

Group 15
Richmond Food Asset Map: Grocery +
Meal Assets
Project Proposal
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Group Members:

Kun Yu 48785159

Selena Chiang 12623154

Yue (Sherry) Qin 15645154

Jacqueline Clark 60063147

Ting-Wei (Kelly) Huang 19849158

Sansan Tan 23879159

Introduction

The goal of the proposed study is to develop a food asset map of Richmond, focussing on free/subsidized/low cost prepared meals, snacks and grocery items, in order to improve food insecurity faced by the community members. The map should be easy to use and updated to serve as a tool for community members to locate the current food assets.

Over 70% of Richmond's population identifies as a visible minority (within Canada) which creates unique challenges for the Richmond community to address issues around food insecurity (Statistics Canada, 2016). According to FAO, every person should have "access to ...nutritious foods that meet ...food preferences" (Rome Declaration, 1996). Currently, in Richmond, there are several organizations working to ensure that community members have access to both nutritious and culturally acceptable foods, including the Richmond Food Bank and the Salvation Army, in addition to our community partner, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).

Vancouver Community Health is "committed to supporting healthy lives in healthy communities...through care, education and research." (VCH, 2017). During the implementation of the Vancouver Food Asset Map, VCH defined food assets to include places where people can "grow, prepare, share, buy, receive or learn about food", including schools and community centres (VCH, 2017). We will keep this definition in mind while developing the map. It is hoped that the food asset map will be a valuable resource for the community to facilitate their access to appropriate food.

Significance

This project fits within the overall framework of community food security, as a component of world food security, as defined by the FAO (Rome Declaration, 1996). Food insecurity has been defined as "the inability to acquire or consume an adequate quality or quantity of food in socially acceptable ways or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so" (Davis & Tarasuk, 1996).

In 2012, 8.5% of all households in BC experienced some level of food insecurity (Statistics Canada, 2016) and Richmond is no exception. Over 38% of its population have an annual income of less than \$40,000 and the child poverty rate, at 25%, is above the provincial average. The Richmond Food Bank feeds over 2200 people each week, 32% of whom are children (Richmond Food Bank, 2017).

It is within this context that we are adopting a food systems approach to community food security as defined in by McCullum & Desjardins (McCullum et al., 2005, p.278-281) . In the three stages of building food security, "community mapping processes" are part of the stage of "food systems in transition". McCullum suggests that this is a tool which will "promote social cohesion and reduce inequities by building connections..." between local food sources and consumers. This concept, along with that of asset-based community development will guide our work. Many resources (programs providing low cost/free meals and food) already exist in Richmond and our goal is to bridge the gap between community members and their resources through participation with local organizations. Mathie and Cunningham (2003) suggest that, by

asset-based development, “communities are helped to build an inventory of their assets”. This will directly address one of the four pillars of food security, “access” which refers to the affordability and allocation of food, as well as the preferences of individuals and households (Gregory et al., 2005).

Currently, information about community organizations that provide free/low cost meals and grocery items are listed in printed brochures available in the community. However, Richmond lacks a comprehensive food asset map and our project seeks to fill that gap, helping social service organizations to direct community members, especially those who are food insecure, to available resources. Vancouver has led the way in food asset mapping in BC and early research suggests that the current mapping tool has been well received and fairly easy to use (Romses et al, 2017). However, more feedback is necessary to improve the map and the second part of the project aims to work towards filling that gap. We will seek input from Richmond community members, addressing concerns about the purpose of the map, its ease of use (eg for the elderly, those without computer access) and how best it can be utilised in the community, by individuals and/or organizations. We hope to gather information to allow further evaluation of the mapping process for Richmond and for the other BC communities currently creating their own food asset maps.

Objectives

Goal:

To gather information about specific food assets across the city of Richmond to assist in the development of a publically accessible food asset map that is current, dynamic and easy to use.

- To collect information about free/low cost meals and grocery items offered by community organizations by updating currently available information (business location, hours, phone numbers, target population) and by acquiring new accurate information about organizations whose profiles are not currently publicly accessible (By November 8th).
- To facilitate instructional sessions on how to use the map for VCH staff, community partners and organizations at selected by VCH, and gather feedback from them on forms provided by the latter.
- To compile a report, summarizing the feedback collected as well as recommendations for the next steps in the project, with reference to the overall map in addition to the specific categories of free/low cost meals and grocery items. (by November 22nd).

Method

A three-step approach will be used to achieve the objectives of this project and provide an informative food asset map for the Richmond community.

To complete our first objective, organizations listed on the “Community Meals & Food Banks in Richmond” brochure will be contacted through email, phone or in person to request updated information on their community meal programs. In addition, these organizations will be asked if they are aware of any other organizations providing similar services. Internet searches and google maps will also be used to search for additional community services. A detailed description this project, in lay language will be proved to all organizations and consent will be obtained (written or oral) for the sharing of their information. Information gathered will be:the location, service hours, phone number and email of the organization, as well as the type and cost of meal/ grocery item, and short description of the population they serve, (who is eligible for the service and how frequently).

Information will gathered by phone calls or emails by our group members, individually. . However, if an in-person meeting is set up with an organization, at least two members in the research group will be present.. Data collected from the first step submitted to VCH dietitians on provided excel sheets (on or before November 1st) and will be added to the food asset map database after its approval by the aforementioned.

The second part of the approach will be to analyze data and the usefulness of the map. The VCH public dietitians will select a number of different social service organizations and public health staff in Richmond. Group members (in pairs) will meet with those community members to instruct them on how to use the new food asset map. After the hands on demonstration, the interviewees will be asked to provide their feedback by answering a series of question such as how easy the map was to use, whether the instructions were easy to understand and if they would use the map in the future.

Lastly our findings and feedback will be submitted to VCH as a written report. Our recommendations will be subsequently implemented in adjusting information format and future development of the food asset map.

Outcomes

The aim of the project is to provide contact information and location about the organizations that provide free or subsidized meals and grocery items for the development of a Richmond Food Asset Map, a tool accessible to the public. This will provide a resource for community organizations to help food insecure community members to access appropriate food. The Information for will be finalised and submitted by November 8th. A report detailing community feedback will be submitted by November 22nd. . An infographic presentation will be taking place on November 29th at a public space on the UBC campus and the final community project report will be submitted on December 3rd via Canvas.

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