

PARTNERSHIP SPARKS MODEL FOR CHANGE IN COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY



Sacramento City Unified School District is working to make school lunch the freshest and most innovative possible partnering with local farmers, producers and Food Geniuses.”

David Edgar

Sacramento City Unified
School District
Executive Chef, 2019

For over three-quarters of a century, HMC Architects has provided innovative, sustainable, and progressive solutions to our clients' challenges. This dynamic thinking is central to the way we work. When you partner with HMC, you will see the difference in the HMC Experience. These examples demonstrate how Design for Good has positively impacted our clients and communities.

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good.

Goals

Reduce food waste

by partnering with local businesses, farms, and restaurants to rescue excess food that would otherwise be wasted. Ensure that edible food reaches those in need instead of ending up in landfills. Educate the community about the importance of sustainable food choices.

Alleviate hunger

by providing nutritious meals to people facing food insecurity, including homeless individuals, low-income families, and vulnerable populations.

Promote food security

by addressing the root causes of hunger. Work towards empowering individuals and communities through food education, job training, and advocacy for sustainable food systems.

Foster community engagement

by involving volunteers, donors, and supporters and organizing events, fundraisers, and awareness campaigns to build a community around addressing food insecurity. Strive to work alongside other community organizations to provide holistic support to needy individuals and families.

Empower vulnerable populations

including children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness. Provide access to nutritious meals while addressing the specific needs and challenges these groups face.

Support local farmers growers, and producers

and prioritize sourcing locally and sustainably whenever possible, supporting local businesses and reducing the food system's environmental impact.



Central Kitchen / Floyd Farms



In 2012, voters in the Sacramento region supported Measure R to upgrade kitchen facilities to improve nutrition and nutritional education for students. Sacramento, being the epicenter of the farm-to-fork movement, saw tremendous value in delivering fresh daily foods to its students.

To address this, the district elected to develop a new Central Kitchen to prepare 50,000 daily meals for the students in the Sacramento City Unified School District. The \$70 million investment maximized the use of three separate properties; the existing transportation facility, an existing central warehouse, and a new adjacent property purchased for the project. The decision was made to relocate the transportation facility to the newly purchased property, allowing for the 50,000 SF warehouse to be fully renovated to support central kitchen bulk storage functions. The new 44,000 SF kitchen facility houses nutrition services administration and the processing kitchen.

The design exudes a strong public presence for this community and a streamlined, functional layout converting bulk product to fully prepared meals delivered to each of the district's 81 school sites. The phased project began with the renovation of the existing warehouse and the relocation of the transportation which were completed in March of 2019 and the kitchen was completed by fall of 2020.

Designed to create a processing kitchen converting bulk product into packaged meals, the project is undeniably rooted in a child's education. Research supports that consuming a healthy nutritious meal leads to students' increased performance in the classroom. The project also houses a test kitchen and training room where students, staff and community members can learn about nutrition while preparing healthy locally sourced meals.

Their newly built Central Kitchen scaled up to meet the increasing need among students and families during the pandemic, when they departed from the previous school meal structure to address the emergency. During the first six months of the pandemic, as the facility was finally being commissioned, the district pivoted to prepare over four million meals to students and their families at 44 school sites. These host campuses became triage centers where drive up lanes of food deliveries became the norm. The district and the incredible staff at the Central Kitchen recognized the need to act and put the facility to use for the greater good—meeting the need of thousands of Sacramentans.

