

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WEST CHESTER, PA – OCTOBER 1, 2020

**West Chester Cooperative has signed its store site lease
with Scott Zukin of Zukin Realty
at 142 East Market Street**

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West Chester Cooperative signed a lease for the building at 142 East Market Street this week with Zukin Realty. The store site will be the future home of the West Chester Cooperative (WCC) grocery and the lease signing is the next step towards the opening of a cooperative grocery in the East End of West Chester borough.

WCC has been diligently working, with the assistance of West Chester Borough leadership, including Mayor Dianne Herrin, WC BID, Chamber of Commerce and many others local business leaders, to make the grocery a reality. The Co-op board is also working with its legal team, local financial institutions, and local and regional co-op experts as consultants on the store build-out and opening.

The Co-op's mission to open a community-owned, full-service grocery store is one step closer to becoming a reality. The Cooperative has been building its member-owner base since 2015 and has reached over 300 member-owners, with a goal of reaching 600 member-owners by the end of 2021. With this growth, and other member-owner building initiatives, the WCC is now ready to sign a lease for its future store site. To start, 142 E Market will become the pick-up location for its ongoing Local Food Program; the location will also be used to introduce the Co-op's newest initiative, the Co-op GoBox, a fully customizable box of locally made foodstuffs, grocery staples, and artisan creations.

"The endorsement by the Co-op member-owners is overwhelmingly enthusiastic as the Co-op board takes this major step of securing a physical location for the grocery store. Both the board and Co-op member-owners have been eagerly awaiting this day, and the entire community will benefit as the Co-op opens a local and organic grocery with a community focus," states Marnie Rhen, Co-op Board President. "The Co-op is also excited that its flagship store will be located in West Chester's East End and that it will be an innovative and community-serving model, wholly and completely in line with the Co-op's mission as a leader in healthy food access, education, and well-being for the community."

Why a Co-op in West Chester?

The cooperative business model ensures WCC is owned, controlled, run by and for its members to realize the common economic, social, cultural needs of its members and patrons. As economic and social benefits of the Co-op activity remain in the community, profits generated are either reinvested in the enterprise or returned to the members. The desire for a full-service grocery in the Borough has been on the public agenda since at least 2000 and Nielsen data shows a massive outflow of food dollars (\$17.6 million/year) due to lack of grocery options in the Borough. A food co-op will be especially beneficial to the downtown area where stores that carry healthy, fresh foods are currently a 20-30 minute walk away. As the WCC's current Local Food Program grows and the GoBox launch takes off, the store site will serve as a new delivery point for CSA shares, bringing local organic foodstuffs directly to new & returning customers. Once the grocery store is up and running, the entire borough will have access to high-quality, nutrient-dense food choices within walkable distance.

To understand more about the structure of cooperatives and their democratic economic principles, please visit: <https://www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity>

To gain a better perspective on how crucial member-ownership numbers are to the building of a cooperative and how very important it is that you join the West Chester Cooperative today, please visit: <https://www.grocer.coop/articles/membership-ownership-cooperative-advantage>

West Chester Cooperative is working to build a member-owned full-service grocery store in West Chester, Pennsylvania. A vibrant community hub, the store will be open to everyone and will provide exceptional, fresh, healthy, locally-focused food at fair prices, seven days a week. If you think this is a good idea and want to make it happen, become a member-owner today. Connect with the Co-op at <https://WestChester.coop>

For questions on this topic, please visit the West Chester Cooperative booth at the Growers Market on Saturdays through November, or contact Marnie Rhen, Co-op Board President, at Exec@WestChester.coop. The Co-op will also continue to provide updates through future press releases and its website.

For more information about:

The Co-op: <https://www.westchester.coop>

The WCC's local food program: <https://www.westchester.coop/local-food>

What is a Co-op: <https://www.westchester.coop/what-is-a-co-op>

A deeper dive into the structure of cooperatives and their democratic economic principles, visit:

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