SFU undergraduate semester in dialogue

Planning a Food-Secure Future

Recommendations for Vancouver's New City Market • July 2009

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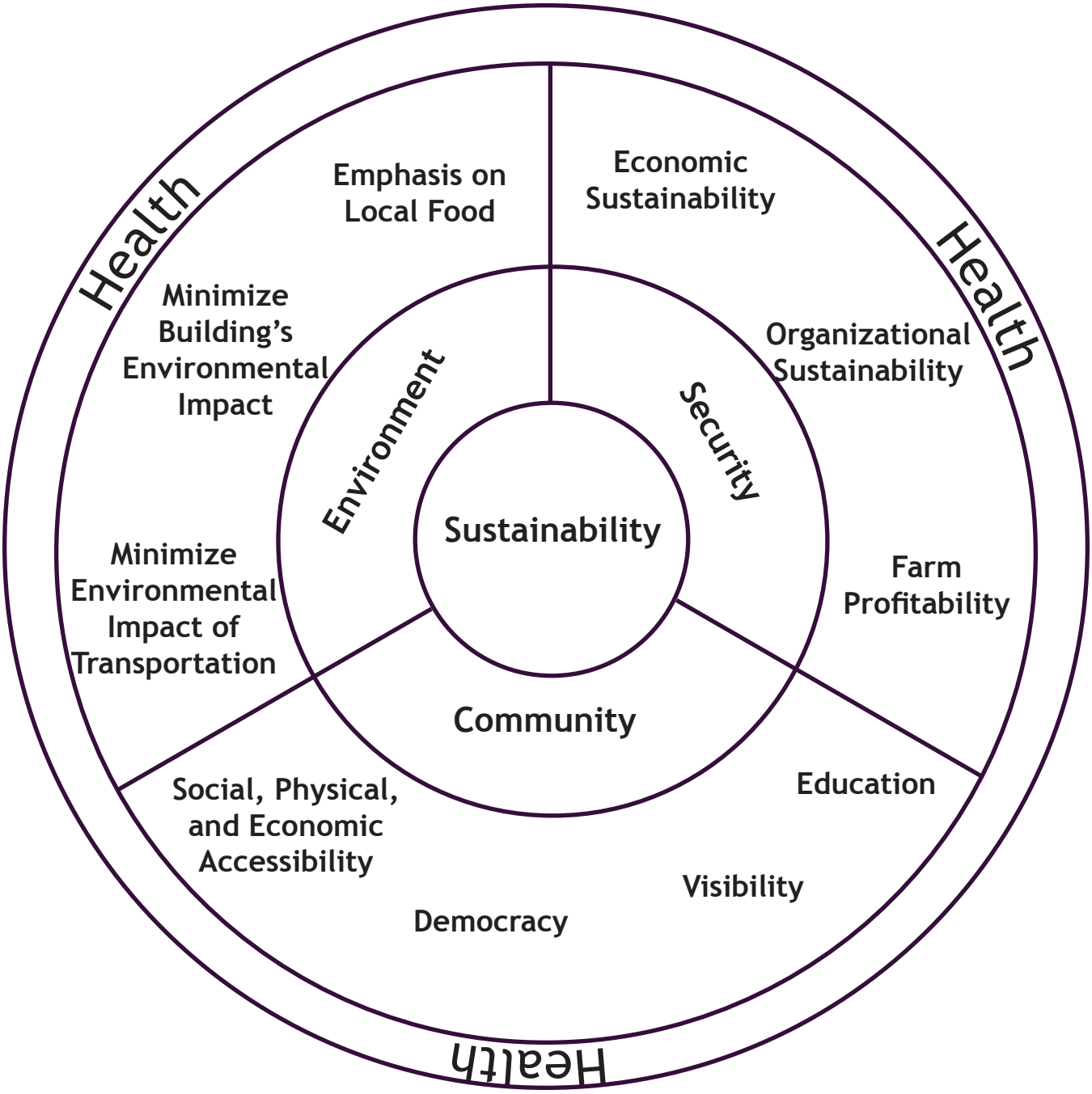
Overarching Values



Overview of Project & Community Partners

By Herb Barbolet

Food activists have put in decades of work and discussion looking for ways to re-form the globalized industrial food system. Local Food First (along with many, many others) decided that the food system needs to be more localized and the best way to do that is to establish Food Hubs and Food Precincts. The Vancouver Food Policy Council agrees.

As envisioned a Food Hub, named the "New City Market" will replace the former market near False Creek that opened in the 1900s, and will be a multipurpose building including:

• Permanent indoor / outdoor year-round farmers market for wholesale
and retail,
• Distribution centre with cold storage and freezer units to consolidate sellers' products
• Processing centre or incubator kitchen
• Office space for community organizations (and professional organizations, such as the food technologists, networks such as Green Table Network, etc.)
• Meeting and conference rooms
• Research and Development lab or be associated with one
• Local Food System research, planning and implementation
• Support centre for local food precincts.

The Food Hub would also be a service centre for a number of 'Food Precincts' in neighbourhoods. Food Precincts could be in every neighbourhood or Community. They would be centered in a community centre, neighbourhood house or school. Food Precincts would help residents access food and information and provide for their collective food security through:

• Growing food (i.e. community gardens, edible landscapes, green rooftops etc.)
• Mini-farmers markets
• Food buyers clubs
• Skills education, training, processing, handling, and cooking of food, etc.

These precincts would be a growing media for public participation, empowerment and democracy. The Food Hub and Precinct work will build on the research of UNBC's, The 'Good Food' Value Chain: Building Capacity of Local Food Systems in British Columbia. http://www.unbc.ca/planning/localfood/

Local Food First (LFF) is a Non-Profit Coalition that has been in operation for over a year. Local Food First's mandate is to support market transformation of the BC food sector by providing research, information, networking and technical assistance services to organizations, businesses, and individuals across the local food value chain. Built of a coalition of some of the strongest actors in the local food market, with representation from non-profits, farmers markets, farmers, distributors, grocers and academia, LFF has the asset of having both a deep pool of knowledge and experience, as well as connections throughout the local food value chain. Over the past year, LFF created an economic landscape report of the lower mainland's food sector, and conducted several informative and high profile events such as; Meet Your Maker, BC's first local food focused farmer/chef connection event, and the first Local Tomato Processing Value Chain Workshop, which resulted in the formation of a new local tomato processing facility.

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Participating Organizations

- Alexander Inks
- BC Cooperative Association
- Biovia
- Centre for Community Enterprise
- Centre for Sustainable Community Development, SFU
- Emdoubleyu Design
- FarmFolk/CityFolk
- Fraser Health
- Green Table Network
- Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Food
- Department of Sociology and Anthropology, SFU
- SPUD – Small Potato Urban Delivery
- Vancouver Farmers Markets Society

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Introduction

As a result of heightened awareness surrounding global issues of climate change and peak oil, along with threats to our local agricultural system, demand for local food is increasing in Vancouver and surrounding Lower Mainland. In response to these growing concerns regarding Food Security, the *Vancouver Food Policy Council* and *Local Food First* conceived of a local Food Hub, and additional Local Food Precincts. The Hub would serve as a central location for local food producers and consumers to meet, with the aim of increasing local food distribution and consumption in the Lower Mainland.

In the summer of 2009, the Centre for Dialogue at Simon Fraser University focused on the concepts of leadership, action and sustainable development, with the theme of "food" as the starting point. We, the students, engaged in a collaborative project with the aforementioned organizations to research the viability of the proposed Food Hub model. We began the research process by identifying a set of over-arching objectives that the prospective Hub would ideally fulfill. Sustainability was central to this vision, particularly in terms of environment, community and local economy. Radiating from this core value were the concepts of increased local food distribution, increased farm profitability, education, and physical, social and economic accessibility.

The research was divided into five areas of inquiry:

- Producer Market Analysis
- Culture and Ethnic Inclusivity
- Wholesale Models
- Cooperative Models
- Design and Communication

This report serves as a summary of our findings.

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Executive Summary

A market analysis of producers is essential to the establishment of the most crucial links in a Food Hub model: that between the Hub and local food producers. A successful producer-hub relationship is essential to the viability and financial sustainability of the Hub. In addition, a clear understanding of the challenges faced by local producers will allow the Hub to be designed in a way that serves their needs, thus creating a strong incentive for producer participation.

Interviews were conducted with Forty BC-based farmers in order to gain a clear understanding of challenges they are facing. Interviewees were carefully chosen to reflect the diversity of producers in BC. They included produce farmers-with farms from 3 acres to as large as 800 acres; as well as dairy, meat, fish, poultry, eggs and processed food producers.

Based on research, we suggest that the Hub include the following elements: a large year-round market, a processing facility, a coordinated transportation system, and a forum for better information and resource sharing. A model that includes these elements will allow for a consistent supply of food to the Hub, and a subsequent increase in local food consumption within the Lower Mainland.

While paying close attention to Cultural diversity and inclusion; Governance would best be carried out using an Integrated model- a combination of cooperative and a non-profit organization. This model presents an exciting opportunity to not only increase local food consumption within the Lower Mainland but additinoally address the current gaps in the local food system, provide educational opportunities, further encourage cultural diversity and inclusion while maximizing wholesale purchasing power.

The creation of the *New City Market* Food Hub will address many challenges, change the status quo, fill a large gap in local food accessibility and become a leading example of food security and sustainability.

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Producers
Who are they and what are their needs?

By Billie Dobbs, Kate Lasiuk, Eric Malysa & Paola Qualizza

Rationale

A market analysis of producers is essential to the establishment of a crucial link necessary in a Food Hub model: that between the Hub and local food producers. A successful producer-Hub relationship will create a viable and financial sustainability Food Hub. Such economic sustainability will allow the Hub to meet many of the objectives outlined earlier in the report. In addition, a clear understanding of the challenges faced by local producers will allow the Hub to serve their needs, thus creating a strong incentive for their participation.

A producer analysis is also vital to a greater understanding of the way the local food system currently operates. The information will aid in the creation of a Food Hub model that fills current gaps in the local food supply chain, allowing for a consistent supply of food to the Hub and a subsequent increase in local food consumption in Metro Vancouver.

Methods

Information was gathered through 40 interviews with BC-based food producers, which provided an understanding of challenges and opportunities in the local food system. The interviewees were carefully chosen in order to reflect the diversity of producers in BC. They included produce farmers with farms from 3 to 800 acres in size as well as dairy, meat and fish, poultry and eggs and processed food producers.

Sixteen farmers market participants were interviewed at their stands at the East Vancouver (Trout Lake) Farmers Market on June 27th 2009. Due to the bustling environment of the farmers market questions were succinct, serving mainly as a source for quantitative information.

Additionally, many producers were contacted by phone. This allowed for longer, more in-depth conversations that gave a well-rounded picture of the producers' current operations, as well as thoughts on what their business might look like in an ideal world. Phone interviews also allowed

for contact with producers located outside of the Lower Mainland.

In order to ensure a greater level of variety within our sample, we interviewed six producers who did not participate in farmers markets. The majority of these farmers relied on farm gate sales to distribute their product.

Other primary research included communication with local agronomists and a variety of other participants in BC's local food movement.

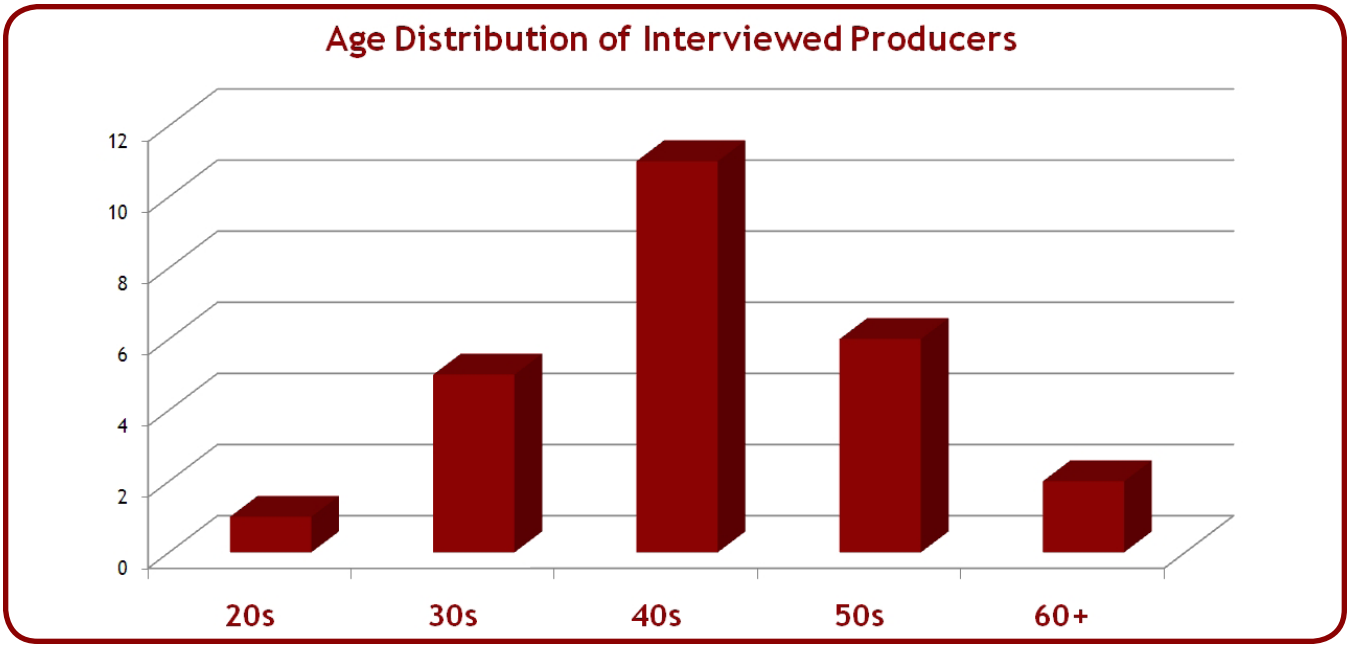
Producer Profile

After conducting interviews with local food producers, it became clear that a Hub would best serve producers that fit within a particular demographic: small- to medium-scale producers that operate within or near to the Fraser Valley. Knowledge of this typical producer demographic will assist the Hub in both targeting and accommodating appropriate producers.

Most producers that expressed interest in participating in a Hub ran small- and medium-sized operations. Land-based producers, such as farmers and ranchers, had farms that averaged 78 acres in size. This number is substantially smaller than the provincial average of 310 acres of farming land (Statistics Canada, 2001). Seafood and processed food producers interested in a Hub also work on a relatively small scale meaning they generally do not sell their products to wholesale distributors, and instead sell directly to stores or from their homes, farmers markets or boats.

The Fraser Valley contains some of the most productive agricultural land in BC (Fraser Basin Council, 2000). Three quarters of all producers interviewed were located within this region, and collectively showed the most interest in supplying a Food Hub located in Vancouver. Some fruit producers from the Okanagan-Similkameen region also expressed interest in supplying product to the Hub. Producers located outside of these regions expressed the least interest in participating in a Hub, which suggests that the majority of Hub supplying producers will be located within or relatively near to the Fraser Valley. The majority of interviewees were located within Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Another predominant characteristic of the producers interviewed was their age: most were in their late 40's and 50's. Alarmingly, less than one fifth of producers had plans for the succession of their business past retirement. There was, however, a



small cohort of farmers in their late 20's and 30's. These young farmers proved to be particularly enthusiastic about a Food Hub.

As illustrated by the graph above, this bell-shaped distribution which is slightly skewed to the right, indicates an aging food producing population.

