



# The Drive to Resilience

## Envisioning the Future of Commercial Drive



Undergraduate Semester  
in Dialogue

Spring 2010



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

- Margaret Mead

# Undergraduate Semester In Dialogue

Simon Fraser University



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# Contents



## Foreword 2

## About Us 3

Semester in Dialogue	3
Our Course Topic	4
What is Dialogue?	6

## Process 7



## Event 9

Resilience	9
Objectives	10
Hopes	11
Fears	12

## Morning Session 13

## Afternoon Session 21

Redistribution	22
Green Industry...	23
Commercial/Broadway	24
Village Vancouver	25
Composting	26
Street Festivals	27
Bikes	28

## Participant Feedback 29

## Concluding Thoughts 30

Our Survey	31
Media Coverage	31
Contributors/ Partners	33
Community	34
Directory	34
Special Thanks	35
To...	35
Sponsors	36
References	37

# Foreword



On March 26th, the Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue held an event for the residents of the Commercial Drive area. “The Drive to Resilience: Envisioning the Future of Commercial Drive” was the culmination of both our course topic, as well as our interests and energy around making Commercial Drive a more resilient community. As details of event planning fell into place, one thought was clear amongst all of us: we come as hosts, guests and facilitators to this thriving neighbourhood. The ideas and actions that came forth from this event were successful because of community members and residents eager to be involved and to make positive changes.

The students of the Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue give a special thanks to our professors, mentors and friends, Janet Moore and Peter Ladner.

# Semester in Dialogue

We are a group of 19 passionate young people from a range of academic backgrounds, including geography, communications, and health sciences. For the last three months, we've been engaging with issues and themes surrounding urban and rural development, food security, land use, and what economic, social, and environmental changes are needed to make Metro Vancouver a more resilient region. We all had different levels of expertise on these topics going into the semester, and we've probably learned the most through the dialogues we've had with guests. Some of us are only partway through our degrees, while others have previous experience in other disciplines, but we were all interested in the unique approach of this program.



*Front row (left to right):*

*Middle row (left to right):*

*Last row (left to right):*

Jean Lehtinen, Chashma Heinze, Aviya Kones, Brady Adkins  
Janet Moore, Charlotte Adamson, Sabrina Dominguez, Maria  
Persdotter, Isabelle Jacques, Shannon Peters, Alicia Doo, Michelle  
Murvai, Christine Houghton, Jenni-Leigh Harder, Peter Ladner,  
Kelvin Chan  
Edward Houghland, Alex Hayer, Bram Rutherford, Alexander  
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## About Us



## Our Course Topic:

### *Finding Space, Understanding Place: Redesigning our Region for Resilience*

Focusing on our overarching themes, one of our key questions throughout the semester was, “What does a resilient region look like?”

Over the past three months, we’ve engaged in conversation surrounding this primary question with influential business and community leaders, planners, policy makers and writers—to name a few. Our learning about how current decisions and policies are made was a continuous process, and informed our deeper understanding of the effect they have on our region. Much of our focus has also been on exploring the possibility of redesigning our current systems, including water, waste, transportation, land use, food, and housing.

Throughout the semester, we’ve also kept in mind the broader question of the “difference between land, space, and place,” with a specific concentration on agriculture and food policy as an example of how we can design resilient systems.<sup>1</sup>

Dialogue:  
“a conversation  
with a center,  
not sides”

- William Isaacs, 1999



learning engagement pauses understanding relate

collaborative listening dialogue-based relationships

issues among differences meaning exploration views

positive effective deep civic

ways mutual educational another context

discussion offers citizenship best discover

participants diverse helpful processes free

conducted expression processes free

respectful complex involving action

build one

emerging Learning

# Dialogue



# What is Dialogue?

Dialogue is intended to be an engaging and inclusive conversation for all participants, and is based on an understanding that everyone in the room is coming from a different background, and will have different interests and views. The goal of dialogue is to create a space where these can be expressed, and where participants can actively listen to each other and learn something new. This might include, as we've learned... some awkward pauses. These breaks in conversation provide room for more soft-spoken participants to take a moment to gather their thoughts and contribute, and also give the whole group time to reflect on what was said. Dialogue ultimately provides a space to bring together diverse viewpoints, explore these differences, and work towards understanding them better.

## *Cultivating a Culture of Dialogue: A Pocket Guide*

The spirit of dialogue is guided by a give and take in the mutual search for meaning

- Be generous of spirit: stay open to new ideas and perspectives
- Be disciplined in your participation: brief, focused, and on topic
- Speak personally: share good stories of living experience rather than set opinions or pet preoccupations
- Listen past defenses, past the familiar, past your certainties
- Inquire into assumptions: ask, e.g., What do you mean? Tell me more ... What leads you to believe this ... ? How are you personally affected?



“Dialogue is about finding a common understanding even when coming from different vantage points.”

How can a public dialogue be planned by 19 strangers coming from different backgrounds in a single semester? Long days, hours of conversation, and support from many experienced mentors carved a path to “The Drive to Resilience.”

The event was based on community involvement; much of our work included reaching out to residents, organizations and businesses, as well as collaborating with the Commercial Drive Business Society. This process was not easy. We have experienced moments of inspiration and frustration, smiles and tears, sweat and stress, as well as long hours.

Each of us is uniquely different. Together we encompass various passions, levels of expertise and very diverse styles of working. It was a challenge throughout the entire planning process to bring our various experiences together and find the balance between working individually and collectively.

The tension between individual pas-

sions and a cohesive direction for the group ultimately inspired creative solutions and new ways of thinking.

Our largest hurdle was deciding on a topic. We discovered that the themes of space, place and resilience were broad and continuously evolving concepts. The in-class dialogues we had each week gave us a better understanding of the issues involved, and eventually inspired the direction our event took.

