



CITY OF TACOMA

FOOD INNOVATION DISTRICT
FOR EAST TACOMA

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF URBAN DESIGN AND
PLANNING

URBDP 598
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PRACTICUM

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LIVABLE CITY YEAR 2017-2018
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
CITY OF TACOMA

SPRING 2018





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We extend gratitude to the City of Tacoma for involving us in this project, one that has captured our hearts and minds and allowed us to apply our learnings about neighborhood planning within a real-world context. Thank you to Pat Babbitt, from the City of Tacoma, and to Karen Meyer, from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, for briefing us on your agencies’ efforts to support a Food Innovation District in East Tacoma. Your insights and guidance helped us to develop the recommendations included in this report.

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ABOUT LIVABLE CITY YEAR

The University of Washington's Livable City Year (LCY) initiative enables local governments to engage UW faculty and students for one academic year to work on city-defined projects that promote local sustainability and livability goals. The program engages hundreds of students each year in high-priority projects, creating momentum on real-world challenges while enabling the students to serve and learn from communities. Partner cities benefit directly from bold and applied ideas that propel fresh thinking, improve livability for residents and invigorate city staff. Focus areas include environmental sustainability; economic viability; population health; and social equity, inclusion, and access. The program's 2017–2018 partner is the City of Tacoma; this follows a partnership with the City of Auburn in 2016–2017.

The LCY program is led by faculty directors Branden Born (Department of Urban Design and Planning), Jennifer Otten (School of Public Health) and Anne Taufen (Urban Studies Program, UW Tacoma), with support from Program Manager Teri Thomson Randall. The program was launched in 2016 in collaboration with UW Sustainability and Urban@UW, with foundational support from the Association of Washington Cities, the College of Built Environments, the Department of Urban Design and Planning, and Undergraduate Academic Affairs.

LCY is modeled after the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program, and is a member of the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), the collection of institutions that have successfully adopted this new model for community innovation and change.

For more information, contact the program at uwlcy@uw.edu.



ABOUT TACOMA

The third largest city in the state of Washington, Tacoma is a diverse, progressive, international gateway to the Pacific Rim. The port city of nearly 210,000 people has evolved considerably over the last two decades, propelled by significant development including the University of Washington Tacoma, the Tacoma Link light rail system, the restored urban waterfront of the Thea Foss Waterway, the expansions of both the MultiCare and CHI Franciscan health systems, and a significant influx of foreign direct investment in its downtown core.

Washington State's highest density of art and history museums are found in Tacoma, which is home to a flourishing creative community of writers, artists, musicians, photographers, filmmakers, chefs, entrepreneurs, and business owners who each add their unique flair to the city's vibrant commercial landscape. The iconic Tacoma Dome has endured as a high-demand venue for some of the largest names in the entertainment industry.


A magnet for families looking for affordable single-family homes in the Puget Sound area, Tacoma also draws those seeking a more urban downtown setting with competitively priced condos and apartments that feature panoramic mountain and water views. The city's natural beauty and proximity to the Puget Sound and Mount Rainier draws hikers, runners, bicyclists, and maritime enthusiasts to the area, while its lively social scene is infused with energy by thousands of students attending the University of Washington Tacoma and other academic institutions.


The City of Tacoma's strategic plan, Tacoma 2025, was adopted in January 2015 following unprecedented public participation and contribution. The plan articulates the City's core values of opportunity, equity, partnerships, and accountability, and expresses the City's deep commitment to apply these values in all of its decisions and programming. Each Livable City Year project ties into the principles and focus areas of this strategic plan. The City of Tacoma is proud of its 2017–2018 Livable City Year partnership with the University of Washington and of the opportunity this brings to its residents.





TACOMA 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN


The *Food Innovation District for East Tacoma* project supports the Livability, Economy and Workforce, and Equity and Accessibility goals of the Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan and was sponsored by the City's Department of Community and Economic Development.

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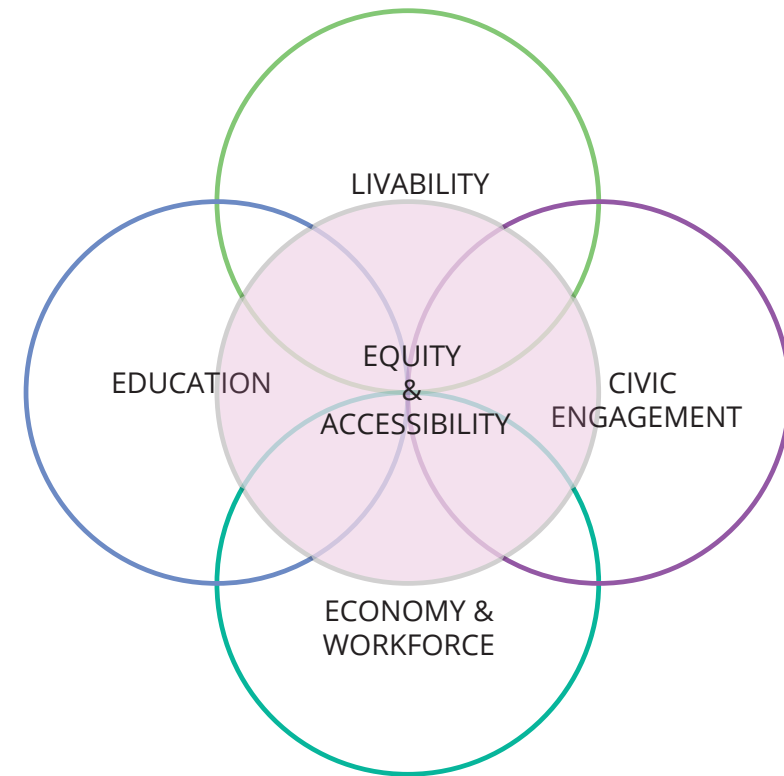
Goal #1 Livability
The City of Tacoma will be a city of choice in the region known for connected neighborhoods, accessible and efficient transportation transit options, and vibrant arts and culture. Residents will be healthy and have access to services and community amenities while maintaining affordability.
- 

Goal #2 Economy and Workforce
By 2025, Tacoma will be a growing economy where Tacoma residents can find livable wage jobs in key industry areas. Tacoma will be a place of choice for employers, professionals, and new graduates.
- 

Goal #3 Education
Tacoma will lead the region in educational attainment amongst youth and adults. In addition to producing more graduates from high school and college, more college graduates will find employment in the region. Lifelong learning and access to education will be prioritized and valued.
- 

Goal #4 Civic Engagement
Tacoma residents will be engaged participants in making Tacoma a well-run city. The leadership of the city, both elected and volunteer, will reflect the diversity of the city and residents and will fully participate in community decision-making.
- 

Goal #5 Equity and Accessibility
Tacoma will ensure that all residents are treated equitably and have access to services, facilities, and financial stability. Disaggregated data will be used to make decisions, direct funding, and develop strategies to address disparate outcomes.



RESOURCES

Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan: https://www.cityoftacoma.org/tacoma_2025

Department of Community and Economic Development:
https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/community_and_economic_development

Livable City Year: <https://www.washington.edu/livable-city-year/>

UW Department of Urban Design and Planning:
<http://urbdp.be.washington.edu/>

East Tacoma (also referred to as 'the Eastside') distinguishes itself as a culturally rich neighborhood, with five primary languages spoken, a largely non-white resident base, and an array of diverse places of worship. Regardless of the Eastside's cultural wealth, it ranks among Tacoma's poorest neighborhoods by various health measures. For example, data indicates that East Tacoma residents contend with a shorter than average life expectancy and an increased likelihood of becoming obese than do the residents of other parts of the city. In fact, compared to Washington State averages, the people of East Tacoma struggle with chronic health conditions at an increased rate. Research conducted by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department suggests that the Eastside's poor health metrics correspond to residents' lack of access to fresh, healthy food.

Research suggests that the Eastside's poor health metrics correspond to residents' lack of access to healthy food.



Diets that consist of high-fat, highly processed, unhealthy foods link to high rates of obesity and diabetes. AUDREY JENSEN

The contents of this report represent the work of students enrolled in the University of Washington's (UW) Urban Planning course, "Neighborhood Planning and Community Development," who participated in the UW's Livable City Year program (LCY) during the spring of 2018. The City of Tacoma contracted with LCY and requested that the students of this course create a plan to address the health disparities of East Tacoma. Specifically, the City asked for a set of recommendations for a Food Innovation District. This report outlines a plan to create a Food Innovation District (FID) in East Tacoma designed to increase residents' access to healthy, affordable food, while also empowering their participation in an innovative, locally-based food system.

This report outlines a plan to increase residents' access to healthy food while also empowering their participation in an innovative, locally-based food system.

The recommendations students generated take aim not only at increasing access to healthy foods and at encouraging people to choose those foods, but also at strengthening the community through shared food experiences and through education, training, and economic opportunities.



Educational gardens are one way to inspire healthy eating and to bridge the gap between communities and the local food system. STEARN FARMS CSA

THIS PROJECT AT A GLANCE

This document emerges from a final report originally prepared by 9 UW students: Hope Freije, Eric Ballantine, Colton Davis, Tyler Marie Michalek, Lauren Elizabeth Miles, Gina Pak, Lex Savanh, Olivia Scott, and Christina Sun. Richard Conlin, a former member of Seattle City Council, instructed their course, formatted as an urban planning practicum. He collaborated with the City of Tacoma to create the structure and themes of the course as part of LCY for the 2017-2018 academic year. As a member of Seattle City Council, Conlin helped shape the Seattle's food and sustainability policies. Under his guidance, the students enrolled in this course devised a set of recommendations for the City of Tacoma to use to establish a Food Innovation District (FID) in East Tacoma.

