THE ROLE OF SMALL GROCERS IN NEIGHBOURHOOD FOOD ACCESS

A STUDY OF RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS IN RENFREW-COLLINGWOOD

Prepared by:

Ignatius But
Greenest City Scholar 2017

in partnership with

Crecien Bencio
Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute

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About the author:

Ignatius But is a recent graduate from the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning. Ignatius holds a BKin with a minor in Urban Geography and has previously worked in community development and public engagement.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Access to fresh, healthy food is essential for obtaining enough food to lead an active, healthy life. However, many communities face barriers to attaining food that is healthy and adequate. Individuals and families living in poverty, people with disabilities, new immigrants and refugees, and seniors may not have the economic, cultural or physical resources to obtain the food they need.

One important way for individuals to access food is through purchasing food at food retailers. Vancouver is home to a diverse range of food retailers, from large, chain supermarkets to ethnic grocers to convenience stores. However, anecdotally, there have been concerns over the loss of **small grocers** and the continued pressures on existing small grocers to stay in business.

This research asks:

1. What types of grocery stores exist in Vancouver?
2. What is the role of small grocers compared to other forms of grocery stores in providing food access?
3. What are the implications of declining numbers of small grocers on food access and availability?

The objectives of the research are to:

1. Develop a definition of small grocers in the context of the City of Vancouver
2. Understand resident perceptions of how small grocers contribute to providing healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate food
3. Understand the potential implications of stores closures on resident food access

METHODS

This research project focuses on the experiences of residents in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood. The research questions and methodology were developed through a partnership with the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute and was implemented through collaborations with the Collingwood Neighbourhood House and the Renfrew Park Community Centre. Overall, 58 semi-structured interviews and 2 focus groups were conducted.

MAIN FINDINGS

Where do people shop? 95% of participants purchased food at supermarkets at least once a month, 76% at small grocers, and 28% at specialty food stores. Only 8% purchased food at a farmers market, all of whom were part of the BC Farmer's Market Association Coupon Program.

On average, participants shopped at four different grocery stores per month and not necessarily at stores closest to their homes. Identify preferences (eating preferences, ethnic identification), life circumstances (income, household size and composition, access to a vehicle) and built environmental factors (residential location, proximity to stores, proximity to transportation options) influenced shopping patterns.

STORES FREQUENTED BY PARTICIPANTS IN A MONTH

Store Type	Percentage of Participants
Supermarkets	93%
Small Grocers	72%
Specialty Food Stores	25%
Food Bank	8%
Farmers Market	8%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why do people shop where they shop?

Affordability

- Small grocers provide more affordable produce while supermarkets have more sales and bulk items.
- Food banks and food programs are an important source of food for households experiencing financial difficulties.

Culturally-appropriate food

- When buying culturally-appropriate food, more participants shop at small grocers than supermarkets.
- Cultural foods for participants of Asian descent (Chinese, FIlipino and Vietnamese) are more accessible than cultural foods for Latin American, African and Middle Eastern participants.

Convenience and Geographic Access

- Small grocers were typically perceived as more convenient to walk to while supermarkets were more convenient to drive or take transit to.
- Regardless of store type, participants were not limited to shopping near their homes.
- Differences in mode of transport to grocery stores are influenced by what participants buy there.

Freshness and Quality

- Supermarkets were perceived to have higher quality products than small grocers, especially for meat and dairy
- Farmers markets were perceived as having the best quality and selection of produce. Most participants felt the markets were financially inaccessible.

Familiarity and Sense of Belonging

- Participants are more likely to foster close connections with staff at small grocers and believe that small grocers contribute to the sense of community and belonging in the neighbourhood

Where would people shop if their grocery store(s) closed down? And how would this change their shopping and eating habits?

- Participants were most likely to switch from shopping at a small grocer to a supermarket, or to continue shopping at another small grocer.
- Store closures have the most impact on buying affordable and culturally-appropriate food, particularly for participants with constrained mobility.