At our meetings, we discussed:

- objectives for the event;
- desired outcomes; and
- how our dialogue could lead to actionable ideas.

It was through this challenge that we were able to figure out the best ways to work together as a group. We learned that we do not always need consensus to move forward or make a decision. Over time, we also discovered that we had to trust each other to make certain decisions individually on behalf of the group.

# Process



We chose resilience as a topic because we recognize that Commercial Drive, like all other neighbourhoods in the Metro Vancouver region, is facing present and pending stresses. These include: population growth, economic instability, peak oil and climate change. We decided to focus our event on Commercial Drive because many of us have a personal connection to the area and recognize the fact that there is already a huge amount of energy and community involvement. The purpose of this event was not to impose our own ideas, but to tap into the already strong community.

The basis of this event was community involvement. In order to reach a broad audience, much of our work included reaching out to residents, organizations

and businesses. We partnered with the Commercial Drive Business Society for the opportunity to help provide them with feedback on their existing projects and to generate new ideas.

Food and venue were key decisions during the planning of our event. The WISE Hall was chosen as our venue because of their generous support of non-profits, central location and reputation in the community. We wanted our food to represent the multiculturalism of the Drive. We reached out to local businesses and many responded with generous donations. As a result, we were able to provide a healthy and delicious community potluck.



# Resilience

Resilience is an elusive concept. In its basic definition, it is “the ability to absorb and learn from disturbances, to be changed and then to re-organize and still retain basic structure and ways of functioning.”<sup>2</sup> While intriguing, this definition leaves much room for interpretation.

In planning “The Drive to Resilience” we grappled with questions such as: “What does resilience look like?” and “How do we plan for resilience at the community level?”

We discovered that resilience is partly a mindset - a way of thinking - and that to envision resilience we need to embrace unpredictability. Resilience thinking is about understanding our rapidly changing world and re-organizing our communities so that they are better able to cope with unexpected shocks and adversity. This, we believe, requires an open and honest approach, and a love for learning.

## Event



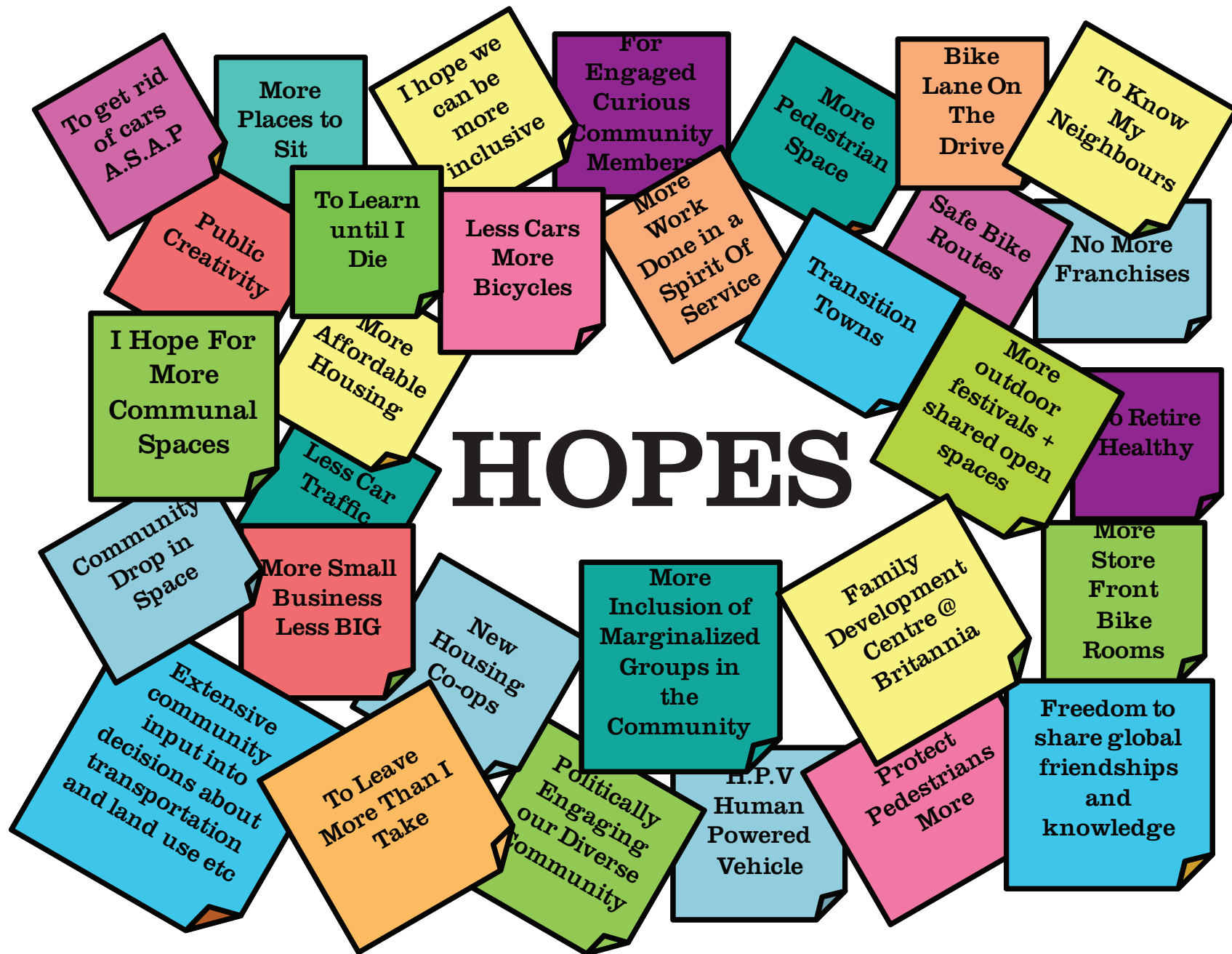
# Objectives

It was very important to us that our event reflected our vision. We wanted to see an open and inclusive conversation that brought together the business sector of the Drive as well as its residents. It was also very important to us to appeal to those who do not normally come out and engage in these conversations. More than anything, we wanted to make it clear that this event was not about us. While we all have a personal attachment to the Drive, we wanted to create a space for the community to come together and learn from each other, rather than have them learning from us.