A DISEASE OF PLACE

The national obesity epidemic is a complex phenomenon with many contributing factors, the most obvious of which include 1) the hyper-availability of unhealthy, highly processed foods, and 2) an increasingly sedentary American lifestyle. Much of the general dialogue around obesity focuses on the role of genetics and personal choice (e.g. lack of willpower or education). An individual's lack of willpower or education about healthy eating and exercise frequently become the scapegoats for a considerably more systemic crisis. While genetics and personal choice each play a part in the obesity epidemic, concern for the relationship between place and prevalence of disease has emerged in recent years among urban planners, public health experts, and policymakers as an important area of focus.

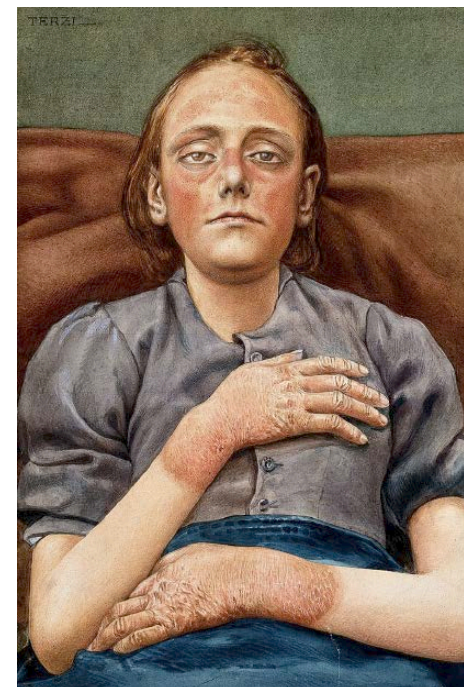
The relationship between place and prevalence of disease is not a new concept. As described in *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* (Sampson 2012), during the early years of the twentieth century, Joseph Goldberger revealed a tie between place and community health in his study of pellagra, a disease caused by a niacin (Vitamin B3) deficiency often associated with inadequate nutrition. Goldberger collected and analyzed data at individual and community levels, comparing the incidence of malnutrition to the availability of food in various cotton mill villages in the southern United States. Goldberger found that pellagra's frequency of occurrence related not just to an individual's socioeconomic status, but also to the availability of healthy food in that person's village.

Current research, such as a study published by the US National Library of Medicine in 2017, presents similar linkages between food access and

prevalence of disease (Haynes-Maslow and Leone). In this case, two public health experts observed a relationship between environmental context and the rate of occurrence of type II diabetes. The findings drawn from their study build upon the theme first identified by Goldberger: There is, indeed, a correlation between environment factors, like access to food, and the occurrence of certain kinds of disease. Inequitable access to nutritious food contributes to modern health disparities.

The connection between environment and human health is central to the development of this project. Student recommendations included within this report support the City of Tacoma in its goal to create a Food Innovation District in East Tacoma as part of a plan to promote the community's health and well-being. Students offer recommendations and strategies to the City, informed by the Health Impact Pyramid's framework (see below) and guided by their belief that through place it is possible to foster human health and flourishing.

The relationship between place and prevalence of disease is not a new concept.

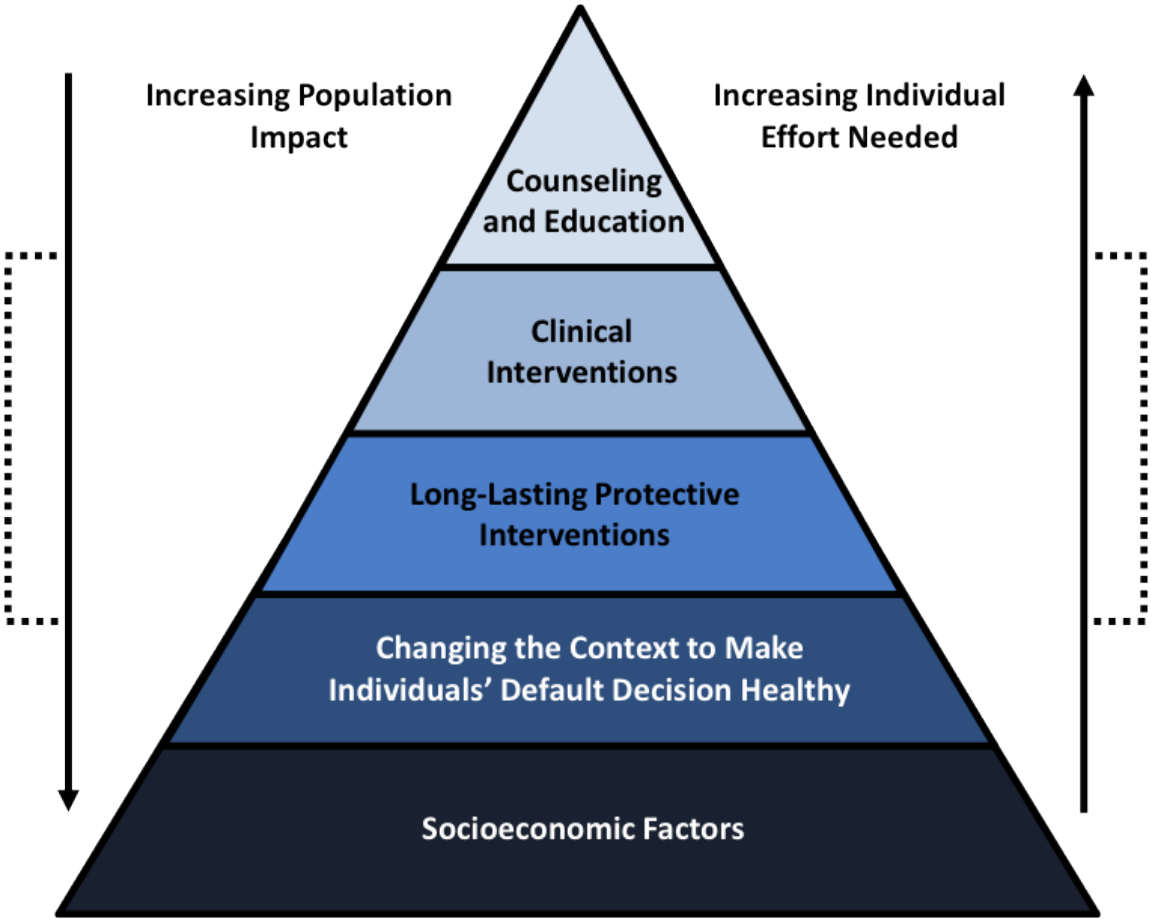


This portrait shows the effects of pellagra, a disease linked to malnutrition. In the early 20th century, Joseph Goldberger noted a relationship between the occurrence of this condition and an individual's or community's diet and access to healthy food. WELCOMER IMAGES

Inequitable access to nutritious food contributes to modern health disparities.

HEALTH IMPACT PYRAMID

The strategies embedded within this plan follow a public health framework known as the Health Impact Pyramid (see Figure 2). This framework recognizes that interventions that focus at the community level yield more desirable public health outcomes than those that focus at the individual level. The majority of the recommendations included in this report target the second level of the Health Impact Pyramid: “Changing the Context to Make Individual’s Default Decision Healthy.” This tier of the pyramid addresses the relationship between place, or context, and human action—that is, the decisions we make on a day-to-day basis that impact our health and longevity.



The Health Impact Pyramid recognizes that interventions that focus at the community level yield more desirable public health outcomes than those that focus at the individual level.

TACOMA'S EASTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

A child born in the Eastside has an average life expectancy 7 years shorter than one born elsewhere in the City (TPCHD 2018). Likely related to this discrepancy, residents of Tacoma’s Eastside also struggle with higher than average rates of obesity and diabetes (TPCHD 2018). The City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) identify lack of access to fresh, nutrient-dense food as a leading contributor to the Eastside’s current health crisis. While a report issued by TPCHD in 2018 describes the Eastside neighborhood as a food desert, lack of grocery stores is not the primary or sole cause of the neighborhood’s elevated rates of obesity, diabetes, and other health conditions frequently associated with poor diet. Barriers to healthy eating are more complex, spanning geography, infrastructure, culture and language, and financial structures.

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department’s Community Health Status Assessment (2013) documents that Tacoma’s African-American and Latino populations are disproportionately affected by obesity and diabetes. This is important for planners and policymakers to bear in mind while strategizing to improve health outcomes for communities characterized by racial and ethnic diversity, which include many of the communities of East Tacoma.

Barriers to healthy eating are complex, spanning geography, infrastructure, culture and language, and financial structures.



