

Assessing Food Assets in Vancouver:

Community Kitchens in Victoria-Fraserview Proposal

Group 18:

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Introduction

The aim of this project is to collect data and make observations on community kitchens in the Victoria-Fraserview neighborhood, through the lens of two pillars of food security: accessibility and utilization. Accessibility is defined as sufficient amount of food that people have access to in order to maintain a healthy life (McCullum et al, 2015). Community kitchens provide several kinds of accessibility aiming not only to provide meals to community members, but also to improve social relationships, food and cooking skills, and empower community members (Iacovou, Pattieson, Truby, & Palermo, 2012). Utilization reflects how these kitchens make use of the assets available to them. Our objectives are:

- We want to understand how and where food programming occurs in Victoria-Fraserview.
- We want to understand what sort of assets these kitchens have, and the condition they're in.

Based on our objectives, we hope to answer these questions:

- How accessible are these kitchens physically, economically, and culturally?
- What is the infrastructure of these kitchens?

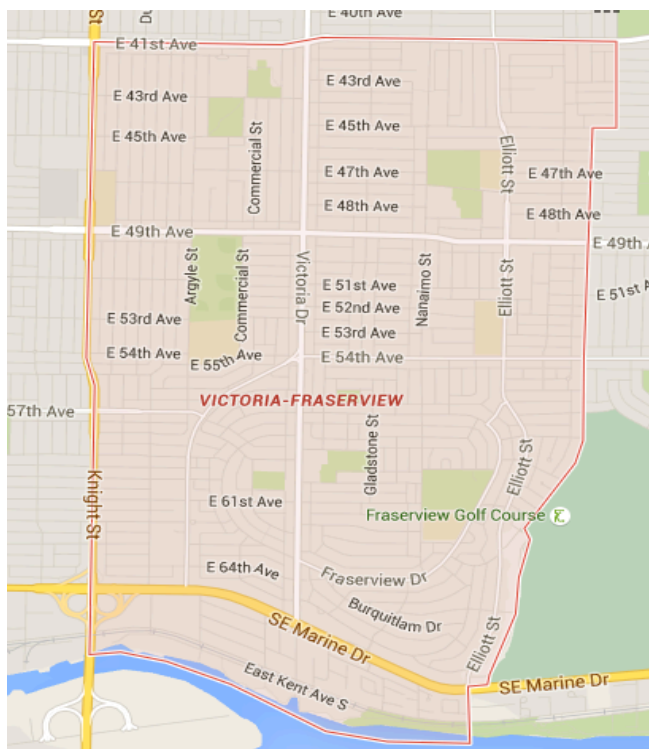
To explore these specific questions, we will utilize techniques from the ABCD theory. This theory claims that by being reminded of assets that already exist, the community will feel uplifted, which can provide clarity, and lead to specific shared goals and visions (Mathie, A., & Cunningham, G. 2003).

Background and Significance

Food security is when all members of the community have access to safe, culturally appropriate, and nutritionally adequate food within a system that promotes self-reliance and social justice (McCullum et al, 2005).

As UBC students in the Land, Food, and Community II course, we want to gain a better understanding of the state of food security in Victoria-Fraserview through the lens of two pillars of food security: accessibility and utilization. These facilities are spaces where community members can gather to prepare a meal together, share knowledge, and make connections (City of Vancouver, 2015) that can be key to establishing a more sustainable regional food system (Ikerd, 2013).

The Victoria-Fraserview community is located in South Vancouver, between 41st Ave. and Fraser River, and between Knight St. and Vivian St.



(Google Maps, 2016)

Victoria-Fraserview was once an industrial area but it has been transforming into a residential, culturally diverse community. According to the Church for Vancouver website, the population of this area is about 30,710 and residents in this area speak English and Chinese, the latter being most prevalent (Bird & Ritchie, 2015). Victoria St. is considered the major commercial area where it features a variety of shops and services, and possibly many community kitchens. There are about nineteen churches in this area spreading along Victoria Dr. and 41st Ave. A church is not only where people gather for similar religious purpose but is also a place that provides services and activities for members. We believe that many community kitchens exist within these churches that offer meal for people. Cultural differences, such as language, nationality, and religion, may influence social accessibility to community kitchens. Physical access to many of these religious organizations is usually convenient which enables us to visit as many churches as possible within a limited time frame. People can access these churches by driving or taking the public transport. There are six main bus routes that operate in the area and go to other different parts of the city such as Downtown, Langara, and Oakridge. Physical accessibility, such as transportation, will help us evaluate the community kitchen.

Barbolet et al. (2006) conducted an assessment on Vancouver food system and found only a few community kitchens in the Victoria-Fraserview neighborhood. They gathered some general information about these kitchens, including how they operate and whom they are providing services for which include people with specific health problems such as HIV, diabetes or people belong to a specific populations such as new mothers and seniors (Barbolet et al., 2006). However, the information provided from the

study is not enough for us to evaluate specific infrastructure or programming of these community kitchens or their role in achieving local food accessibility and utilization.