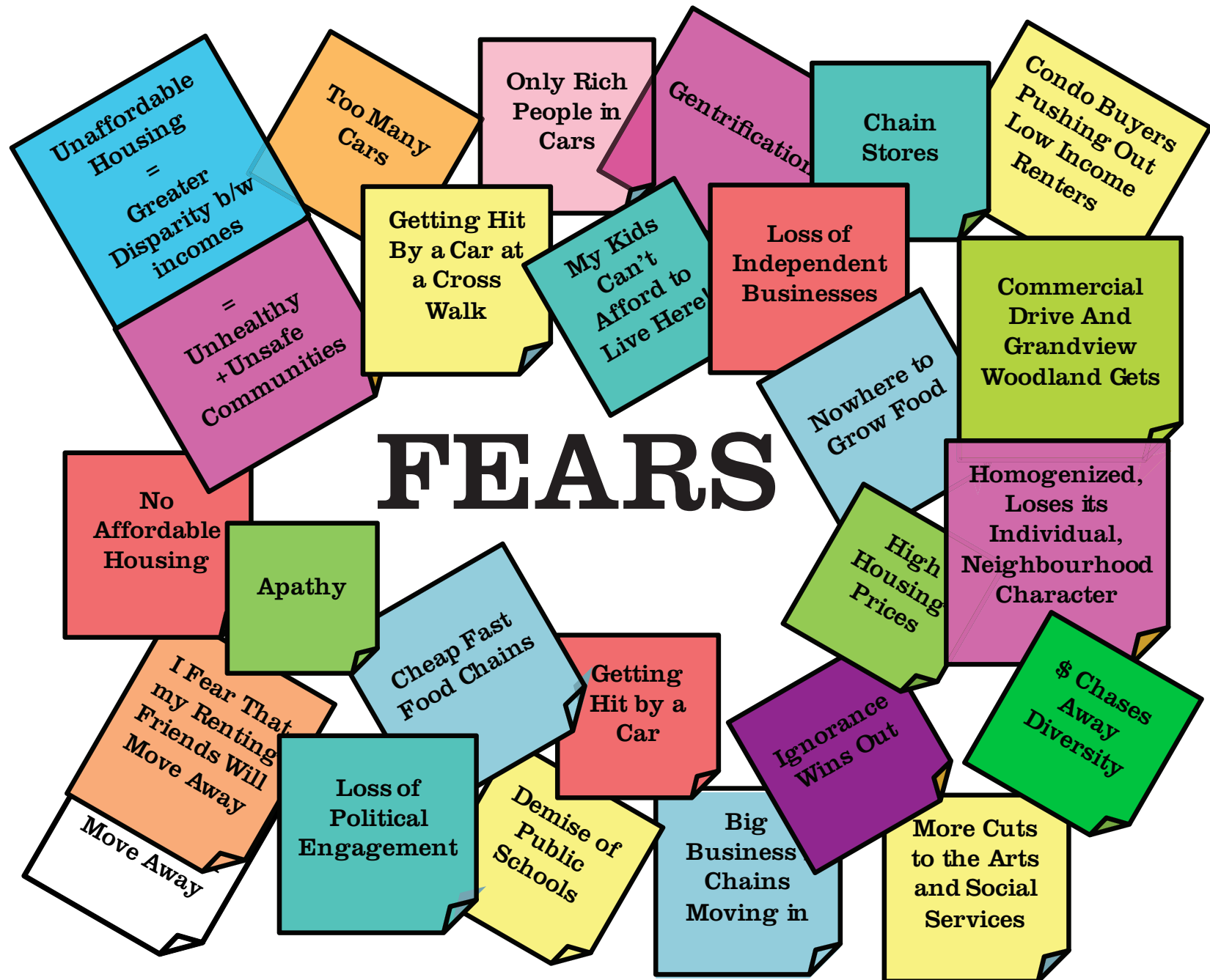
## Event Goals:

- Bring out participants' shared passions, dreams, and experiences
- Create an open, inclusive space in which residents, organizations, and business can network and connect
- Have participants provide direct input into projects that benefit the community





A "Hopes and Fears wall" is a good way for a community to express and share feelings regarding their neighbourhood or other pressing matters. We posted a large sheet of paper reading "HOPES" next to a sheet reading "FEARS". A pile of blank post-it notes and markers were left on a table next to the posters. Throughout the event participants posted many profound hopes and fears on the wall.



This activity was a good way for people to see what issues in their community have strong interest behind them. It generates awareness around issues one was previously unaware of. It's also a meditative activity for the participants as they try to express passionate feelings from deep inside themselves.



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# Morning Session

The first half of the day, “Envisioning Resilience,” was structured as a dialogue focusing on two questions:

- »» “What is needed for Commercial Drive to be more resilient?”
- »» “How do we go about implementing these changes?”

Participants sat at eight different tables, each with two facilitators from the class. Most were placed at random after they registered at the door. The first half hour before the break was focused on envisioning a resilient Commercial Drive, while the second half moved into ideas for bridging the gaps. Each participant was asked to engage in creating a community agreement to ensure that the tables were a safe space for all parties. We were very excited to see the level of engagement from the participants and their passion for the issues surrounding the community.