STORE TYPE CHARACTERISTICS	
Store Type	**Characteristics**
Small Grocers	Affordable produce More culturally-appropriate food for certain cultural groups Convenience by walking, close to home Familiarity and sense of belonging Mixed opinions on product quality
Supermarkets	Affordable products overall Sales and bulk items Convenience by automobile, transit Consistent, trusted quality
Specialty food stores	Authentic and diversity of cultural foods Specific items from country of origins Expensive
Farmers markets	High quality produce Enjoyable shopping experience Expensive, only affordable with Farmers Market Coupon Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study reminds planners and policy makers that a multitude of factors impact individuals ability to obtain food and maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle. Individual, social and environmental factors all contribute to a person's access to food.

This study also reveals differences in how store types are perceived. These differences satisfy unique food needs . A diverse food retail landscape is needed for access to healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate food (VFS Goal).

Food retail contributes to other city goals in the Greenest City Action Plan and Healthy City Strategy. While food retail supports these goals in concept, indicators and targets do not always reflect this inter-relationships. As GCAP and HCS are reviewed, there will be opportunities to explore how food retail can be included in the goals.

How individuals will (or will not) adapt to changes in the food retail environment is complex. Those with financial and mobility constraints combined with specific cultural food needs may face the greatest challenges in accessing healthy, affordable and culturally-relevant food in a less diverse food retail environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support small grocers

- Evaluate new developments and community planning processes for its impacts or contributions to the food retail environment.
- Research into trends, factors, challenges for businesses
- Research into and pilot policy and programs for retaining existing and facilitating new small grocers

2. Monitor the food retail environment

- Redefine the City's definition of food assets to include supermarkets, small grocers and specialty food stores.
- Improve business license data reliability

3. Research into the food needs of marginalized groups and opportunities to increase cultural food security

- Identify gaps and challenges to accessing food for marginalized communities (eg. newcomers, non-Chinese ethnic minorities)
- Further research into the food production, distribution, processing systems and networks of culturally-appropriate foods
- Explore opportunities to encourage greater local/regional production of culturally-appropriate foods

4. Explore opportunities for food retail and other food assets to be included in other Healthy City Strategy goals.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Access to fresh, healthy food is essential for obtaining enough food to lead an active, healthy life. However, many communities face barriers to attaining food that is healthy and adequate. People living in poverty, including children, people with disabilities, new immigrants and refugees, and seniors may not have the economic, physical, or cultural resources to obtain the food they need.

One important way for individuals to access food is through purchasing food at food retailers. Food retail is known to be an important source of food, yet what is less certain is the role of different types of food retailers in providing healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate food. In Vancouver, there are a diverse range of food retailers, from large supermarkets and wholesalers to bakeries, butchers and convenience stores. However, anecdotally there have been concerns over the **loss of small grocers** and many others are challenged to stay open.

While there needs to be extensive investigation into the specific pressures that small grocers are facing and the appropriate interventions to these pressures, it is important to ask: what is the role of small grocers in Vancouver's food retail environment? How do residents shop and how do they perceive different food retailers? What are the implications on resident access to food if small grocers were to close down?

This study is a preliminary attempt to understand the role that small food grocers play in neighbourhood food access.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Develop a typology of grocery stores in the context of the City of Vancouver.
2. Understand resident perceptions of how small grocers contribute to providing healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate food
3. Understand the potential implications of stores closures on resident food access

This research project focuses on the experiences of residents in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood. The research questions and methodology were developed through a partnership with the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute and was implemented through collaborations with the Collingwood Neighbourhood House and the Renfrew Park Community Centre.

This report summarizes the findings of qualitative interviews and focus groups with residents in Renfrew-Collingwood and only begins to understand the role that small grocers play in providing food access and the implications of their decline.

2.0 | BACKGROUND

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

The Vancouver Food Strategy (VFS) outlines how the City of Vancouver wants to shape its food system, identifying five priority areas of action: food production, empowering residents, food processing and distribution, food waste, and food access[1]. The Strategy seeks to "improve access to healthy, affordable food for all by increasing healthy food retail."

The VFS is complementary to the City's Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP) and Healthy City Strategy (HCS). Both documents highlight Vancouver's food system as an area of high priority (focus area): GCAP seeks to make local food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy while the HCS is striving to make Vancouver's food system healthy, just and sustainable for all. These strategies aim to "increase the number of City-wide and neighbourhood food assets in the City of Vancouver by 50% from 2010 levels by 2020" and "to ensure that the majority of residents live within 5-minute walk of a basket of fresh produce"[23].