The fact that most potential Hub producers operate on a small and local scale supports many of the Hub objectives that were defined in the introduction of this report, such as: minimizing environmental impact by reducing kilometres traveled, increasing access to local food, reinvigorating local economies and increasing community connections within the region. By engaging a new generation of farmers, the Hub could also achieve its objective of increasing food security, allowing for the provision of fresh, local food for future generations.

Large-Scale Producers & The Hub

It should be noted that while small-scale farmers showed most interest in a Hub, some of the larger-scale producers that were interviewed also expressed interest in the project. Many of these producers sell their product outside the province or country, but said they would consider selling some product through a Hub if the project could meet their transportation needs. This will be discussed further in the transportation section.

of the report.

It will be by engaging these larger scale producers that we can make a substantial difference in the amount of locally-produced food consumed within the region.

Gaps in the Local Food System

Four common themes were apparent across all interview responses and represent gaps in the current local food system. They are:

- the need for a higher-capacity year round market
- a lack of processing facilities
- the need for better and more transportation
- a lack of information and resource sharing

These issues will form the basis of the rest of our analysis, and will now be addressed in detail.

Year-Round Market

Many producers reported that access to a year-round market was necessary in order to increase local food production throughout the year. Beyond the obvious seasonality of some crops, most producers reported a number of other barriers to year-round production. These included insufficient winter markets, labour shortages, and inadequate access to information on growing.

Three quarters of the producers interviewed currently sell product all year, either at a winter farmers market, at their farm gate or through some arrangement with a local retailer. Many reported the ability to sell more product throughout the year if the above barriers were addressed. Of the remaining interviews, ten percent of producers that did not sell any product outside of the summer season reported that they could produce throughout the year providing the reduction of the following barriers.

Insufficient Winter Markets

Most producers reported that the current winter farmers market at Wise Hall in Vancouver is inadequate. They stated that there is insufficient capacity for all interested producers to participate. Additionally, the facility itself is too small to accommodate the number of consumers the market draws. Similar deficiencies were reported regarding other winter markets, such as the one in White Rock.

Without access to a consistently profitable winter market, producers lack an incentive to extend their production into the winter season. In addition, a lack of processing facilities currently available to farmers market participants to preserve raw goods limits the types of produce grown and the amount of local food that is available year-round.

Off-Season Labour Shortages

Many producers reported labour shortages for agricultural work during the winter months. It is often difficult for them to find adequate assistance in what is typically considered the off-season.

Furthermore, some producers did not sell year-round because they believed it was not worth their effort. This is particularly true for those producers who are nearing retirement or part-time farmers that do other work during the off-season, both of which are unable to seek and manage employees in the winter months. Such labour shortages limit the ability of producers to extend their operations into the winter months.

Lack of Information

Finally, information on the types of produce and growing practices to supply a year-round market is not readily available to all producers. This lack of information means that producers are unwilling to take the risks involved in diversifying their production, which limits the ability of producers to extend their productive capacity into the cold season.

Analysis

The inadequacies of current winter markets can be addressed by a centrally located local food distribution centre or Hub. A Hub can provide a large, accessible and fully equipped year-round market, including processing and storage facilities in order to increase producers' accessibility to year round markets. This type of centre could also serve to link producers with labourers to help alleviate labour shortages. Finally, a Hub can serve as a forum for information sharing for producers who are interested in diversifying their production to supply a year-round market.

Processing

Food processing involves preserving food by cooking, pickling, canning, freezing, drying and grinding. Fruits and vegetables are most frequently preserved as jams,

soups, frozen fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, and other prepared foods. For meat products, processing involves slaughtering and butchering, as well as making sausages, deli meats, and other meat products.

Access to processing facilities is necessary for producers to preserve their perishable goods. This prolongs their selling season and makes seasonal fruits and vegetables available for consumption all year round.

Lack of Facilities

Producers reported a lack of adequate processing facilities in British Columbia. Some interviewees processed food in their own home, which was often challenging, since kitchen certification by a health and safety regulatory authority is necessary in order for the producer to sell their goods to the public. Some producers rent kitchens, but the cost of this is prohibitive to many smaller-scale businesses. These barriers also limit producers' ability to preserve their perishable goods to sell during the winter season. Thus, barriers relating to processing facilities negatively impact the amount of local food available to British Columbians throughout the year.

Cattle producers identified a lack of local slaughtering facilities as well as a limited number of local skilled butchers as having a negative impact on their ability to keep their product local. Many reported having to transport their cattle to Alberta for processing, which raised their input costs, thereby increasing the price they need to charge consumers. Poultry and other meat producers reported a similar lack of access to provincially regulated abattoirs, in addition to a shortage of skilled local butchers.

Other producers reported that they did not process their goods at all because they did not produce enough or the right kinds of food for processing. Still others reported not having the necessary storage capability.

Analysis

The current lack of accessible processing facilities inhibits many local food producers from reaching their full productive capacity. Producers will not maximize or diversify their production if they risk losing part of their yield because they cannot preserve it in time.

A Food Hub can address this issue by providing an on-site industrial kitchen for processing perishable food, as well as

cold and dry storage space. An affordable and scale appropriate processing facility within the Hub would reduce the amount of local food waste, while allowing producers to increase and/or diversify their output. This could result in an increase in the consumption of locally-produced food in Metro Vancouver throughout the year.

The proposed Hub may not be able to supply primary meat processing (slaughtering, butchering, etc.) but could be a source of information and advocacy promoting more local services.

Transportation

Approximately 80% of interviewed producers manage their own transportation for food distribution. We found the method of transportation correlated with the volume of produce or goods being produced. Small- and medium-sized producers reported using their own trucks to transport their goods. High-volume producers tended to outsource their transportation to distributors and wholesalers who arranged to pick up goods directly on-site. Many others chose to avoid transportation altogether by relying on farm gate sales for the sale of their products.

Transportation is an integral issue for producers for many reasons. Among the concerns that we heard, the most common were:

- Time constraints
- Cost
- Distance travelled
- Weather conditions

The time commitment required for producers to load their trucks, drive to market in city traffic, unload their goods for display, reload their remaining goods and once again fight traffic on the way home poses a very large burden on their already busy schedules. For less established producers, cost of transportation was reported as having a detrimental effect on their ability to distribute goods, and their bottom line. For other farmers travelling from areas such as the BC interior, distance and weather conditions topped their list of concerns.

Analysis

Producers from all industries reported that transportation is a considerable barrier to their ability to reach local markets. One concept rang true: producers are not in the business of transporting goods, they are in the business of producing them. Given

how much time and energy is occupied by farming, there is normally very little time or money remaining to spend on arranging for transportation. Additionally, rising oil prices render the current transportation system increasingly expensive and unsustainable.

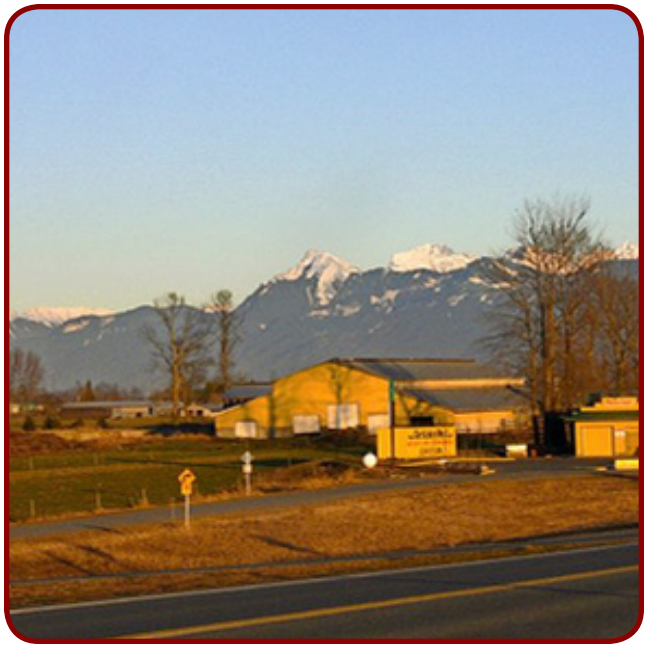
A Food Hub can address these issues by providing a centralized transportation system to local food producers. This will allow small and medium-scale farmers to focus on maximizing their production. A centralized transportation system will also allow the Hub to capture some of the product generated from large-scale producers, who said they would be happy to supply a Hub with their produce if pick-up of goods was provided. A centralized transportation system would also reduce the environmental impact of food distribution. All of these elements would allow for increased distribution and availability of local food in Metro Vancouver.

Information & Resource Sharing

The transfer of knowledge through generations of farming families has formed the cornerstone of farming practice education. While this system has been successful throughout history, many of the producers interviewed reported that currently there is a lack of information sharing within the local farming community. The lack of accessible information poses a particular problem to new farmers who face a considerable knowledge deficit when they begin farming.

One example of the need for better information sharing was found at the Yellow Barn grocery store in Yarrow, BC. Throughout her farming career and into semi-retirement, the owner serves as an informal hub of information. She provides local suppliers and producers with insights into what the market was demanding, what species of plants grew best in which conditions, and

The Yellow Barn, Yarrow, B.C.



how pests and diseases could be mitigated. Soon this lady will be fully retired and no longer able to serve her community in the same way.

Analysis

Many of the interviewed producers expressed a desire for a formalized means to share information with other farmers. Furthermore, many producers were unsatisfied with current farming-related magazines and newsletters. Producers indicated that a formal information sharing system would help many local food producers, particularly individuals just starting a career on the farm.

It was reported that educational programs could also improve the quality and quantity of farm products being produced, while teaching farmers valuable business skills to help maximize the efficiency of their practices.

Lastly, it was suggested that advocacy for producers presented another gap in local farming communities. Our research shows that there is a lack of a unified voice to bring to light certain issues, such as regulatory barriers, processing deficiencies and other shared concerns.

Providing a forum for information and resource sharing would fulfill the Hub's mandate of promoting community involvement. The Hub could provide a space for producers to meet, in person or online, to share ideas and engage in dialogue surrounding the issues that they face. The Hub could also serve as a forum for the creation of a magazine or newsletter to bridge current information gaps for farmers.

Recommendations

Throughout our interviews, respondents consistently identified some or all of the four aforementioned areas of difficulty. The Food Hub presents an exciting opportunity to address many of these challenges. Based on our research, we suggest that the Hub include the following elements:

- **Large Year-Round Local Food Market**

The year-round market at the Hub could successfully address the inadequate scale of current winter farmers markets. It could also serve as a forum for producers who are seeking off-season labourers, and as a space for information sharing regarding year-round production.

- **Processing Facility**

An accessible and user-friendly processing facility would encourage local farmers to produce larger amounts and appropriate kinds of goods for processing. This would increase the amount of local food available in Metro Vancouver throughout the year.

- **Coordinated Transportation System**

A coordinated transportation system provided by the Hub would alleviate the current transportation challenges faced by many local producers. It would allow smaller-scale farmers to concentrate more on production, thus maximizing the output of local food in the Lower Mainland.

- **Forum for Information and Resource Sharing**

The Hub should serve as an in-person or online information sharing centre for local producers. This will be particularly useful for the new generation of farmers. It could also serve as a forum for farmer advocacy, as well as the production of newsletters and other publications.

Areas for Further Research

Though our research did highlight several barriers for producers and opportunities for the Food Hub, more information is needed for a fuller understanding of how to incorporate local producers into a fully functioning, local food Hub. To that end, values for actual productive output as well as projected output, given the elimination of barriers, need to be determined. A successful Food Hub will also require accurate information regarding reliable availability of seasonal produce in sufficient quantities. Therefore, an analysis of the amount and time of year that particular produce is available is also necessary. In addition, further research on retail models is required for not only successful delivery of product to consumers, but also to ensure fair profits for the producers.

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Bringing Culture Into the Conversation

By Stephanie Porowski, Caitlin Hawkes-Frost, Azmina Kassam & Oksana Kim

Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Environment within a Vancouver Food Hub

In the wake of an evolving social movement towards local food and increasing concern for sustainability, a food hub in Vancouver presents an exciting opportunity to combine elements of a farmer's market, wholesaler, public education and social organizing around local food systems. In Vancouver's multicultural and ethnically diverse setting, it is important to foster an inclusive environment, welcoming and accessible to all, within the food hub. It was this objective that guided the research and following report.

Why Does Vancouver Need a Food Hub?

The city of Vancouver contains a wide variety of cultural and ethnic-based communities, many with their own functioning food systems. Chinatown, located in the downtown core, and the Punjab Market, situated on South Main Street, are prime examples of these well-developed systems. While independent, ethnic and culturally-based food systems contribute to the unique and valuable diversity of Vancouver, they also indicate a degree of division within the wider food system. For a variety of reasons, some ethnic groups may opt to shop and eat predominantly within their own food communities, helping to perpetuate ethnic and cultural divides within Vancouver's larger food system.

In equal measures, Vancouver's "local food movement," most visibly present in farmer's markets and similar initiatives, has displayed its own divisions along ethnic and cultural lines. Thus far, the "local food movement" has been predominantly caucasian, dominated by certain ethnic and cultural groups. There is a desire for growth in this area. Looking to the future and the creation of a local food hub in Vancouver, an opportunity exists to explore the challenges and possibilities present within existing cultural and ethnic food systems.

The words “culture” and “ethnic” presented a struggle within themselves: What do they mean? How can those words be used sensitively, without assumptions? These questions resulted in many differetn answers, but what became clear was the need for a Food Hub that would ensure opportunities for participation for ALL who are passionate about local food and community. Utilizing the existing wealth of knowledge, the food hub presents a unique opportunity to create an inclusive and diverse environment. Further this project provides a lens through which to examine the role and impact of culture and ethnicity within the local food movement

Methods & Approach

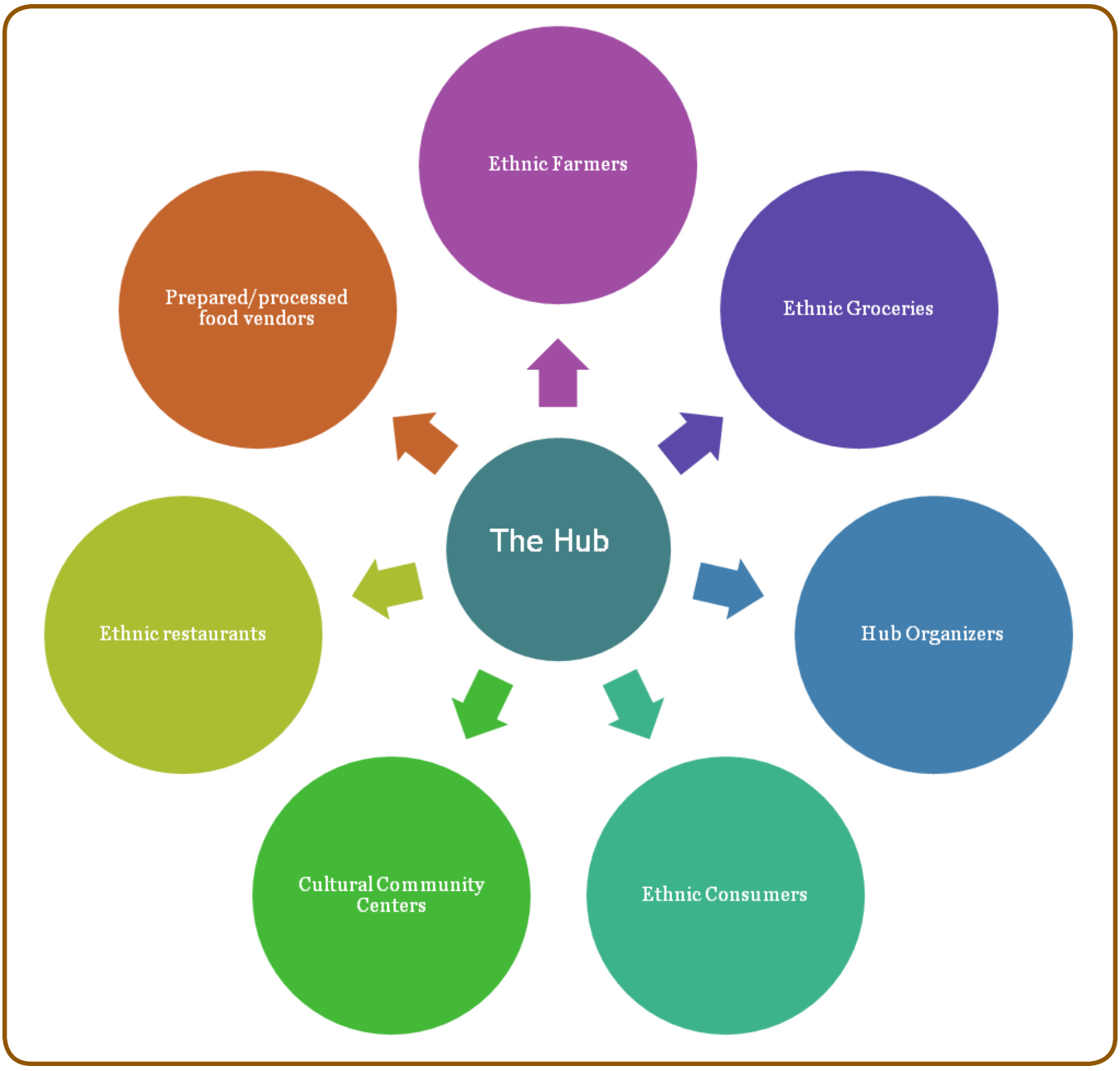
The research informing this report focused on the needs, experiences and perceived obstacles of identified food hub stakeholders in order to understand how to promote ethnic inclusivity and cross-cultural communication within the proposed food hub.