Across the nation, individuals and families who live in food deserts lack access to fresh, nutrient-dense foods and may find it easier to consume and afford highly processed, unhealthy foods like chips and cookies. FLICKR, WIKIPEDIA

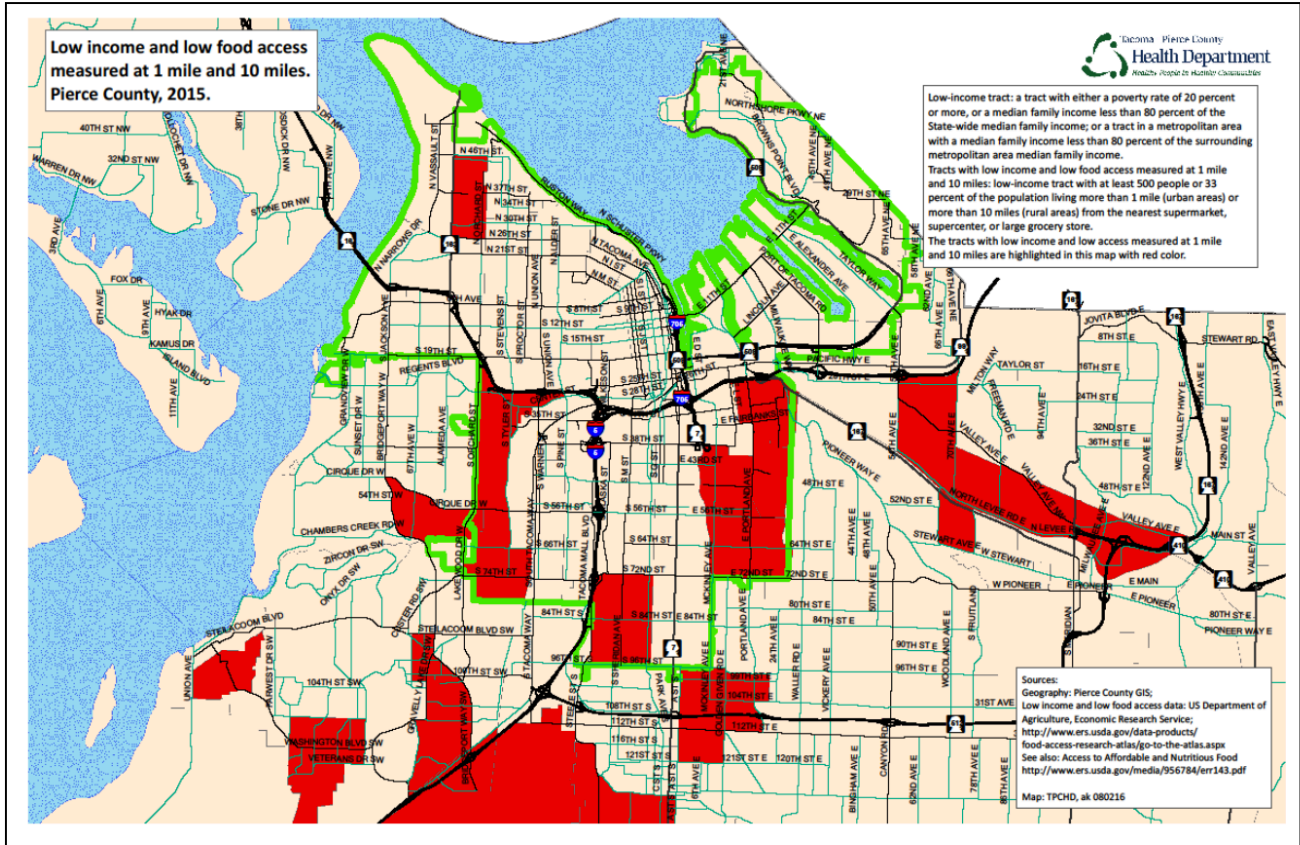
Food Desert

East Tacoma has been identified as an urban food desert by both the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food desert as “parts of the country vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas [and] largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers” (American Nutrition Association 2010).

ENVISION A FOOD INNOVATION DISTRICT

The Food Innovation District (FID) envisioned for the Eastside supports a variety of community uses and activities. For example, the FID’s facilities could enable people to grow, process, and store food right in their neighborhood. In addition, the FID could provide commercial kitchens and community gardens for public use. Beyond providing space for local production, processing, and distribution of food, the FID could host additional entrepreneurial, employment, educational, and training opportunities to benefit and support residents of East Tacoma. The various facilities and programs proposed for the FID would build upon the community’s existing assets and pivot around respecting and elevating the neighborhood’s cultural diversity.

Map of Food Deserts in the Greater Tacoma Area: Low Income and Low Food Access Measured at 1 mile and 10 miles: Pierce County 2015



Source: Low income and low food access data: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

The areas shaded in red designate local food deserts, where urban people must travel more than one mile to access a full-service grocery store and where rural people must travel more than ten miles. The Tacoma Pierce-County Health Department states that this trend, toward presence of food deserts in Tacoma, is a change from the pattern 50 years ago when most of the city’s inhabitants could access local grocers and cornerstores easily from their homes. TACOMA PIERCE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



There are now more than 200 food hubs scattered across the country. Demand for them is increasing as more communities express their desire for access to fresh, healthy foods. US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food Innovation District

Michigan State University (2013) describes a Food Innovation District as “a geographic concentration of food-oriented businesses, services, and community activities that local governments support through planning and economic development initiatives in order to promote a positive business environment, spur regional food system development, and increase access to local food.”



- South Tacoma Neighborhood Council
- Central Neighborhood Council
- Eastside Neighborhood Council
- New Tacoma Neighborhood Council
- North End Neighborhood Council
- Northeast Tacoma Neighborhood Council
- South End Neighborhood Council
- West End Neighborhood Council

EAST TACOMA AT A GLANCE

East Tacoma encompasses about 5.95 square miles of the City's total 62.34 square miles (see map). Its main roads and access points include Interstate 5, Pacific Avenue (State Highway 7), Portland Avenue, and East 72nd Street. For planning purposes, the community is sometimes extended west of Pacific Avenue, as far as Interstate 5.

Demographics

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, taken during 2009-2013, the Eastside's population represents 29,979 people, or 14% of Tacoma's total population of 211,277 people. The area is projected to grow in coming years. The median age for the Eastside is 32.4, with roughly 30% of all residents under the age of 18, 60% between the ages of 18 and 64, and 10% at least 65 years old. The neighborhood's median household income is \$43,444 (about \$10,000 less than the City's average median household income), with 15.7% of all households generating less than \$15,000 annually.

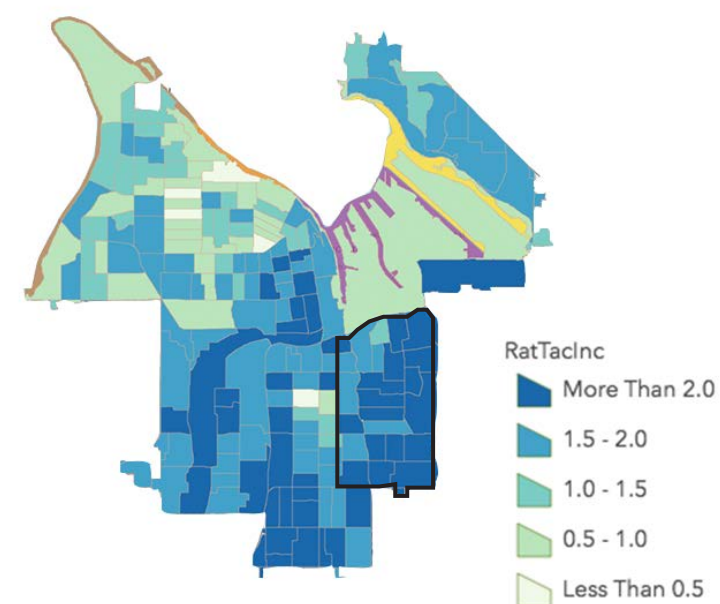
The table below represents demographic data for the Eastside neighborhood collected by the same survey and compares it with demographics taken for the City of Tacoma as a whole. Compared with data that represents all of Tacoma, the Eastside is significantly more diverse. Whereas less than half of the Eastside's population identifies as white, 65.3% of the City's total population does; and, whereas almost one quarter of the Eastside's population identifies as Hispanic, only 11.3% of the City's total population does (US Bureau 2018). Primary languages spoken in East Tacoma, after English, include: Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Korean.

The various facilities and programs proposed for the Food Innovation District would build upon the community's existing assets and pivot around respecting and elevating the neighborhood's cultural diversity.

Race/Ethnicity	% of East Tacoma population	% of Tacoma population
White	46.7%	65.3%
Hispanic	21.4%	11.3%
Asian	13.7%	9.1%
Black	13.1%	10.1%
American Indian	3.8%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	1.7%	1.1%
Other	10.6%	N/A
Two or more races	10.4%	N/A

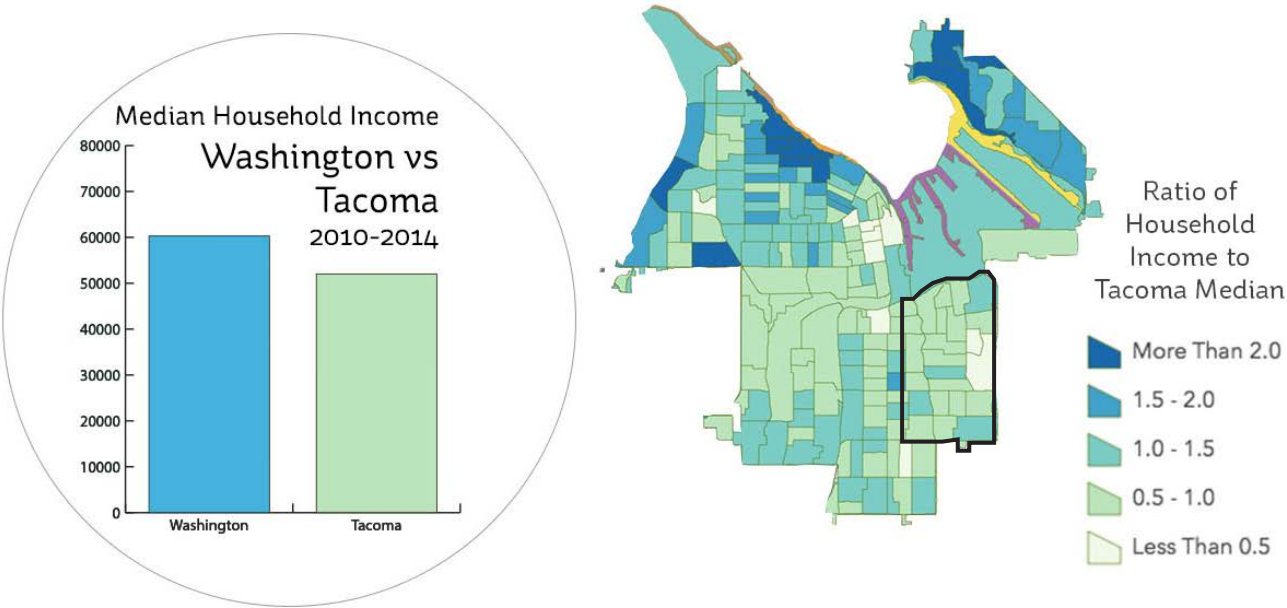
Compared to the city as a whole, the Eastside is more diverse ethnically and racially.

