

# ZONED OUT

A guide to housing for students, by students

A group of students are gathered around a long wooden table, focused on a large-scale architectural drawing. One student in the foreground is using a black marker to draw on the plan, which shows various building footprints and site layouts. Other students are looking on, some holding pieces of paper or using tools like scissors. The background shows a classroom or workshop setting with windows and posters.

Christian Devasagayam, Meredith Gillespie, and Julia Scott Lenz  
Final Report | December 3, 2018

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## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge that our course and project took place on the traditional, unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, which includes the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. We are honoured and privileged to work, learn and play on these lands.

We would also like to thank the following organizations and individuals who helped make our project possible:

Our course instructors, Dr. Janet Moore, Holly Schmidt, and Adrian Sinclair, whose guidance was indispensable. The CityStudio team of Duane Elverum, Miriam Esquitin, Ileana Costrut, and Rochelle Heinrichs for their continued support. CityStudio is an innovation hub where city staff, students, faculty and community work together to design experimental projects that make Vancouver more sustainable, liveable and joyful. It is a collaboration between the City of Vancouver and seven post-secondary institutions.

Cory Dobson, who was the Fall 2018 Semester at CityStudio cohort's staff contact at the City of Vancouver. Cory provided insight as a City staff member and helped connect us with our project stakeholders.

Jeanne Sedun, who is the Provincial Lead for the Student Housing Strategy at the Ministry of Advanced Education. Jeanne informed us about the provincial allocation of money for student housing.

Tracey Mason-Innes, who is the Director of Residence and Housing at Simon Fraser University Residence and Housing. Tracey shared her extensive knowledge about SFU's housing.

Dan Garrison, Senior Planner, and Chris Mah, Planning Assistant, at the City of Vancouver. Chris and Dan gave us feedback for our project and advice on our next steps.

Maura Chestnutt, who is the Vice President Operations and Strategic Initiatives at Catalyst Community Developments Society. Maura provided us with a developer's perspective on student housing.

Luke Harrison, who is the Director and Chief Executive Officer at the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency. Luke advised us on how to define affordability and how to create a business plan.

Max Holmes and Christina Illnitchi at the UBC Alma Mater Society and Jasdeep Gill at the Simon Fraser Student Society who informed us about the work that the student societies are doing on providing students with affordable housing options.

Yuri Artibise, who is the Director of Vancouver City Planning Commission. Yuri gave us

information on the co-op model of housing along with other housing alternatives.

## **Team Members**

### **Christian Devasagayam**

Geography and Urban Studies Student at SFU - christian.devas@gmail.com

After almost nine years of student life, Christian is ready to make the most of his time at CityStudio. With a passion for civic initiatives and human geography, he hopes to embrace the opportunities at CityStudio to work with a team and create lasting impact in our community.

Inspired by individuals dedicated to building livable, green city spaces, Christian has a particular interest in how we can work to evolve transit in Vancouver. He would love to take part in crafting a more streamlined approach to transit planning, which he ultimately believes would yield an advanced system for our city.

### **Meredith Gillespie**

Recent graduate from Geography at UBC - gillespiemeredit@gmail.com

Meredith Gillespie is a UBC Geography graduate who is finding new ways of learning and practical applications of her degree before getting her masters. This program stood out for her because of the small class sizes, which allow her to make strong professional and personal relationships. On a professional level, Meredith hopes to gain experience making change in her city that reflect what she has learned in her degree. She is hoping that this experience allows her to gain professional confidence in making decisions and sharing ideas as well as experience working in government.

### **Julia Scott Lenz**

Communications and International Studies at SFU - jscottlenz@gmail.com

Julia was born in Ontario and raised on Vancouver Island and came to the Lower Mainland to study Communications, but has shifted her focus towards Urban Studies. Her work and volunteer experience has lead to a love for service learning and community development, and she hopes to further this through Semester in Dialogue. She has a love for travelling and recently finished a semester abroad in the Netherlands where she had a many shifts in perspective regarding how we in different cultures move through space. She is interested in

pursuing this further in her education.