Project Information

CLIENT:
Sacramento City Unified
School District

LOCATION:
Sacramento, CA

SIZE:
Central Kitchen:
93,000 SF
Floyd Farms: 4,500 SF

COMPLETION:
Central Kitchen: 01/2020
Floyd Farms: 09/2022

*Sacramento City
Unified School District*

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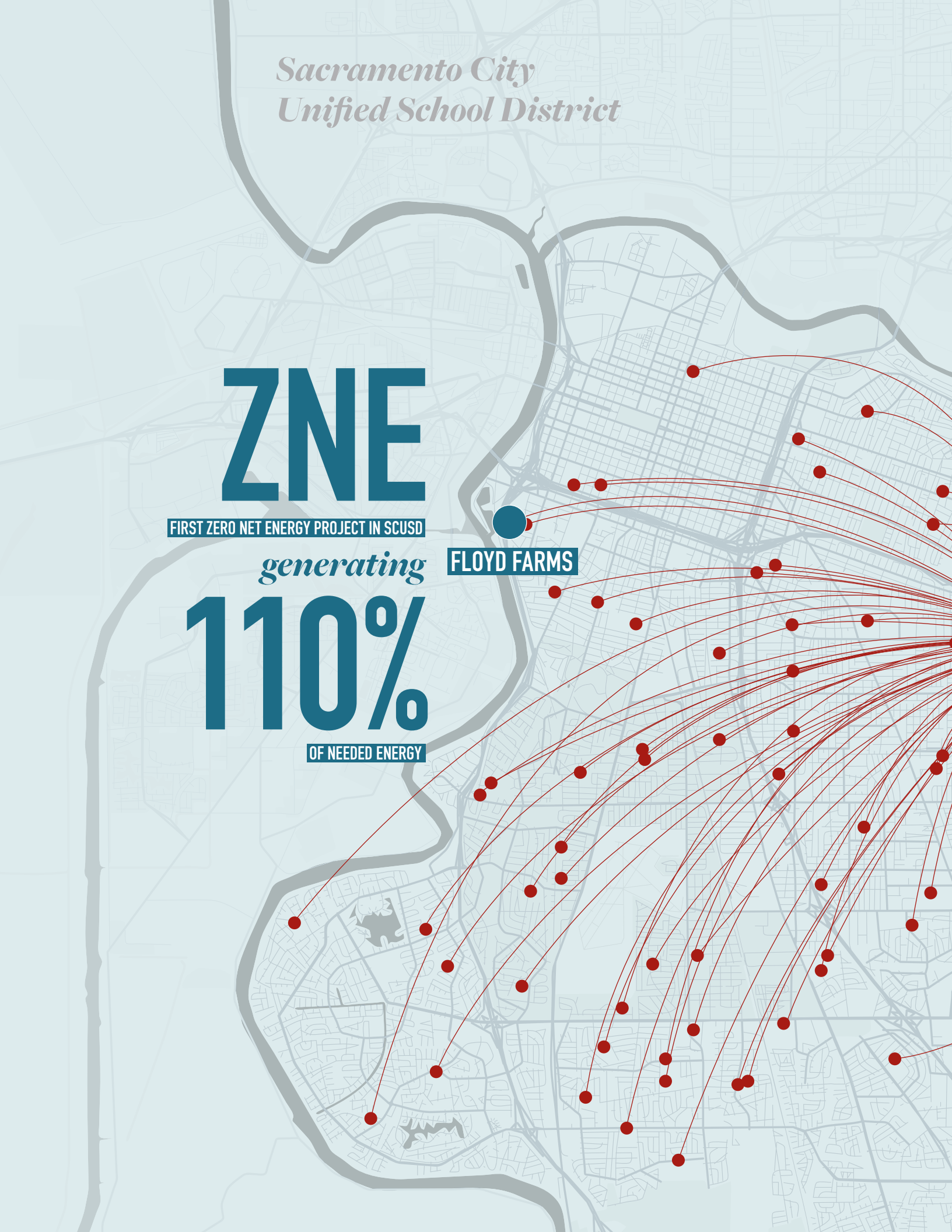
FIRST ZERO NET ENERGY PROJECT IN SCUSD

