



CITY OF TACOMA

University of Washington
Urban Design and Planning
URBDP 598N:

Neighborhood Planning Practicum:
Advancing a Tacoma Eastside Food
Innovation District

Instructor: Richard Conlin

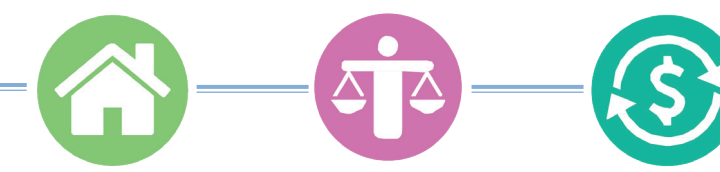
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EASTSIDE FOOD INNOVATION DISTRICT



Introduction

A child born in East Tacoma has a life expectancy 7-12 years shorter than someone born in other parts of the city. Data from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department suggests that lack of access to healthy food is a strong contributor to this disparity. While Eastside Tacoma's assets include a strong network of faith-based organizations, diversity of backgrounds among residents, and a growing contingent of food and garden resources, the neighborhood still grapples with wealth disparity and poor health outcomes for many residents.

The goal of our project is to provide a set of recommendations for creating a local food economy in Eastside Tacoma that will stimulate better access to healthy food and create local employment opportunities.

Local food entrepreneurship is seen as a way of creating fulfilling job opportunities for residents while simultaneously increasing healthy food options for their community. In addition, our recommendations will include strategies for encouraging healthy food choices, especially for young people.



Residents of Eastside Tacoma have expressed that they would like to see walkability and accessibility to healthy food resources improve.

Methods & Approach

We began this project by reviewing literature and precedents in neighborhood, food policy, and community engagement planning strategies. We met early on with representatives from the City of Tacoma and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, who provided background on the health metrics of Eastside Tacoma and helped frame what a Food Innovation District would look like for this neighborhood.

Precedents such as the City of Riverside's Food and Agriculture Policy Action Plan provided guidance as we moved forward with researching best practices. Through meetings with local organizations and research into existing assets and structures, we are developing initial recommendations.

Because of time constraints, our project cannot include extensive community engagement, but our report will outline potential strategies for engaging community members and determining how they envision these changes taking place.



Increasing access and education around community gardens is a strategy we have identified for improving health metrics in Eastside Tacoma.

Initial Findings

Connect Key Partners. Through our research we have identified dozens of people and organizations who are doing amazing work related to food and equity in Eastside Tacoma. There are multiple community gardens, a seasonal farmer's market, and programs that provide healthy food to kids during the summer. One of our primary goals is thus to increase utilization of these resources and connect key partners together to expand them.

Use Vacant Land. Vacant land stands out as an opportunity for urban agriculture and business development. Growing food would not only provide people with access to healthy produce, but would serve as an

educational tool for raising nutrition-minded youth. Identifying locations and strategies for expanding urban agriculture, as well as exploring ways to make them culturally relevant, are priorities.

Promote Food Cultures. Because cultural and ethnic diversity is such a strong asset of this community, we are examining ways for residents to share their food cultures and build food businesses. Cottage Food Laws offer the opportunity to sell goods made in the home, and can offer significant income while also serving the community with locally made goods.