

## Sustainability Project Fund Application Form

**Project Title:** McGill Farmers' Market

**Budget Requested:** \$1,500

**Applicant/Project Leader:** Diana King

Faculty/Department: Geography

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**Project Team:**

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### I. Project Overview

The McGill Farmers' Market (MFM) aims to bring delicious, local, seasonal produce to McGill's downtown campus, with weekly Farmers' Markets throughout September and October, and a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project from July to October. Since it was founded in 2008, the MFM has been an educational outlet for students, administration, faculty and the surrounding McGill community to learn about eating locally, staying healthy and promoting sustainable food choices both at McGill and in Montréal.

Now entering the preparation stage for its 5th year of operation, the McGill Farmers' Market has experienced significant growth and has started to establish its role in the wider McGill community. This coming year marks a crucial stage in the market's development, as it needs to be permanently institutionalized in order to secure its continued presence at McGill. This transition from a pilot project to an integral component of student life needs to be accomplished in a way that is in accordance with its all-inclusive nature. This independent study seeks to evaluate the most effective way to achieve the goals of financial and organizational sustainability, as well as finding the appropriate institutional umbrella under which the market can be housed permanently.

The MFM coordination team (4 people) has continued to foster relationships with multiple different stakeholders across campus, including McGill Food and Dining Services, the McGill Office of Sustainability, Campus Space and Planning, Organic Campus, and Midnight Kitchen. It is through the continued support (financial and in-kind) from these various stakeholders, and their extended interest in the market that we believe the market belongs in a different kind of structure - in lieu to those that currently exist at McGill, such as those offered by SSMU. Through an evaluation of best practices at other markets operating in both university and urban settings, we hope to assess the best operational and financial structure for the MFM.

The market has seen several successful developments in the past year, including the incorporation of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. 2011 also showed a growth in sales and attendance of the market by students, administration and faculty alike. As a result of these successes, we look forward to not only expanding the operations of the market, but to work towards becoming a self-funding organization. While this may not be

entirely feasible as we cannot become a commercial venture, and there are several unavoidable costs such as clean-up fees and parking associated with operating at the university, we are working to minimize our dependence on external funding sources. This year we will adopt a fee structure whereby vendors are charged a small fee (around \$35) for each market day attended. This is a practice invoked by many farmers' markets, and due to the sales momentum that the market has gained over the past 4 years it is now a viable option for us to do the same. In a similar fashion, the market has sought income through establishing a small fee for participating in the CSA program and by selling promotional merchandise. The money collected through these fees will help us work towards financing many of the operation costs we incur, including payment for the student coordinators that organize the market.

As an all-inclusive and collaborative initiative, the market not only provides a space whereby anyone from the diverse McGill campus community and its surroundings can gather, but it also uses food as a tool to bridge gaps between McGill campus community and the agricultural community that produces our food. Because the market touches so many different groups and stakeholders, we would like to use this independent study as an opportunity to effectively evaluate where this market could best be housed (external factors) and how it should be run (internal factors) so as to secure its operational success while not limiting future growth opportunities.

### Achievements in 2011

Many aspects of the MFM were incredibly successful. We secured a location on McTavish Street and saw an increase in visibility and traffic. We also designed a new logo and poster, printed and distributed many flyers and posters in the Montreal area, and really utilised the social media. We were also able to accomplish the goal of increasing the number and variety of vendors at the market; we had a number of vendors attend this year between 10-20 depending on the day - and on average we had about 14, most of them present for every market day. Their products ranged from maple syrup, tea and bread to name a few. We were also able to improve our relations with other stakeholders and groups, as well as foster new ones. We were able to collaborate with the McGill Food Systems Project, McGill Food and Dining Services, The Office of Sustainability, as well as creating relationships with Fit@McGill, Health Promotions and Dietetics and Human Nutrition.

We saw the implementation of the CSA program, which had about 20 participants in its first session and 30 in its second. This increased our relationships with our farmers, including MSEG thus acting as another channel to unify the two McGill Campus'. This was also a great way to spread the message about the MFM, particularly throughout the admin and faculty. This program will continue to facilitate the further expansion of the farmers' market, and ensure its continued success.

