

Cannabis farmers markets proposed in Colo.

By Eleazar David Melendez, Huffington Post

A Colorado entrepreneur is pushing to make buying marijuana nearly as easy as shopping for heirloom tomatoes.

Justin Hartfield, the CEO of a Denver-based website that maps and collects reviews on marijuana dispensaries, is currently shepherding an initiative that would allow “organic cannabis farmers markets” in the city of Boulder.

Colorado legalized recreational weed in 2012, and regulators at the state level are working out the rules that brick-and-mortar recreational pot shops will have to follow when they open their doors next year. Hartfield wants local officials in Boulder to push even further, allowing the creation of markets like the ones now used to haggle over white asparagus and organic lavender.

“I got news for you: Marijuana is legal in Colorado,” Hartfield, a longtime marijuana activist, said. “It’s no longer a drug in a sense. It’s a plant. It’s a commodity. There’s no reason not to allow trade in it openly.”

Marijuana remains illegal under federal law, but federal authorities have mostly allowed medical marijuana dispensaries to exist in states where the drug has been legalized for that purpose. Now that Colorado and Washington have legalized the drug for recreational use, how federal authorities will respond is unclear.

Hartfield admits his idea – first reported on by *Boulder’s Daily Camera* newspaper – is likely to be “controversial,” but says it’s nothing more than a logical extension of the movement to make pot legal. His proposal envisions plots

within agricultural areas in Boulder set up as secure spaces where cannabis growers would “showcase their products, introduce their customers to the growing operation, demonstrate their practices, and host community-oriented events that provide marketing opportunities.” From 26 to 99 vendors would be allowed.

Hartfield wants weed farmers markets to be legal in zoned agricultural areas in the city.

“It really is very similar to any other organic market,” Hartfield said. “The only difference is this plant has certain peculiarities that, say, a tomato doesn’t. Boulder has a rich history of organic markets, and Boulder is also a city in a state where cannabis is legal. It just makes sense.”