STUDENT FOOD NETWORK

A PROGRAM THAT PARTNERS WITH RESTAURANTS TO PROVIDE **$5 MEALS** FOR STUDENTS IN VANCOUVER

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December 3, 2018

SFU SEMESTER IN DIALOGUE

CITYSTUDIO

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Acknowledgements

We would like to respectfully acknowledge that this project took place on the unceded territories of the xwm θkw ý m (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and seĺílĺwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) nations.

We would to thank CityStudio instructors and staff for their invaluable guidance and support throughout the semester. We are very grateful.

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Student Food Network would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for contributing their time and expertise to make the Student Food Network possible.

Melissa Baker, Manager, Nutrition & Wellbeing, Student Housing and Hospitality Services | UBC

Sarah Carten, City of Vancouver Liaison | Vancouver Food Policy Council

Cory Dobson, Urban Planner | City of Vancouver

Julie LeBlanc, Project Management Coordinator Solid Waste Strategic Services | City of Vancouver

Hunter Moyes, Resident Chef | UBC, Founder | The Tiffin Project

Dan Traviss, Director Dining Services | SFU

Pablo Vimos, Garden Coordinator | Embark

Stephanie Yu, Climate Action Coordinator | Embark

Our vision is to build a network of restaurants that are willing and capable to serve the needs of the student market by creating $5 menu items.

The Team

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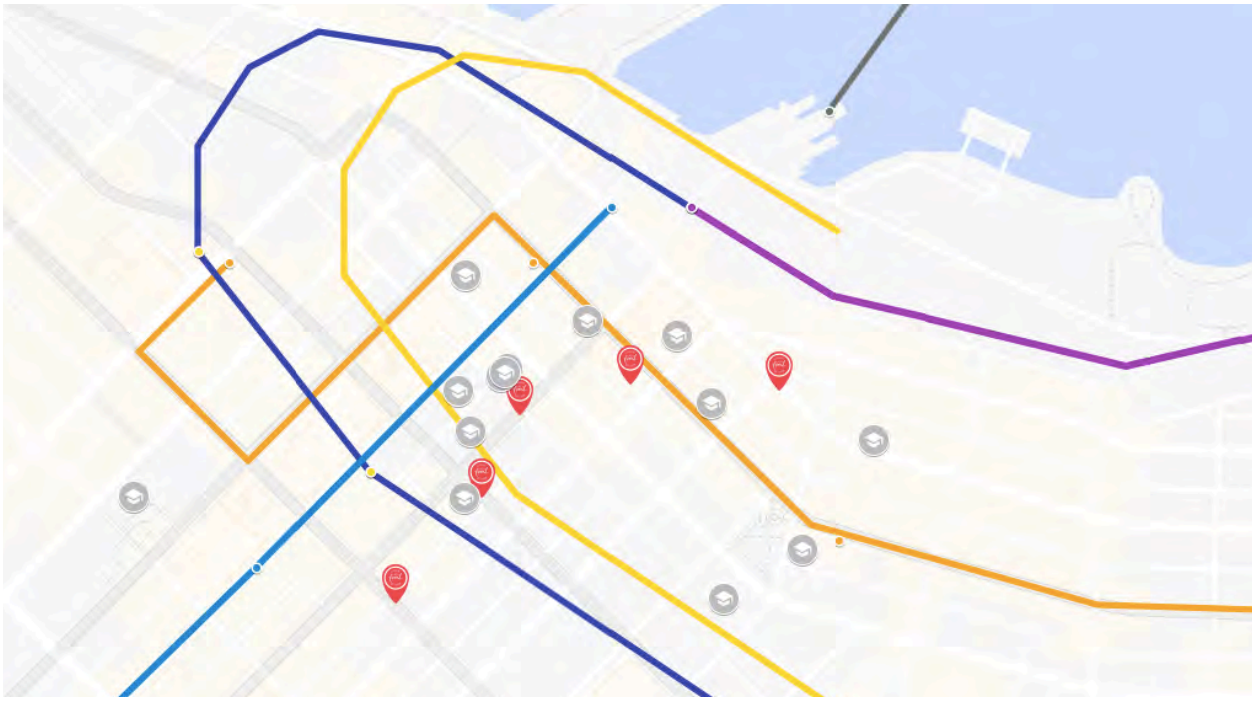
Project Summary

The Student Food Network is a response to the student need for diverse, convenient, and affordable food options in Vancouver. We conducted research on the everyday life of a student on the move and discovered that many students face food inaccessibility on a daily basis. With the rise of tuition and living costs, students have become busier and often do not have the time to prepare meals at home. For convenience, students are increasingly purchasing food while out. Yet, the cost of meals at restaurants and other food establishments are not suitable for a student budget.