## ... What did you learn?

**“That people are interested in change. It’s just a matter of creating an inclusive forum for everyone to convene and share.”**

- dialogue participant



# »» On Community ... from participants

To create a more **RESILIENT**  
community we need to improve  
local **SELF-RELIANCE**, enhance  
social capital and **BAND**  
**TOGETHER** for strength.



# We can do this in a number of ways:

local **currency**  
neighbourhood **skill sharing**  
**mapping** community **assets**  
**more** block **parties & free events**  
improving **communication &**  
linkages via a community directory,  
**web site** or forum where **activities**  
**events** & opportunities for volunteering  
& **engagement** can be listed



# »» On Gardening & Compost ...from participants

We want more **spaces & places** for people without yards to **garden & compost!**

We would like to better integrate composting into our everyday lives.

We can: store compost locally, have a bicycle compost delivery system, incorporate compost into the Farmer's Market and provide educational workshops facilitated by community members.



# » On Youth & Engagement ...from participants

Youth are our future. Are they as engaged as they could be in this community?

Youth should feel more **included** in the community and provide spaces over which they can take **ownership**.

Tools should be provided for youth to create and implement their own **community-building projects** with collaboration and **support** from business owners and other stakeholders.

# » On Connecting Through Food ...from participants

We must **reclaim** local food **production** to ensure future **food security**.

We hope **over-regulation** will be changed for people to grow their own food without having to rely on packaged & processed goods from supermarkets.

Connecting **Food & Social Spaces** in community kitchens, a bread oven in the park



# »» On Housing ...from participants

On our minds...

Concerns over **affordability** & rising costs  
**Gentrification** & a changing demographic  
Solidifying The Drive's **identity**  
& preserving **diversity**  
Introducing more **co-operative** housing  
Providing emergency **shelter**  
& **transitional** housing





## Afternoon Session

The theme of the afternoon dialogue was “Taking Action.” The purpose of this session was to move forward from the morning’s discussion and turn the ideas we generated into actionable projects. This was a space for people to come up with new ideas or to spread awareness about projects that they already had underway.

The format we chose for the afternoon was an adapted version of a process called Open Space.<sup>3</sup> The driving principle behind this style of dialogue is that it is up to the participants to decide which topics they are passionate about. At the beginning of the session all in attendance were asked to select a topic for discussion.

Once items were proposed, a table number was assigned and the other attendees were able to decide which conversation they wanted to take part in. One of the key aspects of Open Space is that there is a “Law of Two Feet” which allows people to move freely from one conversation to the next as they so choose.

There were dialogue students assigned to each table to help keep a record of what was being discussed. At the end of the day, there was also time for networking so that those who did not have a chance to join other conversations that they were interested in had the opportunity to distribute their contact information.



# Reduce, Reuse, Recycle... Redistribute

## Issues:

To create a movement toward a cultural paradigm shift by reintroducing the concept of a lifestyle built upon the 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, but also expanding and pushing this even further by adding a fourth, Redistribution. Taking the idea of freecycling off the internet and into the real world could help to foster a culture of sharing and friendship while at the same time discouraging consumerism in the area. The aim is to promote a more sustainable lifestyle which will ultimately lead to a more resilient and community-based society.

## Ideas:

- People in the community have things that they aren't using and that they would like to give away. Some need things that they can't afford. Some have skills and knowledge that they want to share with others. Some may need a hand with something, but don't know the right people or can't afford to pay for the service.
- Create a space for people to share knowledge, skills and resources to allow for a free exchange of goods and services.
- No money involved, people would share, swap or barter.
- Freecycling already occurs - people put out furniture, pots, materials and bottles in front of their buildings, and in the alleys, for other people to collect. A sharing

event could help formalize these exchanges.

- The Britannia Centre has a recycling depot on the third Saturday of every month and has offered a space for this event alongside theirs.

## *Fostering Responsibility*

- If you have acquired a product - be it a chair, an old sweater or a plastic bottle - you are responsible for that product until you hand it over to its next owner. This event is not the place for people to drop off old things that they no longer want to take responsibility for. This means that if someone brings an item to the event, the person is responsible for this thing until someone else takes it...
- Only things that are in usable shape should be given away at the event. Not a venue for people to drop off things they no longer want.



## Action Item One

# Imagine a concentration of green industry and artistic community...

## Issues:

If you pictured the Commercial Drive area as you home, what room would the North of Hastings area be? A garage or a workspace used mainly for storage would be the most common answer. This part of the neighborhood was once an active industrial area. However, most of the factories and warehouses have closed down and are now boarded up. This area represents an opportunity to extend Commercial Drive, and create the kind of spaces that are currently missing in the neighbourhood.



## Ideas:

- There is a perceived lack of affordable spaces for small businesses and artists, as well as a significant shortage of affordable housing options for low and middle-income earners. Through revitalizing this area, this space can be used to accommodate these needs.
- Preserving as much as possible of the old structures would give the north end a different feel than the rest of Commercial Drive... a bit like Williamsburg in Brooklyn, NY, or Granville Island.
- Collaborative revitalization process, so that there is equal consultation in the redevelopment of the area.
- Ideally this should be a community driven process, as opposed to a top-down redevelopment initiative.



## Action Item Two

# Revitalization of the Commercial and Broadway Intersection

## Issues:

As a transit hub, Broadway/Commercial should be a centre of activity. Why does it feel so peripheral? Keys to developing this area include preserving the character of Commercial Drive and making it more fully apart of Grandview-Woodland. Is there a way to promote a greater sense of ownership within the community for this intersection?

## Ideas:

### *Reduce amount of litter in area*

- Creates greater sense of community ownership.
- Makes intersection more welcoming.
- Needs businesses to be responsible for their waste.
- Requires involvement of Business Society and City of Vancouver to provide resources.