Percentage of Non-White Residents Across Tacoma

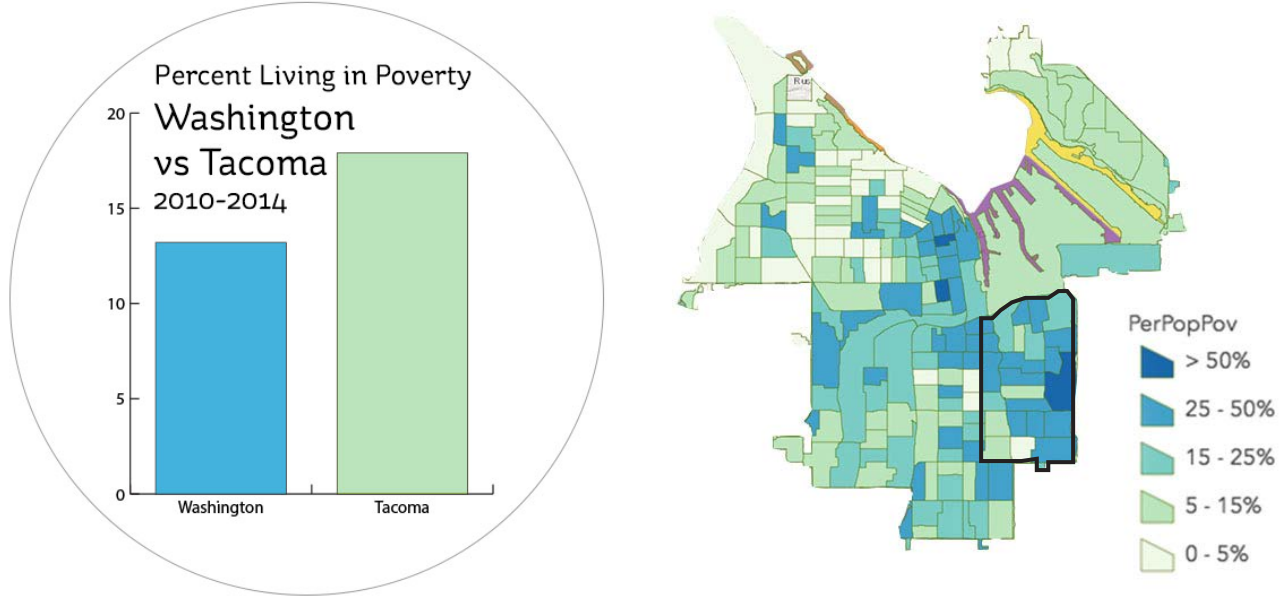


Note: Maps depict Tacoma city limits with the Eastside outlined in black.

Tacoma’s Median Household Income Across Neighborhoods



Percent of People Living in Poverty Throughout Tacoma



The statistical comparisons below measure the Eastside neighborhood against Pierce County to illuminate many of the community’s challenges (TPCHD 2018):

- A lower high school graduation rate: 78.5% compared to 90.9%
- A significantly higher percentage of non-English or limited-English speakers
- More residents below the federal poverty line: 24.4% compared to 12.7%. (The federal poverty line is \$12,140 per year for one person.)
- Greater incidence of unemployment: 13.1% compared to 9.2%
- Greater incidence of housing cost burden, which means that a greater percentage of families spend more than 30% of their income on housing. This makes it more difficult for them to afford other necessities like food, clothing, transportation, and health care.
- Higher asthma rate: 146.4/100,000 residents compared to 82.7/100,000
- Higher % use of public transportation: 5.2% compared to 3.4%
- Higher % of uninsured (health insurance): 23.7% compared to 16.8%
- Higher rate of tobacco use: 32.5% compared to 19.6%
- Higher rate of obesity: average of 5.8/100,000 compared to 3.34/100,000
- Lower life expectancy: 76 years compared to 79 years

Note: Maps depict Tacoma city limits with the Eastside outlined in black.

Almost 20% of East Tacoma residents express that they struggle to access or afford healthy households on a regular basis (TPCHD 2016).

EASTSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD GROCERY STORES, MARKETS, AND OTHER FOOD RESOURCES

A full-service grocery store stocks produce, dry goods, and ready-made foods (TPCHD 2016). According to the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, various studies indicate that access to a full-service grocery store is one indicator of a community's overall health (TPCHD 2016). At least one third of the Eastside's population resides more than one mile away from the nearest full-service grocery store. Although the neighborhood contains community gardens, the Eastside Farmers Market, and Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank, 17-19% of Eastside families report experiencing food insecurity. These residents state that they struggle to access and afford healthy food for their households on a regular basis.

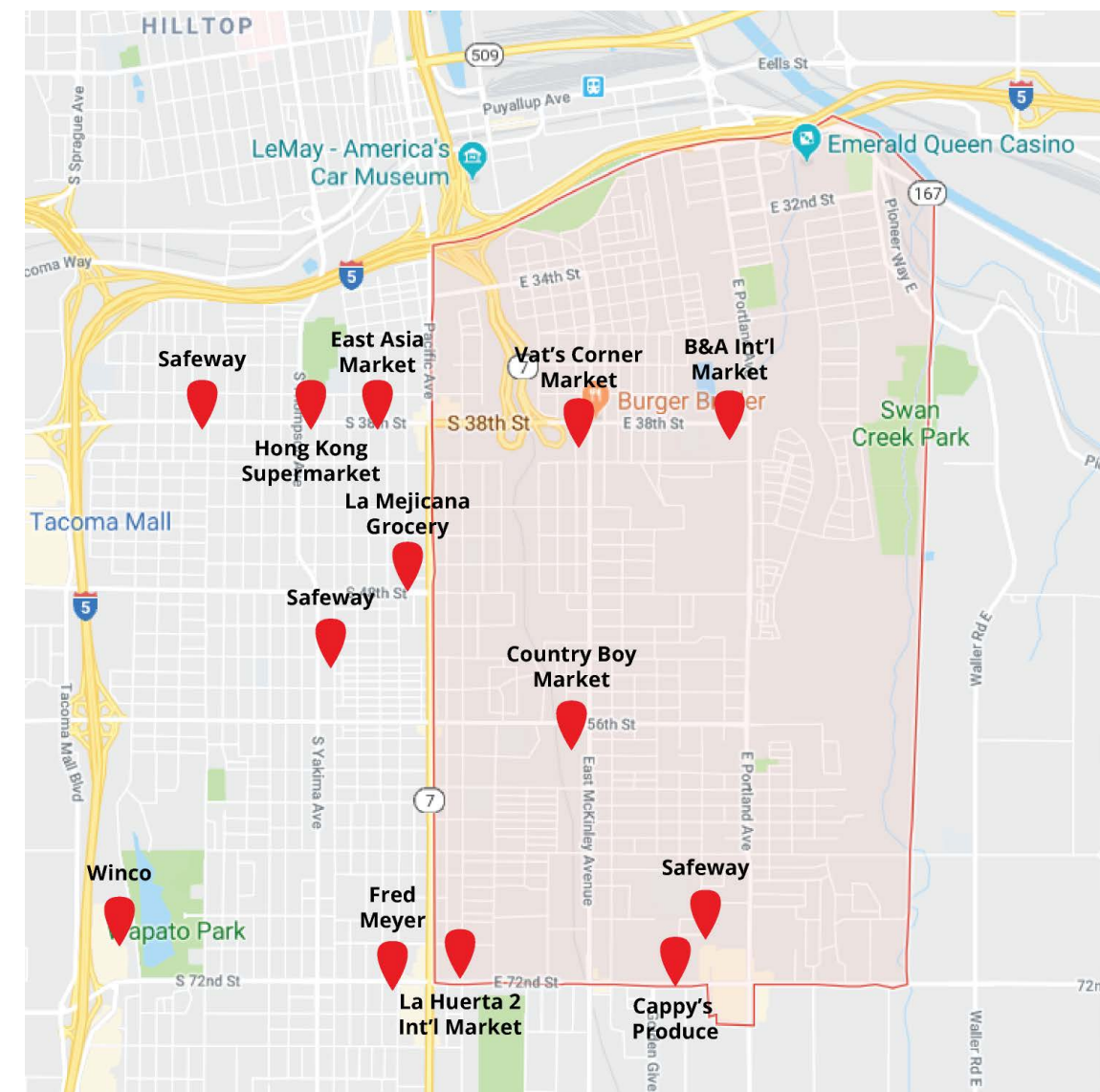


Full service grocery stores, such as the one shown in this photo, are missing from food deserts. US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS

Tacoma's Eastside neighborhood possesses a range of community assets that can be leveraged and built upon by a Food Innovation District to reduce and remove barriers to food access. The neighborhood's assets include: the Eastside Farmers Market, community gardens, farms (located off River Road East), Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank, chain grocery stores, ethnic grocery stores, culturally diverse restaurants, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, the Eastside Community Center (ECC), the Eastside Neighborhood Council, public transportation services, places of worship, parks, and public schools. The Food Innovation District's design can incorporate these community assets within its plan to improve food access, increase economic opportunities, and promote individual and community health.