Our project, the Student Food Network, has attempted to remedy this problem by connecting students with affordable meal options near major transportation lines and post-secondary institutions. The Student Food Network is a program that partners with food establishments committed to providing students with $5 meals. Our goal is to build a growing list of food establishments that are willing and able to contribute to a changing culture of food in the city.



Context

How do we know there is a real need for this work?

There is a deep need for the Vancouver Food Strategy to reflect our diverse food culture and personal experiences with food.

The Student Food Network was created to address the lack of student representation in the Vancouver Food Strategy. Under the goal to “improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents,” the strategy prioritises programs for backyard chickens, community gardens, and beekeeping. However, we, as students, do not see our needs reflected in this work. These activities are expensive, time consuming, and assume that individuals have property. While these actions fit within the mandate of promoting a sustainable food system in Vancouver, we have determined that these priority actions fail to address the diverse needs of Vancouver’s population.

Students are often faced with the decision between time and money. Although this issue is not unique to students, students have been placed in a unique position. According to Stats Canada, the cost of tuition in British Columbia has increased consecutively for the past nine years. The cost of living in Vancouver is one of the highest in Canada. Students are having to spend more time working and commuting, which leaves little time for studying and socialising. Therefore, students are choosing whether to go grocery shopping and cook their own food or spend time studying and sleeping. Buying prepared meals on campus or on their commute gives them more freedom with their time. Affordable meal options can help reduce the strain on student budgets.

The increasing trend of eating out is part of a greater cultural shift in Vancouver and Canada. According to Vancity Canada, **60% of Canadians eat out once a week**. As a whole, Canadians are eating out more and spending less time making food at home. Other places, such as Singapore, have already seen a shift away from making food at home. These countries have shown that this is a viable option for Canadians, as we become busier and there are less time to spend at home.

couver
STUDENT
food
NETWORK

The CityStudio Challenge asks students to resolve **5 key problems** while designing and executing a real project on the ground in Vancouver.

1. Staff & Strategy

Cory Dobson, Urban Planner at the City of Vancouver, provided us with insight and connections to help our project succeed. Through Cory, we were connected with **Sarah Carten**, City Liaison for the Food Policy Council. Sarah provided us with invaluable information about current food policies and remaining challenges.

We created our project as an addition to the **Vancouver Food Strategy**, which aims to build a healthy, accessible, and sustainable food system. Specifically, our project connects to Goal #3:

> "Improving access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents."

Our intention is to address the lack of student representation and engagement within municipal food policy decisions.

2. Support & Resources

We printed stickers and decals to test the potential for our project. A photographer assisted us in-kind and provided the lighting and camera equipment needed to create the photographs used on our poster and assets. See appendix B for our detailed budget.

3. On-Site in Vancouver

We identified the site for our project through research and observations. We determined that there is a need for affordable meal options around post-secondary institutions and major transportation hubs in Vancouver, therefore we prototyped the Student Food Network within the Downtown Core of Vancouver. Our digital map displays participating food establishments near student migration paths in Vancouver.

We prototyped Student Food Network on Wednesday November 14, 2018. We spoke to 15 independent off-campus restaurants within a 500m radius of the SFU harbour centre campus. With just one day of prototyping we found 5 restaurants willing and eager to participate in our project.