## **Project Summary**

### **Vision**

Students are a crucial element of Vancouver's population. With the city's universities enrolling more students each year, demand for housing is only increasing. We were tasked with addressing the barriers to creating the housing students need. Our project is Zoned Out, which proposes student inclusion in Vancouver's zoning. By creating student housing as a use within a bylaw, students will be enshrined in the city's zoning. In this way, we will ensure students' housing needs are fulfilled. We see our proposal of zoning for students as contributing to Vancouver's upcoming city-wide plan.

To propose this student housing use, we developed a Student Housing Guide which comprises our research from the various post secondary institutions, governmental housing strategies and other external organisations, as well as the results from our Design Jam. This guide has been distributed to relevant city staff who comprise the Housing Strategy team, as well as to other key stakeholders like universities with student housing and other housing related organisations in Vancouver.

### **Context**

The Metro Vancouver region is in the midst of a housing crisis. Young people and more specifically, post-secondary students are experiencing strenuous and precarious living situations. The difficulty of finding affordable living has led to many students moving further away from Vancouver and their campuses. As a result, many students spend significant lengths of time commuting on a daily basis. According to Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, there are currently 105,000 registered full time students in the Lower Mainland (BC Government, 2017). There is on campus housing but it long waitlist and lack of supply don't go enough to address the current reality that students face. Students need off campus housing but in order to afford this, over two thirds of students work while attending school. Many of the post secondary institutions have campuses in Vancouver's Downtown core such as BCIT, UBC, SFU, and VFS, but there is only one official student housing building near these sites, SFU's Charles Chang Innovation Centre. However, rooms here are very limited and extremely expensive.

# Staff, Support, Site, Stewardship + Stakeholders, Scalability

## Staff

Our work has been guided by Cory Dobson, Dan Garrison and Chris Mah at the City of Vancouver. Cory was instrumental in sharing knowledge about Vancouver's city-wide plan, as well as connecting us with project stakeholders. His overall insights into our project were also incredibly helpful. Dan provided us with pertinent information about the practical application of our project, and of the current housing realities people face in the city. Chris asked critical questions about our project which helped us uncover weaknesses in our work and address them.

We identified the Housing Vancouver Strategy as the most appropriate city strategy to examine. In the strategy, indigenous, seniors, and homeless populations are addressed in particular as vulnerable populations, but students are not identified in the same way. Our goal is to provide the City of Vancouver with our research on students' housing needs, and for this research to inform a student section in a future amendment to the strategy.



## Support

All of the costs for our project went towards the design jam that we held on November 16th, 2018. These supplies came to under \$200, and included incentives for our guests like food and drinks. It also included supplies for the designs themselves, such as materials from Urban Source, a local shop that sells upcycled art supplies, and Dollarama, a Canadian-owned discount retail store.

## Site

The bulk of our project was in the form of an event called Students Improving Housing Design Jam, which was held at CityStudio. We used the CityStudio space to host our design jam because it is an accessible and welcoming space, as well as free of cost. The space itself was filled with tables that worked well for the creation of designs, and we had a separate space for

our opening presentation. The design jam could be replicated in any open space that had similar furniture. By holding a design jam, we were able to crowdsource information for our housing guide by finding out what other community members would like to see in student housing and what the needs are of varying types of students, as realistic or imaginatively as they would like. Ultimately, the Design Jam brought together over 20 community members - students at different schools, faculty, recent graduates, and those with no post-secondary affiliation - to reimagine student housing. We began the jam with a presentation on the context of Vancouver's housing crisis and how housing affordability affects students. Then we went into the challenge, which was to create a design for a new student housing building that includes ways to accommodate for a type of student, a student priority, and a Vancouver neighborhood. Each group then had one hour to come up with their designs, and 2 minutes to present to the rest of the groups. All of the groups had suggestions for community spaces, private rooms, and facilities that promote environmental sustainability. Above all, non-market rental prices, at least for the students living in these buildings, was a must.



## **Stewardship & Stakeholders**

Our project is timely because Vancouver's city-wide plan was recently approved, and work has begun on deciding what information should contribute to the plan. Dan Garrison and Chris Mah at the City of Vancouver have expressed interest in our project and have asked us to send them our Student Housing Guide. They are interested in hearing what types of housing students need and in which neighbourhoods, as well as learning more about the potential for stronger relationships between the universities and the City of Vancouver. Chris and Dan work in the Department of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, which is responsible for zoning and housing policy and the Greenest City Action Plan. This makes them ideal stewards to carry on our project, as the Housing Vancouver Strategy falls under their jurisdiction, and they will also be contributing to Vancouver's city-wide plan which we see our work influencing.

