Keep on Truckin': Improving Access to Fresh Healthy Food With a Mobile Farmer's Market

Glenda Velji, DNP, APRN, FNP-C

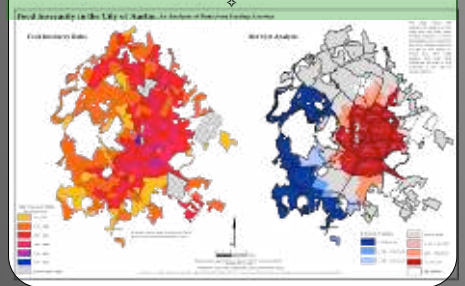
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Introduction

- Food deserts characterized by poor access to healthy affordable food (Beaulac, Kristjannson & Cummins, 2009).
- Food insecurity has been described as insufficient access to adequate food for a healthy, active life (Dean, & Sharkey, 2011).
- Many factors contribute to the development of food deserts and food insecurity, including low socioeconomic status (SES), financial barriers, such as transportation costs, fewer supermarkets and grocery stores which offer healthy food choices, and racial and ethnic disparities among inner city neighborhoods (Braunstein & Lavazzo-Mourey, 2011; Koprak, 2014).
- Almost thirty-five percent (34.9%) of American adults are obese, translating to over 78 million adults who are overweight (CDC, 2014).
- Leading causes of preventable death associated with obesity include heart disease, stroke and diabetes, and certain cancers (CDC, 2014). The estimated medical costs of these preventable conditions exceeded $147 million in 2008 (CDC, 2014).
- Obese individuals had higher associated medical costs than non-obese, greater than $1400 per person (CDC, 2014). In Travis County, obesity is estimated to cost area businesses $9 Billion annually (Office of Sustainability, 2015). Non Hispanic Blacks have the highest prevalence of obesity at 47.8%, followed by Hispanics at 42.5%, Non Hispanic Whites at 32.6%, and Non-Hispanic Asians at 10.8% (CDC, 2014).
- In 2013, the local Community Health Assessment reported that 8.7% of the low-income population in the County did not live within one mile of a full service grocery store (Sustainable Food Policy Board, 2015).
- The establishment of Mobile Farmer's Markets been successful in several communities, including Washington DC; Grand Rapids Michigan; Boston, MA; Indianapolis, IN; Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; and Toronto, Canada (Willis, 2014).
- A Mobile Farmer's Market is just one of many strategies to address Food Insecurity in Travis County (City of Austin, 2015).

Purpose

- It was the purpose of this project to conduct Phase 1of a feasibility study for initiating a Mobile Farmer's Market in the County, using best practices implemented by Arcadia, Washington DC, Garden on the Go, Indianapolis; Mobile Farmers Market, Baltimore and others around the country.



Methods

Moyes and Lawrence Framework

Design

Asset Based Community Development

- Ethical Framework to Engage Community
- Strengths
- Skills
- Passions
- Relationship Driven (ABCD Institute, 2015)
- Feasibility study involving 3 food insecure neighborhoods
- Focus groups using ABCD principles
- Qualitative analysis to assess major themes

Measures

Format

- Limited to 60 minutes
- Facilitator, note taker, translator as needed

Themes for Questions

- Neighbourhood Strengths/Weaknesses
- Cost/Accessibility
- Acquisition/Preferences

Sample

Table 2a: Group 1 Demographics – GGSC

Name	Gender	Age	Race	MS	EL	AHI
Bertha	F	55+	H/L	W	HSG	<$20K
Sam	M	55+	H/L	W	SHS	<$20K
Mary	F	55+	H/L	W	SC	<$20K
Beatrice	F	55+	Asian	W	HSG	<$20K
Timothy	M	55+	Asian	M	HSG	<$20K
Sally	F	55+	H/L	W	<8th grade	<$20K

Table 2b: Group 2 Demographics – CHSHWC

Name	Gender	Age	Race	MS	EL	AHI
Patricia	F	45-54	O/N	L W/P	SC	>$50K
Dennis	M	35-44	H/L	M	<8th grade	$31-$40K
Francine	F	35-44	H/L	M	SHS	$31-$40K
Rosemarie	F	25-34	H/L	M	HSG	$20-$30K
Laura	F	25-34	H/L	M	SC	$20-$30K
Katherine	F	35-44	H/L	M	<8th grade	>$50K
Cindy	F	55+	H/L	W	<8th grade	----

