approach that engages and inspires business and associated stakeholders to gain a sense of ownership and a strong willingness to contribute to the KFC development process over time
- C. Success in this process will depend on creating the optimal balance between framing engagement (setting broad-based KFC areas of focus, goals and objectives) and then opening the process to be, as much as feasible, stakeholder driven)
- D. Long range planning, including a systems approach* to scouting for signals of change that will present potential risks and opportunities (from those changes broadly anticipated by many farm and food business leaders, to those changes at the fringe that few people are willing or able to anticipate).
- E. While not the immediate and central objective of the Inn at Kirkside and KFC, sustainability and resiliency planning must be incorporated into all of our planning to further reduce risks, capture opportunities and to adequately serve the needs of our community over time.

* Broadly, our local food economy and, specifically, KFC operate within complex and complicated systems that are inherently unpredictable with emergent properties for which the past may have little bearing. Climate change/biodiversity loss, the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts and deep U.S. political divides, and associated supply chain disruptions are key drivers that will result in profoundly uncertain business conditions throughout the coming years.

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