Methods

We will use both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess each kitchen: The qualitative method consists of our observations regarding the accessibility of the kitchens. Incorporating information regarding the infrastructure would be qualitative as well as quantitative, and it is based on the survey results.

Collection

We will begin by locating community kitchens in Victoria-Fraserview. We will search the Internet for local churches and cultural centers. We also ask the neighborhood stores and shops about community kitchens in their local area.

After finding the contact information of a few of these community kitchens, we will get a hold of them either through email or by going directly to the kitchen for further inquiry (see appendix A for proposed contact letter).

If we get a response, we will make provide our community partner with a consent form, which they will need to sign before we proceed to making an appointment based on what time works for both our group and our partners'.

When we visit the site, we will use a survey (see the link in appendix B) that has been provided to us by the LFS 350 course. We will also be taking photos of the kitchen if our community partner consents to it.

Analysis

The survey will help us to evaluate the type of facility we visit as a religious, cultural, or non-profit center. The physical aspect of the survey focuses on the location,

accessibility to public transportation, and to people with disabilities and wheelchairs.

The economical aspect includes whether or not there is a fee/donation required to use kitchen facilities. The cultural aspect of the survey includes the social status of the people who attend the community kitchens.

Information regarding the infrastructure determines the existence and condition of kitchen appliances; the amount of maintenance needed per week, and the different types of meals prepared each day. The photos, if available, will help visualize how infrastructure is related to functionality. We will also ask them about the different ways they advertise for their kitchen, and their various programs for specific age/cultural groups.

The answer to these questions will help us complete our qualitative and quantitative analysis through a food security lens, by finding themes in the data related to accessibility and utilization of the community kitchen assets.

Ethics

Throughout this project, we must actively respect the position of community members as leaders. We must respect their opinions, as well as being conscious of specific ethical considerations. For example, we will keep any participant names and personal details confidential. We will get consent to disclose the organization's location in our report. This is important because there could be legal grey areas, especially involving food safety regulations, which could compromise a community kitchen's operations if exposed, to the City of Vancouver, for example.

We will be as professional as possible when interacting with community members. We will try to minimize bias, especially by being mindful to respect all cultural

backgrounds. We will do our best to fit into representatives' schedules and follow through on any requests made of us.

We will provide a follow up e-mail before our final report so our community partners can review it, ask questions, or inform us of any changes we need to make so they feel comfortable.

We hope to come together as a group and combine our different perspectives, together with the community partners'.

Success Factors

- As a group, the biggest success factor will be determined by the number of community kitchens we're able to assess; and by how early we complete a high quality project before the final presentation, which is due on April 4th.
 - We will be contacting potential community partners via e-mail. If this fails, we will try in person to find willing partners and inquire at grocery stores, community centers, barber shops, and other places that could potentially have information about nearby kitchens
 - We will try to meet as a group once a week to build our proposal and construct a final report and presentation in a timely manner.
 - In these meetings, we will most importantly determine our next steps to complete the project, and then delegate out our individual roles to complete them.
 - These meetings will also help us connect all the individual work we have done.

- Another success factor is the quality of our data that allows us to analyze and expand knowledge about community kitchens in Victoria-Fraserview neighborhood.
 - We will do our best to control and standardize the variables in the survey by making sure all the questions are complete for each kitchen, and clearly acknowledging which questions are incomplete or vague when or if we cannot.
 - We will make sure that we do research and make observations for the questions that won't necessarily be posed to our partners. For example, we will note how long it takes to bus to the organization from a central location such as Downtown Vancouver, Langara, Oakridge, or UBC.

By presenting and analyzing our accessibility and utilization data in this report, we hope to raise awareness about food security in Victoria-Fraserview. We hope this report will make an impact on ourselves, on our community partners, on other LFS 350 students, and on City of Vancouver representatives. Our partners, and even the City of Vancouver, may choose to use our findings as a guide for implementing new strategies to improve the accessibility and utilization of the community kitchens.

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Appendix A

Proposed Contact Letter

Dear INSERT NAME,

I hope this E-mail finds you well.

Our names are Dakotah, Maedeh, Mana, Janny, and Leanne. We are a group of UBC undergraduate students in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. We are doing a project in our Land, Food, and Community II class that focuses on the accessibility, utilization, and sustainability of community kitchens.

We are looking to partner with community kitchens that take part in making Victoria-Fraserview a food-friendly neighborhood, or a neighborhood that provides physical, social, and cultural access to cooking and sharing meals.

If INSERT NAME is one of these organizations, we would be truly honored to learn more about community food systems from you through a brief in-person interview and survey (30-45 minutes) at your convenience.

If you'd like, there are more details on the course and our project (under Community Projects—2016 Winter Projects) here:

<http://lfs350.landfood.ubc.ca/>

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. We really look forward to hearing from and meeting you.

You can reach us at dakotah@fazzard.com or if you prefer to call (303) 501-2626.

Best regards,

Dakotah, Maedeh, Mana, Janny, and Leanne

Appendix B

Link to Survey

<https://survey.ubc.ca/s/lfs350-communitykitchenassetsurvey-winter2016/>