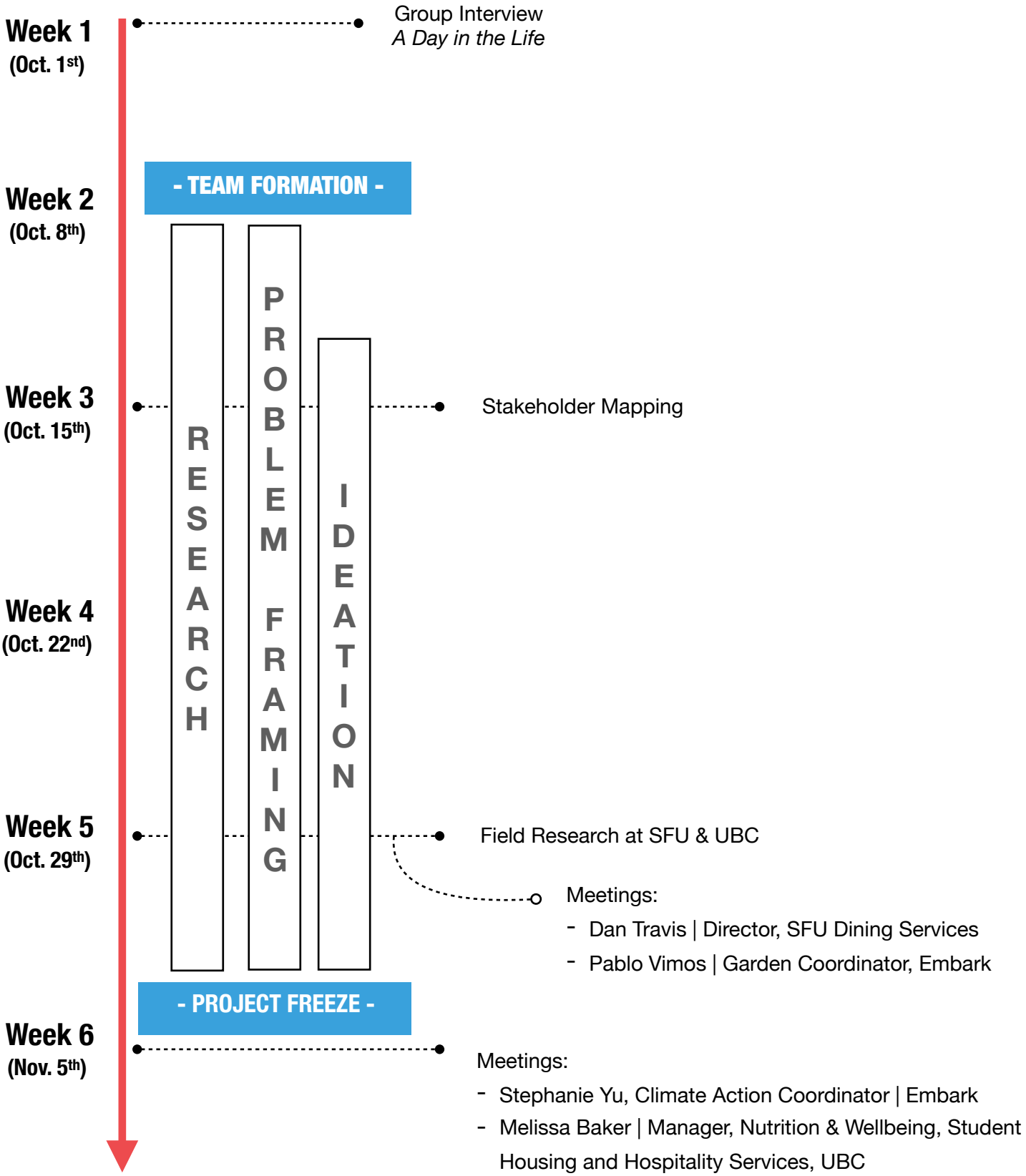
4. Stewardship & Stakeholders

Our project was met with interest by organisations and food establishments. We have created the capacity for others to contribute and expand the work of our project. The first item is an information packages for partnering food establishments, which outlines our project, a contract for participation, and a timeline of duties (see appendix D). The second item is a hand-over package for stewardship, which outlines the direction and next-steps of the project. We hope that a future partnership will fulfil the objectives of our program and build a vast network of affordable food options for students in Vancouver.

5. Multiplying Project Impact with Scalability

The Student Food Network is scalable in multiple directions. First, our project has the capacity to be scaled out. As an increasing number of food establishments partner with the Student Food Network, our project will encompass a larger number of locations in Vancouver as well as eventually moving to other cities. Second, our project has the ability to scale up by influencing food policy decisions to reflect the needs of students. Lastly, our project has the potential to scale deep by contributing to the changing culture of food in Vancouver. Our goal is to influence all three areas of scalability in order to help students thrive in Vancouver.