### *Greater diversity of businesses and more welcoming public spaces*

- Take advantage of the area being a transit hub, and create more green spaces and living spaces – a great opportunity to open up a dialogue between the community, developers, and Translink.
- Explore opportunities for increasing residents' sense of safety – may include foot patrols, community policing, and more collaboration between the different organizations whose jurisdictions end in this area.

### *More mixed use and increased density*

- More housing options in that area for different income levels – move away from predominantly commercial focus.
- As the best-served intersection in the city, there is potential for vertical development.
- Look at possibility of rezoning to allow for higher residential density – having more people living there will create a greater sense of community and ownership.
- Provide opportunities for community involvement in planning and decisions by creating a residents' group.

### *More public art and music*

- Provide more space for public art and music – this can also be a way to involve youth.
- Can also be a way of bringing continuity to the skytrain area.
- Restart murals, business involvement in painting storefronts.
- Create a Commercial/Broadway theme for the area.

### *Collaboration with Translink*

- Explore possibility of relocating 99 B-Line loading area – freeing up more space on the streets for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Action Item Three



# Village Vancouver: What is Village Vancouver (VV)?

*Village Vancouver supports individuals and community groups by enabling and supporting diverse efforts to re-connect with neighbours and ecosystems. They collaborate and facilitate local endeavors to build sustainable communities. The role of Village Vancouver is to act as teachers and learners striving to inspire creative and critical thinking, questioning, planning and action. Village Vancouver engages individuals and organizations to take action to build sustainable communities in a fun and interactive way. The Village Vancouver discussion was convened by a representative of VV, Ross Moster.*

## Issues:

Initially the discussion involved questions from the participants about VV's mandate and how they are involved in building resilient communities. Ross expressed to the participants that VV intends to be a community-networking tool where residents can meet up and take action on various projects they're passionate about at the grassroots level. The specific projects are to be determined by its participants, thus a project could be any number of things.

## Ideas:

Project ideas that were discussed during the session included:

### Establishing:

- community-level waste recycling (i.e. compost)
- neighbourhood tool sharing network
- community skill sharing workshops
- community work parties to assist others in preparing backyard gardens
- food networks in South Vancouver neighbourhoods (i.e. Collingwood)
- programs that inspire youth to connect with food



## Action Item Four

# Composting - Localize, Not Regionalize

## Issues:

The new composting program for the City of Vancouver is too broad in scale. By shipping compost to Delta we are unnecessarily relying on the use of fossil fuels. A localized composting plan would be easier to control and more sustainable.

## Ideas:

### *Community Garden and Composting Integration*

- People would be able to drop off their compost at a local community garden. The finished product could then be used in the garden itself, or sold to generate revenue.
- Keeping compost within the community will allow for more control of the entire process. If waste is shipped to Delta to a large facility there is no way to ensure that there are no pesticides (i.e. used on weeds in yard waste) or other inappropriate items in the compost.
- Education about composting could be incorporated into the process.

### *A composting system similar to the Downtown East Side Recycling model*

- People are employed to go around and retrieve the compost material. The scraps would then be put in a community-composting bin. The finished product would then be sold back to the community. Pick-up could be done on bikes or with trailers.

### *Composting CSA*

- CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. A

program such as this would involve residents of the community paying a nominal fee up front to fund the project, and would then be eligible to have their waste picked up, as well as receiving a bag of finished product.

### *Worm Composts*

- These can already be purchased from the City. However, this should be promoted more. Individuals could compost their own waste.

### *Knowledge Sharing*

- Making community gardens and community programs more inclusive. Using it as a local pond for knowledge sharing. Community spaces should be a meeting place. Knowledge empowers the individual to make a difference on their own.

### *Possible problems:*

- Rat infestations if compost is not properly cared for.
- Where would a local community compost be located?
- Contamination - if people are not properly educated about what they can put in the compost, the finished product will be worthless.
- Contamination - pesticides/herbicides on yard waste.
- How to solve the large amounts of wastes from restaurants.

## Action Item Five



# Public Space and Street Festivals

## Issues:

Street festivals are a big community builder and are effective at displaying a community's local culture. There was a represented need for more street festivals within the community of Commercial Drive, but also more of a connection and cohesiveness with street festivals within the Metro Vancouver area. There is also a need for accessibility within these street festivals so ideally they would be free events.

## Ideas:

If Commercial Drive wants to nurture its young musical interests it would be wise to invest in the creation of musical venues for the purpose of hosting underage performers.

Regular night markets along the Drive would regularly draw large crowds. This idea could result in the Drive becoming a safer environment at night for pedestrians as large populations mill about the street shopping around various outdoor vendors.

Festivals should include a broad range of the community's demographics, as well as encourage turn-out and involvement through themes and costume requirements.

Themes and activities planned for an event need to be selected carefully to attract diverse audiences, such as having an event for the Commercial Drive film community that showcases its talents as a medium of our time.



## Action Item Six

## More Bikes, Less Cars...

### Issues:

Commercial Drive is one of the main arteries giving North/South access for the city of Vancouver. However, for cyclists this corridor is quite unsafe. High speed limits, narrow roads, and parked cars all contribute to this dilemma. There is also the issue of bike security on Commercial Drive, and whether or not locking your bike secures it from being stolen.

It was also discussed that making changes to the above issues has some conflict areas as well. In order to make Commercial Drive bike-friendly, changes need to be made within our cities' laws and institutions, and there needs to be a broader culture shift in how we think about transportation. Throughout this discussion, a list of short and long term goals were composed.

