



FREE RANGE FOOD CO-OP MARKET STUDY KEY FINDINGS

In October 2017, the board of directors for Free Range Food Co-op contracted with Debbie Suassuna of G2G Research Group and CDS Consulting Co-op to conduct a market study for the co-op. Debbie has over 20 years of location research and site analysis experience, and specializes in natural foods co-ops.

Below is a summary of the key findings:

- Based on the population size, demographic composition and competitive environment of the Grand Rapids market area, combined with the experiences of other natural foods co-ops that operate in similar market situations, it appears that there is sufficient sales potential to support a full-line natural foods co-op.
- The proposed natural foods co-op will serve a relatively large-sized trade area, extending between 14 and 46 straight-line miles, encompassing most of Itasca County, with a small portion of west-central St. Louis County extending to the city of Hibbing. There are an estimated 58,200 shoppers within the defined trade area.
- It is recommended that Free Range Food Co-op have about 4000 sq ft of sales area, which will allow for customers to make most or all of their grocery purchases at the co-op.
- It is strongly recommended that Free Range Food Co-op place a heavy emphasis on its deli/prepared food departments by offering a sandwich station, specialty drink bar, self-serve hot/cold food bars, and a good selection of grab and go foods.
- Our market study has identified two geographic locations that would be favorable locations for the food co-op: South Highway 169 and along the Highway 2 corridor.
- Indoor/outdoor seating space and classroom/community space are also recommended.
- The food co-op should strive to become a part of the community through various outreach programs in order to raise awareness to the co-op, but also to demonstrate how the co-op supports the community. In addition there is a need for a strong educational component in order to enhance shopper/owner awareness to the relationship between food, the environment and their health.