Timeline


Week 1
(Oct. 1st)
Group Interview
A Day in the Life
Week 2
(Oct. 8th)
- TEAM FORMATION -
RESEARCH
PROBLEM FRAMING
IDEATION
Week 3
(Oct. 15th)
Stakeholder Mapping
Week 4
(Oct. 22nd)
Week 5
(Oct. 29th)
Field Research at SFU & UBC
Meetings:
- Dan Travis | Director, SFU Dining Services
- Pablo Vimos | Garden Coordinator, Embark
- PROJECT FREEZE -
Week 6
(Nov. 5th)
Meetings:
- Stephanie Yu, Climate Action Coordinator | Embark
- Melissa Baker | Manager, Nutrition & Wellbeing, Student Housing and Hospitality Services, UBC

Week 7
(Nov. 12th)

- PROJECT REDESIGN -

Somewhere in our process we lost sight of where our project was going. We had to take a step back to remind ourselves of our project: asking restaurants to make $5 student meals.

Wednesday November 14th
Prototype Launch

1st Poster Draft

Began Stewardship Conversation with Embark

Meeting with Hunter Moyes | Chef in Residence, UBC | Founder, The Tiffin Project

PACKAGE FOR RESTAURANTS

HAND-OVER FOR STEWARD

BRANDING DEVELOPMENT

Week 8
(Nov. 19th)

2st Poster Draft

Stewardship Meeting with Pablo Vimos | Embark

Meeting with Julie LeBlanc, Project Management Coordinator | City of Vancouver

Wednesday November 21st
Presentation for Gil Kelley, General manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability | City of Vancouver

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 24TH : PROTOTYPE PHOTOSHOOT

Sunday November 25th
Final Poster Hand-In

Week 9
(Nov. 26th)

- FINAL WEEK -

Monday November 26th
Dress Rehearsal for Staff Presentation

Tuesday November 27th
Finalise Presentation Slides and Script

Wednesday November 28th
Staff Presentation

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 30TH : HUBBUB # 11

Project Barriers

Throughout the duration of our project, our group faced multiple obstacles. We entered the project feeling confident that food and the issues of food affordability and accessibility would be a relatively simple field within which we could prototype a project. It was only after we began researching and comparing our individual experiences that we realised that the scope of these issues would be one of our biggest underlying challenges.

Each member of our group had different experiences with food, resulting in different project ideas. This was our first major hurdle. Our vastly different interactions with food meant that when we started our research and problem framing we were going in different directions. This in and of itself was not an issue. Rather, the problem was that we spent far too long going in different directions and not pooling our work into a collective effort.

In terms of getting a prototype on-the-ground, the biggest barriers we faced were Vancouver Coastal Health regulations. By week 6 of our project, we were working towards implementing a container to-go program at SFU's Harbour Centre campus. We hoped to offer students a discount on their meal in exchange for ditching disposable take-out containers. The aim was that by bypassing the cost of take-out containers the restaurant would pass on that saving to the consumer.

We spoke to Melissa Baker who was involved in a similar program at UBC and we were excited to begin working on this project. We hit a huge wall when we began to reach out to Hunter Moyes, the founder of The Tiffin Project. The Tiffin Project was a reusable container initiative launched in 2012 in Vancouver. It ultimately failed because of an impasse with Vancouver Coastal Health where the VCHA would not support the project due to fears of cross-contamination. The regulatory and policy issues that prevented

The Tiffin Project from success still exist in 2018 and would have been an unrealistic hurdle for us to overcome in the short span of our project.

This set-back caused us to panic and rush into a mapping project that lost sight of our initial aim: to make eating out more affordable and accessible for students. We spent two weeks developing an illustrated map and accompanying digital map that would direct students to existing “cheap” food. Yet, as the course instructors and city staff pointed out, this project only addressed a symptom of the actual problem. Through this important feedback, we finally decided on our final project: one that addresses food affordability at the root.

Remaining Questions

We are interested as to how our project can influence the affordability of food while still addressing alternative issues that are important to students. For example, we have determined that low costs are often associated with environmental and social impacts. Therefore, we question how our project might balance these conflicting issues. We acknowledge that it is difficult to address one problem without affecting another. More research and consultation should be conducted in order to avoid infuriating a related issue.