Eastside Neighborhood Retail Grocery Stores



In terms of grocery stores, Safeway dominates the Eastside neighborhood, with three stores located within a six-square-mile radius. Residents may also choose to purchase groceries from Fred Meyer and/or from a range of culture-specific grocery stores, like Hong Kong Supermarket, East Asia Supermarket, other small Asian markets, and several Latino tiendas. Many of these grocery stores and markets appear clustered near each other rather than distributed throughout the area.

CITY OF TACOMA

The nine students involved in this project began their work with a literature review focused on neighborhood planning, food policy, and community engagement strategies. Early on, students met with representatives from the City of Tacoma and from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD). These representatives provided information and data on the health metrics of East Tacoma. They also encouraged students to consider what an East Tacoma Food Innovation District might resemble. In addition to meeting with staff from the City of Tacoma and TPCHD, students found guidance and inspiration from their review of existing plans and policies tied to similar projects, such as Riverside, California's Food and Agriculture Policy Action Plan from 2015.

The students' approach to this project involved a survey of the Eastside neighborhood's existing resources: grocery stores, community gardens, schools, and community centers. Students also conducted interviews with various community stakeholders: cottage foods producers, Metro Parks, Lumpia Love, Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank, the Grit City Co-op, Lincoln High School, and FareStart. This helped them understand how a Food Innovation District could reduce food barriers for the people of East Tacoma. From their preliminary review of assets and challenges, students took it upon themselves to draft a set of initial recommendations for the City of Tacoma, aligning their recommendations with the Health Impact Pyramid (referred in the Introduction section of this report). Students received feedback from the City of Tacoma and from TPCHD and used this input to refine and organize their final recommendations.



Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank operates a wide variety of programs, including classes on healthy shopping and cooking, a mobile market on wheels that delivers fresh produce for free, and a traditional backpack program where they fill backpacks with meals and hygiene products to distribute to people experiencing homelessness. ELOISE'S COOKING POT FOOD BANK

Themes emerged as students began to synthesize their research and create recommendations for an East Tacoma Food Innovation District. Students acknowledged the importance of involving residents directly in the planning process for a project meant to serve them and address their needs and priorities. They also recognized the importance of including educational opportunities to enhance resident awareness of healthy eating options and to increase their understanding of the local food system. Finally, students realized the value of investing in economic development through food, as an essential part of a plan that addresses barriers to food access. Students organized the following set of recommendations, and their accompanying work plans, around five overarching goals.

Students acknowledged the importance of involving residents directly in the planning process for a project meant to serve them.



A woman tends her plot at the Swan Creek Community Garden. METRO PARKS TACOMA

A plan to improve food access and to promote public health must address not only environmental contexts but also the behaviors developed within those contexts.

OVERARCHING GOALS



1. PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING



2. CELEBRATE CULINARY DIVERSITY



3. STRENGTHEN LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY



4. REINFORCE THE FOOD SAFETY NET



5. MODEL HEALTHY HABITS



1. PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING: FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

The prevalences of diseases, like obesity and type two diabetes appear to be linked to environmental factors, such as how close to a grocery store each one of us lives. However, simply increasing the number of grocery stores in an area is insufficient for improving public health metrics because it fails to address the habits and mindsets formed previously. Thus, a plan to improve food access and to promote public health must address not only environmental contexts but also the behaviors developed within those contexts.

Eastside Tacoma's second community center is currently under construction. Upon its completion in summer of 2018, this site will serve community members as an important resource for food and nutrition education. Program and class titles are to include, "Cooking for Healthy Living," and "Sharing Cultures and Traditions through Food." The following recommendations support these programs in empowering community members with resources and understandings to make choices that promote their optimal health.



The Making a Difference Foundation in Tacoma operates an after-school snack program, providing healthy snacks to children throughout Pierce County. MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOUNDATION

Recommendations

1.1 Partner with the Eastside Community Center (ECC) to strengthen nutrition, cooking, and gardening education; involve nutritionists, chefs, horticulturalists, and other local food experts; welcome feedback from community members in the planning and organizing stages to ensure that programs align with their interests and needs

Work Plan

- Invite community members to sign up to share seasonal recipes and teach them to others. Cooking classes could feature one guest teacher each week.
- Foster partnerships between the ECC and community gardens to increase knowledge among residents about food growing techniques and to encourage greater use of community gardens. Community members could sign up through the ECC for classes taught by community garden leaders and/or advanced gardeners in the community. Potential class focuses could include: home and container gardening, companion planting, growing a winter garden, and perennial gardening.
- Encourage ECC to provide classes on reducing food waste through preservation, just-in-time usage, and proper food storage. ECC could partner with the Center for Food Preservation Arts, which already hosts events related to food waste and preservation.

1.2 Increase food and nutrition awareness among youth and young adults while fostering connections across diverse age groups

Work Plan

- Create an internship program for local college students studying nutrition, horticulture, food justice, or a related field. These students would develop curricula for middle school and high school aged students. Lesson topics might include: nutrition and health, home gardening, cooking, food justice, and sustainability. The program could culminate with an event, like a Healthy Foods 'Iron Chef' competition, held at a school with a kitchen, or at ECC. Ideally the foods featured in this event would be grown locally. Event proceeds could help fund the next year's internship program.

Food and nutrition education is one way to increase awareness among people of all ages of their food options and to encourage them to make choices that support their health.



The Eastside Community Center opens soon to provide a range of programs, including ones with nutrition and health focuses, to the residents of East Tacoma. METRO PARKS TACOMA

- Healthy Foods ‘Iron Chef’ models: Minneapolis Public Schools’ Jr. Iron Chef Competition, Wilson School District’s Iron Chef Competition and Benefit Auction, Wilbur H. Lynch Literacy Academy Jr.’s Iron Chef Competition, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.

1.3 Increase youth awareness of the local food system, including their understanding of rural and urban farms, community and home gardens, farmers markets, grocery stores, and food banks

Work Plan

- Connect with local nonprofits and higher education institutions, like the University of Washington Tacoma, to develop a curriculum for mixed-aged youth that focuses on the local food system and food justice.
- Send representatives who developed the curriculum to public schools in East Tacoma to implement it.



The Eastside Farmers Market recently moved from its location in the Salishan neighborhood to McKinley Avenue. The new location sets the famers market more centrally in East Tacoma, directly on a bus line, with better ADA accessibility, all in an effort to attract more shoppers and vendors.
PIERCE COUNTY FRESH

1.4 Establish a Farm to School Network

Work Plan

- Establish food procurement policies and means for schools to purchase, promote, and serve local foods in school cafeterias.
- Develop and expand existing school gardens for students to engage in hands-on learning.
- Expand the farm to school network to other institutions, such as senior centers, hospitals, and correctional facilities.

Key Actors

Eastside Community Center, Eastside Family Support Center, Center for Food Preservation Arts, Green Thumb Community Garden, Salishan Community Garden, Swan Creek Park Community Garden, Roger’s Park, Charlotte’s Blueberry Park, City of Tacoma Environmental Services, City of Tacoma Department of Education, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma Public Libraries, Metro Parks Tacoma, Puyallup Tribal Schools, Harvest Pierce County, Puyallup Watershed Initiative (Food Justice, Environmental Education, and Agriculture COIs), US Department of Agriculture, AmeriCorps FoodCorps, University of Washington Tacoma Environmental Studies and Environmental Sustainability departments, University of Washington Seattle, Tacoma Community College, Bates Technical College, youth organizations, nonprofits serving youth, advocacy organizations, and groups aligned with food justice.



In her campaign “Let’s Move,” former first lady, Michelle Obama, brought attention to the need to create oppotunities for youth to engage with food growing practices and to increase access to healthy foods in schools. LAWRENCE JACKSON



2. CELEBRATE CULINARY DIVERSITY: MARKET AND PROMOTE DIVERSE FOOD CULTURES

Growing and consuming food is as necessary to human survival as it is central to cultural traditions across the globe. This makes everyday customs related to growing, preparing, and consuming food appear as useful tools for bringing diverse populations together to form community. A community garden or a farmers market might seem like the perfect place for a city to invest resources to bring East Tacoma's diverse communities together. However, communities of color report feeling unwelcomed at community gardens and farmers markets—spaces predominantly operated and attended by white people (Delaney 2017). Conversely, white community members express uncertainty about shopping at Asian markets and Latino tiendas due to their lack of knowledge about the products stocked at such businesses (Delaney 2017).

Broadly speaking, the diverse populations of East Tacoma report feeling uncomfortable accessing one another's foods. This is unfortunate since cultural and food diversity rank high among East Tacoma's assets (Delaney 2017). This section of recommendations targets unifying the Eastside's diverse populations while promoting the neighborhood's distinct cultural and food traditions.



Taqueria El Antojito on McKinley Avenue in East Tacoma. LIZA HIGBEE-ROBINSON

Broadly speaking, the diverse populations of East Tacoma report feeling uncomfortable accessing one another's foods.