Our Student Housing Guide will also be distributed to the entire Planning department at the City of Vancouver as per their request. This will ensure that our ideas gain sufficient attention and increases the likelihood that our ideas are taken up. Finally, our Guide will also be given to all the City Councillors, who have the power to pass by-laws. Since our main proposal is to include student housing as a use within a bylaw, they are also appropriate stewards for our project.

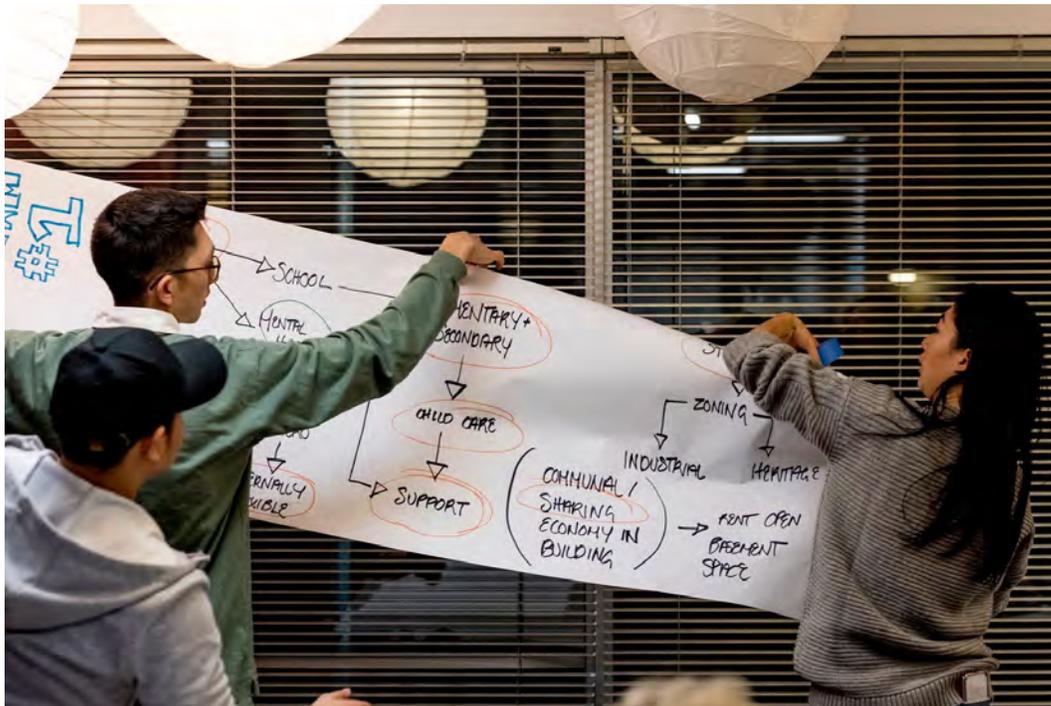
## **Scalability**

There is an opportunity for our project to scale to create a much larger effect by redoing our design jam with more individuals and with those from a wider community. The next step would then be implementing the ideas from it into real life building projects.

