

# Local Foodsteps

## Final Report

Colette Cartier | Sabrina Hauser | Larry Ho | Lihwen Hsu



Signs in your community pointing you to local,  
sustainable food assets.

**CityStudio**

December 10, 2013

# Press Release

CityStudio announces the installation of a wayfinding project called Local Foodsteps to increase the awareness of local food assets in Vancouver's neighbourhoods. Signs attached on poles in the city point to a range of places including urban farms, grocery stores, restaurants, community gardens. The pilot project will be installed on the corner of 4th Ave and Yew St in Kitsilano, being the first of what the project plans to have many around Vancouver.

As City Council recently passed the Vancouver Food Strategy on January 30th, 2013 the community is buzzing with groundwork to further the city's goal to become a global leader in urban food systems. Local Foodsteps aims to increase the visibility of the local food system with all its assets and connect individuals to it.

Realizing the lack of awareness of local food around us, Local Foodsteps highlights existing community food assets in our neighbourhoods such as restaurants using local produce, to build the capacity for people to identify them as they are walking by the poles. The project group consisting of four students from two institutions (Colette Cartier (Emily Carr), Sabrina Hauser (SFU), Lihwen Hsu (Emily Carr), and Larry Ho (SFU)) believes Vancouver needs to spark a shift in the mindset of our citizens towards the local food economy in order to move towards greater resiliency. "Our goal is to provide people with the opportunity to slow

down, encourage curiosity about the local food system and choose to buy local more often," said Lihwen Hsu "all we want people to do is to take that first step and point them towards the right direction."

If groups and individuals would like to highlight themselves as a community food asset on this project, they are invited to send an email to [vanlocalfood@gmail.com](mailto:vanlocalfood@gmail.com).

CityStudio Vancouver is an energetic hub of learning and leadership where students design and implement Greenest City projects. CityStudio is co-led by Duane Elverum (Emily Carr University of Art and Design) and Dr. Janet Moore (Simon Fraser University-Centre for Dialogue). The project is a collaboration of the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC), British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Langara College, Simon Fraser University (SFU), University of British Columbia (UBC) and Vancouver Community College (VCC). The project is supported by Vancouver's Campus City Collaborative (C3).

For more information please visit:

<http://www.citystudiovancouver.com> | @citystudiovancouver | [facebook.com/CityStudioVancouver](https://facebook.com/CityStudioVancouver)

or contact:

Lena Soots, CityStudio Coordinator

604.874.6401 , [citystudiocoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:citystudiocoordinator@gmail.com)



CityStudio launches Local Foodsteps, a signage and wayfinding project pointing to local food assets.

# Project Summary

## What

Local Foodsteps is a wayfinding and awareness project that points to existing sustainable local food assets in Vancouver's neighbourhoods. Signs installed on street poles and painted "foodsteps" on the ground aim to increase the awareness of local food assets in neighbourhoods and get people to actually go and find them.

## Who

This project did not end up having a direct CoV staff partner, however we got in touch with several individuals including Wendy Mendes and James O'Neill (Social Policy), David Rootman (RIL Development, managing the property of launch-site).

## When

A prototype was presented at CityHall on November 29th (see picture below). An Installation of a pilot is planned for Spring 2014 in Kitsilano.



## Where

The pilot is planned to be located in Kitsilano on the corner of 4th Ave and Yew St. This location is in the middle of an 8-block business strip, offering a high flow of pedestrians and car traffic in the area. 16,170 employees work in this district and its surrounding 1 km radius. The area is also home to young adults and the young at heart who enjoy a carefree lifestyle. There are three community parks as well as a corridor for cars, bikes, and foot traffic. The proposed launch site is on a property under RIL Development, managed by David Rootman.

## Why

Local Foodsteps supports sustainable food habits by creating curiosity and raising awareness in the individual. The project aims to motivate people to take a first step and change their habits around sustainable food consumption. Currently, the average meal travels 1200 km from the farm to plate (David Suzuki Foundation, n.d.). Promoting local food consumption not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions but also has an impact on the global level but also supports the local economy.





# Local **Foodsteps**

## **Signs in your community pointing you to sustainable food assets.**

**Colette Cartier** (Emily Carr) | **Sabrina Hauser** (SFU) | **Barry Ho** (Emily Carr) | **Lihwen Hsu** (SFU)



## **Executive Summary**

Aiming to empower people to eat more sustainably in Vancouver, Local Foodsteps is a pilot project that fills the gap in the local food system, connecting neighbours with their community food assets nearby. By installing signs at a central hub, the pilot aims to increase awareness of what these food assets are, as well as the distance they are from them. Stemming from the Greenest City Action Plan to have Vancouver become the global leader on an urban food system, this community-based project introduces a artistic engagement of how we view signs, creating an interactive and symbolic footprint path with the signs.