Ten interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholder groups, including ethnic grocers, restaurateurs, food processors, farmers, local artisans, community members, local food organizers as well as coordinators from existing food retail and distribution models in Canada. Interviews primarily focused on the dynamics of producing, selling, consuming and promoting local food in the context of Vancouver’s culturally diverse community, and in the wake of increasing demand for ethnic foods. In addition, interviews with coordinators of existing food distribution models focused on organizational structure, governance and best practices around cultural inclusivity.

In the context of this report, an “inclusive” environment is defined as one that is diverse, accessible and welcoming to all cultures and ethnicities. When considering what the essential components a broadly inclusive food environment would be, four areas of focus were identified:

- Food vendors and producers
- Food consumers
- The food itself
- The hub’s organizers and organizational structure

In all four of these areas, the hub should strive to eliminate existing barriers and to create viable opportunities for participation from all who are passionate about local food. These four components



Stakeholder Map

are utilized within this report as the evaluative criteria for examining existing food distribution models in Canada. Further, these four elements help to shape the recommendations for the proposed food hub and provide the framework for an "ideal model" of inclusivity, informed by information collected from stakeholder

interviews and best practices in Canada.

Best Practices: Three Exisiting Canadian Food Distribution Models

In addition to local viewpoints and opinions, we sought real world examples of the efforts being made by food distribution centers around the world. We focused on Canada's existing practices to facilitate the adoption or adaptation of our best and brightest's ideas in creating a diverse, welcoming and vibrant hub in Vancouver.

The Stop Community Food Centre in Toronto, Ontario seeks to increase the access of low-income, homeless or marginally housed and isolated community members in a manner that maintains dignity, builds hope and challenges inequality. In 2008 an annual revenue of $1.2 million dollars, accrued from individuals, organizations, foundations, corporations, special events, donated food and government funding served an 8 km^2 area of Toronto's downtown. Part of how they accomplish this is involving community members at every level of the organization, from front-line volunteers to advisory committee members to gardeners and cooks. This inclusion of the wider community is imperative to the success of The Stop and a valuable lesson to bring to Vancouver.

Granville Island Public Market

Closer to home, Granville Island Public Market houses a mix of day vendors and direct sale markets that offer foods from every corner of the globe. Interestingly, there has never been a concerted effort to include an ethnic or cultural element within the market. The multi-cultural nature of the vendors and foodstuff is purely reflective of the applicants and is constantly made available to passers-by. It is important to note that while The Stop combines emergency food relief and community programs, Granville Island remains largely prohibitive to the participation of lower income groups. There is potential to combine elements of both models to create a socially and economically viable Hub in Vancouver.

The Halifax Farmers Market is the oldest of its kind in Canada and sees itself as a "forum for all who share the love of local food and community". There is a recognition of Canada as a destination for immigration and that an often over-looked aspect of settlement in new areas is where and how to find good fresh local food. To facilitate this, the market employs a Community Cultural Connector, an individual who works with organizations from government and ethnic groups to determine the food requirements of all cultural communities in Nova Scotia. There is great potential in Vancouver to learn from this pro-active stance.

The "Status Quo": Current Gaps, Challenges, and Opportunities in Vancouver's Multiple Food Systems

Interviews with stakeholders revealed a variety of themes surrounding ethnic diversity and inclusivity. Significant issues that emerged included gaps in the current food system, challenges for participation and opportunities for change and growth. An understanding of the "status quo" informs recommendations for change and the adoption of new ideas in fostering an inclusive environment.

Farmers

A significant challenge for many farmers is breaking into Vancouver's wider community and the larger potential customer base that comes with it. Not surprisingly, profit was the overarching theme that emerged from most interviews with farmers. Everyone likes the idea "from farm to table", but not all consumers are ready to pay farmers enough for their products. If there is demand for product and enough return, most interviewees would love to expand

their businesses and potentially supply their goods to a Food Hub.

Food Processors

Another potential component of a food hub could be the inclusion of prepared foods, such as homemade samosas, jamaican patties or perogies. There is a growing market and increasing opportunity for small and medium sized food processors to develop their products using local ingredients. According to a prominent local restauranteur, there are not enough food processors to meet current demands in Vancouver. This evidence was further supported by three interviews with small-scale processors, who expressed great interest in developing their businesses and saw the hub as a potential place from which they could access a larger market and offer their goods to consumers at reasonable prices.

Aruna Sidpura, a small-scale processor of Indian cuisine

A major challenge for many small-scale food processors is gaining appropriate certification. The rules and regulations surrounding food preparation are rigorous and can be costly and difficult to navigate, particularly for those with limited English language skills. Varying expectations and experiences regarding food safety regulations may present an additional barrier to certification and participation. High rents and health inspection costs mean high volumes must be produced to warrant required outlays of capital, which new businesses usually lack. This situation has resulted in a lack of public access to locally produced and processed goods.

Restaurants

Vancouver's restaurant industry has taken a leading role in the sustainable food movement, from "local ingredient" designations on menus to the Green Table Network, a program that helps restaurants achieve goals such as increasing the use

of local products and services. Some of the interviews we conducted highlighted crusaders in our midst and others shed light on how to address the 'ethnic versus local' debate.

An example of a local crusader is the owner of an Afghan restaurant in Vancouver that serves wholesome ethnic food made predominantly from organic and local ingredients. According to the owner, the mission for the restaurant has been founded on the following principles:

• Relationships: Support local farmers by buying their produce, meats and available goods.
• Social Business Model: Provide employment to immigrant Afghan women who have language and cultural barriers, and provide them with a fair and consistent wage, bringing dignity, a sense of empowerment and equality to this otherwise invisible group.
• Support: The restaurant holds an ongoing fundraising buffet once a week where a third of the proceeds go to support organizations such as "Children of War" and "Global Peace."

The Head Chef and proprietor of a local Indian-fusion restaurant claims that he owes much of the evolution of his restaurant to the foods that are available in BC. With the mantra that "everything is adaptable," he maintains that local food is not hard to find if one has adequate time and interest. He further suggests a shift in expectations is required for the local food movement to maintain and/or gain momentum. People cannot move to a new place and expect to find all the same foods as where they came from. With the sentiment that all ethnic food is just local food to whatever place it originated, the need for adaptability was driven home.

Grocers

Interviews with local grocers specializing in ethnic and specialty food items revealed a variety of opportunities and challenges. Two grocers emphasized the increasing demand for local foodstuffs in Vancouver, including fruits, vegetables, meats and prepared foods, but noted the short growing season as an obstacle to providing these products in their stores. Both grocers also noted the lack of locally produced and processed foods, suggesting that most 'locally produced' food items utilized imported ingredients and that the

A Jacket produced by a Vancouver-based aboriginal designer

grocers themselves relied heavily on imports in order to offer ethnically diverse food items. A potential opportunity to arise from these interviews is the desire for grocers to have access to wholesale, prepared foods, made locally and with local ingredients. Further, a final lesson imparted from these merchants was the need for any food businesses or distribution models in Vancouver to diversify their products to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse population, the danger being that focus on one region's cuisine risks alienating customers that hale from other parts of the world.

Artisans

A discussion with a local Aboriginal designer revealed a growing group of highly creative Aboriginal artists and food producers in need of better representation, visibility and engagement within Vancouver's wider community. These artisans produce a wide variety of goods, everything from clothing and jewelry to smoked salmon and berries. However, there is currently a gap in the market place for collectively showcasing these creative products, with artisans and food producers hidden from the public eye due to lack of funding, proper organization and lack of accessibility.

Broad Recommendations for a Vibrant and Inclusive Hub

Public Education on:

• Availability and schedule of local and seasonal foods, including how and where to access local foods during varying seasons.

• Importance of eating local, including the implications for building social capital across cultural communities, the implications for promoting local food in the name of local food security and the necessity of supporting local farmers.

Dialogue and Connectivity:

	STATUS QUO	Granville Island
Food	• Increasing demand for access to ethnically and culturally diverse foods.	• Unique food items • Food sampling • Specialty food destination.
Consumers	• local food movement is dominated by one culture	• Public events, accessible to all • Price prohibitive to lower income groups
Producers	• Lack of processing facilities for small vendors. • Lack of visibility for ethnic and Aboriginal artisans.	• Reflective of Vancouver's multicultural environment. • Limited space and high rents represent constraints on producers.
Organization	• Well-established but separate cultural food system.	• No programming or policy in effect with targeted cultural inclusivity as its mandate.

• Encouraging community involvement at all levels of the hub.

• Forging connections with existing cultural community leaders and representatives in the creation and ongoing governance of the hub.

Visibility and Accessibility

• Provide viable space and opportunity to under-represented stakeholders within the community.

• Provide an environment for producers and consumers to meet in a mutually beneficial capacity. For example, matching products with public demand, and recognizing the need for a variety of foodstuffs to reflect the diversity of the community.

• Accessibility across the socio-economic spectrum, recognizing that many ethnic minority groups fall into lower income

The Stop	Halifax Farmers' Market	IDEAL MODEL
• healthy, high quality • culturally diverse • Inexpensive.	• Is there a demand for locally grown food in the ethnic food market?	• A diversity of culturally appropriate food • sampling • cooking demonstrations • cooking classes.
• Serves the low-income, homeless or marginally housed and socially isolated community members of a particular neighborhood.	• Forum for all who share the love of local food and community • Connecting local food at the farmers market with different cultural groups.	• Diverse • Accessible • Economically viable
• Community involvement in the organization's decision-making is encouraged • Seeks to use food to build skills, hope, and health across culture.	• Who is growing food for the ethnic niche market? • Is there interest in expanding or shifting production to include ethnic produce?	• Broad representation • visibility and accessibility • shared space and shared kitchen • providing opportunities for small producers
• Volunteer board of directors	• Employs community cultural connector.	• Functional, sustainable, equitable • Visionary • Mentorship program, • Voluntary Board of Directors • Community Connector.

brackets.

A Matrix of Comparisons and Contrasts

This matrix provides a visual representation of the various information gathered in this research and illustrates how it has informed recommendations for an ideal hub.

An ideal hub model is one that is entirely inclusive of Vancouver's diverse population. This could be represented in the following ways:

Food: ***Have diverse and culturally appropriate foods available from the local food system to meet everyone's needs.***

• Educational initiatives are an important aspect of promoting awareness of the food

hub as a destination for local foods. It is important for new immigrant and ethnic groups to learn about ways they can be involved in initiatives at the hub and to know that local foods are available here and can be adapted to meet ethnic tastes. Communication campaigns to support this initiative will be discussed in the Creating Space for Local Food section of this report.

• Chefs from culinary schools, fusion and ethnic restaurants, catering companies and individual food processors could be invited to offer food sampling, give cooking demonstrations and offer classes on simple food preparation techniques using local ingredients.

Vendors and Producers: ***To reflect the diversity of food vendors and producers.***

• A venue to provide increased visibility to under-represented groups.

• Make a wide range of products available to a larger consumer base at viable costs, meeting the growing consumer demand for a variety of healthy prepared foods while reflecting the need for economic accessibility.

• Shared kitchen and processing space for small-scale food producers.

• Retail opportunities for independent artisans. This initiative could involve connecting with cultural community leaders to seek out local artisans.

• Provide information on health certification and business licensing in multiple languages, at various literacy levels.

Consumers: ***To have a diverse, accessible and economically viable environment.***

• Advertising in multiple languages to attract a broad range of consumers.

• Information and advertising featured in neighbourhood grocery stores, through cultural and community centres, schools, Medical clinics, local newspapers and non-governmental organizations working with new immigrants.

• Ensure that second and third grade produce is available at reasonable prices to lower income groups and to organizations such as food banks, soup and community kitchens, church groups and other non-governmental organizations that provide meals to economically and socially challenged community members.

Organizers & Organizational Structure: ***To maintain a vision of inclusivity and make dialogue a necessary and vital form of engagement with and between***

stakeholders. It is pertinent for hub organizers to help keep the lines of communication open and to be receptive to ideas, concerns and recommendations from the community.

• A Voluntary Board of Directors could help provide a broad representation of ideas, thought processes, skills, knowledge and experiences to give greater insight into how different communities can be involved in the creation, evolution and sustainability of the Vancouver food hub.

• A Mentorship Program to assist farmers and food processors to learn how to package, label, price and transport their goods to make their businesses more productive, their goods better presented and more marketable to a mainstream consumer base.

• Employing a Community Cultural Connector, as the Halifax Farmer's Market has done, to assist in strategically forging alliances and meaningful connections with communities. Ongoing consultation and communication with community members will help hub organizers/coordinators remain in touch with culturally and ethnically based food systems. This will allow a stronger knowledge sharing system between communities, through the hub.

• Constant self-evaluation from the hub organizers, considering the values and assumptions that may inform or influence the organizational structure and governance of the hub, and how these may be welcoming or prohibitive to various cultural groups.

Concluding and Looking to the Future

The Hub can be a central space to celebrate the local harvest in diverse ways. The hub can provide a meaningful space designed around the culture of food, supports regional food systems, while creating visibility for under-represented groups in ways that are sustainable, educative, informative, and accessible to the larger community. Food connects us intimately with one another across cultures: it is the bridge that unites. The soil is already fertile, though tilling is necessary to make the process of planting the seeds a fruitful and deserving enterprise, one that will bear fruit in the near future.

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Granville Island Public Market, www.granvilleisland.com/public_market

The Stop Community Food Centre, www.thestop.org

Appendices

1. Links Between Cultural Inclusivity and Overarching Hub Objectives

• Local: an emphasis on local produce should be reflected by the participation of all faces of the local population.

• Sustainable: community support is integral in the continued success of a local food hub.