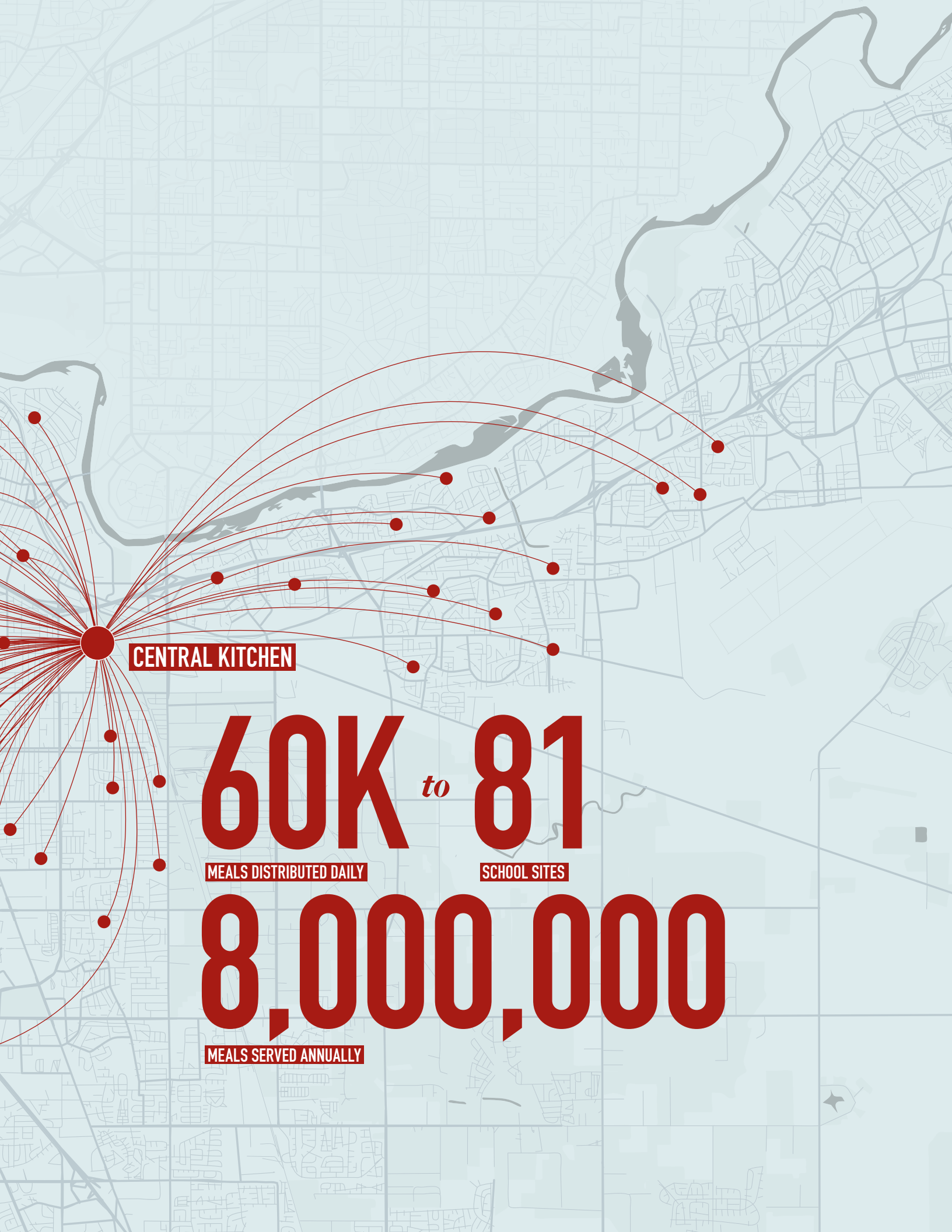
generating

110%

OF NEEDED ENERGY

FLOYD FARMS





CENTRAL KITCHEN

60K to 81

MEALS DISTRIBUTED DAILY

SCHOOL SITES

8,000,000

MEALS SERVED ANNUALLY



Our district is committed to the health of its students and we're pleased to bring this important project to life."

Jorge Aguilar

Sacramento City Unified School District
Superintendent, 2019

The year 2012 proved to be momentous as Sacramento paved the way to address the growing nutritional needs of students and their families. In addition to the successful passage of Measure R, the nonprofit, The Food Literacy Center was founded by Amber Stott. Amber saw the need to respond to the growing childhood obesity crisis and began working with legislators, culminating in a Sacramento County resolution passing, declaring September "Food Literacy Month."