## **Site Selection**

Kitsilano 4th Ave was determined to be a good launch point as it is enclosed in a public realm on private property. Kitsilano 4th Ave has a high level of walkability and bike traffic, presence of local food assets, and has a presence of a transportation line. There are also implementation plans for 3 more neighbourhoods in Vancouver.

## **Stewardship Plan**

A guide will be developed for other neighbourhoods to create their own community-based wayfinding project. Local Foodsteps will continue to work on the engagement with neighbourhoods in Vancouver to produce wayfinding tools to support their food assets.

## **Consultations**

**James O'Neill** | City of Vancouver, Social Policy  
**Emi Do** | Coordinator, Metro Vancouver City Farms  
**Zsuzsi Fodor** | Coordinator, Westside Food Collaborative

Why

The City of Vancouver has identified that there are not enough opportunities to share knowledge and build connections about local food within the wider community. By creating wayfinding signs that increase the access to information, the project fills the gap and connects people to key local food initiatives.



# Project Details

## Executive Summary

Aiming to empower people to eat more sustainably in Vancouver, Local Foodsteps is a pilot program that fills a gap in the local food system, connecting neighbours with local food assets in their communities. By installing signs at a central hub, the project aims to increase awareness of what kind of local food assets are around, and how to get to them. Stemming from the Greenest City Action Plan to have Vancouver become the global leader on an urban food system, this community-based project introduces an artistic engagement of how we view signs, creating an interactive and symbolic footstep path with the signs.

## Project Team

Sabrina Hauser, Lihwen Hsu, Colette Cartier, Larry Ho (left to right).



## Methodology

### Formation of the Project Group

Local Foodsteps was formed in October 2013 from a shared interest between community gatherings and sustainable food in Vancouver. A creative and collaborative consensus was used in the iterative process of narrowing down the project. The group pursued the design of a wayfinding concept pilot to improve the awareness of local food assets in food-friendly neighbourhoods. The team aims to address the question, 'How can we point people to local food that is accessible around them?' while supporting the goals of the Vancouver Food Strategy.

### Research and Conversations with Potential Partners

Our team began an extensive search of signs and symbols around the world where we documented the various styles, locations, interactions, and any negative warnings that had emerged through past projects. Moreover, we looked at important general facts on sustainable and local food assets as well as specifics on Vancouver's food system. At the same time, we searched for sites in Vancouver in multiple neighbourhoods, considering the frequency of car, pedestrian, and bike traffic; presence of a transportation hub; and presence of local food assets. We visited four potential sites and had chosen the site in Kitsilano to pursue as it had the perfect blend of foot traffic, food assets, and presence of bus/car traffic.

In October, the group sent out emails to community practitioners who have shared visions or worked with CityStudio in the past. Reaching out to more than a dozen individuals, we received interest from Emi Do, of



Yummy Yards. Knowing that the partnerships with city staff and a community steward can be critical for the success of a project, we sought out the partnership with Wendy Mendes, Food Systems Planner for the Social Planning Department. Unfortunately, she was unable to collaborate.

On November 1st, we had a conversation with James O'Neill over the phone about project ideas and current work that the city is working on. O'Neill had acknowledged that the connection that improve Vancouver's food system because there is a lack of marketing / access to information for these community resources. The lack of access to information continues to be seen across Vancouver, limiting the awareness of these food initiatives. By attaching ourselves to the idea of incorporating this need, the group began finding best

practices and methods of wayfinding from across the world and moved forward without a city staff partner.

On November 19th, the group spoke to Zsuzhi Fodor, coordinator of the Westside Food Collaborative, to identify which food assets in the community would benefit most from being on the signs and why. Realizing that there are too many food assets to fit on the sign to parlay effective communication, we wanted to pursue and share the knowledge of initiatives that are leaders that share more than their contribution to the environment, but also to the community. We also discussed the topic of site locations of the sign, realizing the need for private property sponsorship that exists in the public realm for everyone to access.

### Design Process and Prototype

During design, we went through a process of brainstorming, drawing, prototyping, and re-designing to come to our final pilot. Considering the attributes of contrast, message, visibility, and associations with emotions and information, we wanted signs that left a lasting impact on people wandering by. We wanted to develop something that is replicable, aesthetically-pleasing, and easy to manage.

The team established a prototype for the launch of Hubbub, a forum of city and academic engagement in a public space, hosted by CityStudio in City Hall. The prototype was exposed to approximately 200 individuals of city staff, guests, faculty staff and students from all six institutions of Vancouver. This exposure led to conversations for further connections that can be established to pilot the project in other neighbourhoods and partners for sourcing materials and content for signage.