• Accessible: to ensure community members, both consumers and suppliers, feel they can participate in an open and welcoming environment.

• Marketable: it is important to have the available goods and services reflect the diversity of Vancouver's population.

• Affordable: affordability is imperative for ensuring access to a broad population.

•Visible: to promote awareness of the food hub in all the communities of Vancouver.

• Functional: dialogue between various community representatives would aid in ensuring a Food Hub that meets everyone's needs.

• Healthy: all people, of varying ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, should have access to healthy food.

Bridging the Gap
Wholesale and the Supply Chain

By Josli Rockafella, Kaitlyn Watson, Sean Wilkinson & Elena Yelizarov
For a video of our findings, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-GVV7itQsA.

Context & Background

Residents of the Lower Mainland gain access to food predominately through supermarkets and grocery stores, with some of their needs supplemented by farmers' markets and food banks. The produce and grocery items in stores comes from wholesale distributors, most being located on Malkin Avenue just out of downtown Vancouver, with others in Richmond and Burnaby.

When in season, much of this stock is brought in from the Fraser Valley. Farmers' markets also get much of their goods from local farms and producers. However, all wholesalers and some farmer's markets (for example, the Granville Island Public Market) obtain their fresh fruits and vegetables through distributors from California, Mexico, China, and many other parts of the world, to ensure a full array of fresh stock year-round.

With proper planning, infrastructure, and investment, almost twice as much food in Vancouver's wholesale system could be locally sourced (Vancouver Food Policy Council, 2009). This report offers recommendations on how to accomplish this.

Challenges & Opportunities

In addressing the opportunities for the wholesale of local goods through a Food Hub it is first important to define our approach. By definition, wholesale is the sale of goods in large quantity with zero retail mark up. Specifically, a local food wholesale model would provide an alternative food distribution system that is convenient for both food producers and food buyers. It would bring together local farmers to increase the supply and distribution of local food and would encourage growth and diversification of small regional farms by providing a year round outlet for their goods.

A local wholesale model would fill the gap for a processing facility to serve specifically local food producers. The

greater economic benefits of such a focus on local goods being sold, bought and processed locally, creates a self-sufficient community by keeping food's lifecycle in its own economic and bio-region.

As we began to research wholesale models and interview people involved with them, we quickly realized that, to be effective, the wholesale branch of a local Food Hub must incorporate as many links of the food supply chain as possible. We have identified four links of the food supply chain that need to be improved in order for the Lower Mainland's local food system to reach its full potential:

Communication

• The lack of an organized communication system, leads to inefficiencies in the distribution of local goods. Without a convenient and accessible platform to connect, it is difficult for regional food producers to find wholesale buyers.

Transportation

• An efficient transportation system needs to be created to deliver goods from local producers to buyers.

Distribution

• Local, small-scale food producers often find it challenging to balance time between producing, distributing and retailing their products. In addition, food producers require an economically secure outlet to distribute their goods for both retail and wholesale buyers. Therefore an effective local food system will include an efficient, profitable, and equitable distribution system.

Processing

• Finally, as there is a lack of local processing facilities to support producers throughout British Columbia, it is difficult to preserve local products and ensure year round availability.

Real-World Models for Local Wholesale

To address these issues, we looked at five real world models that offer innovative solutions to the problems raised above:

• Ecotrust (Portland, Oregon)
• FarmsReach (San Francisco, California)
• Food Roots (Victoria, British Columbia)
• The Detroit Eastern Market (Detroit, Michigan)
• The Stop Community Food Centre (Toronto, Ontario).

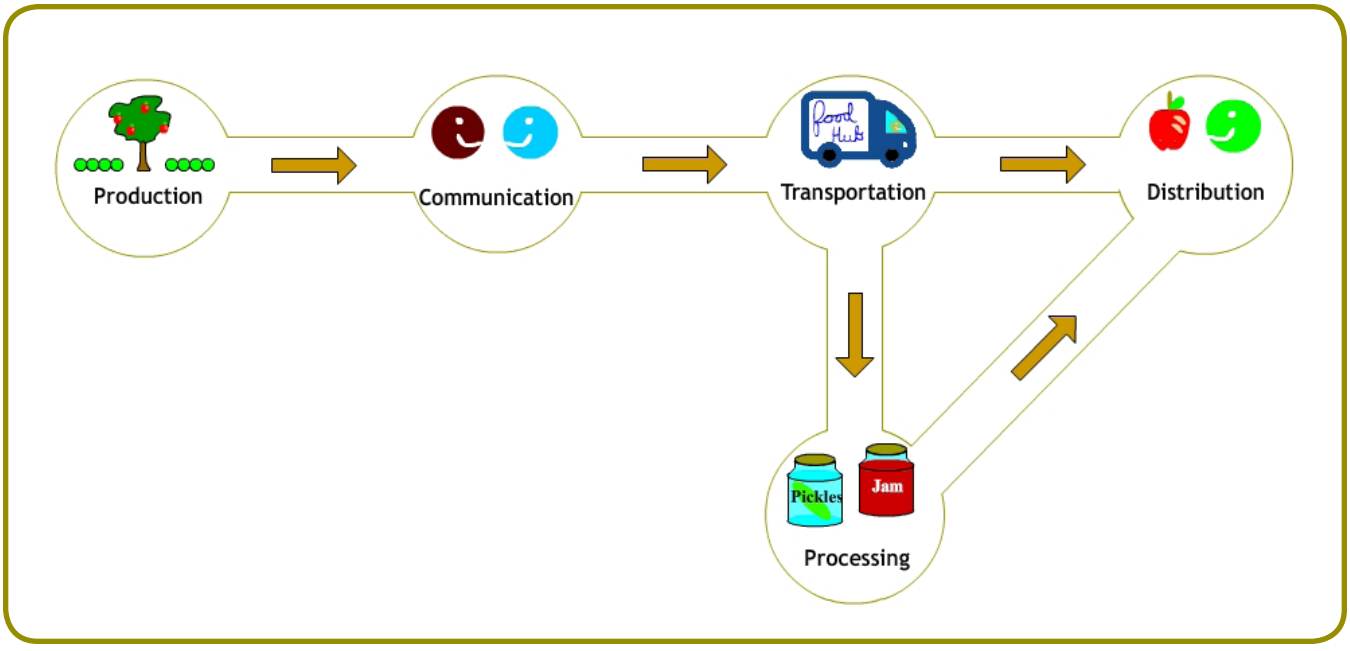
We will evaluate these solutions according to eight criteria that address the areas for improvement listed, as well as this report's overarching values:

- **Steady producer profits** to help farming remain an attractive occupation,
- **Organizational sustainability** to ensure the Hub stays open year after year,
- **Community education** so as to intellectually connect eaters and their food,
- **Social accessibility** to ensure that the Hub serves all sectors of the food-eating public (that's everyone!)
- **Visibility** to attract buyers and sellers, thereby increasing volume,
- **Emphasis on local food** so that the Hub will contribute to the Lower Mainland's food security and sustainability,
- **Transportation** to allow producers to concentrate their time and effort on producing, not traveling.
- **Economic viability** to prevent a vulnerable over-reliance on grant money and donations.

A Four-Step Program to a Better Wholesale System

Step 1: Communication

The first post-production stage of the food supply chain is communication. This involves marketing and advertising, as well as creating buying agreements and processing paperwork. If properly implemented and



maintained, an effective communication system would allow producers to know which crops to plant based on local demand, provide them with the economic confidence to grow off-season crops, all while greatly decreasing the amount of time dedicated to non-productive marketing activities.

Current and past communication innovations have involved newsletters and catalogues run by individuals or producer co-operatives that amalgamate and re-market food produced by their members. However, the internet presents an opportunity to create a more efficient communication system, leaving producers more time in their working day for tangibly productive activities while reaching a wider variety of buyers.

Search Engines for Sustainability

FarmsReach, originating in San Francisco, and *Ecotrust*, launching in July 2009 in Portland, offer online connections for buyers and sellers. *FarmsReach* starts with the seller creating an online "stall" where they list all available goods as well as contact information and delivery options. The buyer can then search for all types of products based on their own priorities, such as geographic region, growing techniques, or variety. From here they can place their orders online, coordinate pick-up and delivery dates, and even determine payment.

The Ecotrust online service, *FoodHub*, is designed to first connect food buyers and food producers with one another and then to conduct business on a web-based wholesale-direct trading platform. They are focused on a three-tiered level of service, the first being an online directory and marketplace, allowing buyers and sellers to find one another easily and efficiently form business relationships. Tier 2 will allow one to one transactions while Tier 3 will allow one to many transactions. This model's strengths encapsulate online connections in order to keep barriers-to-entry low, while appealing to multiple generations of farmers. It provides direct access to information about growing operations and availability which can be communicated amongst buyers and sellers. *FoodHub* expects their customers to be from Alaska to Northern California, as that is the bio-region that Ecotrust serves. It is designed to support producers of all food types, from fresh vegetables to processed goods, making it a reliable resource for food products year round.

Analysis

Including a strong online communication component in the proposed Food Hub could help solve many of the time-sensitive information problems inherent in the local food industry. The producers would benefit from having access to information regarding what other farms in the region are producing as well as the demand for different types of products. This information would enable them to plan the variety and the amount of food they produce, as well as spread out the production throughout the year. Additionally, an online database would make it easier for large organizations or businesses looking to purchase local food to find local producers. Increased information could substantially decrease the cost of accessing local food as more organizations are able to purchase it, creating the potential for economies of scale. The economic viablity of the Food Hub would also be improved by online communications as it would enable the Hub to track the inventory of local produce and ensure that it is sold in an efficiently in order to minimize spoilage.

Step 2: Transportation

Another vital connection missing in the current local food network is an efficient transportation system coordinating deliveries of goods from small-scale local producers to buyers. As a consequence, many producers often find it difficult to balance time between producing, distributing and retailing their products. A local Food Hub presents the opportunity to create a transportation system that is centralized, predictable, efficient, environmentally sustainable and economically viable to producers and buyers.

The Milk Run

The *Food Roots Distribution Co-op* in Victoria is one example of how a centralized transportation system can decrease the costs of accessing local food. Food Roots makes bi-weekly trips with a refrigerated van up the coast of Vancouver Island to pick up goods from producers who are without time or means for transportation. Food Roots also supplies packaging and containers to small producers through a box-recycling program. To ensure steady income for producers, they offer a fair price for products either through negotiations or by using baseline buying prices from other organic wholesalers, such as *Discovery Organics*. The most remarkable feature is that *Food Roots* guarantees its

suppliers the value of their product regardless of whether it sells, unlike many commercial food brokers who pay suppliers only for the amount of product sold. Producers are thus partially shielded from the unpredictable variables of the market.

Analysis

A centralized transportation system would facilitate physical access to the Food Hub; remove both the cost and time barriers for local producers and greatly reduce the potential carbon footprint, as routes are coordinated and planned for efficiency. In planning a centralized transportation system it is also important to include packaging supplies (such as boxes, tags and wrap) to aid farmers in getting their goods into marketable forms to the Food Hub. Packaging is an added cost for farmers that detracts from their income, so providing a recyclable or re-usable packaging would improve farm profitability and reduce environmental impact. *Food Roots* has successfully pioneered such a reusable packaging program.

Step 3: Distribution

Although there are currently many distributors in Vancouver, they are not inclusive of small scale farmers who may lack the knowledge of the food industry and the product volume to make it worthwhile for large wholesalers to work with them. An example of an exception is *Discovery Organics* - a wholesale organic food distributor that has invested much time and knowledge into helping farmers achieve their economic potential. *Discovery Organics* offers both transportation and packaging to their suppliers as well as educates them on grading and packing their food which go a long way to helping small scale farmers access the local market.

Mixed Marketing

The *Detroit Eastern Market* also combines a variety of distribution systems including wholesale, retail and non-profit organizations. During the week the *Market* serves as a trade center for hundreds of buyers and sellers from the surrounding areas. Farm trucks filled with produce arrive daily at the market where sales are negotiated between producers and wholesale buyers such as local restaurants, supermarkets and food processors. The market facilitates physical access for wholesalers by providing space, dry storage and refrigeration services. The wholesale market is open from 12am to

6am Monday to Friday. From 7am to 5pm Monday to Saturday the market is open to retail buyers to purchase everything from fresh produce to processed foods such as cheeses, soups, jams and baked goods. Although the market gives priority in renting market stalls to farmers who sell their own produce, the majority of the food is sold by representatives of food producers. This alleviates the pressure for farmers to be present at the market to sell their produce, therefore removing a common barrier to participation.

To increase access to local food for low income households, the *Detroit Eastern Market* partners with the *Gleaners Community Food Bank* in the *Green Ribbon Initiative* to deliver fresh produce in vans all over the city. This initiative also allows welfare recipients to exchange their food stamps for boxes of fresh local produce. Another initiative, The *AM Market Fresh* program, places produce from the wholesale market in stands at small farmers markets and convenience stores. *Food Roots* also runs a similar program that serves low income neighborhoods, local food banks and cooperatives.

Analysis

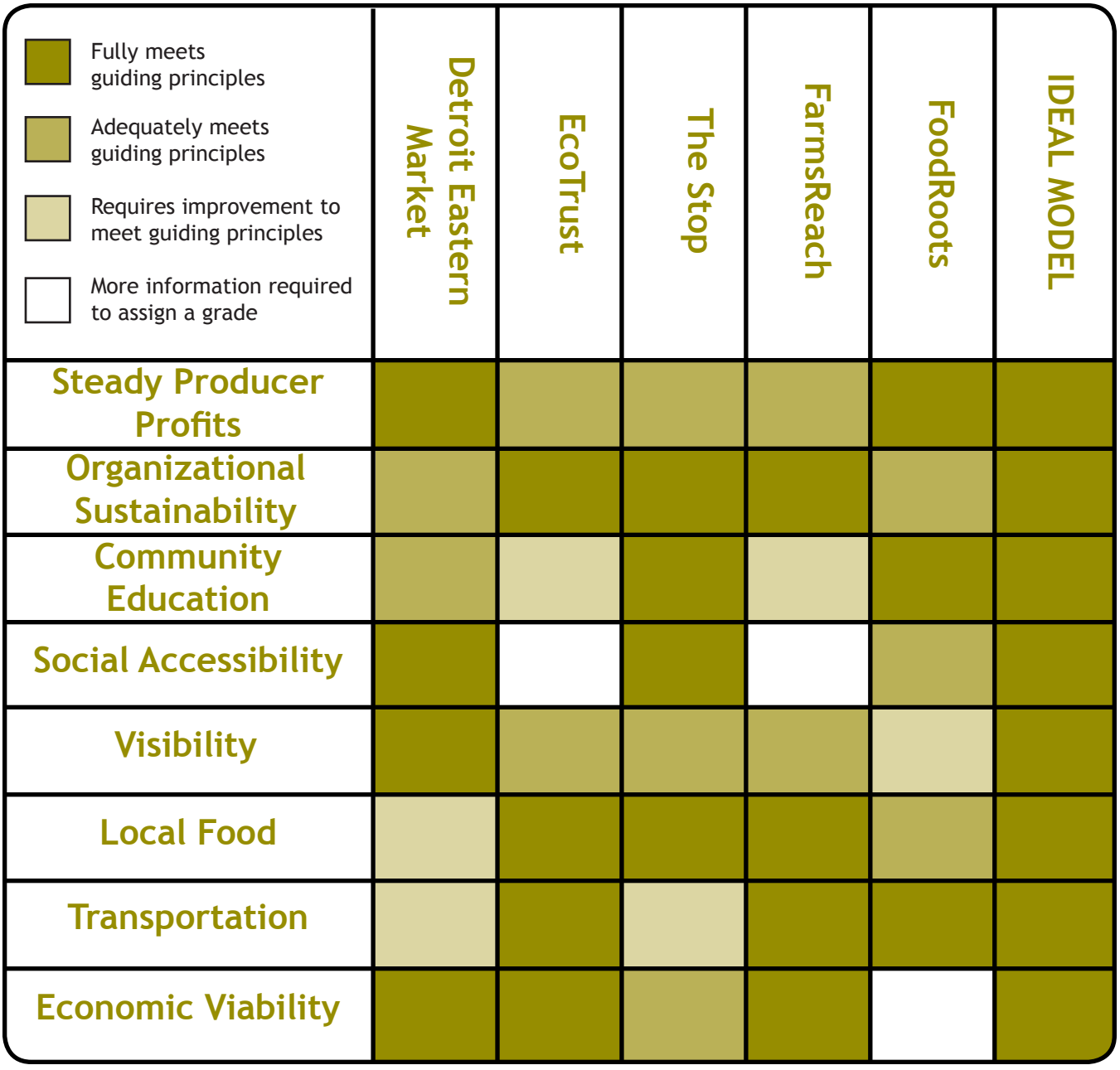
Wholesale farmers'-market style operations like the *Detroit Eastern Market* try to find a happy medium between industrial-scale agribusiness and neighbourhood-scale pocket markets. They offer an example of a highly efficient food distribution system that is capable of moving large quantities of product from small, medium, and large producers to consumers.