2.2 EVOLUTION OF RESEARCH QUESTION

This study originated out of concerns for the loss of small food retailers and cultural food assets in the City of Vancouver. Research conducted by the Hua Foundation found that 50% of fresh food stores (green grocers, fish mongers and barbecue meat store) and 32% of Chinese dried good stores in Chinatown have closed between 2009-2016[4]. Media outlets have also reported on the loss of long-time small, independent businesses elsewhere in the city[5]. To address these concerns, the City of Vancouver will be conducting research into the trends, factors and challenges that small businesses are facing city-wide in 2018. In light of these potential threats, why is it important to have a diverse retail environment that includes small, independent food retailers? What are the unique roles that different types of food retailers play in our communities? What are the implications if these stores are closed? By answering these questions, this report intends on providing support for future interventions on the food retail environment.

WHAT IS A FOOD ASSET?

Food assets are defined by the City in these three documents as resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents, used to support the local food system, and most able to be supported by the City of Vancouver. These include:

- community composting sites
- community food markets
- community fruit tree orchards
- community gardens
- community kitchens
- farmers markets
- street food vendors
- urban farms

1. City of Vancouver. (2013). "Vancouver Food Strategy". Retrieved from http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-food-strategy-final.PDF
2. City of Vancouver. (200??). "Greenest City 2020 Action Plan". Retrieved from http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Greenest-city-action-plan.pdf
3. City of Vancouver. (2014). "Healthy City Strategy". Retrieved from http://council.vancouver.ca/20141029/documents/ptec1_appendix_a_final.pdf

4. Ho, A., & Chen, A. (2017). Vancouver Chinatown Food Security Report. Retrieved from hua foundation website: http://www.huafoundation.org/foodreport/
5. News coverage on Vancouver's changing retail landscape.
Gold, K. (2016). *Soaring property values push businesses out of Vancouver's west side.* Retrieved from https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/small-business/sb-growth/empty-storefronts-crop-up-in-vancouvers-priciest-neighbourhoods-as-soaring-property-values-push-out-small-business/article30767046/
Fumano, D. (2017). *Vancouver's independent businesses struggle, entangled in 'triple-net' leases.* Retrieved from http://vancouversun.com/business/local-business/dan-fumano-vancouvers-independent-businesses-struggle-entangled-in-triple-net-leases
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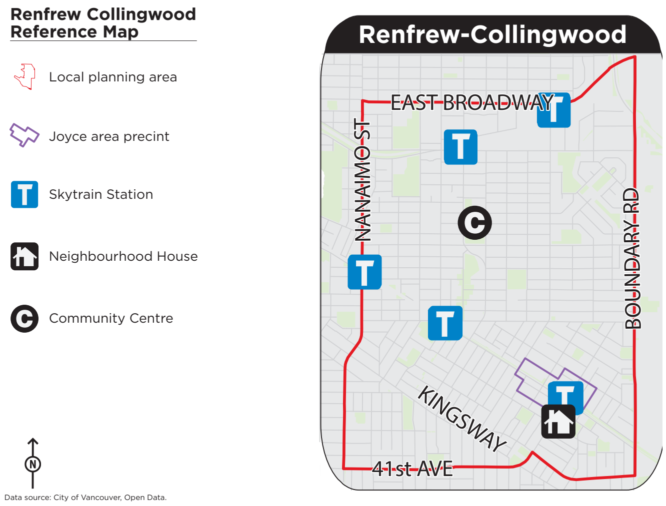
3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study is the product of a partnership between the Social Policy Department of the City of Vancouver and the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute (RCFSI). Based out of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the RCFSI is working to promote learning and leadership around sustainable growing, local food, multicultural food traditions, and healthy eating in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood[6]. This partnership stemmed out of community concerns over land use and zoning changes occurring in the neighbourhood and its impacts on local food retailers. Hence, this study focuses on the personal grocery shopping experiences of residents in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood.

3.1 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Renfrew-Collingwood is a community of 50,240 residents located on the eastern border of the City of Vancouver. Income levels are mixed, but 21% of residents live below the poverty line (LIM-AT)*. The neighbourhood is also diverse, with 45% of residents most often speaking a non-English language at home. 28% of residents primarily spoke a Chinese language at home, 4% Tagalog (Pilipino or Filipino), 3% Vietnamese and 1% Spanish[7]. 58% of residents are immigrants to Canada, compared to 44% of residents city-wide[8].