Recommendations

2.1 Make food-focused public spaces and establishments, like community gardens, farmers markets, grocery stores, and restaurants welcoming to people of all cultures

Work Plan

- Invite the owners, managers, and customers of East Tacoma's small markets and corner stores to participate in a survey that solicits information about the barriers that business owners encounter in their attempts to supply certain products or to appeal to a broader range of customers; and that residents perceive in their attempts to patronize certain businesses. For example, a store owner may want to supply a particular food, but lack a local distribution channel. A customer may live near a store whose signage is not written in their primary language.
- Involve community members in strategic planning efforts that address the barriers identified by the survey. Support residents and small business owners in implementing community-led solutions. Solutions could be as simple as adding multi-lingual signage to business storefronts. They may also be more complex and require deeper inquiry and long-term commitment and engagement.



Metro Parks Tacoma supports the presence of community gardens, like the Franklin Community Garden, that provide space for people to grow their own food. METRO PARKS TACOMA

2.2 Market East Tacoma’s culinary diversity at the neighborhood, city, and regional levels

Work Plan

- Identify restaurants and dishes to promote in marketing materials.
- Create marketing materials that highlight customer reviews, advertise weekly specials, and feature, when possible, locally sourced foods.
- Work with each targeted restaurant to track customer visitation and sales.
- East Tacoma’s Lincoln District has been highlighted in food blogs like, “Eater Seattle,” for its culinary diversity. This part of the Eastside might be a natural area for the City to focus a new marketing strategy.

2.3 Create an East Tacoma Restaurant Week and highlight locally sourced, healthy eats within it

Work Plan

- Appoint an events coordinator for East Tacoma Restaurant Week (often the local Chamber of Commerce) to organize restaurant owners around a set of event standards and marketing strategies.
- Track the event’s success by comparing sales during Restaurant Week to sales during other times of the year and by compiling data about visitation and sales to the neighborhood’s restaurants over many years.
- As East Tacoma Restaurant Week gains local fame, broaden the marketing approach to include all of Pierce County and Seattle.

Key Actors

Eastside Farmers Market, Eastside Neighborhood Council, City of Tacoma Community and Economic Development department, Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, University of Washington Tacoma, Evergreen State College Tacoma, local restaurants, grocery stores, and businesses, local news and media sources, food bloggers, places of worship, schools, childcare facilities

Restaurant Week

Restaurant Week began in New York City in the early 1990s. The event coincided with the Democratic Convention and showcased various local restaurants.

Essentially, NYC applied a marketing strategy to direct the influx of tourist dollars to support local restaurants and economy (Navarra 2017). Today, nearly every major city in the US and many smaller cities and towns have developed their own version of Restaurant Week. In fact, the City of Tacoma carries out its own Restaurant Week each April.

The way it works: Generally, Restaurant Week occurs when a city or district experiences low business margins (typically winter or spring). Each participating restaurant pre-determines a meal to offer at a promotional price. Restaurants may include in their offerings multiple meals at varying price points. The aim of Restaurant Week is not just to attract tourists but also to establish repeat customers.



Customers enjoying Seattle Restaurant Week at Le Zinc in 2014. DANIEL GASNIENICA



3. STRENGTHEN LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY: EXPAND HEALTHY FOOD ENTERPRISES

This section targets strengthening East Tacoma's economy by promoting local food production-consumption supply chains, supporting local food-focused enterprises, and increasing the number of living wage jobs in the neighborhood's food sector. Cities like Riverside, California and Rainier Valley in Seattle have proposed similar Food Innovation Districts. While East Tacoma and its communities' needs are distinct from those cities', the FIDs of Riverside and Rainier Valley provide useful models and inform many of the recommendations of this section.

FIDs enable local farmers to sell directly to retail grocers, chefs, and residents. Such a supply chain, that connects food producers to consumers, directly benefits farmers, who generate up to seven times the revenue selling direct than they would through conventional supply chains (Association of Wisconsin Regional Councils). Thus, it is important to establish and strengthen ties between local food producers and markets, restaurants, and consumers.



By supporting the local food system, all of us stand to benefit from improved economic, health, social, and environmental outcomes. US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Recommendations

3.1 Support businesses involved in the production, processing, and distribution of fresh, local, nutrient-dense foods

Work Plan

- Strengthen marketing efforts for Eastside Farmers Market and South Tacoma Farmers Market (also accessible to Eastside residents). Successful, well-attended farmers markets go a long way to support local food producers and processors; and, they bring more fresh, healthy food to community members.
- Identify new farmers market vendors and invite them to join, potentially waiving fees to minimize barriers to their participation.
- Work with Pierce Transit to add a 'Market Bus' line, with a route and schedule designed around input from community members.
- Work with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to develop a 'Mobile Market.'
- Create an East Tacoma Night Market focused on supporting the local food system and promoting healthy eating. As part of a larger effort to support local food economy, cultural diversity, and public health, an East Tacoma Night Market would provide residents with a new venue to enjoy freshly prepared foods, support local entrepreneurs, and share in art, music, and ideas. The goal of the night market would be to create a platform for sustained community engagement, centered around food. The venue should be located centrally, near transit routes. Potential locations include Yakima Festival Street, the McKinley neighborhood, Stewart Heights Park, and the Eastside Community Center.

It is important to establish and strengthen ties between local food producers and markets, restaurants, and consumers.



Farmers bring fresh, nutrient-packed, delicious food to sell at farmers markets. DREW GERAETS

Why Try a Mobile Market?

In interviews conducted by UWT nursing students in 2016, low income residents from the Eastside reported believing that a mobile market would address the transportation barriers that limit their access to fresh produce. Mobile markets travel to customers, bringing fresh produce from local farms right to their doorsteps. This model differs from Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), where farmers select weekly produce assortments for CSA members and require them to pick up their shares at a distribution site. In addition to eliminating the condition that customers must retrieve their produce from a distribution site, the mobile market model allows people to determine exactly how much and what types of produce they want each week.

Note: For further review of the benefits associated with a mobile market, see Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's, "Mobile Market Readiness Assessment," published in 2016.

3.2 Promote cottage food industries and provide resources, materials, and incentives to inspire more residents to take advantage of cottage food industries



Tacoma residents can join Brown Paper Baking Company's bread share and have fresh-baked bread delivered straight to their homes.
BROWN PAPER BAKING COMPANY

Work Plan

- Offer incentives to low-income applicants to help them overcome financial and logistical barriers associated with becoming a cottage foods producer. For example, in addition to other start-up costs, a \$230 application fee is required. The City of Tacoma can write grants and provide scholarships to offset the application fee for low-income residents interested in becoming cottage food producers.
- Provide marketing assistance. Although it is legal for food makers to advertise their products, marketing requires time, money, and expertise. The City of Tacoma could form a partnership with University of Washington Tacoma's marketing classes. Students from these classes could gain experience in their field while creating marketing materials for cottage food producers.
- Help people navigate cottage food laws. Many people know very little about cottage food laws and countless others struggle to navigate them. The City of Tacoma could design a campaign to reach out to prospective food makers and help them complete the necessary steps to apply for certification as cottage food producers. As part of this campaign, the City could host free seminars at the Eastside Community Center to educate people about cottage food industries.

Cottage Food Laws

Cottage food laws operate at the state level and provide guidelines for people who wish to make and sell food products from their homes, to do so legally. Community members who take advantage of cottage food laws work from home preparing meals for other people. This increases the availability and variety of prepared meals sold throughout a given neighborhood or area. In 2016, Washington State updated its cottage food laws, to raise the maximum-annually permitted gross sales from \$15,000 to \$25,000, to expand the list of foods permissible for sale from home, and to increase the number of recipes an applicant can submit. These revisions create new openings and indicate that the State acknowledges the significance of the income generated by this industry to many people.



Cottage foods producers target value added products like pickled vegetables and jellies. They may process these foods in their homes and sell them at farmers markets. MAX PIXEL

Funding

In order for the City of Tacoma to promote cottage food industries in East Tacoma— by way of offering scholarships, providing marketing, legal, and technical support, and hosting educational seminars— it is essential that the City seek funding. Below are a couple of options for the City to consider:

- **Farmers Market Promotion Program:** This is a USDA grant aimed at promoting local food economies. Grant money received through this program may be used to develop, improve, or expand farmers markets, roadside produce stands, CSAs, and other producer-to-consumer market opportunities. This grant can cover costs for creating new outreach methods and training programs, and for providing technical assistance. The next application cycle begins in 2019.
- **Local Food Promotion Program:** The Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) offers grants to support the development and expansion of local and regional food enterprises. LFPP's goal is to increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products and to develop new market opportunities for farmers and ranchers. The next application cycle begins in 2019.

Other Model Programs

Bates Technical College offers college level culinary courses to students interested in starting their own food truck businesses. This includes the Curbside Urban Cuisine program, which allows students to create and sell products using a food truck.

Tacoma Public Schools offers high school students interested in culinary arts a career building program through ProStart. ProStart offers students at Lincoln, Mt. Tahoma, Stadium, and Wilson high schools training on how to start their own food industry businesses.

3.3 Support Local Efforts to Create a Community Food Truck

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health department has already dedicated resources to researching and planning a Mobile Market initiative (TPCHD 2016). Planners and public health experts envision the Mobile Market as a tool to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, especially where food access is an issue. East Tacoma, considered a food desert, fits the bill for the Mobile Market approach.