Step 4: Processing

Processing helps preserve food during peak seasons, making it available throughout the year. It also minimizes losses to the producers due to spoilage. A local Food Hub presents an opportunity to offer onsite processing facilities of goods that are already in the hub. *The Stop Community Food Center* in Toronto, The *Detroit Eastern Market* and *Food Roots* all offer methods for pickling, canning, drying, grinding and packaging local food. These models incorporate community kitchens, freezing facilities and packaging services to guarantee that all goods acquired from local producers, if not sold, will be processed and sold at a later time.

Analysis

The incorporation of processing facilities would contribute to several core principles. Processing would lengthen the local food season, allowing the Hub to stay open year-round without flooding itself with imports. At the same time, the sale of processed goods would help the Hub remain economically viable, while helping producers earn a higher, steadier return.



Recommendations

Each of the models described above has commendable features that would be applicable to the Vancouver based *New City Market*. The matrix shows how each stacks up in terms of the guiding principles we elicited.

While it is important that the Food Hub have a real bricks-and-mortar, smiling-faces existence, its tangible aspects must be complemented by an internet component designed to efficiently share information between producers, consumers, and the Hub administration. A strong web presence can also contribute to visibility and social accessibility and be used as a public educational tool In addition, it offers possibilities outside of wholesale marketing that have not yet been explored by other organizations, such as retail home delivery for those unable to come in person to the market.

The first chapter of this report ("Producers: Who Are They and What Are Their Needs?") noted that producers often lack control of or access to transportation equipment. This puts them at a disadvantage in price negotiations with large wholesale buyers. A transportation system run by the Hub-at cost, would help level the playing field. Providing packaging supplies is another way that the Hub could remove a financial and temporal distraction from producers' operations. A Hub-sponsored packaging program could also greatly facilitate the *Food Routes* program proposed in the fifth chapter ("Communication & Design: Creating Space for Local Food").

Finally, dedicating space within the Hub itself for processing facilities would further encourage local food production, reduce food waste, and provide a much-needed source of income for the Hub.

Conclusion

The creation of a year-round local food wholesale system would constitute the necessary leap in the local food movement from farmers' markets to a significant shift in the mainstream food supply. The existence of successful models elsewhere tells us both that such an endeavour is possible and that Vancouver is far behind other North American cities. The establishment of the *New City Market (Food Hub)* will help us catch up.

Further Considerations

In order to successfully incorporate wholesale as a viable inclusion into the Food Hub, we understand that there are several

other areas to be considered. Further research into pocket markets and farmers' markets as a means of distributing produce from the Hub into the community could uncover greater systems of distribution. Food 'precincts' could work with neighbourhood-based community centers and existing farmers' markets to further social access as well. There is a concern as to what volume of produce would be necessary to make the Food Hub a financially viable venture for both producers and consumers, as well as the Hub itself. If there is not enough local produce currently to host a Hub, could there be? And is there enougo h land to produce this volume? We also recognize that there are many other distributors and wholesalers in the Lower Mainland who are making an effort to supply as much local food as possible. How could a Hub work towards increased efficiency and avoid unnecessary competition with existing businesses for buying food from local farms?

These are a few questions that still lie just out of our reach, but that each play into the ongoing research and development of a local Food Hub.

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Governance
How Should the Hub Operate?

By Chelsea Calder, Tara Kainz, Sienna MacMillan & Kat Southam

In considering the reality of a Food Hub in Vancouver, studying the different models of governance is essential. We began our research specifically on cooperatives because we feel the community-based nature of this business model is in line with the objectives of the Food Hub. We soon realized that it was essential to understand aspects of other business models to confidently provide our recommendation of the appropriate governance model for the Hub.

Context & Background

We looked at three governance options, these being: a cooperative, a company and a non-profit organization. In addition to

	A Co-operative	A Company	A Non-Profit Society
Accountability	To the community and the co-op system, built in through co-op principles and values.	To the shareholders, as determined by the market.	To the community and its clients.
Profit	Distributed to members based on their use of co-op services.	Distributed based on number of shares owned.	Capital is obtained from donations and contributions. Surplus is reinvested, not distributed
Control	Rests with members. Voting is vested in membership—one member, one vote.	Rests with capital. voting is vested in share ownership—one share, one vote.	Rests with members —one member, one vote.
Purpose	To provide a service to members.	To create profit for owners/shareholders	To provide a service to clients.

cooperative we studied the aspects of a corporation which operates for profit, and a non-profit organization. We compared the different aspects of these business models into a matrix based on a chart from The Canadian CED Network website.

Based on this matrix, we want to highlight the similarity between a cooperative and a non-profit society. First, these two models focus on people in the community- versus profits and second, they are both democratic, which means one member, one vote. This compared to a corporate model that is mainly focused on profits for shareholders and is organized around an undemocratic hierarchy. This matrix along with our research on effective governance is what has encouraged our group to further study the applicability of cooperatives as the governance model for the Food Hub.

Research Statement

We were interested in studying different governance models because we want to find out their strengths and weaknesses in order to understand if the cooperative governance model should be the best practice model for the local Food Hub project.

Methodology

Our research consisted of in-person, telephone, and e-mail interviews with different stakeholders and cooperative members, with a focus on the best practices of the different business models. Some of these include the *East End Food Coop*, *Organic Valley* and *Community Food Connections*. We shared with them our ideas of governance for the Food Hub and they shared their real life experiences of cooperative and non-profit models. In addition to best practices, we also contacted the *BC Institute of Cooperative Studies* for case study information that has previously been conducted in BC. For the theoretical information we started with governmental and publication websites. Our research included the following websites: International Alliance Cooperative, Ernst & Young Cooperative Final Report, The Ontario Cooperative Association, the Government of Canadian Cooperatives Secretariat, the British Columbia Cooperative Association, Cooperative Grocer, CoopZone and the Canadian Cooperatives Association.

History of Cooperatives

The first cooperative businesses started in Europe in the late 18th and 19th

century during the Industrial Revolution. It was a time when people moved away from the rural family farm and into cities searching for better lives for their families. However, these new urban families had to rely on food stores to feed their families because they were no longer growing their own food. Unfortunately, these food stores did not provide urban families with a variety of quality and affordable produce. Therefore, to protect themselves, the workers, farmers and producers, who were essentially the least powerful consumers in society, began building social capital. Social capital is defined, through the glossary of statistical terms, as the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of societies that enable people to coordinate action to achieve desired goals.

Building social capital within their various groups allowed them to gain more control over the supply of food so that they could purchase higher quality groceries at reasonable prices. Currently, in the 21st century, cooperatives have become a larger social-environmental justice movement. This movement focuses on a lifestyle of returning back to the land to produce natural whole foods .

What is a Cooperative?

Cooperatives worldwide are guided by the same seven principles which were initially created by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) as follows:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of

the cooperative. Members typically receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surplus for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5. Education, Training, and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation

6. Co-operation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for the Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Cooperative Models

To assess which cooperative model would best suit the needs and objectives of the Food Hub, we initially studied a variety of cooperatives. The following is a list and brief description of various cooperatives :

Producer Cooperative

Made up of independent farmers, entrepreneurs, artisans or growers. In our case, the producers, i.e. the smaller farmers and producers of the Fraser Valley, could join together to improve their production, distribution and profit. By partnering together, the small farmers are able to efficiently increase their ability to distribute more products to the consumer.

Consumer Co-op	Provides products or services to its members such as retail, housing, health care, or child care.
Producer Co-op	Processes and markets the goods or services produced by its members.
Worker Co-op	Provides employment for its members, who are the owners of the enterprise.
Housing Co-op	Members collectively own either the property in which they live or owns the right to occupy it.
Distributor Co-op	Serves the needs of distributors, linking growers, processors, and buyers.
Multi-Stakeholder Co-op	Serves the needs of different stakeholder groups such as employees, clients, producers, and its own customers.

This chart shows the diversity of co-operative models

A cooperative governance model is a valuable medium for this type of industry because the primary producers, supplying the products, benefit from the on-going membership and community gain from local economic development and related spin offs. Because of the collaborative nature of this type of cooperative, producers could come together to purchase storage facilities within the Food Hub or share equipment and transportation costs for distribution of their products to the Food Hub. In addition to the financial benefits that come with being a member of a cooperative, farmers can share agriculture knowledge and growing practices. Producers can work together to provide top quality products and ensure better crop performance, higher yields, and help boost their *bottom line*. Furthermore, the ability for producers to gain access to processing facilities will increase and thus develop a new niche for value-added products. Therefore, cooperative farmers receive a fair price for their crop and increased profits for their hard work. There are over 1,300 agriculture cooperatives in Canada, employing more than 3,500 people.

Consumer Cooperative

Owned and operated by the consumer and typically function similarly to a retail store. This type of cooperative provides services and/or products to serve the needs of its members. If there is a surplus within the consumer cooperative, the revenues are either redistributed back into the cooperative for store renovations and improvements or is provided to the members based on how much each member purchased from the cooperative that year. These payments are called "patronage" and are one of the major benefits of becoming a member. Consumer cooperatives are active with the community through networking with other organizations and by continually engaging new members. These cooperatives typically provide organic, local, fair trade and sustainable products and services, which directly link the farmer with the consumer. Additionally, most consumer cooperatives serve the community as a great educational resource, by having in-store information about products and producers and by providing workshops and seminars about food, responsible purchasing and cooking.

Multi-Stakeholder Cooperative

A multi-stakeholder cooperative typically is a combination of other types of cooperatives, with the membership made up of different categories of members who share a common interest in the organization. This cooperative represents more than one stakeholder group, so more voices are heard and more needs are addressed. For example, the stakeholders could be the consumers, the producers, other community organizations and other interested members of the community. Stakeholders groups employ a range of social backgrounds, skills and resources, benefiting the members and the community in an all-encompassing way. The structure of this cooperative builds stronger partnerships, networking relations are developed, fosters more education, is capacity building. offers a strong voice to all its members and serves a variety of needs, while decentralizing control and decision making. Because the mentioned stakeholders will be working under the previously stated objectives of the Hub, having a multi-stakeholder cooperative as the governance model for the Food Hub will ensure that the objectives are met with support from all involved parties. Furthermore, since the Food Hub will impact the surrounding larger community, it seems only natural that more

than one stakeholder be represented within the governance of the Hub.

Other Business Models

Since non-profit organizations are similarly based within the community, it was important to gather some information on how they operate in considering their role for governance for the Food Hub.

The main objective of a non-profit organization is to provide a service to their community, rather than working solely for a profit. Therefore, any surplus is reinvested into the organization. This contrasts with the typical business and cooperative models as in businesses all profits are distributed among shareholders and in cooperatives all profits are distributed among members.

Even though the members involved in a non-profit do not receive any share of the organization's profits, they do play an active role in the decision making and governance of the organization by operating though a democratically elected Board of Directors. Lastly, non-profits are able to apply for a variety of grants and government funding to further support social and community development projects and programs.

Recommendation

In looking for a governance model for the Hub we aimed to fulfill three key objectives: to empower small farmers; to engage the community; and to do so using a democratic model to achieve this.

In consideration of these objectives, and in light of our research, we determined that a new, innovative cooperative model would best suit the needs of the Food Hub. This new model combines both a multi-stake holder cooperative and a non-profit organization. We call this the Integrated Cooperative. Under the umbrella of the multi-stake holder aspect we have included the wholesale market, the retail market, transportation, dry/cold storage and freezer facilities. This cooperative aspect will be governed by both the producers and the consumers, thus uniting the farmer with the urbanite to promote a shared initiative: providing healthy, local and sustainable food.

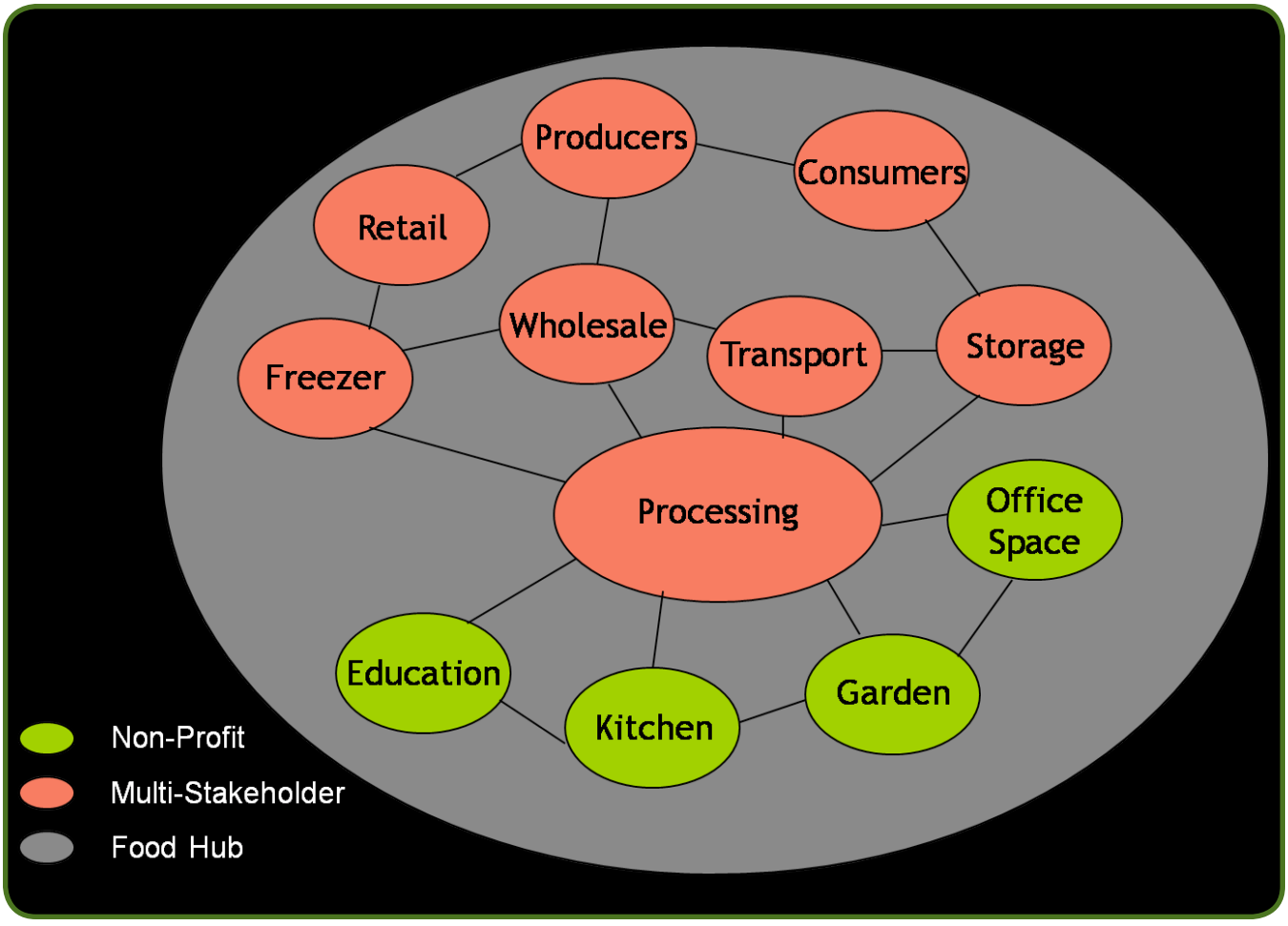
The other side of this model is a non-profit organization which will operate with a focus on education. The non-profit will manage the education facilities, community kitchens, gardens and office spaces which will accommodate a variety of local food action groups, thus granting them a space

to work together. One major benefit of having a non-profit organization as part of the Food Hub is that they will be eligible for a variety of grants and other funding opportunities. Moreover, through placing the educational aspect under a separate system of governance we are able to relieve the producers of projects that are not directly related to food production and distribution.