Figure 1. Renfrew-Collingwood Reference Map (City of Vancouver, 2017)



JOYCE-AREA PRECINCT PLAN

Approved by Council in 2016, the Joyce-Area Precinct Plan revises land use, building form and height, transportation, and community amenity policies around for sites around the Joyce-Collingwood SkyTrain Station. The plan includes increases in residential, commercial and office density, building heights and improvements to the area's walking and cycling network. Policy 4.2.3 explore the inclusion of larger retail spaces (7,500 – 10,000 sq ft) to accommodate a grocery store near the SkyTrain station on Joyce.

6. For more information on the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute's programs and services, please check out https://rcfood.wordpress.com/.
7. City of Vancouver. (2011). Home Languages Spoken. Retrieved from VanDocs.
8. City of Vancouver. (2011). Census Local Area Profiles 2011. Retrieved from http://data.vancouver.ca/datacatalogue/censusLocalAreaProfiles2011.htm.

3.0 | METHODOLOGY

3.2 DEVELOPING DEFINITIONS

Business licenses have been demonstrated to be a reliable data source to understand the location and distribution of food retailers[9]. However, Vancouver's current licensing categories are not sufficiently indicative of a food retailer's function. The City of Vancouver business licensing data classifies the food retail environment into three categories: (1) retail dealer food, (2) retail dealer – grocery, (3) retail dealer – market outlet.

Stores licensed under retail dealer–grocery typically reflect the category's definition, which include large format supermarkets such as Safeway, No Frills and T&T Supermarket. However, a wide range of stores that sell food but are primarily engaged in non-food products and services are included in the categories of retail dealer–food and retail dealer–market outlet. Stores as varied as clothing retailers, pharmacies and hardware stores are grouped together with small grocers, convenience stores and food wholesalers. While some licenses include sub-categories to further specify store type, such as convenience store or pharmacy, many others do not have sub-categories specified. This is problematic when attempting to assess a neighbourhood's access to food; residents typically do not go to clothing retailers or hardware stores for their groceries. As a result, it is difficult to assess where residents obtain food by using these categories.

For the purposes of this project, business license definitions from the City of Vancouver have been modified to develop more functional categories of food retailers. The definitions were modified after reviewing definitions from NAICS, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), Centre for Disease Control, City of Toronto, Seattle and King County Public Health, San Francisco Public Health, City of Baltimore, and the Food Marketing Institute[10]. These definitions have been adapted by VCH for use in their Vancouver Food Asset Map[11].

9. Depp, M.I.G. (2016). The Food Environment Surrounding Vancouver Schools Associations of Access to Food Outlets and Children's Intake of Minimally Nutritious Foods At or En-Route to School. *(Master's Thesis).* Retrieved from https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/stream/pdf/24/1.0308712/4.

10. Please see Appendix 1 for document citations.

11. Vancouver Coastal Health. (2017). *Vancouver Food Asset Map.* Retrieved from http://www.vch.ca/public-health/nutrition/vancouver-food-asset-map

TABLE 1. CITY OF VANCOUVER BUSINESS LICENSE CATEGORIES & DEFINITIONS

Category	Description
Retail dealer – food	any person who carries on the business of selling commodities including foodstuffs but does not include a retail dealer - grocery or a retail dealer - market outlet
Retail Dealer - Grocery	any person who carries on the business of selling commodities including foodstuffs directly to the public AND whose business customarily includes two or more of a bakery, butcher, deli, snack bar/food service but does not include market outlet
Retail Dealer - Market Outlet	any person not otherwise herein defined who carries on the business of selling commodities which may include foodstuffs directly to the public from premises having a total floor area greater than 4,645 square metres (50,000 sqft)
Data Source:	*City of Vancouver. License By-law 4450, 2016*

