• Paper / Proposal Title:
Rethinking the Urban Foodscape: Lessons from a Community College in New York City

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• Abstract (300 words):
The urban foodscape encompasses both the built environment – the places where food is grown, purchased, consumed, and disposed of – and the social norms, perceptions, resources, and practices that govern the way we interact with food in space. Much of current design and spatial research has investigated the urban food environment at the neighborhood and city level but neglected the importance of large-scale urban institutions like universities and their campuses. This is a perilous omission especially when considering community colleges, which serve a larger population of low-income, food insecure, and minority students than senior colleges.
In this study, we sought to uncover how disparities within a community college foodscape manifest and are co-determined by the built environment and students' individual experiences on campus. To this end, we examined the urban foodscape of a community college in the Borough of Bronx, New York, using geospatial analysis, surveys with over 200 participants, and on-site audits. A mixed-methods approach enabled us to combine an analysis of the physical environment (i.e., the “designed foodscape”) with an in-depth assessment of the lived experiences of students (i.e., the “perceived foodscape”) and identify key areas of contrast and overlap.

Preliminary analyses reveal high levels of food insecurity among the predominantly minority and low-income student population, as well as students' difficulties and desire for more affordances (such as lower prices, healthier food, and more seating) on campus. These survey results are in accord with our analysis of the designed foodscape, which revealed the lack of healthy, accessible, and affordable food options on campus – a lack that contradicts recent institutional maneuvers (such as the 2016 opening of a campus food pantry) to fight food insecurity.

The findings of this study have implications for architects and urban planners engaged in the design and development of urban food system- and/or university-related projects. Ultimately, a more resilient and sustainable urban future cannot be attained without the systematic understanding (and the purposeful redesign) of one of the most fundamental and complex urban infrastructures – the urban foodscape, and how people perceive and relate to it in everyday life.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Dr. Rositsa T. Ilieva is an architect-urban planner with an expertise in policies, planning, and design for sustainable cities and urban food systems. At present, she teaches at the Parsons School of Design and at the Milano School of International Affairs, Management, and Urban Policy at The New School university in New York, NY and conducts research at the Urban Systems Lab at the same university. Dr. Ilieva is also affiliated with Hunter College, CUNY where she is currently pursuing a specialization degree in GIScience. Dr. Ilieva has an international research experience and has collaborated with global urban food policy scholars and practitioners during her MS and PhD studies at the Polytechnic University in Milan, Italy, visiting scholarships at Cardiff University (UK), Wageningen University (the Netherlands) and MIT (USA), and postdoctoral research fellowship at the Tishman Environment and Design Center in New York. She has presented her research at numerous international research conferences and is author of “Urban Food Planning: Seeds of Transition in the Global North” (Routledge, 2016). In 2017, Dr. Ilieva had the privilege to participate in the UN Post-
Habitat III Cross-cutting Expert Group Meeting on the integration of food security and nutrition into urban and territorial planning.

**Dr. Tanzina Ahmed** is a recent graduate of the Developmental Psychology program at The Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY). She is also a substitute lecturer in the Social Sciences department of CUNY Bronx Community College. Her research focuses on understanding how community college students in the Bronx navigate issues of academic achievement, food access, and socio-economic status. She uses a detailed mixed-methods approach to delve deep into how students in the Bronx interpret their life experiences, both at home and on the college campus. She also works with the Bronx Community Research Review Board's Community Engaged Research Academy (BXCRRB's CERA) to advocate for the empowerment of all Bronx residents.

**Anita Yan** is an undergraduate student in business administration and marketing in Brooklyn College. She is currently a research assistant for Dr. Ahmed as well as an intern for the non-profit organization Kitchen Connection.

**Dr. Sunil Bhaskaran** is a Professor of Geomatics at the City University of New York and the founding Director of the BCC Geospatial Center of the CUNY CREST Institute (BGCCCI). Sunil’s research expertise is in spatial analysis of data acquired from spaceborne, airborne and geographic data for developing spatial decision support systems for the urban environment. He has authored over 58 research papers, technical reports, and is a member of a panel of peer-reviewers on international journals. Sunil has been the recipient of several awards and grants from industry and federal government including the National Science Foundation’s Advanced Technological Education program (NSF-ATE), Federal Highway Administration and Department of transportation’s National Summer Transport Institute (NSTI), Digital Globe foundation, PSC CUNY, Natural Resources Imagery Grant Program Award and CUNY’s Workforce Development Initiative (WDI) program.