This integrated model will strengthen community capital by mobilizing citizens. The essence of food security lies in the connection of individuals to their community and the connection of communities to the land. This model will foster these vital connections as it uses the dynamic nature of our community to envision and create local food sustainability.

Conclusion

To identify what the best governance model would be for a Food Hub within the Lower Mainland, we began to research



the many various options and locate the experts who could best share their first hand knowledge. In our research, it was identified that cooperatives all follow the seven guiding principles. While being aware of: the overall objectives of the Food Hub, health as the overarching guiding principle, nurturing the environment, the security of food, and the community as a priority; we have identified the need for an additional non-profit orgaizational aspect to maintain the educational components. A non-profit element is complimentary to the cooperative model because of the commonalities with a democratically elected Board, profits reinvested into the organization, and community involvement for acquiring grants and donations. After careful analysis and research we recommend an Integrated Cooperative Model, which is a union of both a non-profit and multi-stakeholder cooperative, as the best form of governance for the local Food Hub.

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Design & Communication
Creating Space for Local Food

By Nicholas DeJager, Katie Raso, Taisa Rose & Christopher Short

Creating a Space For Local Food

In considering the challenge of creating space for local food, two components must be addressed: communication and design. In doing so, we explored the advertising and marketing practices currently employed by other community food organizations throughout North America. Additionally, we examined potential design elements and locations that could contribute to a vibrant Food Hub. Based on this research, we offer design options that meet exceptional standards of sustainability—one of our primary objectives—while also contributing to the beautification of Vancouver- an added benefit. We believe the Hub has the potential to address many food security issues that affect all communities within the Lower Mainland. A strong communication program and effective design will allow this potential to be realized.

Communicating Local Food

For the long-term social and financial sustainability of the project, strong communication campaigns are a critical part of a local Food Hub. In order to meet these sustainability goals, communication campaigns must engage and educate all members of the community, across different mediums—embracing diverse languages, cultures, and perspectives as valuable assets.

Best Practices

Across North America, there are many examples of communication campaigns that are successful in reaching broad audiences. From creating informative advertising to improving communication between buyers and sellers, these programs demonstrate best practices for increasing awareness of local food systems. Specifically, the *Foodland, Local Dirt* and *Farm to School* programs are innovators within this field, due to their ability to reach large audiences. Each campaign approaches the challenge of communicating local food with different

methods. These methods could greatly improve the visibility of, and support for local food.

Foodland Ontario: Creating and maintaining awareness of local food

Foodland Ontario has operated for thirty years, funded by the provincial government. In addition to providing traditional advertisements, *Foodland* runs campaigns in food outlets throughout the province. These campaigns offer information including recipes and proper food storage tips. *Foodland* continually monitors the efficacy of these programs through various review procedures. New programs, including the recent "Savour Ontario" campaign, are created based on the needs and opportunities identified by these studies. *Foodland's* focus on effectively reaching audiences has led to strong brand recognition within their target markets. Additionally, the program has created significant awareness in Ontario communities regarding the many benefits of supporting local food. *Foodland's* 2006 consumer study included the following highlights:

- 9 in 10 said that buying local food is important for supporting both local economy and local farmers
- 83% said that local food is fresher
- 89% believed that the Foodland program is a worthwhile government initiative.

Local Dirt: Farmers markets go digital

Local Dirt is an online initiative, allowing farmers markets in any U.S. state to participate. This website aims to connect consumers with farmers. Through *Local Dirt*, markets and vendors are able to list their products online, for no charge. Buyers- from individuals to wholesalers- also register for this service. Once registered, buyers are able to search for markets in their area and pre-order products from the vendors. This system does not reduce attendance of markets; rather it expands their capacity by creating a more efficient purchasing system.

Farm to School: Get 'em while they're young

Farm to School is a highly successful program in the United States that seeks to connect schools with local farms. This connection provides healthy foods for school cafeterias, improving student nutrition. Through this program, schools gain opportunities for children to explore the

path of their food from farm to fork. *Farm to School* conducts feasibility studies to ensure its programs are as effective as possible. Currently, this program is operational in nine thousand schools, in forty-one states.

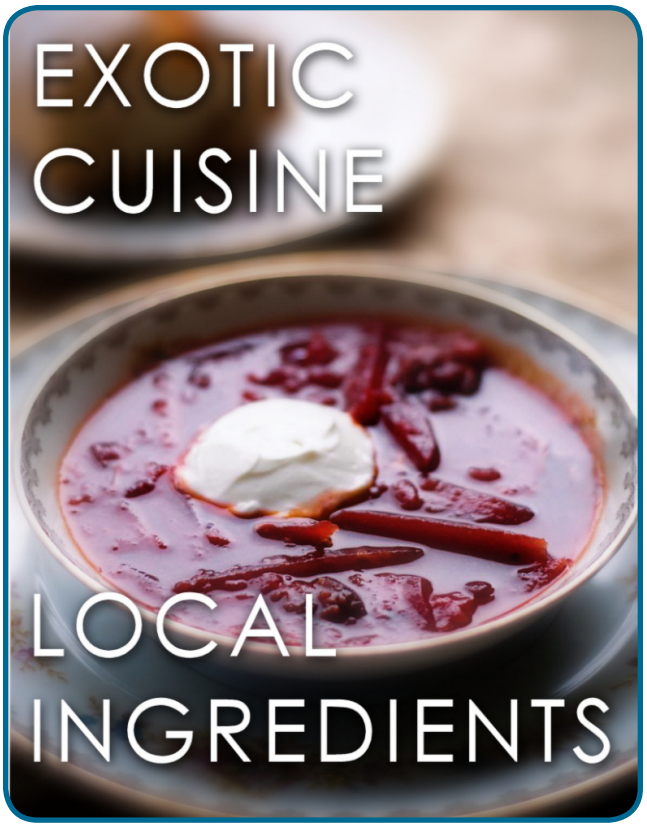
Application of Best Practices

Together, these programs successfully showcase how a communication campaign can combine educational and marketable materials. Through systems of self-evaluation, these programs maintain their capacity for effectively creating space for local food within their respective communities. The potential campaigns outlined below draw from these best practices. Presently, there are several local food initiatives operating within BC, including the *BC Fresh* and *Vancouver Farmers Market* campaigns. These campaigns, when compared to initiatives like *Foodland*, are limited in their audience reach. We believe that a stronger campaign should be championed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Potential Campaigns

We developed a series of communication campaigns in order to help address some of the needs identified by the other groups' research. Toward this aim we began with an educational print campaign intended to informed citizens about food security and the value of buying local. To illuminate these issues we imagined traveling

Eat Local Campaign



pears, carrying luggage and covered in baggage tags. A simple question or comment was added, to focus the viewer on an issue related to food security:

A similar campaign, aimed at illuminating the wide range of locally produced food features "exotic" foreign dishes made with local ingredients. This campaign includes multiple languages and foods from other countries and cultures. Aesthetic choices, including font type, further the engagement of viewers with this concept. The ultimate goal of this print

Exotic Cuisine/Local Ingredients Campaign

Calendar Campaign

campaign is to stimulate public discussion of local food.

A calendar is an inexpensive and effective communication tool, as well as small source of revenue. Often placed in highly visible locations year-round, a calendar is a powerful tool that could be used for food and agriculture education. We designed a calendar after determining its key features:

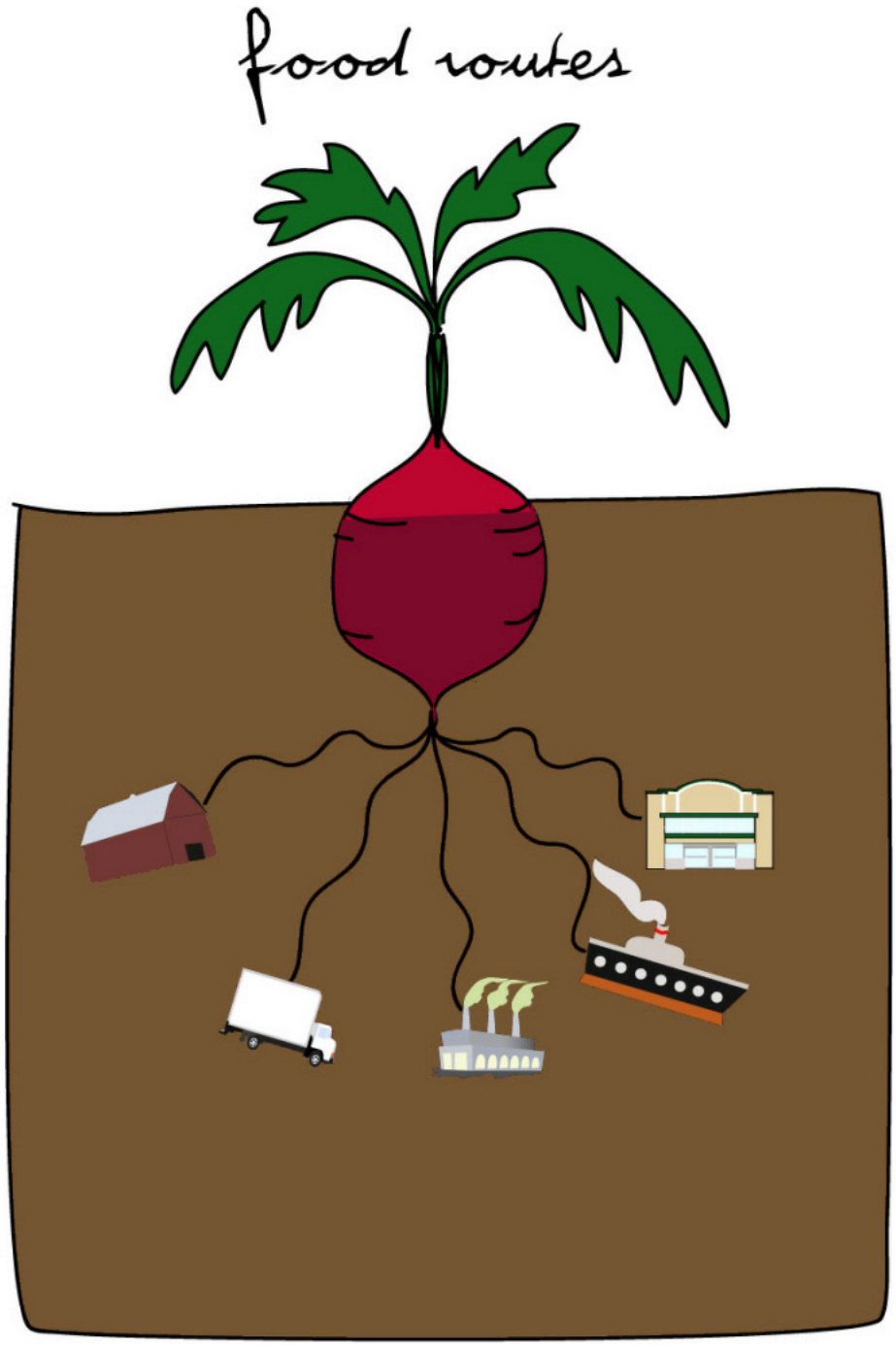
• Information and images about local food, including what local foods are available and when

• Profiles of farms, farmers, farmers market and the Food Hub, including contact information, location, and hours of operation

• Seasonal recipes using local ingredients

• Advertising for community events

Finally, we created the "Food Routes" campaign. Evolving out of a debate about food sovereignty and security, we drafted a food transparency model. This is a visual tool for communicating the distance traveled by food from field to store. This campaign also highlights how many stops the food makes along this journey, and could evolve to include valuable information such as the price paid at each distribution point. If implemented, "Food Routes" could introduce a much-needed measure of transparency into our food system. Currently much work is required to dig up even the most basic information about where food comes from and who produced it. We believe this information is essential to a democratic food system as it addresses the need for



Food Routes Campaign

direct active consent of consumers, rather than passive indirect submission.

Design

When conceptualizing the design of the Food Hub, we are envisioning the physical manifestation of our goal to create space for local food. Designing a space for such a project involves many considerations. The ability of a design to aptly address issues, such as sustainability and accessibility, dictates the success of the project which it houses.

Best Practices and Real-World Examples

To assess the strengths of potential hub designs, we created a list of criteria: environmental sustainability, transportation, democracy, education, physical accessibility, visibility and marketability. These indicators reflect the guiding objectives of the overall project. To understand how these criteria could be included in design, we looked to real world examples. The real world models examined were identified as innovative projects by interview participants, and within our research materials. The abilities of these programs to address our criteria are briefly explained.

Environmental Sustainability

Halifax Farmers Market is a model that includes many advanced sustainability practices into its design. As research uncovered, these innovative technologies include passive ventilation, wind power, rooftop agriculture, solar collection, rainwater capture and water conservation.

Granville Island is a local model that incorporates sustainability into its design, but in entirely different ways than the *Halifax Farmers Market*. *Granville Island* is a strong example of reinvented space. This market makes creative use of an otherwise undesirable piece of land that was once a dangerous industial zone under a bridge. In addition, *Granville Island* has successfully recycled its many industrial buildings into valuable public and commercial space as well as thoughtfully incorporating multiple green spaces into its layout. As research verefied, these spaces not only enhance the visitor's experience of the market, but are also a great example of mixed land use.

Transportation

The Stop, in Toronto, is accessible by popular transportation routes and methods. Focusing on the communities between Bloor Street, St. Clair Avenue, Dovercourt Road and

Runnymede Road, *The Stop* can be reached by several transit and car routes within this area. Situated within the community it serves, *The Stop* is also a very pedestrian friendly.

Halifax Farmers Market advertises that it is accessible by bike, pedestrian, bus, boat, and car routes. Offering multiple entry points prevents congestion for vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

Democracy

The *Halifax Farmers Market* recognizes the need for community involvement in its governance model. To assist this process, the market employs Community Connectors. The Connectors liaise with community groups, institutions and individuals to determine how they can work together to support common goals. This process allows the community to take direct action on market-related issues that affect them.