TABLE 2. NEW FOOD RETAIL TYPOLOGY DEFINITIONS	
Category	**Description**
Supermarket	Stores that offer a wide selection of fresh, dried, frozen and packaged food from all of Health Canada's four main food groups*. They usually include non-food household products.
Small Grocers	Stores that offer a wide selection of fresh, dried, frozen and packaged food from all of Health Canada's four main food groups. Most are independently owned (3 or less stores). They may specialize in cultural foods from other countries.
Specialty Food Stores	Stores that specialize in selling a specific type of food or cultural foods from other countries.
Convenience Stores	Stores that offer a limited choice of food items, often including snacks, soft drinks and other mostly processed products. Some stores also sell a limited assortment of canned goods, produce, bread, egg and dairy products. Stores typically focus on selling non-food items and include pharmacies, dollar stores or non-grocery department stores with a significant choice of foods.
Public Markets	Markets that include fresh fruits, vegetables, and other products from farms.
Mobile or Seasonal Markets	Non-permanent or seasonal markets that include fresh fruits, vegetables, and other products from farms.
Online grocery delivery	offers online ordering services of groceries and both home and in-store pick-up of groceries. These services may be a part of an existing food retailer's operations or operate separately as their own company.
Data Source:	*Vancouver Coastal Health: Food Asset Map, 2016.*

3.3 ASSESSING FOOD ACCESS

The initial intent of this research was to assess resident perceptions and objective measures of food access. Previous research has demonstrated that correlations between objective and perceived food environment measures can be inconsistent, depending on the measure. For example, correlations between objective and perceived measures of geographic food access seem to be more consistent than objective and perceived food availability[12]. Hence, it is important to understand both perceived and objective measures to gain a better understanding of the food retail environment.

12. Health Canada. (2013). Measuring the Food Environment in Canada. Retrieved from http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/resource-documents/MeasureFoodEnvironm_EN.pdf

Perceptions of food access: 58 interviews were conducted with neighbourhood residents. All interviewees were patrons of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) or Renfrew Park Community Centre (RPCC) between June 10-July 10, 2017, though not all lived within the boundaries of Renfrew-Collingwood. All interviews were semi-structured, guided by pre-set questions but allowing for new ideas to be discussed by the interviewee. Most interviews were conducted during existing programming at CNH and RPCC. See Appendix 2 for

3.0 | METHODOLOGY

the list of programs that interviews were conducted in.

Two focus groups were conducted in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes hosted by the CNH on July 13, 2017. There were 14 participants in total, 7 in each session. Participants first wrote down responses to a set of questions and participated in a 25-minute facilitated discussion.

Interviews and focus groups were recorded using a voice-recorder. If the interviewee(s) was not comfortable with being voice-recorded, the interviewers took handwritten notes of the conversation. See Appendix 3 for the interview guides and focus group questions.Responses were transcribed and coded into thematic groupings.

To broaden the study's sample population, in-person store-front interviews of grocery customers were also planned. However, due to low participation from store-owners and managers (reasons explained below), this portion of the study was not implemented.

Objective measures of food access: Assessments of in-store consumer food environment were initially part of the methodology to understand what foods are available to residents in the neighbourhood and to assess for differences between store types. An audit tool was developed, which would have measured the variety and cost of healthy food and proportion of the store's floor area devoted to selling healthy food[13]. Six small grocers and two supermarkets were approached to participate in the study. However, store owner and manager uptake was low, with only two small grocers and one supermarket agreeing to participate in the study. Hence, this part of the study was not implemented. Among the small grocers, two were unable to be reached by phone or in-person and two did not have time to participate. The non-participating supermarket was undergoing store layout changes at the time of the study and did not feel the interim layout was indicative of its typical layout.

13. The in-store audit tool was adapted from the audit tool developed and used in Stephanie Bury's Richmond Healthy Food Retail Project and National Nutritious Food Basket.

GRAPH 1. PARTICIPANTS BY AGE GROUP

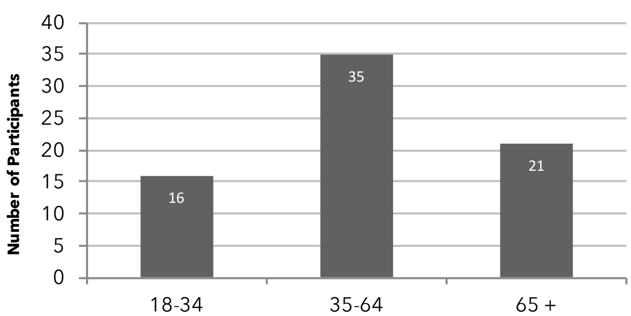


TABLE 3. PARTICIPANTS BY ETHNIC/COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Ethnic/Country of Origin	Number of Participants
Chinese	23
Filipino	19
European	11
Latin American	10
Vietnamese	4
African (West and North)	3
Japanese	2
Afghani	1
Indian	1
Total	**74**

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 WHERE DO PEOPLE SHOP?

