



Vancouver Food Asset Map

October 9th, 2016

Group 11

Lidwina Christanya Amanda Sari

Mitchie Zhao

Iris Lopez Ramirez

Lisa Zheng

Yin Lam Wong

Queena Chung

Introduction

The Vancouver Food Mapping project is an initiative by Vancouver Coastal Health based on Toronto's Food by Ward initiative which yielded a resource of the city's food assets. As such, we aim to build capacity for community members dealing with food insecurity in Vancouver by providing a current, easy-to-use, and dynamic tool to locate local community food assets, specifically free or subsidized grocery items. In addition, the map will make it easy for community partners to view and utilize community food assets in order to continue improvement of local food systems. Our group will continue the work started by previous classes to further develop the map and will be trialling it within our assigned region of Vancouver: the UBC area.

So far, the Vancouver Food Asset map only includes two assets in UBC, one which is the AMS Food Bank. As expressed by Food Bank coordinator Jay Singh in a CBC report, food bank use doubled from 2014 to 2015, contradicting the misconception that students attending UBC are financially stable; a statement that overlooks the many students who attend the university through student loans to cover tuition and living expenses (The Early Edition, 2015). It is our intent in this process not to overlook UBC as a place which would benefit from free or low cost groceries, thus will attempt to find further resources within campus and surrounding areas.

Significance

Food insecurity occurs when there is limited availability of adequate nutritious and safe food, or lack of accessibility to acceptable food due to social barriers (Radimer et al., 1992). Food insecurity has been considered a rising global issue, and Vancouver is facing this issue partly as a result of high living costs. Low income has been found to be the primary risk factor for food insecurity (Broughton et al., 2006). According to the Provincial Health Services Authority, the average monthly nutrition food cost for an individual male and for an individual female aged 18-30 in BC is \$302 and \$234 respectively (2016). This cost is rather significant as food is not the only source of expenditure. In fact, more than one hundred thousand people in British Columbia get help from food banks every month as a result of high living costs (Food Banks BC, 2016).

However, there are still many people who do not know how to approach the free or subsidized groceries from Food Banks or other organizations. This is usually because



community workers are not aware of who needs help (Food Banks BC, 2016). Thus we can see community environments also play an important role on the accessibility of food (Broughton et al., 2006) As a result, there is a need to spread the knowledge about food assets around the community to help support those vulnerable individuals in danger of experiencing food insecurity.

In an article by Allen, P., she argues about the important role of academics in changing the food system. According to her, “changes in beliefs and attitudes contribute to the participation of individuals in social change” (Allen, 2008). Thus, academics can take part in this idea through their research projects. We believe that our contribution in this project will not only impact vulnerable families by improving their access to food, but also benefit UBC community members and partners in general. Community partners can benefit by improving their service for the community and better lead the community to different food resources according to their needs. Involving community members in UBC will open conversations about food insecurity, which will hopefully encourage them to actively participate in alleviating this problem within UBC and Vancouver. Addressing our research questions will close the gaps in the map and strengthen its functionality to better serve the community.

Objectives

1. **Incorporate free or subsidized grocery items into the food asset map**
2. **Assess usability of the map by conducting trials in the UBC community**

Inquiry Questions

1. How willing would community members be to use the asset maps?
2. Was the information provided on the assets in the asset map clear and comprehensible?

Methods

There are two parts of this research - Data Collection for Mapping, and Trialing Map in the Community. All six of Group 11 members are TCPS 2 certified for ethical considerations. Specific instructions are given and monitored by our Community partner, Teya Stephens MSc, RD from Vancouver Coastal Health.

Data Collection

We will use the excel document provided by Teya containing names and contact of organizations providing free or low cost grocery items, as well as finding new assets. We will be emailing these organizations according to the template given by Teya to collect details of the days and times they provide their services, and any criteria required to receive their services. Although some of this data is already on the map, it may be outdated and no longer useful. By directly contacting these organizations, we can provide up-to-date information and adjust our map accordingly. In addition, we will ask these organizations for permission before adding them to the asset map.

The data we collect will be displayed on the asset map through the Google platform. The use of Google Maps in this project is justified by three reasons. First of all, mapping out the information makes it easier for users to locate the services. Secondly, the platform can be continually updated for future use. More importantly, Google Maps is a free service for both the creators that add information, and the users.

Trialing Map in Community

As part of the larger trialing of the map throughout Vancouver, our group was assigned to the UBC area. In order to increase the accuracy of the result, we are aiming for a sample size of 60 surveys. For this sample size, UBC Point Grey campus is considered to be the best location for its high population density. It is worth noting that this is a high student population area, thus the opinions gathered may not be representative of the population living off campus but within UBC. The Main Mall will be separated into three equidistant parts- Rose Garden to Agricultural Road, Agricultural Road to the south of Beaty Biodiversity Museum, and south of Beaty Biodiversity Museum to Thunderbird Crescent Road. Three groups will simultaneously conduct the survey using Google Forms, based on the template created by our community partner, during LFS 350 session 8 time (Oct 26th, 1-4pm). A consent form will be signed by participating community members for ethical considerations.

References

- Allen, P. (2008). Mining for justice in the food system: perceptions, practices, and possibilities. *Agriculture And Human Values*, 25(2), 157-161.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10460-008-9120-6>
- Broughton, M., Janssen, P., Hertzman, C., Innis, S., & Frankish, C. (2006). Predictors and Outcomes of Household Food Insecurity Among Inner City Families with Preschool Children in Vancouver. *Canadian Journal of Public Health / Revue Canadienne De Sante'e Publique*, 97(3), 214-216. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41994727>
- Food and Agriculture Organization (2002). "The State of Food Insecurity in the World. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y4671e/y4671e06.htm#fn40> on 5th October 2016.
- Food Banks BC (2016). About Hunger in BC. Retrieved from <http://www.foodbanksbc.com/about-hunger-in-bc/hunger-count-2013-2/> on October 7, 2016
- Provincial Health Services Authority (2016). Food Costing in BC 2015. Vancouver, B.C.: Provincial Health Services Authority, Population and Public Health Program. Retrieved from <http://www.phsa.ca/population-public-health-site/Documents/2015%20Food%20Costing%20in%20BC%20-%20FINAL.pdf> on Oct 8th, 2016.
- Radimer, K. L., C. M. Olson, J. C. Greene, C. C. Campbell, and J. P. Habicht. 1992. Understanding hunger and developing indicators to assess it in women and children. *Journal of Nutrition Education* 24 (1 suppl.):36S–44S
- Roshanafshar, S., & Hawkins, E. (2015). Food insecurity in Canada. Retrieved October 7, 2016, from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2015001/article/14138-eng.pdf>
- The Early Edition (2015). UBC food bank sees a spike in visits this year. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ubc-food-bank-1.3332420>