The Stop has advertised itself as a leader in implementing democratic initiatives. This organization's decision-making and program designing processes require significant and meaningful participation by community members. *The Stop's* framework is both transparent and cooperative.

Visibility/Marketability

The *Halifax Farmers Market* is the longest running farmers market in North America. Its rich history lends to it marketability. The market is located on Halifax's waterfront. This location allows the market to attract a large customer base, including tourists, which might otherwise not engage with the local food offerings of the area.

Granville Island's brightly coloured buildings are visible from the waterfront and bridges that surround it. Recent advertisement campaigns from Granville's Public Market showcase the local food available from their vendors. These campaigns can be seen on billboards and buses throughout Vancouver, and bring awareness to the market's offerings.

Education

As *Halifax Farmers Market* transitions from one location to the next, plans for the new building are available online. The new building is thoroughly explained through a series of drawings and documents.

Similarly, *The Stop* has clearly outlined its impetus for expanding into a second location. Information regarding this new space, and its potential, is available on

the website. Additionally, as education is a central focus for this organization, space is allotted within the design to support ongoing educational initiatives.

Physical Accessibility

In our research, we noted a lack of attention towards physical accessibility within market designs. While all models included some supports, we believe that stronger systems can be incorporated in the Food Hub's design. Our recommendations are guided by the United Nations *Enable Project*, and will be detailed in the grading system explanation.

Construction

To meet the criteria listed above, there are two major design considerations: location and construction. These two conceptual components determine how, and how well, a design can address these criteria.

Location

Location is the first consideration when addressing the indicators listed. A vibrant location can enhance many of these factors, while a secluded location can detract from even the strongest design.

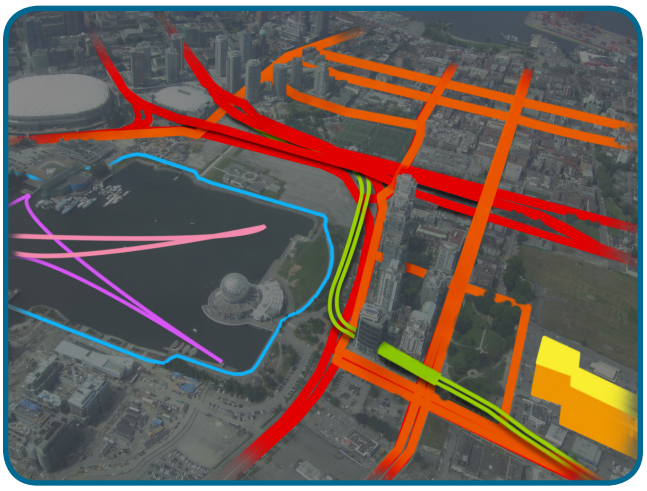
In searching for an ideal location for a Food Hub, we were drawn to the intersection of Main Street and Terminal Avenue. This neighbourhood is an unrecognized focal point of the city, a center of activity, commerce, and transportation – a hub. Where better to locate a valuable public resource aimed at connecting communities and individuals through food?

In our assessment, this location is unique

within the city of Vancouver: a hub of both transportation and culture. All conventional modes of transportation – pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, city bus, rapid transit, interurban bus, train, and watercraft – can conveniently reach this location, making

it one of the most accessible sites in Vancouver.

This location is also surrounded by



many of Vancouver's High-profile notable attractions, such as: BC Place, GM Place, and Science World draw many thousands of people to the area with events year-round. As well, the abundant cultural and city attractions draw countless locals and tourists into the neighbourhood. This diversity of venues and activities means that a wide spectrum of Vancouver's population regularly converges on this community. This capacity is not replicated anywhere else in the city.

Residential space in the Main and Terminal area is concentrated around False Creek. New and proposed apartment developments in the neighbourhood will bring many thousands of new residents into the community. The Olympic Village, and other Southeast False Creek developments, aim to provide housing for at least 10,000 more people. All of this development will dramatically increase the demand for a food vendor and public space in the area, meaning that a year-round community supporting venue such as a Food Hub will be a valued resource. As well, these new neighbourhoods are intended to showcase sustainable living; as such, the envisioned local Food Hub would fit perfectly into this community design.

Clearly, the main concern when looking at this location as a site for a future Food Hub is available space. Vacant land in this area does not exist and any available space is far too expensive to purchase. For this reason, we propose that False Creek itself, in the area of Northeast False Creek,

be considered as a viable option for a Food Hub.

At Northeast False Creek a vast expanse of concrete awaits further development. Property owner Concord Pacific, the Province of British Columbia, and the city of Vancouver have a vision for this location. We believe that a Food Hub can complement and enhance these plans. The following sketch is a visual representation of the current plan for Northeast False Creek:

For more details on the city's architectural plans, visit http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/nefc/creekside.htm)

Existing Architectual Plan for Northeast False Creek

Build vs Refurbish vs Float

When charged with the task of designing a Food Hub, we were presented with two viable options: build or refurbish.

We discovered that the main strength of building a new structure is the ability to create fresh new spaces using the best practices and materials, given the best knowledge available today. The negative impacts of such a construction are mostly environmental and relate to site development. For example, even the most state-of-the-art building will take more than sixty years to save the amount of energy lost by tearing down an existing building9.

This realization led us to explore refurbishment options. After careful review, we determined that recycling a building is far more socially and environmentally sustainable than constructing a new one. Embracing the history of a community by maintaining existing buildings and structures, and incorporating the stories they tell into a redesign, enriches both new and old. From recycling materials to pre-paid embodied carbon, the environmental benefits of refurbishment are significant. To put these benefits into perspective, according to Jonathan Narvey, a local advocate for heritage building protection, states that building a new 15,000 square metre commercial building requires the same amount of energy as driving a car 32,000 km a year for 730 years. Moreover, making use of existing land developments, rather than encroaching further onto diminishing wilderness and agricultural land, shows good ecological stewardship. The main hurdle when refurbishing a building is the design constraints posed by existing infrastructure; however, such challenges are often easily addressed with creativity and efficient use of space.

As our research progressed, a third option came to our attention: float. A floating hub not only addressed the landless issues explained above, but also allows for the incorporation of many ideal design features of both “build” and “refurbish” models. In this model we imagined refurbishing “Seaborne II” (also known as the “McBarge”) – the former floating McDonalds restaurant that debuted at Expo ‘86, but has sat unused and decaying ever since.

As well as being an elegant symbol for our evolution from a fast-food nation to a slow food one, the incorporation of this cultural and physical junk into the hub’s design also speaks to the evolution

Seaborne II ("The McBarge")

of Vancouver's collective consciousness, from a throwaway culture to one embracing sustainable solutions. We believe that creating a design that draws the strengths of both building and refurbishing will allow us to maximize the Food Hub's sustainability.

Making the Grade

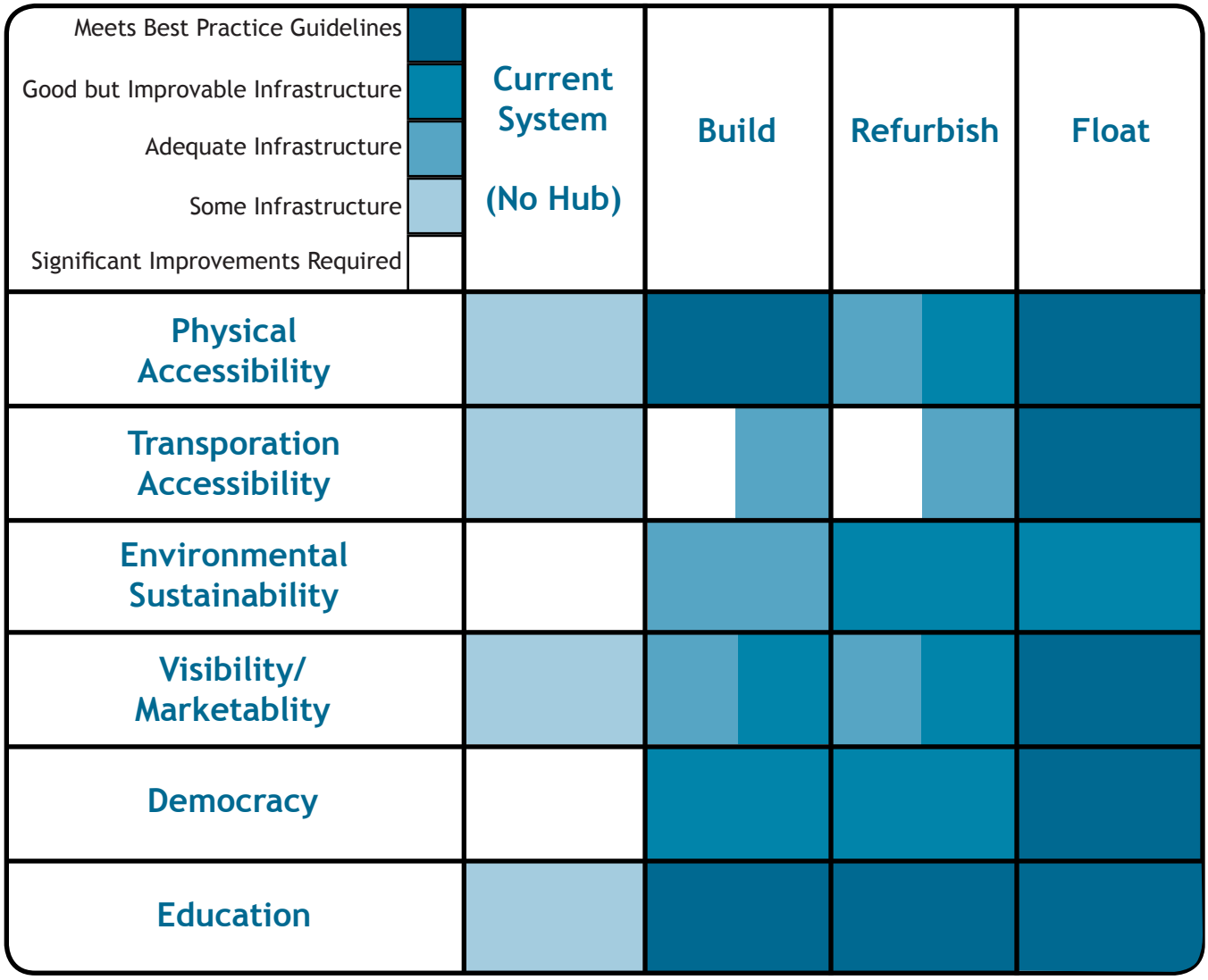
This grading system was created to assess the strengths of the three construction options: build, refurbish, and float. The system's indicators are based on the six best practices identified from our research of real world models. The grading scales used to measure each indicator are based on scales created by organizations including the *International Network for Environmental Management*, *Living Building Challenge* and the United Nations *Enable Project*.

Explaining the Grades

Physical Accessibility

The scale for this indicator was based entirely on the United Nations *Enable Project*. Here, considerations included availability, and quality of:

- Signage
- Pathways
- Curb ramps
- Parking



- Pedestrian routes
- Ramps
- Elevators and platform lifts
- Stairs and ramps
- Railings and handrails (one 0.7-.75 m from the floor for wheelchair support, one 0.85-0.95 m)
- Doors (swinging doors with opening mechanism, minimum width of 0.9 m when door is open)
- Rest rooms (at least one accessible compartment per public restroom)
- Corridors and hallways (recommended width is 1.8 m, minimum width is 1.5 m)
- Absence of obstructions (street furniture, traffic signs, direction signs, plants, trees, awnings, etc.)

In a refurbishment, one's capabilities to include physical access aides are limited by the design of the pre-existing structure. Thus, the option to build offers enhanced potential to meet these needs. We believe that with the proper considerations, the floating hub can also excel in creating physically accessible space.

Transportation Accessibility

To assess transportation accessibility of the three construction options, we examined where each model would likely be situated within the city. The architect, planners and engineers interviewed identified probable locations for building and refurbishing. These sites are located between Prior and Terminal streets in Strathcona, and in the Powell and Glen street area. The floating Hub is envisioned as a component of the redevelopment of Northeast False Creek. Grading of transportation accessibility was based on how many methods of transportation reached these sites. Preference was given to sites with high accessibility by pedestrian, bike and public transit. Here, the Hub excelled because of its central location. Such a location is difficult to replicate with building or refurbishing options, as centrality comes at a significant price. High traffic land is very costly. Thus, the building and refurbishing options are unable to compete with the transportation accessibility of the floating Hub.

Environmental Sustainability

The *Living Building Challenge* (LBC) guided our assessment of environmental sustainability. This decision was based on the recommendations of the sustainable engineer who advised our process for creating a grading system. We found LBC to be a superior performance standard over the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system. To obtain LBC certification, one must meet sixteen prerequisites. Alternately, LEED certification operates with a credit allocation system that is less stringent. As we believe that the Hub should embody the best practices of sustainability, LBC was used to grade environmental sustainability of the construction options.

The sixteen prerequisites for LBC, and the capacity of each construction option are listed below:

• Responsible Site Selection

All three options should be able to meet this prerequisite.

• Limits to Growth (No New Land)

All three options should be able to meet this prerequisite.

• Habitat Exchange

All three options should be able to meet this prerequisite.

• 100% of building's energy comes from on-site renewable sources

The plans for the building option suggest it will aim full energy self-sufficiency. However, as the plan involves 30 ft. walls of window, onsite energy sources will struggle to heat this building. Further, as two walls of window face South and East, the solar capture of this structure will be significant. Additional energy will be required to cool the facilities. Thus, we do not feel confident that this model will be able to meet this prerequisite.

Similarly, refurbishing is vulnerable to the inefficiencies of the pre-existing structure.

Within the floating option, multiple sources of on-site energy have been incorporated. Additionally, sitting on False Creek provides ability for a water-driven building cooling system.

• Materials Red List

Both building and floating should be able to meet this prerequisite. However, the barge, that is intended to be included in the plan, will need inspection to confirm that it includes no Red List materials.

Adhering to the Red List is increasingly difficult for the refurbish option. The decisions of the original builders can significantly impact the refurbishments intent to meet this prerequisite.

• Construction Carbon Footprint

As the embedded carbon of the barge was accounted for in the 1980s, it has an immediately lessened carbon footprint.

The refurbish option has similar potential, while building will have a substantially larger footprint. As noted at the start of this section, the inputs required to build a sustainable structure are arguably unsustainable.

• Responsible Industry

Build and float should be able to meet this prerequisite. However, refurbish will be unable to account for the pre-existing wood in its structure.

• Appropriate Materials/Service Radius

All three options may be able to meet this prerequisite, which designates that the majority of materials for construction must be locally sourced.

• Leadership in Construction Waste

The refurbish option will struggle with this prerequisite. On a smaller scale, the barge will also be required to determine alternate destinations for its waste products.

• Zero Net Water

All three options should be able to meet this prerequisite.

• Sustainable Water Discharge

All three options should be able to meet this prerequisite.

• Civilized Environment

Both the build and float options have operable windows built into their designs. The refurbish option is, again, limited by the design of the building it uses. While changes are possible to the structure, they will come at an additional cost.

• Healthy Air: Source Control

All three options should be able to meet this prerequisite.

• Ventilation

All three options should be able to meet this prerequisite.

• Beauty and Spirit

The float option incorporates a piece of refuse into its design, transforming it into a symbol of ingenuity, and hope for the future. Redesigning the barge as a part of reviving the Northeast False Creek area speaks to the capacity of the human spirit, while fostering the growth of social capital in the neighbourhood.

The design proposed for the build option is fairly generic. In addition to potentially creating social access barriers, this standardized vision of a Food Hub does not showcase creativity or ingenuity.

