

Appendix M Vancouver's Food Security Indicators

Food security can be measured on the individual, household, community and regional levels. Individual measures can be based on dietary intake, episodes of food insecurity or indicators related to health, such as BMI. Household measures may be examined through such measures as food costs as a percentage of household income. Community measures may focus on issues such as access to grocery stores, charitable food usage rates, or the number and usage of community food resources. Community food security may also be measured in terms of indicators related to food related social enterprise. Regionally, we can look at issues such as food miles (the distance food travels to reach Vancouver consumers), the number of farms in the GVRD and the amount of local foods available in stores.

We have developed a list of strategic indicators that are linked to specific policy action. While information has been collected on most of these through this research, there are others that are central to assessing Vancouver's food system that remain uncollected.

Grocery Store Access	Current Status	Research and Action Recommendations
Grocery Store Location	Varies widely throughout the City. Some neighborhoods were well provided (DTES, Strathcona), while others (Oakridge) are lacking grocery store facilities.	Continue to monitor the location of stores to ensure that neighborhoods are not losing these important resources and analyze accessibility to transit routes.
Food Costs	Overall food costs are lowest in low-income neighborhoods, however the % of the household budget spent on food is highest in low-income neighborhoods (e.g., Strathcona)	Continue to monitor the cost of food, using an instrument that is more sensitive to ethnic and religious food preferences and possible health concerns (e.g., diabetes).
Food Quality	Not directly measured, however, approximately 50% of small stores lacked produce.	Measure the amount of space within stores devoted to various types of food.
Charitable Food System Adequacy	Current Status	Research and Action Recommendations
% of charitable food providers devoted to underserved populations (e.g., women, seniors, Aboriginal) including those with health concerns or other dietary restrictions.	Approximately 59% of charitable food providers have programs specifically for underserved populations. There are three providers that cater specifically to individuals with health issues (HIV/AIDS and Diabetes).	Continue to monitor to ensure that these groups continue to receive food. Research whether there is adequate provision of food for individuals with health concerns.
Nutritional adequacy of meals	Our survey of charitable food programs suggested a wide range in adequacy from poor to excellent although no study of nutritional breakdown of meals was conducted. Because programs are dependent	Conduct a detailed nutritional analysis of the types of foods provided through the charitable food system.

	upon donations, they cannot ensure that meals will be nutritionally adequate.	
Location of charitable food services in comparison to low-income populations	Charitable food resources are heavily concentrated in the downtown core. There are far fewer available in outlying areas.	Continue to monitor the location of charitable food resources to ensure that neighborhoods are not being saturated or underserved.
Food acceptability	Focus group reports suggest that much of the food provided through the charitable system is unacceptable because it is old or of poor quality. In addition, there are some reports that "healthy" foods are seen as unappealing.	Monitor the foods provided by the charitable system to ensure that they are fresh and that they take into account dietary preferences and limitation due to long-term drug use or other medical conditions (e.g., poor teeth)
Amount of food that remains unused because of spoilage	Did not measure	Conduct a survey of charitable food provider to ascertain food waste and reasons why waste occurs (e.g., lack of refrigeration)
Community Food Security	Current Status	Research and Action Recommendations
Location of community food security resources in relation to population densities and low-income residents	Community food resources are more evenly distributed throughout the City but there is still a concentration of these sites in the downtown core and many neighborhoods only have 1 or 2 resources.	More research needs to be done into determining areas of need outside of the downtown core.
Number and location of Farmers Markets	There are 4 farmers markets in the City. None located in a low-income neighborhood.	Continue to monitor and investigate the feasibility of establishing additional markets, especially in low-income neighborhoods.
Number of farmers selling at Farmers' Markets	According to the 2005 schedule for Your Local Farmers Market, there were 63 vendors selling farm produce, plants, meat or cheese and 34 vendors selling prepared foods.	Continue to monitor. There appears to be a need for more farmers if additional markets are to be created, so efforts should be made to increase this number.
Cost of food at Farmers Markets compared to grocery stores	Did not measure	Compare food costs between grocery stores and farmers' markets from the Health Canada Healthy Food Basket
Direct job creation and Multiplier effect of farmers markets	Did not measure	Conduct an analysis of the economic impact of farmers market for both local farmers and neighborhoods in which the farms are located.
Number and location of	There are 20 Community Gardens	Continue to monitor, including

Community Gardens/Plots	<p>operating in the City of Vancouver.</p> <p>The neighborhood with the largest number of community gardens is Mount Pleasant (7), Grandview-Woodland (4), Strathcona (4) and Kitsilano (3), the West End (2), Kerrisdale (1).</p> <p>There are approximately 1,000 garden plots within the city. Strathcona (305), Mount Pleasant (205), Kitsilano (194), the West End (100), Grandview-Woodland (84) and Kerrisdale (35)</p> <p>Most community gardens that we surveyed had waiting lists, some as many of 70.</p>	the average wait times to obtain a plot in a community garden in order to ascertain ongoing demand.
Nutritional contribution of community gardening.	Did not measure	Conduct a survey of community gardeners to ascertain the amount of food produced and consumed in their gardens
Cost savings from community gardening	Did not measure	See above
Food-Related Enterprise	Current Status	Research and Action Recommendations
Number of current food-related Social Enterprises	There are currently 5--Potluck Cafe, Cook Studio Café, Café Etico, Lunch a la Kart, Ray Cam Youth Cappuccino Bar	Continue to monitor and encourage growth in this area.
Number of food-related social enterprises located in the DTES	4 out of 5 food-related social enterprises are located in the DTES.	Continue to monitor and make effort to keep these entities in the DTES but also examine other locations that may benefit from such programs.
Training in food-related enterprises	4 out of the 5 food related social enterprises provide training to the hard-to-employ	Continue to monitor and encourage additional training opportunities.