93% of participants purchased groceries at supermarkets in a month, 72% at small grocers, and 25% at specialty food stores. 8% of participants purchased food at farmers markets, all of whom did so using the BC Farmer's Market Association coupon program. Another 8% of participants obtained food from the food bank and community meal programs offered by community centres, neighbourhood houses and other organizations.

On average, participants shopped at four different stores per month. As seen in figure 2, the locations of store were not contained within the neighbourhood's boundaries.

TABLE 4. STORES FREQUENTED BY PARTICIPANTS IN A MONTH

Store Type	Percentage of Participants
Supermarkets	93%
Small Grocers	72%
Specialty Food Stores	25%
Food Bank	8%
Farmers Market	8%

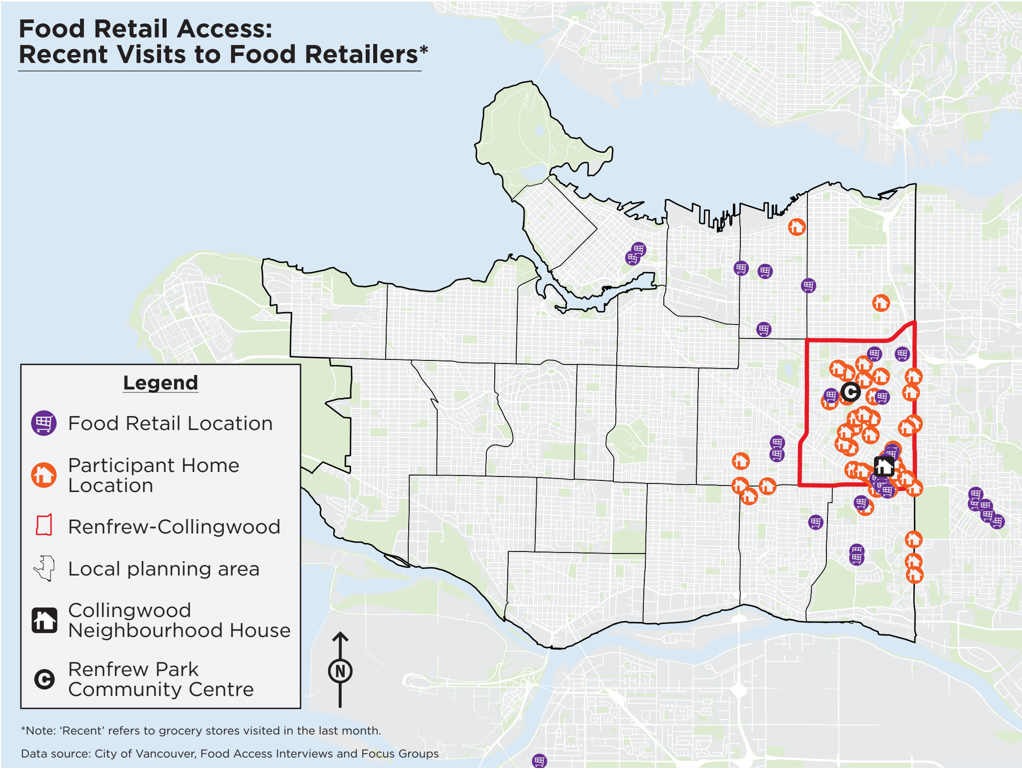


Figure 2. Map of Participant's Residential Locations and Recent Visits to Food Retailers

(City of Vancouver, 2017)

4.0 | RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.3 WHY DO PEOPLE SHOP WHERE THEY SHOP?

Although individual shopping patterns were very diverse, there were clear differences in why participants shopped in different stores.

4.3.1 Affordability

Small grocers provide more affordable produce while supermarkets have more sales and bulk items. Food banks and food programs are an important source of food for households experiencing financial difficulties.