This year also saw Diana King (current co-coordinator) and Susanna Klassen (previous co-coordinator) undertake an independent study assessing the viability of the MFM within McGill. As part of this we are establishing the groundwork that will inform a financial and organisational strategy and aid in the creation of a 5-year plan that will aim to institutionalise the MFM on campus and make the market self-sustainable.

### Challenges in 2011

While we did succeed in accomplishing many of the things we had set out to do, we were faced with a few challenges that inhibited us from reaching some of the desired milestones. Our most difficult challenge was actually regarding the mandate of the market itself. The market does not have a set of rules and regulations to abide by per se and as such found itself in both discovering that we were not permitted to have artisanal vendors at the market. We tried to establish what the mandate is, however underestimated the amount of time it would take to assess it. Ultimately it required a lot more consulting with current stakeholders, and drawing from models within different Universities than we have previously thought. It is partially for this reason why the Independent Study on the MFM manifested. We are currently finishing off the study which will inform the work over the summer, as well as the long-term vision and goals for the market.

Another challenge was due to water constraints! We had a flood during the first week, which damaged a lot of our promotional material, and throughout the rest of the weeks we had a lot of rain that in some cases actually caused damage to the vendor's produce.

Another major challenge (a challenge for every year) has been really getting the message across that the MFM exists. It is certainly gaining attention, but we still need to assess whether there are channels that we are unaware of that could spread our message even wider and deeper.

### Goals for 2012

This year will be incredibly important as we hope to adopt changes in both the financial and organisational structure that will help us to transition from a start-up student initiative to an established and integral part of the McGill campus community. Specific goals include creating a new financial strategy, ensuring the continuation and growth of the CSA, fostering continued and new relationships with our various stakeholders across campus, and for the past coordinators to provide the required support in order for the incoming market team to reach their fullest potential through a newly-introduced 2-month long period of overlap.

With the revenue generated from the CSA program as well as the attendance fee for the vendors, we will be able to generate the majority of the funds to cover our operational costs. By applying to the SPF and Green Fund for the remaining funding for coordinator stipends this will allow for 1 year of adjustment and trial to ensure the success of the new fee structure, as well as allowing us to secure and expand our stakeholder relationships for additional support. We also aim to investigate the possibility of institutionalizing the MFM coordinator positions, either through an educational internship position or a permanent position. If one of our stakeholders at the university (or several) were to provide the permanent financial support to cover the cost of the coordinator stipends in this way, all of our costs would be covered and future uncertainties about funding would be eliminated.

This year will include an additional two months of overlap between past coordinators (3) and the new MFM team. Due to unforeseen challenges and investigations required for the applied research about the MFM, extra time was needed in order to finalize the resulting recommendations and the overall plan for the 2012-2013 market year. To this end, the cost of this extra period of overlap (\$3,000) will not exist in future, and is only to facilitate the proper knowledge transfer between coordinating groups in this time of significant transition for the

market. This year will also see the incorporation of the MFM Board of Advisors which will include representatives from our important stakeholders to serve as institutional memory for the market.

**II. Project Implementation**

Position Description	Stipend Amount	Timeline
Stipend for Senior Coordinator (3)	1000	April 2012 – July 2012
Stipend for Junior Coordinator (2)	1500	April 2012 - April 2013
Stipend for Promotions and Outreach Coordinator	1000	April 2012 - April 2013
Stipend for Finance Coordinator	900	April 2012 - April 2013
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7900</b>	

**III. Financials**

**Detailed expenses:**

Expense Description	Estimated Cost
Materials + supplies (incl. tents)	\$800
Printing Costs	\$500
Clean-up costs	\$1870
Parking	\$700
Stipends	\$7900

**Detailed revenues:**

Revenue Source	Amount Requested	Confirmed?
Sustainability Projects Fund	\$1500	No
Vendors	\$3150 [\$35 x 10 vendors x 9 weeks]	Expected
CSA Income	\$1600 [\$2.50 x 40 x 16weeks]	Expected
Green Fund	\$3500	Yes
Building, Grounds and Special Events	\$2000	Yes!