## Project Outcomes & Impact

The Local Foodsteps prototype at City Hall was a success for its ability to address a real gap in Vancouver's current food system, and brought this to the attention of a highly motivated and empowered group of people. The goal at the beginning of this project was to acknowledge that local food is readily available in this city, and to make it more accessible by increasing its visibility to the consumer. The project has highlighted over 100 local food assets within the relatively small radius of Vancouver, all of which were categorized into type of asset, and specific location based on neighbourhood boundaries. This compilation of information makes the project very easy to scale up; the ideal outcome would have these signs installed within every neighbourhood within Vancouver. In this context, Local Foodsteps has contributed to the first step in addressing a greater spatial awareness of Vancouver's local food system. The project shows how the simplicity of creative wayfinding can have very powerful consequences, in a way that is very low impact on the city's resources in terms of getting the project on the ground.

## Key Lessons & Challenges

The site of installation is integral for the success of the project will be determined by its exposure to the public. The primary concern of the City was the liability of what the sign contained. In the conversation

with O'Neill, O'Neill had acknowledged that there would be political pushback as this installation will favour one business over another. The nature of the signs promotes food initiatives that can be private businesses, creating bias in our selection process. This prompted us to reach out to the Business Improvement Association to ensure shared agreement for the overall economic improvement of the neighbourhood.

We found that by locating a site on private property, the liability to the City would be decreased and stewardship would be easier to attain. There is the need for permits (which involves an consensual agreement between Local Foodsteps and the property owner), and insurance still exist. the impact will last longer with a steward. We then aimed to have sites that were supportive of community-minded projects, located on private property but publically accessible.

City staff often go through grant review seasons which take up a lot of their time. It is important to note this and work around the time, either contacting them before or after so that they know what they are capable of partnering up with.

Another challenge for our project laid in designing a mounting system for the wayfinding signs. In addition to addressing issues such as ease of assembly, and being able to attach signs in multiple directions, we were challenged to create a system that can be adapted to the range of street poles in our City. Pole qualities that had an effect on our



design consideration were diameter size, cross-sectional shape (round, octagonal, even rectangular). These factors, combined with concerns relating to ease of assembly and modification, affected the possible angles for attaching the individual signs.

## Current Project Status

The pilot plan is to be installed in January 2014 on the corner of West 4th Ave and Yew St in Kitsilano. The group achieved a prototype that was showcased at the Hubbub event at City Hall on November 29th, 2013 and gathered reflections on the thoughts of users. We intended to pilot the project in December 2013, but decided to maintain the relationship of the property owner and plan the installment of the pilot for January. The intended production of the signs for the W 4th pilot has yet to begin and will commence when the designs reach the Sign Department at the City. The project plan will consist of multiple parts including production and post-production in the Kitsilano neighbourhood. The production and installment is aimed to take place in the first quarter of 2014. The post-production will consist of impact evaluation to measure for success in the engagement of users to food initiatives. By evaluating the effectiveness, we think that we will be able to prove the ability for Local Foodsteps to be scaled up for implementation in other neighbourhoods.

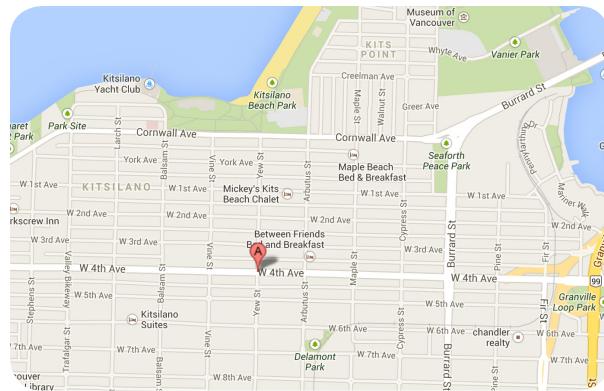
## Stewardship Plan

We have put in place a stewardship plan that consists of three parts.

1. Build a comprehensive document that lays out how to build this project in your neighbourhood through the planning and implementation process, including best practices and failures that have happened in the past. This guiding document will include design features, mapping instructions, per-

mit/insurance/bylaws to consider, and various types of signs and structural support. The guide will be published in 2014.

2. An agreement will be drawn between members of Local Foodsteps and the property manager at RIL Development to indicate the details of ownership, leasee, installation and removal costs and responsibility, and insurance. This agreement will also include an agreement for a undertaking letter by the property manager in order to obtain a permit for the sign and abide by City of Vancouver bylaws for signs.
3. Due to the longevity of the school course, the project ends on the December 10, 2013. At this time, two of the team members have expressed an interest to commit to taking the project further. Details of responsibilities have yet to be determined. The other



two members have expressed interest, but are not ready to voice a commitment at this time. These members would have first right of refusal for roles/responsibilities in the next phase of the project. The team will take the necessary steps to install the pilot and evaluate the outcomes. The steps include: securing funding through grants and partnerships within the neighbourhood; drawing up a contract agreement with the property owner; installing the pilot; evaluating the outcomes; and removal of the pilot.