Metro Parks Tacoma is currently creating a Mobile Teaching Kitchen. Their vision is to address many of the same issues that a Food Innovation District tackles. The Mobile Teaching Kitchen will host classes on a range of topics related to food, diet, and health— everything from how to manage your health if you have diabetes, to how to eat well on a tight budget. The Mobile Teaching Kitchen could support various community spaces in the Eastside by providing a full-service food preparation space and/or a way to distribute fresh produce and prepared foods.

Work Plan

- Connect with Metro Parks Tacoma and explore funding opportunities for a ‘Mobile Market’ for East Tacoma.
- Partner with faith-based organizations and other community groups. By partnering with these organizations, the food truck could be used to distribute produce and prepared foods at locations where people already gather.
- Address the barriers that prevent local food makers from succeeding. For example, local food makers interviewed for this project identified lack of access to markets and commercial kitchens as key barriers. The City of Tacoma and Metro Parks Tacoma could devise a plan to support local food makers by allowing them to use the truck to sell their products.



Curbside Urban Cuisine students from Bates Technical College learn about sanitation and food safety, cost controls, menu development, and starting their own businesses. SOUTH SOUND TALK

3.4 Create a Local Food Makers Hub

Beyond creating a space for local food makers to sell their goods, the City could establish its own food incubator, the Local Food Makers Hub: a space dedicated to nurturing small businesses in their initial stages. The Local Food Makers Hub could include a commercial kitchen, an area for local food makers to sell their products, and space for legal assistance and other consulting services. It could also offer internships to high school and/or college students interested in starting a career in the food industry, and/or house local restaurants and eateries and function like a market cooperative.

Work Plan

- Identify a central location for the Local Food Makers Hub that is accessible by public transportation.
- Create partnerships with UWT Milgard School of Business. Students could help create marketing materials and write reports to assist business start-ups.
- Explore funding options to support the Local Food Makers Hub.

3.5 Modify City Regulations to Support Healthy Food Enterprises

Work Plan

- Amend City of Tacoma zoning codes to expand the area where urban agriculture is permitted.
- Review and streamline City of Tacoma permitting and licensing processes to facilitate the creation of farmers markets and other established grounds for vendors to sell healthy food.
- Allow organizations to establish mini-farmers markets in low-income neighborhoods and permit these markets to occur on local organizations’ or vendors’ own property.

Key Actors

Eastside Community Center, Portland Avenue Community Center, City of Tacoma Community and Economic Development department, City of Tacoma Arts and Vitality Department, City of Tacoma Environmental Services, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Department of Social and Health Services, Metro Parks Tacoma, University of Washington Tacoma Milgard School of Business, Goodwill’s Milgard Work Opportunity Center, Earth Economics, Forterra, Puyallup Watershed Initiative (Food Justice, Environmental Education, and Agriculture COIs), Puyallup Tribe, Harvest Pierce County, The Food Trust, Tacoma Public Libraries, local chefs, food makers, and entrepreneurs, faith-based organizations, community groups, non-profit organizations.

A Local Food Maker’s Perspective

In an interview with Lynette Boada of Lumpia Love, she commented: “It was a fun ride, but the lack of commercial kitchens in Tacoma was always an issue. Barriers to being a food maker include limited resources to help people navigate the system’s permits, licenses, applications, taxes, and fees. My suggestion is to make more levels in the lower income grade scale so that small businesses participating in one or two events within the city are not paying the same as a business that is a fixture within the city. For example, currently, there is a fee of \$110 for a business license for all businesses in the City of Tacoma, whether the annual gross income is \$12,000 or \$250,000. In 2017, I did a one-time event in Tacoma and was–charged \$110 - the same as a business that regularly does business within the city.”



4. REINFORCE THE FOOD SAFETY NET: ADDRESS BARRIERS TO FOOD ACCESS

Common barriers to accessing healthy food include availability, affordability, and education. A Food Innovation District addresses each of these barriers and provides ample new opportunities for residents to change their relationship to food. The following set of recommendations aim to eliminate these common barriers to food access in East Tacoma and to empower community members to adopt healthy eating habits.

Recommendations

4.1 Subsidize local, healthy foods to encourage healthy eating and support the local food system

Work Plan

- Encourage and help Eastside grocers apply for USDA grants to provide rebates, like SNAP, for targeted fruits and vegetables (TFV).

SNAP Rebates

A SNAP rebate operates like a conventional retail coupon. A person first buys the targeted food and then receives a rebate, applied to their electronic benefit transfer (EBT) account. Eligible TFVs include fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables without added sugars, fats, oils, and salt. The USDA's Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) tested this approach to incentivizing consumption of healthy foods in 2011. Participants of HIP reported spending more on targeted fruits and vegetables while participating in the study than they had previously (Olsho et al. 2017). With many residents of Tacoma arguing that SNAP provides too little money for them to afford a healthy diet, offering a rebate for their consumption of TFVs would go a long way to support them in changing their dietary habits.



**Supplemental
Nutrition
Assistance
Program**

By offering rebates for targeted healthy foods purchased using SNAP, it is possible to incentivize healthy eating.
US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

4.2 Set higher nutrition standards for programs that provide supplemental food and that serve meals to persons in need

Work Plan

- Develop stronger nutrition standards for supplemental food programs administered by the City. Work with nutrition and health experts to conduct a program-by-program analysis of nutritional standards and to create guidelines that account for each program's structure, target populations, and available resources.
- Support continued adoption of health-promoting nutrition standards for school meals. While the federal government sets nutrition standards for school meals, it is possible for states and cities to create even stronger nutrition standards.
- Provide technical assistance, training, and grants to expand the availability of SNAP at retail stores, mobile vendor sites, and farmers markets.
- Rescue food that would otherwise be wasted through improved coordination, communication, and logistics planning among businesses and food pantries and soup kitchens. Make this food available to people in need.

4.3 Develop a Sliding Scale CSA

Work Plan

- Partner with local farmers to provide new subscription services to increase low income community members' access to fresh produce.
- Consider the financial circumstances of East Tacoma residents and determine an appropriate sliding scale payment structure.
- Seek funding to offset the cost to farmers who agree to participate in sliding scale payment structures.

Model for a Sliding Scale CSA

An example of a sliding scale CSA is the Pike Box CSA from the Pike Place Market. This subscription service is available to all residents, with payment plans based on an individual or household's finances. While residents who earn more than \$40,000 a year are encouraged to pay the full price for the CSA, residents who face financial hardship are welcomed to pay a reduced price, and residents who receive SNAP benefits pay on a sliding scale.

4.4 Create a Meal-Kit Delivery Service

Work Plan

- Partner with local farms and grocery stores to create a meal-kit delivery service that features locally produced food and that allows residents to view and select meals for home delivery each week. To appeal to a wide range of consumers, ensure that these meal kits are ethnically diverse and affordably priced.



The Meal-Kit Delivery Service recommendation is based on current business models like Blue Apron, Plated, and Amazon Fresh. Each week, a menu of prepared meal-kits becomes available for online order and home delivery.
GUILLERMO FERNANDES

4.5 Partner with Eloise’s Cooking Pot Food Bank to create a non-profit grocery store

Work Plan

- Develop a partnership with Ahndrea Blue, founder of Eloise’s Cooking Pot Food Bank (ECPFB), to create a nonprofit grocery store in East Tacoma. Stock the store with healthy, locally-sourced foods and price products affordably.



In 2017, Eloise’s Cooking Pot Food Bank fed more than 116,838 clients, distributed more than 2 million pounds of food, and served more than 2.4 million meals. It is the third largest food bank in Pierce County. MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOUNDATION

4.6 Create an East Tacoma Food Innovation District website

Create a website that synthesizes the food resources available in East Tacoma. This will help connect residents to employment and business opportunities, education and job training programs, and other resources like community kitchens, farmers markets, and CSAs. By disseminating information about these opportunities and resources, the City can generate enthusiasm and gain public support for the Eastside’s Food Innovation District.

Work Plan

- Hire a website developer to create a user-friendly website that targets the aforementioned functions.
- Advertise the website at community centers, farmers markets, public libraries, public schools, and through mailings.

Key Actors

City of Tacoma, University of Washington Tacoma, Metro Parks Tacoma, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, United States Department of Agriculture, Puyallup Watershed Initiative Just and Healthy Food System, United Way, Emergency Food Network, Eloise’s Cooking Pot Food Bank, Harvest Pierce County, Eastside Farmers Market, Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma Public Libraries, local farms

What’s in an East Tacoma Food Innovation District website?

The website could describe a range of community resources, including food preparation facilities open for public use; education and training programs related to culinary arts and nutrition; and information about community gardens, farmers markets, and food banks. The website could provide access to job listings and provide information related to services like EBT, Fresh Bucks, and SNAP benefits.

The website could also include:

- a blog that features healthy recipes
- links to news stories related to the local food system
- a calendar of events
- new restaurant listings
- cottage food producers listing



5. MODEL HEALTHY EATING: SERVE HEALTHY FOODS AND BEVERAGES AT GOVERNMENTAL FUNCTIONS

Government agencies allocate resources to provide food for people at public schools, hospitals, assisted living centers, and correctional facilities. Government agencies also purchase food to sell to employees and to the general public on government property. They may also offer food for sale from vending machines, cafeterias, and concession stands.

This presents a significant opportunity for the government to take a stand for public health by eliminating unhealthy foods from its own food services. The City of Tacoma can promote healthy eating by providing healthy foods at its own public functions and by encouraging the organizations it promotes and sponsors to procure healthy foods for their events

The City of Tacoma can promote healthy eating by providing healthy foods at its own public functions and by encouraging the organizations it promotes and sponsors to procure healthy foods for their events.