Recommendations

Moving forward, the Student Food Network should consider the sustainability and health of food with students at the centre. We noticed that talking about student accessibility to food is often meet with judgemental comments about the laziness of today's youth. When actually speaking to students, we found that this is far from the truth. Students are facing time poverty which leads them to make choices between everyday activities like making food, seeing friends, and sleeping. Since this is not being seen by those making policies, it is not considered in the strategies. By putting students at the centre, the Student Food Network can help students access affordable food in a way that meets their needs. We hope that the narrative of the ‘lazy student’ will change to reflect students current state.

The work can continue by students asking for what they need. We discovered through our work that students often accept that they cannot change the restaurant industry: a mindset we got into as a group. Students are a huge market that spend a lot of money to eat out, and restaurants are willing to make changes to bring in the business. The Student Food Network should work as a platform to allow students to ask for what they need. The program should work closely with students through dialogue to ensure that the aims of the program are reflective of students experience and needs. We hope that the network will change and adapt as the needs of students change.

Priority Actions

We have outlined five priority action areas that will ensure the program will achieve success:

1. Use network as a way to push for student representation in city policies and strategies about food.
2. Start conversation about the time poverty being faced by students preventing them from being able to make food at home.
3. Use the network to ensure students have an array of vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options.
4. Start a container share program using metal containers with participating restaurants to reduce waste associated with take out food.
5. Move to other cities in the lower mainland to encompass the experiences of all students in these areas.

Appendix A : Media Release

FINAL FOR RELEASE

Student Food Network brings $5 meals to students.

December 1 2018

Vancouver, BC - The Student Food Network is a program that works with restaurants to give students $5 meals. This project attempts to address time poverty and food affordability for students in Vancouver.

“Many students do not have time for meal preparation. Instead, they are compromising their budgets in order to save time for other commitments,” said Kaylee Royce of SFU Semester in Dialogue at CityStudio.

Through our research, we discovered that the Vancouver Food Strategy attempts to address food sustainability and affordability, but fails to prioritise the youth perspective. Under the plan’s goal to ‘improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents,’ involves priorities to increase opportunities for backyard chickens, community gardens, and beekeeping, among others. However, we, as students, do not see ourselves reflected in this work. We do not have the time or the resources to engage in this work. We believe that the vision of these programs fails to reflect the reality of many people living and working in Vancouver, including students. There is a great quantity of resources and emphasis placed on meal preparation, but very little consideration of alternative options. Students are increasingly purchasing food out due to their busy schedules, even though it puts a strain on their financial situation.

The Student Food Network is a response to the student need for diverse food options on the go within the city. This program was initiated to assist students in finding food establishments within the city, and close to campus, participating in the program that commits to creating meals for $5. Now students can visit any of the participating restaurants and get a meal for $5. Participating restaurants can be found here. The

meals offered will vary by restaurant, meaning there is a variety of options to suit any preference or mood!

Student Food Network is a project of SFU's Semester in Dialogue at CityStudio developed in partnership with Embark.

For more information on HUBBUB and other CityStudio events and projects, please visit the CityStudio website. For information on Semester in Dialogue click here.

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About us:

SFU's Semester in Dialogue is a one-semester, full-time program designed to inspire students with a sense of civic responsibility and encourage their passion for improving society. Each semester the program offers an original, interdisciplinary experience that bridges the classroom with the community and creates space for students to reflect on what they are doing and why it matters. Students in the SFU Semester in Dialogue at CityStudio spend the entire semester working on a project directly with City Staff.

CityStudio Vancouver is an innovation hub where City staff, students, and community co-create experimental projects to make Vancouver more sustainable, liveable and joyful. CityStudio Vancouver launched in 2011 as a collaboration between the City of Vancouver and Simon Fraser University as well as University of British Columbia, Langara College, BCIT, Emily Carr University and the Native Education College. It is part of global shift in education that provides practical learning experiences to help students get jobs and change the world.