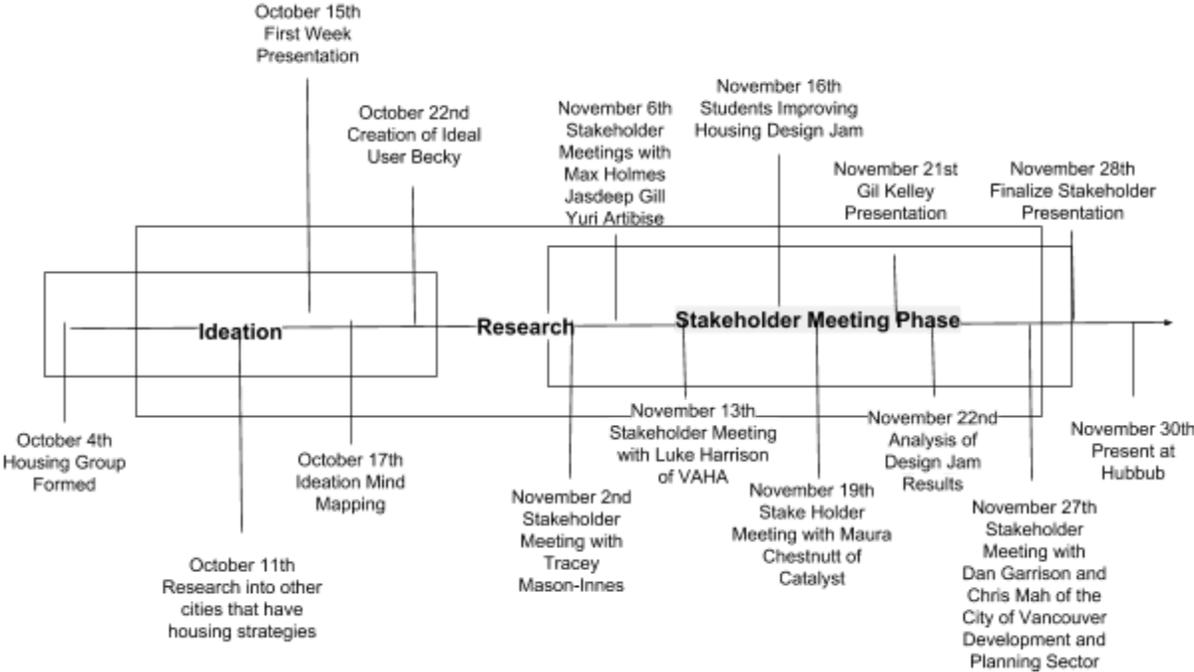
Our project works through the larger systems of change through our Student Housing Guide, which suggests policy shifts to allow for more rental only housing by adding student housing as a use within this bylaw. By simply allowing for this type of housing to be built, it could incentivise developers and the universities to construct closer to the Vancouver post-secondary school campuses. This comes down to allowing students to live closer to their schools while paying reasonable rent prices. This would enable them to focus more on their degree and be more healthy, happy and successful students. While student housing is a responsibility of the post-secondary schools (as per the Ministry of Advanced Education), they need this shift in bylaws and access to land in order to even consider building student accommodations in the city.

If this new bylaw is included in Vancouver's city wide plan, we see higher density housing

becoming the norm in Vancouver as opposed to single family homes, and hope to shift the larger mental models surrounding our living spaces to allow for more community connection.



# Timeline of Project



Our project started in early October. We as a group were tasked with addressing student housing affordability in Vancouver. We went through an ideation phase and created an ideal user to personify the feeling of students precarious living situations. In late October, we began researching governmental housing strategies to see how our work could enhance existing policies. In early November, we began meeting with stakeholders from universities, the municipal and provincial government, and other local housing organizations. In mid-November, we brought together our research and information gained from talking to stakeholders to present to the design jam participants. After the design jam, we consolidated the information gained from the designs and our research, and began work on our Student Housing Guide. Our project concluded in late November with presenting our work to the City of Vancouver, our stakeholders, and the public.



## Project Barriers

One of the biggest obstacles that we encountered as a group was the subjective concept of defining youth versus student. We decided to focus our research on students as the majority of youth in the Lower Mainland move here to attend post-secondary institutions. Students can also be defined more specifically than youth, and though they can vary in age, their income is generally low and fixed for the duration of their studies.

Affordable housing is a big issue and we struggled to develop a concept or prototype that was within our reach as non-design students. Though we have theoretical academic backgrounds, we struggled to visually represent our needs and ways that they could be addressed. We also needed a prototype-style event to capstone our project, as much of what we had created was based in research and in the form of conversations with our stakeholders.

Another huge barrier for us was moving beyond the ideation stage and to begin talking to stakeholders, and then to come up with the design jam itself. With the timeline of our project accelerating, we only had a week between coming up with the idea of a design jam and the execution of the event itself.