It was her passion, and the passion of other like-minded food literacy and nutritional health champions that led to the movement which culminated in the passage of Measure R. She was a part of a committee exploring ways to systemically change the way food is delivered to students. The answer was the Central Kitchen.

Her mission is to inspire kids to eat their vegetables. The Food Literacy Center teaches children in low-income elementary schools cooking, nutrition, gardening, and active play to improve our health, the environment, and the economy. Her passion led the Food Literacy Center's dramatic growth: expanding from one school to nine in the first five years. The school district and the City of Sacramento took notice and began to explore ways to support her efforts more meaningfully.

The Food Literacy Center operated for its first several years in a portable on the back half of Leatatta Floyd Elementary School (LFES), a school supporting students whose families have an average annual household income of \$8,000 per year. This community was at the epicenter of the food literacy crisis. School Board Member Jay Hansen and Sacramento City Council Member Steve Hansen (no relation) knew that their community needed support, so they threw their political will behind a project that ultimately became a new headquarters for the Food Literacy Center.

LFES is located immediately south of downtown Sacramento. The city paved the way for a new development just north of LFES, which became known as the Mill at Broadway. Up to 1,000 single family units are nearing completion. A network of parks and paths were planned to interconnect the community. One 2.5-acre property, owned by the school district, sandwiched between the elementary school and Interstate 5 sat undeveloped for years. Amber, from her portable facility, would look out at the vacant land and dream of developing a farm to directly connect the students in her program to the land. The political will was there, the site was there, and finally in 2016 the investment was made by the district to design and construct a new headquarters, a working farm, and a community garden creating a link between the Mill development, the school site and the broader community. Amber's vision was about to become a reality.



In 2017, HMC Architects was selected to design the new Central Kitchen project. We had a seat at the table exploring ways to design a facility that would change the way kids thought of school meals. Through community meetings, we had the pleasure of meeting some of the titans of the food world, developing an understanding of the great stories that led to the creation of such an impactful project. Cathy Allen, retired chief operations officer for SCUSD, invited our team to the district office to gauge our willingness to take on another project, with loose affiliation to the kitchen—the design of the Food Literacy Center. Our charge at the time was to quickly design a facility, pro bono, which could assist in the fundraising efforts. During September 2018, at an event highlighting Food Literacy Month, renderings were shared with the community at the future home of the Food Literacy Center.

A dream of the Food Literacy Center and Sacramento City USD for over a decade, Floyd Farms at Leataata Floyd Elementary School is now home to the program’s headquarters, a cooking classroom, and a farm where students and community members can actively practice the “Farm-to-Fork” philosophy.

As an organization built around the tenets of health, wellness, and the environment, it was paramount that the headquarters reflected these same values while adhering to the nonprofit’s tight budget. Fruits and veggies will be grown on-site and washed and prepared in the shade of the outdoor learning classroom. Meals are later prepared in the Net Zero Energy kitchen, the first NZE project in the district’s portfolio, for healthy bodies and a healthy environment. The learning kitchen is anchored by a large demonstration counter and is surrounded by domestic cooking stations for kids to gain hands-on kitchen experience.

Only four percent of American children eat their recommended servings of daily vegetables. Thirty-eight percent of California children are overweight. Researchers believe we have two generations of Americans who do not know how to cook. Meanwhile, the entire global food chain may account for a third of what’s heating our planet. Our current food system is taking a toll on our health, the environment, our kids and the economy. The Central Kitchen and Food Literacy Center are more than health and nutrition education centers. With programs that have proven to be economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable, these projects may prove to be a model for systemic change in school districts around the United States. ●

HMC Architects

Los Angeles

633 W. 5th Street
Third Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071
213.542.8300

San Diego

8910 University Center Lane
Studio 650
San Diego, CA 92122
619.744.4077

San Jose

333 W. San Carlos Street
Studio 750
San Jose, CA 95110
408.977.9160

Ontario

3546 Concourse Street
Ontario, CA 91764
909.989.9979

Sacramento

2101 Capitol Avenue
Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816
916.368.7990

San Francisco

388 Market Street
Studio 800
San Francisco, CA 94111
415.915.0759

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