Table 2c: Group 3 Demographics – AAAHCT

Name	Gender	Age	Race	MS	EL	AHI
Nadine	F	45-54	B/AA	S	CG	$41-$50K
Marci	F	45-54	B/AA	S	CG	$20-$30K
Karen	F	55+	B/AA	S	---	<$20K
Jane	F	55+	B/AA	W	CG	>$50K
Millie	F	45-54	B/AA	M	SC	$20-$30K
Andrea	F	35-44	B/AA/L	LWP	CG	<$20K
Victoria	F	55+	B/AA	M	CG	>$50K
Lisa	F	45-54	B/AA	M	SC	>$50K

Results

Analysis

Shopping Habits

Table 3a: Grocery Shopping Habits – GGSC

Name	Benefits (SNAP/WIC)	Frequency	Shopping Days
Bertha	----	1x Per Week	----
Sam	N	2x Per Week	M/W/F
Mary	N	2x Per Week	Th/Sat
Beatrice	N	2x Per Week	Th
Timothy	N	1x Per Week	Sun
Sally	N	2x Per Week	Sat

Table 3b: Grocery Shopping Habits – CHSHWC

Name	Benefits (SNAP/WIC)	Frequency	Shopping Days
Patricia	N	1x Per Week	W/Sun
Dennis	Y	2x Per Week	M/Th
Francine	Y	2x Per Week	M/Th
Rosemarie	Y	1x Per Week	Sun
Laura	Y	1x Per Week	M
Katherine	Y	2x Per Week	M/Sun
Cindy	N	1x Per Week	M

Table 3c: Grocery Shopping Habits – AAAHCT

Name	Benefits (SNAP/WIC)	Frequency	Shopping Days
Nadine	N	1x Per Week	Th
Marci	N	2x Per Week	W/Th/Sat
Karen	N	2x Per Week	Sat
Jane	N	1x Per Week	Th/F/Sat
Millie	N	2x Per Week	Th/Sat/Sun
Andrea	N	2x Per Week	Sat
Victoria	Y	2x Per Week	Sat
Lisa	N	Daily	M/T/W/Th/F

Cost

" So I went to visit the meat market. I came in through the front. It's a nice hipster place. It's just like wonderful. It's like walking distance. And then I wanted to get to the meat section. And there was this hen sitting. Because I was going to get some sausage, steak or whatever, but when I went to that area that hen was sitting in there. And the hen was $18 a pound. I said ooh. But that meat market, I could not afford it."

- Nadine, AAAHCT Focus Participant

Accessibility

- Main shopping done at HEB
- 10-15 minutes transportation via car
- Did not shop at a farmer's market now because of the hours

- " I guess if it was available more than once or twice a week. And then it's like, not that it's just between like 2:00 and 4:00. My kids get off the school at 3:00, so I have to be home."

-Francine, CHSHWC Focus Participant

Acquisition

When I first moved here in the '90s, there was a man and I swear he pulled a cart with a donkey, like around the East side. And it was a vegetable – it was a vegetable truck."

-Patricia, CHSHWC Focus Participant

" When I was growing up we actually had someone then, came through the neighbourhood, and he pushed a cart…and you'd go down and he'd put your stuff in a brown paper bag, pay him and get your fresh produce."

- Victoria, AAAHCT Focus Participant

Preferences

- No strong preference for locally grown produce
- Staples such as rice, legumes, milk
- Concern over who would be bringing the produce into the community
- "Especially with the gentrification that's going on in East Austin, I just identifies with somebody that looks like me if it's going to be that kind of one on one, then I would identify more with an African American."

Millie, AAAHCT Focus Participan

Conclusions

Summary of Findings

- Target markets are interested and willing
- 2 focus groups described a Mobile vegetable market from the 1990s
- Hours of Mobile Market need to be extended and available in the evening hours
- 2 stops per week at central facility
- Educational cooking classes

Limitations

- Time Limitations
- Convenience
- Introduction of Bias
- Language Barriers (Spanish/English)

Practical Implications

- Strong community interest in having better access to fresh produce via a Mobile Farmer's Market
- Increased access to fresh healthy foods will decrease obesity rates in Travis county, and decrease the cost of health care.

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