For more information, interviews or inquiries please contact
Sydney Brown | 778-552-4095

Appendix B : Budget

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST	ACTUAL COST	DONATION VALUE	NOTES
Printing: decal and stickers	$50.00	$61.60		
Food	$100.00	$126.23		
Photographer	$0.00		$1000.00	In-kind: David Simmonds
TOTAL	**$150.00**	**$187.83**	**$1000.00**	

Appendix C : References

Bouw, Brenda (2018, October 16). Eating out is the top indulgence for most Canadians. The Globe and Mail. Retrieved from https://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/personal-finance/household-finances/eating-out-at-restaurants-is-the-top-financial-indulgence-for-most-canadians/article36597841/

This article looks at the changing food culture in Canada. It shows how Canadians are spending more time and money on eating out over the part two decades. People are choosing buying pre-prepared meals over other forms of entertainment, vacations, or clothing. There is a change in how Canadian are viewing eating out; before it was seen as a frivolous expense, but now it is seen as being convenient and a way to socialize, celebrate, or reward themselves.

City of Vancouver. (2013). Vancouver Food Strategy. Retrieved from https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-food-strategy-final.PDF

The Vancouver Food Strategy presents a vision for the future of food systems in Vancouver and a set of actions and targets used to achieve specific goals. The Vancouver Food Strategy was an important resource that helped us understand current food policy and functioned to inform our project goal.

Hild, Chris (2009). The economy of local food in Vancouver. Retrieved from http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/the-economy-of-local-food-in-vancouver.pdf

Issued by Vancouver Economic Development Commission, The Economy of Local Food In Vancouver was a project undertaken to understand the current state and limitations of Metro Vancouver's food system. The report recognises consumer demand for locally produced food as Vancouver Farmers' Markets have created over "$10 million of economic activity for the local economy." Despite demand for local produce, large

distribution and wholesale companies hold a monopoly over Vancouver's supply network. This makes it difficult for local producers to supply to the service industry. In order to overcome this monopoly, the report recommends that public institutions ease regulatory barriers and start procurement initiatives in order to assist local producers.

REACH (2015). Singaporeans Mealtime Habits Revealed. Retrieved from https://www.reach.gov.sg/participate/discussion-forum/2015/08/28/singaporeans-mealtime-habits-revealed

This report looks at the food culture in Singapore and how it become the way it is. They found that people in Singapore are very busy so they have turned to buying food instead of making meals at home. People in Singapore, although are worried about losing the art of cooking, sees the change in culture as a positive move. People are able to spend more time helping their kids with their homework. As well, women are able to spend less time on domestic duties and more time on their careers. There are some concerns about the health of eating out all the time but it is seen as a positive move for society.

Tostenson, Ian & Scholefield, Samantha (2018). Metro Vancouver Restaurant Labour Shortage: Report and Recommendations. Retrieved from http://www.bcrfa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Final-Report-Labour-Shortage.pdf

This industry report from the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association (BCRFA) summarizes the labour shortage in Metro Vancouver's restaurant industry and looks to make recommendations based on their industry knowledge. Using funding from the Employment Program of BC, the BCRFA conducted research to review and identify the imbalance between existing labour pools and the demand for workers in the restaurant industry. We used this report as a source of data on Vancouver's growing restaurant industry as well as a resource to understand the barriers that restaurants may face when trying to create a $5 meal.

Appendix D : Information Package

THE STUDENT FOOD NETWORK

A PROGRAM THAT COMMITS TO CREATING $5 MEALS FOR STUDENTS IN VANCOUVER

INFORMATION PACKAGE

CHANGING THE FOOD CULTURE IN VANCOUVER

Participation in the program includes branded stickers for take out containers.

ABOUT

HOW IT WORKS

1) A food establishment partners with the Student Food Network.
2) Establishment creates a $5 meal for students.
3) Establishment uses branded decal and stickers to identify their participation in the program.
4) Students gain access to a living digital map directing them to participating food establishments.
5) Students benefit from affordable meals and food establishments benefit from exposure to a student market.

DECAL

STICKER

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: kaylee_royce@sfu.ca; 604-319-7847