### Ideas:

#### Short-term goals:

- Increase the amount of bike racks on the Drive.
- Additions to parking meters so they are bike-lock friendly.
- Reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h, ensure that there are visible signs and it is enforced.
- Make space for more bikes on buses.
- Increase the markings for bike paths and shared lanes.
- Create bike-only corridors.
- Increase bus frequencies so that there is less of a reliance on cars

#### Long-term goals:

- Create an alternative transportation corridor for cars.
- Removal of the Georgia Viaduct and using that space as a landscaped bikeway.
- Innovative ideas for street parking.
  - Removal of the West side parking on the street to use as a bike lane. There will still be car usage on the East side of the street.
  - Every ten parking spots on the road can be occupied by bike racks.
  - Removal of one lane that will be used as a dedicated bike lane between the car parking and the sidewalk. This increases safety for the cyclists, as there is a lower speed conflict.

#### Other Ideas:

- Initiate a toll entry system for the downtown core area. This will decrease car traffic into the downtown area and increase foot, bike and bus transit into these areas.
- Converting the Arbutus railway corridor into a bikeway.
- At transit hubs, have an area set up for training people how to put your bike on the bus. This will increase peoples comfort level in combining transit and bike use, making them more likely to use alternative commuting options

## Action Item Seven



# Participant Feedback

## »» What did you like about the day?

“So great! It was a perfect forum to share and explore ideas with neighbours and work toward taking action.”

“Great organization, creativity. Afternoon ‘choose your own’ topic session was great!! Exciting mix of people, networking.”

“The event was very well-organized and allowed time for people to know and interact with each other. It was a humanizing experience for participants to talk and enjoy their freedom to share knowledge and experiences. One of the best events I have attended in fifteen years.”

## »» What do you think could have been improved? What else would you have liked the event to cover?

“Needed more focus in the morning, better table member diversity and distribution, needed more structure and direction on how to implement our project ideas.”

“More age groups represented and perhaps more business owners participating (even though in the middle of a work day?).”

“I would have liked the morning session to be in World Café format. I would have liked to see more direct discussion questions - with the topic being so broad the group had too much to talk about. It would have also got people mingling and meeting new people right from the get-go.”

# Concluding Thoughts



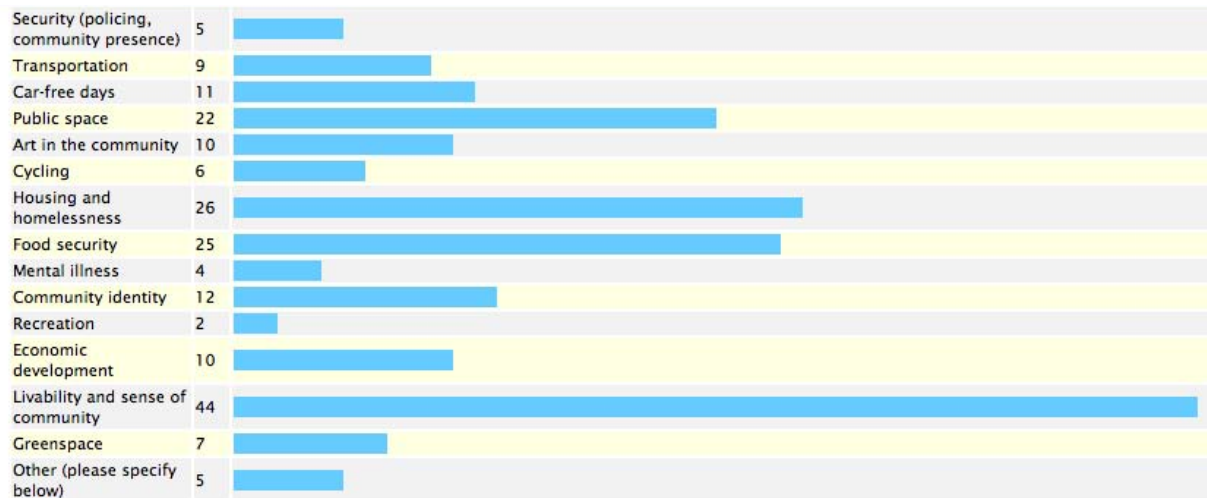
As a group, we experienced many challenges in the months planning this public dialogue. We spent long days and evenings trying to figure out the best way to accomplish this giant, and at often times overwhelming, task. It's almost certain that each of us became ill at least once, and balancing life around this project was definitely no picnic – but we did it! We gained much-needed trust in one another and learned to work smartly with the resources and the time given to us. We learned much from working in a team environment where communication with our classmates was essential

to reach a collective goal. We realized that this dialogue was not for our personal measure of accomplishment, and learned how to set aside our personal agendas. We also learned at our event that we can't steer conversations, and to let participants shape their own dialogues, and engage with the issues that they're passionate about. Regardless of the challenges up until the event, at the end of the day everything ran very smoothly and we accomplished our main objectives – tangible results, open communication, good food! And we may even have had a little FUN!

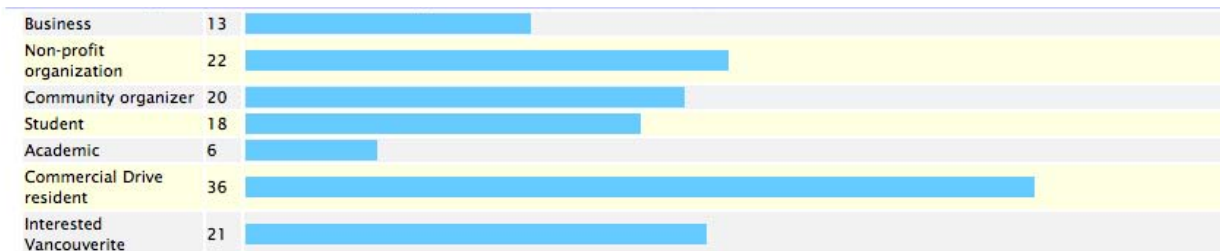


# Our Survey and Media Coverage

## Areas that Most Interested Me:



## Group(s) I Most Identified With:



The data from our surveys was used throughout the design and planning process of our dialogue. With a steady flow of information about interests and expectations, and the groups our participants best identified with, we were able to change the flow of the day to incorporate different styles of facilitation. Open Space Technology was something our class decided to use for the purpose of ensuring everyone at our dialogue had an opportunity to convene a working group where they could discuss their ideas, as well as ways to carry forward their projects.