Through meeting with Dan Garrison from the City of Vancouver's Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability Division, we learned that the city is interested in the student perspective as they want to retain young, skilled workers in the city of Vancouver. This gave us motivation to focus on students, and, in addition to needing a visual representation of our goals, led us to creating a design jam. The design jam gave us a prototype that was easily replicable and could be scaled by any organization that was interested in the structure or concept. It also gave us inspiration for our final deliverable of this project, the Student Housing Guide, as a way to consolidate our research to be passed on to our various stakeholders.

Looking back, it would have been best if we had developed a more clear timeline early on, and pushed ourselves to move more quickly from ideation to stakeholders and research, as these both played huge roles in the development of our final project. As well, it would have been better for us to contact stakeholders earlier on as many of them were busy or on vacation during our major stakeholder phase. We had to settle for meetings and interviews later on in the project timeline. If we had more time to assess what we learned in these later meetings, our project would have been even stronger.

## **Our Biggest Lesson**

Our biggest lesson became the idea that we have the power to create profound change in the city. Learning that planners who are responsible for zoning and housing policy are receptive to our idea was deeply encouraging. With successful transition of our project to our stewards in the City of Vancouver, there is a high chance that our goals will be met. Grasping that we have the power to improve thousands of students' lives through prioritising their housing needs is an incredible lesson to have learned about ourselves.

## **Remaining Questions**

Some questions remain which can be answered in the future stages of our project. How can we better foster the relationships between the municipal government and universities to order to work together towards creating housing for students that is in Vancouver? How do we create incentive for developers to create non market or rental only housing that suites student's needs or fits within this zoning bylaw? Whose responsibility is it really to house students?

At this point, we have two tasks left. The first is to present our Student Housing Guide to the City Staff that oversee housing policy in Vancouver and the post-secondary schools and external organisations that have shown their interest. We are also presenting our work to City Council, in which we can expect questions about our project. Lastly, there needs to be a way for our different stakeholders, the municipal staff and university staff, to get into direct contact. Our main concern is that although we have shared the contact information with other stakeholders, we did not facilitate any meetings between these individuals who are directly involved with housing. However, we hope that our guide could be the a jumping off point to initiate these interactions and start a dialogue about what could be done in the city in regards to student housing.

If there is one thing that students need to know if they work on this project in the future, it is the power of stakeholders. Firstly, talking to a variety of stakeholders was crucial to our project's success, because we understood the perspectives of the government, universities, and from those providing housing on the market. Secondly, we have power as students to connect stakeholders who wouldn't ordinarily interact. Finally, even if you cannot affect change yourself, you can develop relationships with people who do have the power to make these shifts.

## **Recommendations**

We now know that the best way to foster these kind of relationships is through face to face interactions and dialogues, and this was even exemplified through our design jam. Moving forward, we would love to see a second design jam that involves more of our stakeholders and gives them an avenue to be more imaginative and explore different ways of approaching student housing. We would also like to see our recommendations for the inclusion of students in planning process being taken into consideration.

Our work can continue in the hands of Vancouver's Housing Strategy team, and could be carried on in Vancouver's city wide plan. Ultimately, we would like to see the construction of student buildings in Vancouver proper so that students can stay and thrive in Vancouver.

## References

The City of Vancouver. *Housing Vancouver Strategy*. The City Of Vancouver, Vancouver, 2018.

The Housing Vancouver Strategy, which began implementation in 2018, aims to increase not only the amount of housing supply in the city, but the right type of supply for Vancouver's residents. Produced by the City of Vancouver, its major targets include developing 72,000 new homes over 10 years, 20,000 new purpose-built rentals and 12,000 units of social housing. This policy is relevant to our work because it addresses affordability of housing in Vancouver as does our project. The finding that students are not addressed within this policy was of critical significance to our project. Given that we worked with the City of Vancouver on this project and City staff are our project stewards, this policy was also appropriate to review.