ABOUT US

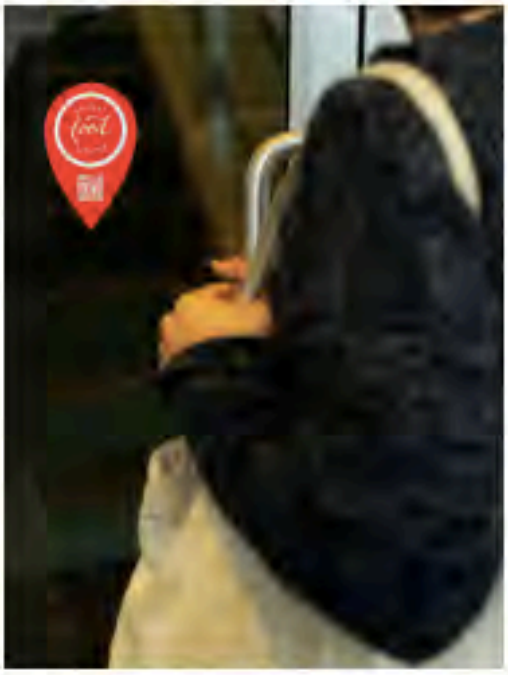
The Student Food Network is a response to the student need for diverse food options on the go within the city. We conducted research on the everyday life of a student on the move and discovered that many students face food inaccessibility on a daily basis. Student life is filled with all sorts of time commitments including classes, homework, volunteer and paid work among many other reasons.

With rising tuitions and living costs, a large number of students travel to campus without having had time to prepare meals. In order to eat, students are faced with the challenge of finding meals that are priced within their budgets. This program was initiated to assist students in finding food establishments within the city, and close to campus, participating in the program that commits to creating meals for $5.

STEWARDSHIP

The Student Food Network intends to be stewarded by Embark, an independent, student-led not-for-profit based out of Simon Fraser University Burnaby Campus that empowers the next generation of student sustainability leaders. Stewardship will be initiated by Embark in support of its goal for Food Systems Change. This involves the promotion of a nutritious and sustainable food system in order to improve students' connection to food. We anticipate that this partnership will fulfil the objectives of our program and build a vast network of affordable options for students in Vancouver.

INFO



Participation in the program includes branded decals for store fronts.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN RESTAURANT AND THE STUDENT FOOD NETWORK

This is a memorandum of understanding between [restaurant] and Student Food Network concerning the addition of [restaurant] to the Student Food Network.

The Student Food Network is committed to bringing affordable meals to on the go students. With increasing costs of living students are having to work and commute more which leaves students without time to make food. Students are a big market that are often not considered when making decisions. The network bring students and food establishments together to create a mutually beneficial program. Both parties recognize the value of creating this unique network to bring students affordable meals.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT FOOD NETWORK

1) The Student Food Network agrees to add [restaurant] to their map and network that advertises their restaurant to students.
2) The restaurant will be supplied with one decal for the entrance and provided with the graphic design files to advertise for the $5 meals.
3) Help advise [restaurant] on what is an appropriate option.

With rising tuitions and living costs, a large number of students travel to campus without having had time to prepare meals. In order to eat, students are faced with the challenge of finding meals that are priced within their budgets. This program was initiated to assist students in finding food establishments within the city and close to campus, participating in the program that commits to creating meals for $5.

THE ROLE OF THE RESTAURANT

4) [Restaurant] agrees to offer students a $5 meal, not including tax.

5) Work with the Student Food Network to offer a $5 meal that is filling and nutritious.

6) Student shall be defined as any person currently enrolled in any post-secondary institution in the City of Vancouver. [Restaurant] has the right to ask students for verification they are a student.

TERMINATION OF INVOLVEMENT

7) If [Restaurant] wants to terminate involvement with Student Food Network, the Student Food Network requires 30 days written notice and during this period they will continue to sell the $5 meal option. After the 30 days [Restaurant] will be taken off all documents advertising their involvement. [Restaurant] agrees to stop advertising their involvement in the program.

8) Discontinuing $5 student meals will be considered termination in the program and the restaurant must end advertising their involvement in the Student Food Network. Restaurants can be reinstated in the program at the discretion of the Student Food Network.

9) In the event of matters not covered by this letter or disputes, both parties will keep in mind the larger purpose of the undertaking and work for fair and amicable resolution of any problems as partners in promoting an inclusive and affordable food landscape for students and youth in Vancouver.

TIMELINE

Week 1: Submit application to participate in the Student Food Network.

Week 2: Ideate a $5 meal option for students, preferably consisting of a carbohydrate, protein, and vegetable.

Week 3: Implement a $5 meal option for students and receive Student Food Network stickers and decal.

Week 4: Food establishment location will be placed on the Student Food Network digital map and will gain access to a student market.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: kaylee_royce@sfu.ca ; 604-319-7847

Appendix F : Poster