Recommendations

5.1 Provide healthy food choices in public buildings and at government-supported meetings and events

Work Plan

- Establish healthy food standards for all City of Tacoma food vendors, for catered and public meetings, and for vending machines in City buildings. Government entities that provide meals to their workers and to members of the public can be required to follow nutritional standards, at least, comparable to those followed by public schools.
- Encourage community organizations, faith-based and nonprofit organizations, sports teams, and private companies to follow the City's healthy food standards.

- Provide technical assistance to help organizations follow the healthy food standards at a minimum cost.
- Offer incentives to organizations that offer healthy food options at community events for children, adults, and seniors.
- Advocate healthy food options at street festivals and at large public events by developing new event guidelines.
- Discourage the use of unhealthy foods and candy as rewards for children at public school events and as part of school fundraisers. Introduce alternative rewards such as school supplies, sports equipment, and free admission to events. Instead of selling candy in school fundraisers, encourage schools to promote student and parent engagement through fundraising activities like dances, car washes, and walkathons.

Key Actors

Eastside Community Center, University of Washington Tacoma, City of Tacoma, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Public Schools



It is important for policymakers and government agencies to support efforts to provide high quality, healthy foods in public institutions like schools. US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A variety of resources exist locally and can be involved in building a Food Innovation District to serve the residents of East Tacoma. This section describes several key stakeholders who can provide necessary guidance and leadership skills to propel this project forward. These include governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, community members, civic leaders, and neighborhood councilmembers. East Tacoma’s Food Innovation District is likely to succeed if these entities work together to form a shared vision and to combine their knowledge, skills, and resources.

Stakeholders		
• City of Tacoma	• Pierce Conservation District	• Tacoma Public Libraries
• Eastside Farmers Market	• Puyallup Watershed Initiative	• Tacoma Public Schools
• Eastside Neighborhood Advisory Council	• Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department	• University of Washington Tacoma
• Greater Metro Parks Foundation		



A view of downtown Tacoma taken from the Tacoma Convention Center. CITY OF TACOMA

The Food Innovation District will succeed if local government, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood councils, civic leaders, and community members work together to form a shared vision.

City of Tacoma

The City of Tacoma, as the key sponsor for the FID, holds the power to enact the policy changes necessary for this project’s implementation to begin. With clear guidance and well-defined goals and objectives, the City can work with community members of the Eastside to develop a FID.



The City holds the power to enact the policy changes necessary for this project’s implementation to begin.

Eastside Farmers Market

Farmers markets represent vital links between producers and consumers in any food system that promotes human health. The Eastside Farmers Market’s leadership is open to expanding the market’s size and extending the market’s season if it gains adequate support from community members. Opportunities for the City to partner with the Eastside Farmers Market might include creating a quarterly night market and/or overseeing mobile market operations.



Eastside Neighborhood Advisory Council

The Eastside Neighborhood Advisory Council is comprised of community members, City officials, and local leaders. These individuals work together to address problems their communities face and to brainstorm actionable measures to create positive change. Examples of the Council’s work include:

- a partnership with the Tacoma Police Department to reduce crime.
- a partnership with the Pierce Conservation District (PCD) to beautify the McKinley Business District (this effort involves the removal of more than 10,000 square feet of asphalt and concrete, to be replaced by more than 6,000 trees and other plants).
- a partnership with Sound Transit to manage habitat alongside McKinley Park.



Greater Metro Parks Foundation

The Greater Metro Parks Foundation focuses on remediating disinvestment of the Eastside. While the Foundation's work addresses an array of issues, including the neighborhood's lack of banks and grocery stores, their top priority is to develop a comprehensive, community-oriented program at the new Eastside Community Center. As Dave Lewis of Metro Parks Tacoma noted: "This is not your standard recreation center. This is a community center." In collaboration with Metro Parks Tacoma, Tacoma Public Schools, and the Boys & Girls Club of South Puget Sound, the Metro Parks Foundation seeks to ensure that the Eastside Community Center serves its community as a safe haven for children and families to gather and as a resource for community members to access services and develop skills.



Pierce Conservation District (PCD)

PCD, with its three-pronged mission to: 1) conserve natural resources tied to local economy and quality of life, 2) support the local food system, and 3) ensure a sustainable future, supports the City's efforts to create a Food Innovation District in East Tacoma. PCD supports the local food system in its work with community gardens and in its efforts to partner with eleven farmers markets in Pierce County. In addition to strengthening and supporting the Eastside Farmers Market, PCD empowers youth and other community members to act as environmental stewards and to involve themselves in a healthy, sustainable food system.



Puyallup Watershed Initiative

The Puyallup Watershed Initiative is a non-profit organization that focuses on core issues that affect local communities. They work in conjunction with other nonprofits, businesses, government agencies, and community members to address issues and topics related to transportation, agriculture, environmental education, forests, industrial storm water run-off, and a just and healthy food system. They identify the goals of a just and healthy food system as:

- Increasing equity
- Building skills, tools and resources to make food available to all people
- Connecting, engaging and supporting communities
- Revaluing food and agriculture

The Puyallup Watershed Initiative is composed of a diverse team of partners, all equipped with the skills, experience, and passion necessary to carry out the recommendations of this report.

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department is a vital and critical partner in this project. Their involvement stems directly from their vision statement, "Healthy People in Healthy Communities," and their mission statement, "We protect and improve the health of all people and places in Pierce County." The Health Department participated actively in the development and review of this report. They will play a very important role in implementation, as many of the recommendations will either require their engagement and approval or their partnership. The proposed activities all relate directly to the Health Department priorities: "People are healthy and safe here; people have equitable opportunities for health; and children, families and communities thrive."



Tacoma Public Libraries

Tacoma Public Libraries is an important community resource that can be invited to contribute to this project through its educational programs. For example, the Mottet branch, located in East Tacoma, could create a children's summer program focused on healthy eating or on the local food system. In addition, Tacoma Public Libraries can promote upcoming events and projects that require the input of residents.



Tacoma Public Schools

Tacoma Public Schools' existing infrastructure and its mission to educate youth can be leveraged to support and facilitate the active involvement of parents and children in an equitable, healthy food system. The schools can serve as a resource for students and parents to learn about healthy food options. Schools can demonstrate their commitment to their students' health by providing locally-sourced, nutritious meals.



University of Washington Tacoma

This class was offered jointly at the Seattle and Tacoma campuses, with five students from Seattle and four from Tacoma. UW Tacoma provided classroom space and supported the field work for the project. During the implementation phase, UW Tacoma has been nominated for direct engagement in several of the recommendations, and both students and faculty have a role to play in carrying out many of the others.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While piecing this project together, students reached out to many of the stakeholder agencies and organizations described previously. This helped them form recommendations that reflect the Eastside neighborhood's specific assets and challenges. Even so, students recognize that far more outreach is required for the City to succeed in designing a Food Innovation District that truly represents and serves the people of East Tacoma. Successful enactment of the recommendations provided by this document, and of the Food Innovation District at large, hinges on the City's dedication to soliciting input from community members. Although students have embedded community outreach strategies within many of their individual recommendations, it behooves the City to consider the following recommendations, all focused on community engagement:

1. Emphasize a community-engaged and resident-driven planning process, focused on elevating the voices of underrepresented and vulnerable populations. These may include Puyallup Tribal members, refugee and immigrant communities, people of color, people with disabilities, seniors, and low-income families.
2. Identify a diverse set of community leaders who can connect City staff to different resident populations. These may include long-term homeowners, short-term renters, multi-family/ intergenerational households, restaurant owners, well-known neighbors, tribal leaders, and others willing to participate in outreach strategies.
3. Develop questionnaires and surveys, conducted in multiple formats (in person, over the phone, online, etc.) and in multiple languages (e.g., Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, Lushootseed, etc.) and use these to gather information from diverse populations on topics related to the FID.
4. Create flyers and posters with visually engaging graphic design that quickly draws attention and conveys pertinent information. Post these flyers in neighborhoods and/or areas where previous outreach efforts have failed.

Students recognize that far more outreach is required for the City to succeed in designing a Food Innovation District that truly represents and serves the people of East Tacoma.



A local farmer sets up her booth at one of the markets managed by Tacoma Farmers Market.
HOMINI

The Eastside neighborhood already boasts an array of community assets and resources. Its diversity of people and ethnic cuisines, community gardens, parks, and farmers market make it a vibrant and unique place to live. The nearly completed Eastside Community Center, described within this report, stands out as one example of the myriad ways in which the neighborhood is undergoing a positive transformation. Yet, data compiled from recent studies indicates that severe health disparities impact East Tacoma residents' quality of life and longevity.

Many organizations and individuals demonstrate their commitment to the people of East Tacoma and to increasing the neighborhood's access to healthy food: Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank, Metro Parks Tacoma, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. Their efforts and understanding guide and inspire many of the recommendations of this report. It is our hope that this set of recommendations support the City of Tacoma in a collaboration with community members of East Tacoma. We envision the City, local organizations, and residents working hand in hand to create a Food Innovation District, one that will improve quality of life factors for all residents of East Tacoma.



Community gardens offer space for people of all ages to develop new skills and to relate directly to the foods they eat. METRO PARKS TACOMA

The Eastside's diversity of people and ethnic cuisines, community gardens, parks, and farmers markets make it a vibrant and unique place to live.

We envision the City, local organizations, and residents working hand in hand to create a Food Innovation District, one that will improve quality of life factors for all residents of East Tacoma.



Farmers markets represent vital links between producers and consumers in any food system that promotes human health. CITY OF TACOMA

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