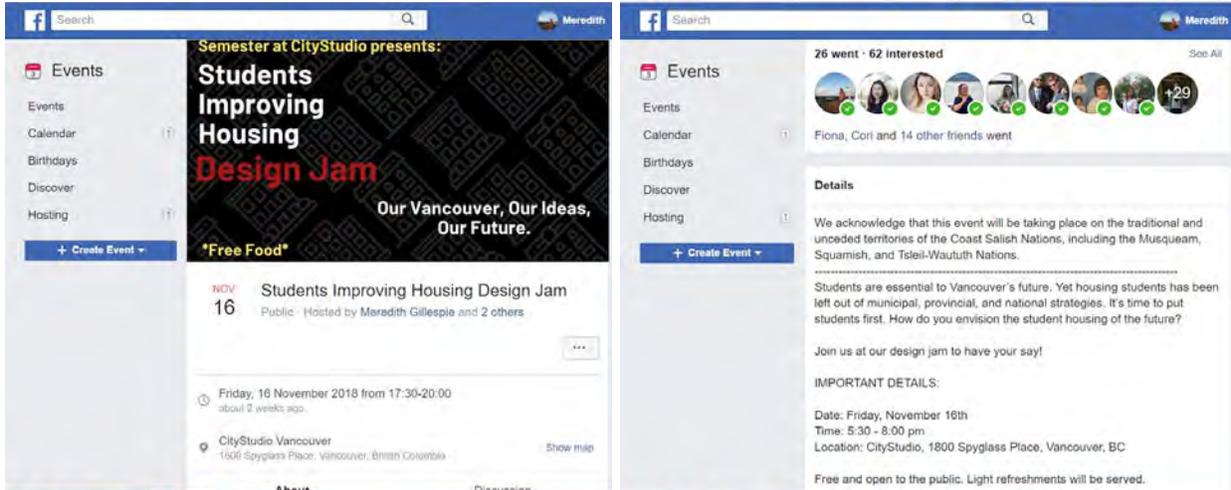


BC Government Data Set, *Full Time enrollment at Metro Vancouver PostS-Secondary Schools*

<https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset/full-time-equivalent-enrolments-at-b-c-public-post-secondary-institutions/resource/5ccc8108-855c-4802-b60d-cb9da4b96fbf>

# Appendices

## Appendix A - Design Jam Media



## Appendix A (cont.)- Design Jam Media

**Semester at CityStudio presents:**

# Students Improving Housing Design Jam

**Our Vancouver, Our Ideas, Our Future.**

NOV 16

**Students Improving Housing: Design Jam**

by CityStudio Vancouver

Free

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🔖
Sales Ended
Details

**DESCRIPTION**

We acknowledge that this event will be taking place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Nations, including the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Students are essential to Vancouver's future. Yet housing students has been left out of municipal, provincial, and national strategies. It's time to put students first. How do you envision the student housing of the future?

Join us at our design jam to have your say!

It's time for students to be a focal point in the future of our city.

What is a design charette? It is an intense, collaborative planning session in which designers, architects and community members create inspirational solutions to timely challenges.

Date: Friday, November 16th  
 Time: 5:30 - 8:00 pm  
 Location: CityStudio, 1800 Spyglass Place, Vancouver BC

**DATE AND TIME**

Fri, 16 November 2018  
 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM PST  
[Add to Calendar](#)

**LOCATION**

CityStudio  
 1800 Spyglass Place  
 Vancouver, BC V5Z 4K7  
[View Map](#)

### Event Dashboard

**Completed**

Congratulations on completing your event!

23 Tickets Sold / 50

46%

**Tickets sold**  
All time

● Available ● Free

Tickets sold: 23

Page views: 118

Invites: 0

Tickets sold via Eventbrite Channels. [Learn more](#)

Channel	Pending	Free	Available
	0	23	27

#### Sales by Ticket Type

Ticket Type	Price	Sold	Status	End Sales
RSVP		23/50	On Sale	16/12/2018 8:00 PM

#### Common Reports

- Attendee Summary**  
Information about attendees
- Custom Questions Responses**  
Information about attendees collected by questions on the order form

## Appendix B - Design Jam Budget

Zoned Out - Students Improving Housing - Design Jam				
Snack Tray	\$30.00	\$29.99		Order from Save-on-foods
Spinach and Dip	\$25.00	\$24.99		Order from Save-on-foods
Veggies	\$18.00	\$17.99		Order from Save-on-foods
Fruit Tray	\$15.00	\$12.99		Order from Save-on-foods
Chips	\$5.00	\$3.92		No Frills
Crackers	\$5.00	\$5.51		No Frills
Hummus	\$6.00	\$3.67		No Frills
Salsa	\$5.00	\$3.47		No Frills
Dips	\$6.00	\$4.47		No Frills
Popcorn	\$10.00	\$1.25		No Frills
Drafting Paper/White Roll of Paper	\$10.00	\$10.07		Staples
Pens	\$3.00	\$3.00		At CityStudio
Tape	\$0.00	\$0.00		At CityStudio
Clay	\$6.00	\$6.00		Dollarama