The feedback survey was important for us to see what were the highlights and what needed to be improved. This information helped us reflect on certain points of the planning process and assess whether we'd missed any particular concerns, and where greater collaboration within the class was needed.

The marketing portfolio for our dialogue consisted of the creation and use of print media, and internet social media platforms.

The core graphics used in our materials were created to depict streetscapes, food, and public spaces. Stock photography of Commercial Drive provided by the Business Society was incorporated into our promotional materials. Our print media included a canvassing flyer, event poster, and an event programme. The Commercial Drive Business Society's Street Team helped distribute our posters to businesses along the entirety of Commercial Drive, and the Business Society also provided their printing services. Our internet presence includes popular websites such as Facebook, StrataXL, Granville Online, and SFU events listings.

# The Peak

The SFU student newspaper, *The Peak*, wrote the following article about the event:

## “Dialogue Drives to Resilience” Chris Apps

April 6, 2010

On March 26, SFU’s Semester in Dialogue students, along with residents and members of the local business community, gathered at the WISE Hall off Commercial Drive to discuss their stakes and interests in the economic, social, and environmental future of the Vancouver neighborhood. The theme of the spring Semester in Dialogue concerns “public space, understanding place, and planning our region for resilience.”

The dialogue began with participants discussing their respective outlooks for what has come to be known as “the drive.” On one wall, two large posters listed the hopes and fears of community members. New housing co-ops, community drop-in spaces, and a demand for fewer cars and more bikes were some of the many desires, while fears included a loss of political engagement and independent businesses.

The event served as a venue for people to generate new ideas and establish long-lasting goals for the community.

“The idea of this event was not to create projects necessarily,” said Bram Rutherford, a student in the Dialogue program and event organizer. “It was to tap into the energy that already existed in the neighborhood. We wanted to have an event where what we generated [could] be continued.”

“Dialogue is learning from people with different backgrounds, and putting that knowledge together, as opposed to a debate . . . this is really a collaborative process,” explained Rutherford.

The dialogue was exemplar for people who were not from the area, giving them the opportunity to learn what’s going on and how to take it back to their own communities. “We recognized that there are already a lot of people working on the same type of thing, so we wanted to feed off of their energy,” reiterated Rutherford.

Lynda Hurst, a 25-year resident of the Vancouver-area, was ecstatic about

the event. “There are so many [concerns about] social programs, education, public schools, [and] seniors,” she explained.

Topics also included improving the Commercial-Broadway corridor, and the creation of community composting services.

The dialogue, sponsored by the Simon Fraser Student Society with local contributions from the Commercial Drive Business Society, successfully linked a variety of grassroots movements to streamline initiatives and goals for the community.

“I’ve been really impressed with how well the students have organized it and how many people have shown up,” said Peter Ladner, an individual of the Center for Dialogue and co-teacher for the semester. “I have seen people connecting who were working in the same neighborhood and didn’t know about each other and now do. I think that in itself is a great help to the community.”

# Contributors/Partners

## Commercial Drive Business Society:

We partnered with the Commercial Drive Business Society for this public dialogue, a well-known and active organization with many social programs and community initiatives. They are active in driving local economic growth and connecting with local residents, business owners, and non-governmental organizations. Our partnership with the Business Society helped bring a range of participants and community groups to our dialogue. Michelle Barile, the executive director of the Business Society, joined our dialogue to present the many ongoing initiatives happening in the Commercial Drive area. Our partnership with Michelle was an excellent opportunity to open up a dialogue on community resilience.

<http://www.thedrive.ca>



## JustWork:

JustWork is an organization that envisions "a healthy community where people are meaningfully and gainfully employed and business practices embrace an ethical social mandate." They also strive to "embrace a model of interdependence – mutually giving and receiving to create a more caring and just neighborhood." JustWork's subsidiary service, JustCatering supplied our event with baked goods and morning treats. They also showcased pottery works from their JustPottery initiative, which provides studio space, instruction, support and employment opportunities for people who have no access to creative spaces. JustCatering and JustPottery initiatives are part of the strong social values that make Commercial Drive a more resilient community. Their contributions to our public dialogue truly demonstrate this example.

<http://www.justwork.ca>



## The Kettle Friendship Society:

The Kettle Friendship Society, founded in 1976, showcased their art = empowerment installations, which were shown in business and community spaces, from February 11 – March 21, as well as at our public dialogue. The art exemplifies the values of friendship, peace, inspiration and empowerment, all created by individuals living with mental illness. The Kettle Friendship Society provides care as a complement to existing treatment facilities by attempting to enrich lives, broaden personal and social horizons, and encourage participation in community life. Their contribution to our public dialogue promotes the inclusion of people living with mental illness in all aspects of society, which again helps the community become more resilient.