## Project Reflection

Reflecting on the entire progression of the project up to this point, our design process was very thorough and detail oriented. One of the key challenges we faced occurred before the form and direction of the project actually came to be; in the early stages, the focus was on finding a project partner and building a project off of a mutual need to address key issues about accessibility of local food assets. This stage consisted of many conversations with members of the community who we intended to take an active role in our project. This was a long process of correspondence that often resulted in a dead end and slight frustrations. The experience was very valuable, and important to understanding certain mindsets around the issue that we are trying to address, however, if we were to do anything differently, we would suggest going forth with our own design plans, and not waiting long periods for a community partner to join our mission. Had the actual prototyping process occurred at an earlier stage, we could have implemented the project in a few different locations and gained valuable, measurable data, in terms of how the general public will react to the project. This is a key piece of information we plan to collect in the 2014, but could have been tested at a smaller scale, earlier on.

## Barrier Identification

The project has characteristics that need to fit the following city bylaws: Sign Bylaw 6510 and obtain a sign permit. The following requirements can be found online with the city's website. The city needs to know that this comes from a community-based intention and should not fit into commercial sign bylaws as indicated. There needs to be a separate formula that allows for projects like these fit into our community easier with more permanence. The group knows that the city has great intentions to improve its action on greenest city goals. However, there is a need for current status quo to be maintained and conditions for installation and removal needs to be adopted into the design of the beta test. In consideration of designing the beta test for the outdoors, the material needed for the signs need to withstand weathering. Materials such as plastic or aluminum is standard for street signs, however is more costly. Due to high cost for plastic and aluminum, the design was constricted as the the team had a fixed budget.



## Budget

We anticipate certain costs for the project's next phase. At this time, choice of material and service of further iterations have yet to be determined; therefore, we are not able to include those numbers in the presentation of our budget.

## Local Foodsteps Budget

As of 12/8/2013

Accountant: Larry Ho

	CityStudio Grant				
	<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>			<b>\$0.00</b>	
	<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>SUPPLIER</b>	<b>QUANTITY</b>		
<i>Wayfinding &amp; Signage</i>					
1	1/8" baltic birch plywood (signs)	ECUAD	20 ft <sup>2</sup>	\$12.19	
2	Metal gear clamps	Home Depot	2	\$4.42	
3	Wood (beech and other for mounting system)	ECUAD		\$7.00	no receipt
4	Laser-cutting	SFU	4.5 hr		in kind
5	Screws	Private	40 pcs		in kind
6	Wooden Pole	Private	-		borrowed
7	Tree Stand	Private	-		borrowed
<i>Foodsteps Footprints</i>					
8	Cardstock	Private	2 ft <sup>2</sup>		in kind
9	Lasercutting (2x \$11)	ECUAD		\$22.00	
10	Paint	Color Bomb			in kind
11	Sponge	Opus		\$1.50	
12	Floor Panels	Private			borrowed
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES:					\$47.11
<i>Advertising &amp; Other Display</i>					
13	Postcard Printing	Private		\$90.00	
14	Burlap	Private			in kind
15	Vegetables				in kind
TOTAL ADVERTISING EXPENSES:					\$90.00
<i>Contingency</i>					
SUBTOTAL EXPENSES:					\$137.10
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>			<b>\$137.10</b>	

# Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Duane Elverum, Lena Soots, Lisa Papania and Janet Moore for the support throughout our project, the School of Interactive Arts & Technology (SIAT) and Maja Jensen for laser cutting the signs, CityStudio guests Jenny Moore and Doug Smith for valuable information, as well as James O'Neill and Emi Do for helpful advice.

# References

City of Vancouver (2013). Vancouver Food Strategy. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-food-strategy-final.PDF>

Serecon Management Consulting Inc. for Vancouver Food Policy Council, Vancouver, BC (2009). Food Secure Vancouver. <http://www.sfu.ca/dialog/undergrad/readings2009-2/Food+Secure+Vancouver.pdf>

City of Vancouver (2013). Sign Bylaw 6510  
<http://vancouver.ca/your-government/sign-bylaw.aspx>

City of Vancouver (2012a). Greenest City Action Plan.  
<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Greenest-city-action-plan.pdf>

City of Vancouver (2012b). Sign Permit  
<http://vancouver.ca/doing-business/sign-permit.aspx>

David Suzuki Foundation (n.d.). Food and Climate Change.



Colette Cartier | Emily Carr University of Art + Design

Larry Ho | Emily Carr University of Art + Design

Lihwen Hsu | Simon Fraser University

Sabrina Hauser | Simon Fraser University