• Inspires and Educates

The location of the float option increases its potential to serve as a beacon within the community. This capacity increases its ability to showcase sustainable building practices, and for the community to witness its construction.

Both the build and refurbish options are capable of including educational components in the construction, but may be less visible.

Visibility/Marketability

Visibility and marketability rely partially on project location.

While build and refurbish have the potential to maintain some visibility and marketability, the float's location gives this option significant advantage.

Democracy

How is the community involved in the development of the Food Hub?

The float option proposes community involvement in its design process, ensuring both transparency and cooperation.

As the build designs are complete, we assume that the democratic capacity of this design is significantly diminished.

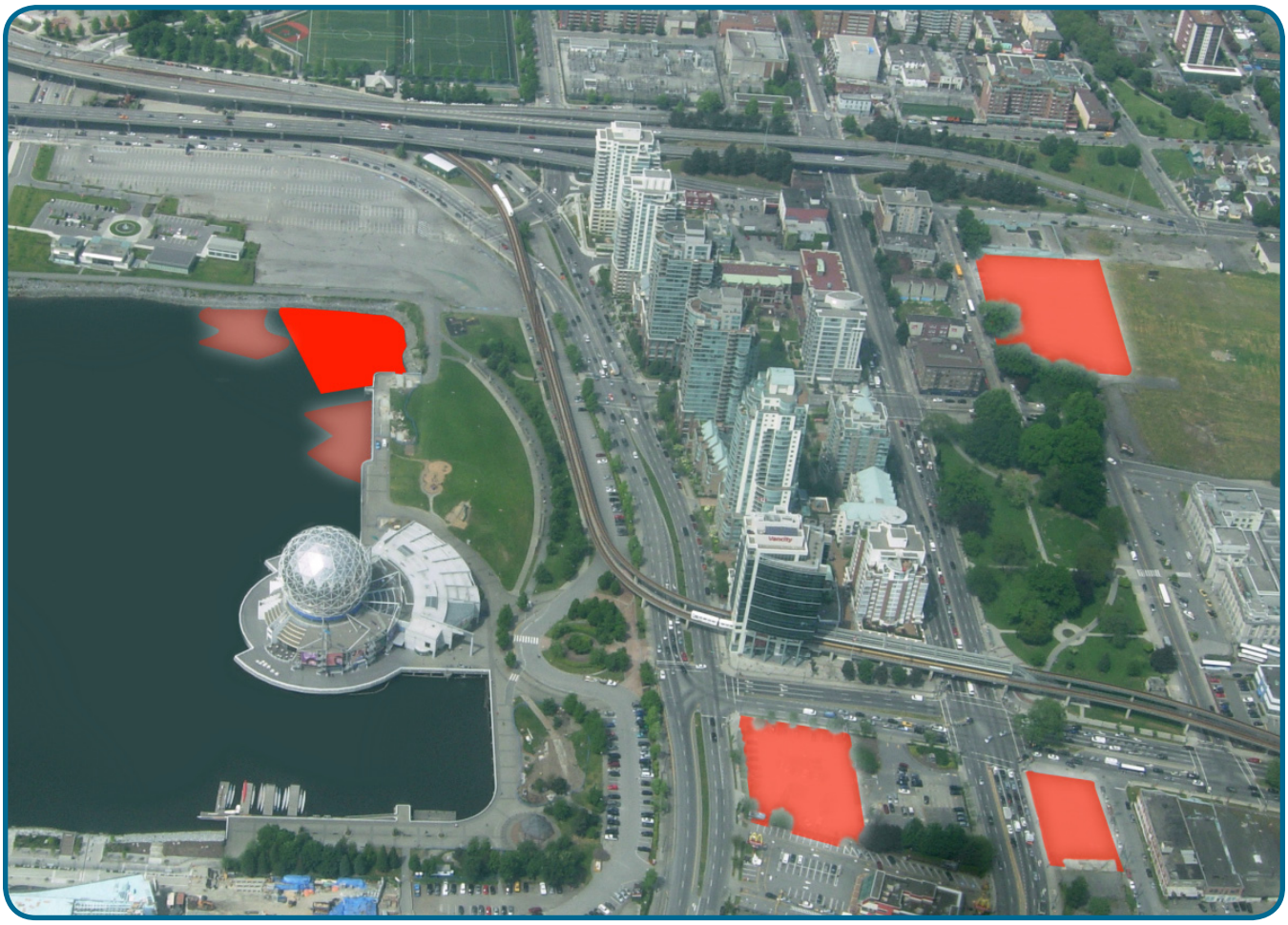
Education

All construction options are capable of including room for educational opportunities.

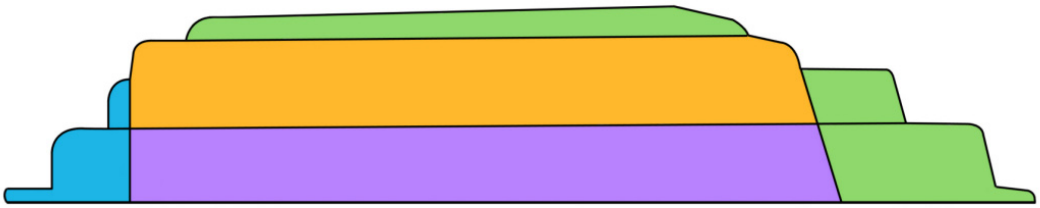
Disclaimer

The grades assigned within the matrix were guided by the inputs and expertise of engineers and planners; however, all participants recognized the difficulty in assessing projects for which there are many unknown variables. The floating Hub excels because initiatives to address many of the criteria have been integrated in its design. There is potential for building and refurbishing options to meet higher standards in their designs, as well. However, some criteria are inherently more difficult for these projects to meet. Examples include transportation accessibility and democratic process, as detailed above.

Potential Designs of the New City Market Food Hub



This map shows the multi-location strategy similar to that of The Stop, Toronto's urban Food Hub. This model allows for multiple sites to be used in order to maximize effectiveness, accessibility and building cost.



Processing Kitchen

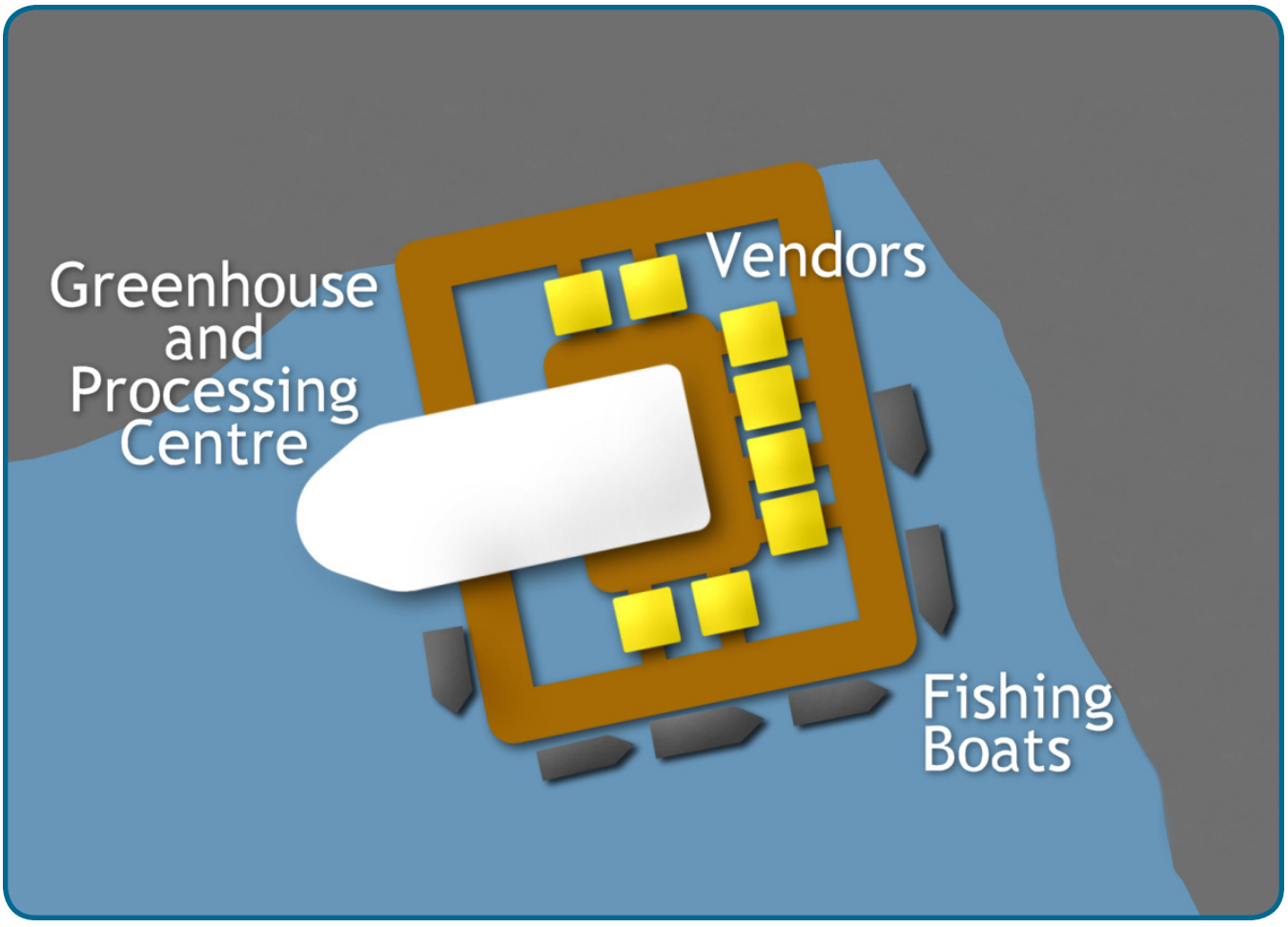
Market

Agriculture Space

Public Space

This model shows a plan for the barge. Space is made within the existing structure for a processing kitchen, public and retail activities, as well as greenhouses and rooftop gardens.

In this model, boardwalks link the public with retail and public spaces, and vendors with processing and storage space. Maximizing the amount of available boardwalk allows space for private and commercial boats to make use of the Food Hub as well.



This design imagines the Food Hub as an multi-structure layout incorporating the barge (as office and research space), multi-storey floating workshops and residences, commercial and public space, as well as areas designated for fishing vessels to dock and sell their catch direct to the public. This model also seeks to maximize greenspace with ground level, rooftop, and vertical gardens that incorporate native species and agricultural plant varieties.

Recommendations

Full Assessment of Options

We believe that the first step forward for this plan should be a total assessment of the three construction options, including location considerations. This assessment must include:

- a study of cost for land versus existing building versus barge
- a study of the cost to operate the three options

Based on this assessment, a construction option and location must be chosen, and an in-depth plan created.
The estimated cost for this assessment – based on interviews with engineers – is between $40,000 and $60,000.

Connect with Potential Partners

From our research, we have identified several potential partners to engage with in the creation process.
This list includes, but is not limited to:

- Lighthouse Sustainable Building Centre
- Vancity
- BC Hydro
- City of Vancouver's Sustainable Development Department
- Oakland Green Jobs Corps (a potential sister project)
- City Farmer

Stronger Support for Local Food Communication Programs

We believe that British Columbia should adopt a model similar to Ontario's *Foodland* program. The provincial government should champion this initiative, as it is in their interest to encourage food security awareness.

Increased Understanding of Sustainability

This project must showcase sustainable practices. To do so, we encourage the designers involved to move beyond LEED certification. We believe that true sustainability embraces the use of waste materials, and adheres to the prerequisites of LBC.

Conclusion

Creating space for local food in the minds and the fridges of the Lower Mainland residents, requires an inviting and innovative building design. Based on our research, we

believe that the floating model has the best potential to engage multiple audiences. The proposed use of the Seaborne II invigorates community interest on multiple levels. This building is a beloved part of Vancouver's history from Expo '86. Not only is interest peaked from re-introducing a familiar, but forgotten structure, but also its transformation has great potential for exciting the community. Including the barge is a symbol of a new way of thinking. We are at a critical point where we must address our unsustainable, and unhealthy habits. Redesigning the barge shows a move from fast to slow food, from throwaway culture to systems of reinvention and reuse.

The location of northeast False Creek furthers this story. Development of this area is currently impeded by the toxic soil that has been dumped there. To revive this area, and its soil, speaks further to moving forward through vision and accountability: solving our problems, rather than ignoring them.

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Conclusion

This report has showcased the unique demands and advantages of the Lower Mainland's food requirements, and has indicated the existence of a great need for a local Food Hub. This Hub must be economically and socially viable, while also able to nurture the growth of local food production.

The establishment of the *New City Market* (Food Hub) will create a unique opportunity to fill the widening gaps in the Lower Mainland's local food system. Its creation would help to unite all who are passionate about food and transform our food system into one that embraces health and sustainability. While doing so, the Hub would stimulate the local economy, and may also stand as an example to inspire other cities, just as the programs studied in this report have inspired us.

This report recommends that the New City Market benefit food producers by creating a space for shared resources, labour pooling and for general information and education. Moreover, producers have indicated a growing need for shared transportation, packaging, and processing facilities. In providing these facilities to the community, the New City Market will support local production. To further promote the presence of the Hub, an online identity should be created which will make the producers and the market more socially accessible.

The Market must act as a community connector, not only through its services, but also by using a socially oriented governance model. An integrated governance model consisting of a non-profit and cooperative structures would facilitate social inclusion, financial sustainability, democracy, and also serve the educational and retail needs of the Lower Mainland.

The Market would bring the community together, be more environmentally sound than our current food distirbution system, and empower community members to play an active role in their local food system.

With our food systems as they presently are, we truly are at a fork in the road. By suggesting, the location of the False Creek area, our goal is to connect multiple

communities. Incorporating the Seaborne II/"McBarge," which has been sitting idle since Expo'86, is about more than creating space for local food. It's about taking a piece of cultural and physical junk and turning it into a highly visible test site for green collar jobs to revive our construction industry, a public space that reawakens the bonds of community, and a landmark symbolizing Vancouver's leap into a sustainable future.

We invite leaders at city hall, innovators in industry, and the community as a whole to join us in envisioning a stronger, more resilient future for the Lower Mainland's food systems.

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About the Authors

This report was collectively researched and written by twenty students in Simon Fraser University's 'Semester in Dialogue' program under the guidance of our instructors: Siobhan Ashe, Herb Barbolet, and Janet Moore. 'Semester in Dialogue' provides an intensive, cohort-based learning experience for students from a variety of academic backgrounds. A new topic is introduced each semester, providing the class with a wealth of information and encouraging intense exploration and critical analysis. Over the course of seven weeks, we have dissected the complex and often controversial topic of food, exploring issues ranging from local food security to genetically modified foods to the plight of BC's Agricultural Land Reserve.

The learning environment within this course is unique in its emphasis on dialogue, a process of communication involving an open sharing of ideas and information with as much emphasis on listening as on speaking. Dialogue is grounded in a philosophy that encourages individual talents to be shared and developed creatively through group processes and interactions. This results in a unique and highly beneficial learning experience.

The topic of food provided rich and fertile ground to facilitate meaningful connections between students and the wider community, as numerous guests were invited to the course to participate in dialogues on various aspects of the food system. This provided an opportunity for us, as students, to collaborate with community members on real world projects and problems, forging meaningful connections between academics, activists and every day citizens. In the last seven weeks, we as a class have devoted much time and energy to exploring an exciting, food-centered community project, in collaboration with Local Food First and the Vancouver Food Policy Council. This report represents the fruits of our labour.

Bon appetite!

SFU Semester in Dialogue Cohort,
Summer 2009

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