<http://www.thekettle.ca>



# Community Directory

## Community Resources

Britannia Community Centre  
Cynthia Low  
604-831-6815  
cynthia.low@vancouver.ca

Car Free Days  
drivefest@carfreevancouver.org  
www.carfreevancouver.org/

Grandview-Woodland Area Council  
gwac@vcn.bc.ca  
www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/

Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre  
1977 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver BC V5N 4A8  
604-717- 2932  
britcpo@shaw.ca  
www.gwcpc.ca

Grandview-Woodland Food Connection  
gwfcnetwork@gmail.com  
http://gwfoodconnection.blogspot.com

Kettle Friendship Centre  
1725 Venables Street  
Vancouver, BC  
V5L 2H3  
604-251-2801  
www.thekettle.ca

MOBY Community Garden  
moby\_lize@yahoo.ca  
www.myownbackyard.ca/

Public Dreams Society  
604-879-8611  
amd@publicdreams.org  
www.publicdreams.org/

Purple Thistle Centre – Youth, Art and Activism  
260-975 Vernon Dr.  
Vancouver V6A 3P2  
604-255-2838  
http://www.purplethistle.ca/

REACH Community Health Centre  
1145 Commercial Drive, Vancouver V5L 3X3  
www.reachcentre.bc.ca/

Salsbury Community Society 21732-1424 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver V5L 5G3  
www.salsburycommunitysociety.ca

Trout Lake Farmers Market  
15th Avenue & Victoria Drive  
www.eatlocal.org

Under One Umbrella Society  
(formerly known as the Grandview Woodlands Drug and Alcohol Coalition)  
uosity@gmail.com

Urban Native Youth Association  
1618 East Hastings Street  
Vancouver V5L 1S6  
(604) 254-7732  
info@unya.bc.ca

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society  
1607 E. Hastings St.  
Vancouver V5L 1S7  
604-251-4844  
www.vafcs.org/

Village Vancouver  
http://villagevancouver.ning.com/

## Elected Representatives

COPE City Councilor,  
Ellen Woodsworth  
604-873-7240  
clrwoodsworth@vancouver.ca  
http://ellenwoodsworth.com/

MLA, Jenny Kwan  
1070 – 1641 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver V5L 3Y3  
604-775-0790

MLA, Shane Simpson  
2365 Hastings  
604-775-2277  
shane.simpson.mla@leg.bc.ca

MP, Libby Davis  
2412 Main Street,  
Vancouver V5T 3E2  
604-775-5800  
www.libbydavies.ca/

## Enterprise

Commercial Drive Business Society (BIA)  
Suite #4 - 1726 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver, V5N 4A3  
604-251-2884  
www.thedrive.ca

NADATODO, Online Event Source  
Anastasia Koutalianos  
www.nadatodo.com/

JustWork Economic Initiative  
604.734.2104  
david.holcomb@justwork.ca  
www.justwork.ca/

# Special Thanks To:

One vital ingredient that we find on Commercial Drive is the incredible variety of quality groceries, bakeries and innovative restaurants—these locally owned businesses are a truly integral part of this community and contribute to its unique character. In keeping with the neighbourhood ethos, we organized a multi-ethnic potluck to showcase some of the really fabulous food on the Drive. Much of the breakfast and lunch provided for the event was in part generously donated by some very skilled and hard-working Commercial Drive food purveyors. Not only do they make the Drive proud of what it can offer to all of us who love to eat, but their generosity speaks volumes about their underlying—and often not so visible—support that they give to their wider community.

The Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Booster Juice, Whole Foods, Ethical Bean, Bandidas, Drive Organics, Bouzyos, Uprising Breads, Fratelli Bakery,

Sweet Cherubim, JustCatering and The Reef. It is businesses like these that really do contribute to a greater definition of resilience.

In line with the project goals, and in an effort to bridge divides in the community, a partnership was struck with two key organizations in the Commercial Drive area: the JustWork Economic Initiative and the Kettle Friendship Society. The presence of these two organizations was a valuable contribution to the event dynamic. Not only did the organizers participate in the dialogue, but the space came alive with the passions of artists and craftspeople living in the community.

JustWork, with its vision of “a healthy community where people are meaningfully and gainfully employed and business practices embrace an ethical, social mandate,” strives to “embrace a model of interdependence - mutually giving and receiving to create a more caring and just neighborhood.” Through their catering

arm, JustCatering, the organization supplied baked goods and morning treats, creating a low barrier opportunity in the process. Additionally, they exhibited pottery from their Justpottery initiative, which provides studio space, instruction, support, and employment opportunities for people in the neighborhood who, due to economic or social barriers, have no access to a creative space. These initiatives are emblematic of the strong social values that create a more resilient community, and the work the organization is doing is simply phenomenal, employing those who have the hardest time finding stable employment.

More information can be found at:  
<http://www.justwork.ca>

*A final thank you to all of the participants for coming out and sharing your passions, thoughts and ideas; and of course to Janet Moore and Peter Ladner, thank you for everything.*

# JUST CATERING

*a taste of heaven*

Commercial  
Drive



ethical  
bean  
coffee



West Coast Seeds

the Reef

DREAM  
CYCLE

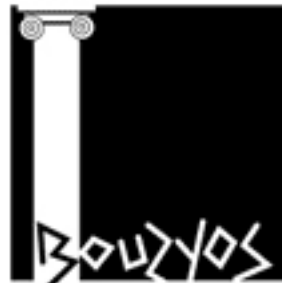
undergraduate  
semester in  
*dialogue*

Booster



Juice

Juice & Smoothie Bar



The Greek Taverna

BANDIDAS  
taquería



*uprising breads*  
bakery

FRATELLI

AUTHENTIC ITALIAN BAKING



## References:

<sup>1</sup>Simon Fraser University. (n.d.). *Undergraduate Semester in Dialogue*. Retrieved from <http://www.sfu.ca/dialogue/undergrad/>

<sup>2</sup>Resilience Alliance. (2010). *Key concepts*. Retrieved from <http://www.resalliance.org/564.php>

<sup>3</sup>Owen, H. (1997). *Open Space Technology: A user's guide*. San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers.

Quote on page 4:

Isaacs, W. (1999). *Dialogue and the art of thinking together: A pioneering approach to communicating in business and life*. New York: Doubleday.

*picture credits: Janet Moore and Commercial Drive Business Society*