Rulers	\$2.00	\$2.00		Dollarama
Pencils	\$2.00	\$2.00		Dollarama
Markers	\$0.00	\$0.00		At CityStudio
Photographer	\$50.00	\$50.00		1.5 hours, name is Michael So.
Tinfoil	\$3.00	\$3.00		Dollarama
Pipcleaners	\$5.00	\$5.00		Dollarama
Papercups	\$5.00	\$5.00		Dollarama
Bits and Bobs	\$11.75	\$13.16		Urban Source
Pie plates	\$2.00	\$2.00		Dollarama
Paperbags	\$1.25	\$1.25		Dollarama
Popsicle Sticks	\$3.00	\$2.50		Dollarama
Post it notes	\$4.00	\$3.75		Dollarama
Milk	\$2.35	\$2.35		Save-On-Foods
Coffee	\$8.00	\$5.88		Save-On-Foods
Perrier	\$9.00	\$9.47		Save-On-Foods
Juice	\$3.00	\$3.24		Save-On-Foods

Pie plates	\$2.00	\$2.00		Dollarama
Paperbags	\$1.25	\$1.25		Dollarama
Popsicle Sticks	\$3.00	\$2.50		Dollarama
Post it notes	\$4.00	\$3.75		Dollarama
Milk	\$2.35	\$2.35		Save-On-Foods
Coffee	\$8.00	\$5.88		Save-On-Foods
Perrier	\$9.00	\$9.47		Save-On-Foods
Juice	\$3.00	\$3.24		Save-On-Foods
Tea	\$9.50	\$9.49		Save-On-Foods
Julia - 000972(Dollarama) Taxes + bags		\$2.30		Dollarama
Julia - S00937 Taxes		\$0.46		Save-On-Foods
Julia - C0207 Taxes		\$4.30		Save-On-Foods
Meredith - No Frills Taxes		\$0.20		No Frills
Meredith - Dollarama Taxes + Bags		\$2.07		Dollarama
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$264.85</b>	<b>\$256.74</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	

# ZONED OUT

A guide to housing for students, by students

**Purpose**

Our Youth Housing guide uses research on the current state of housing and real life student experiences to identify student needs. The purpose of our guide is to enhance the current housing strategies by adding the student voice.

**Process**

To create the housing guide, we identified students as a large portion of the youth population, and connected with the universities on their housing policies. We also read the Housing Vancouver Strategy, Housing Matters BC, and the National Housing Strategy. Through this we learned that neither students nor youth were addressed as viable options for housing. We identified the needs of students and youth, and how they might be addressed through new forms of housing. A Design Jam is an event that brings together community members to come up with innovative solutions to a particular challenge.

Through our Design Jam, students and other community members created visions for housing that would address students' needs. These included but are not limited to providing social connection, maintaining mental and physical health, and access to cultural amenities. By incorporating these ideas to the Youth Housing Guide, we ensured that it reflects the realities that today's students face.

**Outcome and Impact**

Our design jam brought together many community members to have a conversation on the topic of housing shortage, a concept they might never have approached from a student perspective before. Participants felt empowered knowing their ideas would be presented to the municipal government through the Youth Housing Guide.

Ultimately, our Youth Housing Guide illustrates to universities and the municipal government the issues with current student housing, and what we know must be done to address these issues. It serves as a basis for how youth housing could and should be implemented. It also provides a framework for how youth housing for youth is indispensable to their ability to stay and thrive in Vancouver.

**Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the CityStudio teaching staff, the staff and student societies of SFU and UBC, and the Ministry of Advanced Education. A special thanks to Joanne Spoken, Max Holmes, Jusdeep Gill, Tracey Mason-Pyles, Luke Harrison, Yui Artibise, and Haara Christine.

**The Team**

Christian Devasagayam, Meredith Gillespie, and Julia Scott-Lenz.

SFU SEMESTER IN PARTNERSHIP CITYSTUDIO