Small grocers. 24% of participants shopped at small grocers because of price considerations. Participants often discussed the affordability of produce at small grocers compared to supermarkets. As eating healthy and providing healthy food for their family were important values for the participants, many were shopping for fruits and vegetables several times a week. However, several individuals highlighted that eating healthy is expensive and actively sought ways to save money while eating healthily. Purchasing produce at small grocers was perceived as the most cost-effective strategy.

> *"The fruits and vegetable prices are way better than anything else. I buy all my fruits and veggies here and I seldom buy fruits and veggies at superstore." (White, above 65)*

Supermarkets. 16% of participants shopped at supermarkets for low product prices. In contrast to small grocers, supermarkets were perceived to be have low costs for a wide range of products.

> *"The price is good and items are usually always cheaper. The things that I always buy such as condensed milk, milk, half and half cream, potato chips usually are the cheapest [at her supermarket] compared to other stores." (Chinese, 35-64)*

Although it may seem that less participants shopped at supermarkets for price considerations than small grocers, participants were able to practice a combination of different money-saving techniques at supermarkets. Cost-saving strategies included shopping for sale items, forgoing and limiting certain foods, and purchasing in bulk. Several participants noted that they would check flyers or online apps for sales at supermarkets and adjust their shopping list based on what items were on sale.

TABLE 5. COMMON REASONS FOR SHOPPING AT SMALL GROCERS AND SUPERMARKETS

Common Themes	Small Grocer (n=172)	Supermarket (n=205)
Geographic Access and Convenience	28%	19%
Cost and Affordability	24%	16%
Culturally-appropriate	22%	5%
Quality	12%	16%
Friendly staff	6%	1%
Specific items	n/a	10%
Sales	n/a	10%
Bulk purchases	n/a	9%

> *"I always look for price, I don't have the ability to go to one place. If one place has one sale I go there, and I look for best price. I use Red Flag Deals app and every week I look for best price, sometimes I buy rice here, food there, vegetables there. I go to these places by bus, I do this cause I need to save money. Sometimes I go to London Drugs and buy something that's very cheap so I buy it even if I need it for next month." (Brazilian, 35-64)*

For one individual, seeking out sales at supermarkets is a necessary strategy to buy sufficient food.

> *"It's difficult for me to buy groceries because prices are always changing and increasing, especially the meat. I look at the flyers week to week and decide where to shop based on the sales. If things are too expensive one week, I won't buy it yet and will check around for other stores or wait until later weeks." (Chinese, 65-above)*

Individuals also purchased in bulk to save costs, especially when items were on sale. If the items were perishable, participants would freeze and store the items for later consumption.

Food Banks and Food Programs. While participants did not reveal their income, six participants openly discussed their use of food banks and community meal programs to obtain food for free. One individual emphasized his dependence on the food bank during periods of financial instability to provide food for his three children. It is possible there were other participants who use these services but did not feel comfortable to share.

> *"I wish my disability pension was higher so I can buy things without worrying about the price, and that I wouldn't have to shop around as much. I live below the poverty line and I have to strain to budget and think about how I buy things…" (Caucasian, 35-64)*

4.3.2. Access and Availability of Cultural Food

When buying culturally-appropriate food, more participants shop at small grocers than supermarkets. Cultural foods for participants of Asian descent (Chinese, FIlipino and Vietnamese) are more accessible than cultural foods for Latin American, African and Middle Eastern participants.

Small Grocers. 22% of the respondents who shopped at small grocers did so to find culturally-appropriate food compared to 5% for supermarkets. Small grocers had more authentic and a greater ariety of culturally-appropriate foods at lower costs compared to supermarkets, particularly for Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese and other Asian groups.

> *"I like Chinese stores because we can get a lot of Chinese products such as black beans or seaweed that I cannot get at Western grocery stores… We can get REAL Chinese food." (Chinese, above 65)*

The availability of various Asian foods may be in large part due to Asian ownership and operation of many of the small grocers identified in the study. These owners are likely to have greater knowledge of the Asian foods and may have more connections with Asian food suppliers. Another reason may be that small grocers are more agile in their operations and able to respond to customer needs. For example, one of the Chinese-run small grocers was identified by multiple participants of Filipino decent as carrying common Filipino products.

> *"They have very specific Filipino products that I use and I'm familiar with. I buy pandesal, Filipino eden cheese, even the Filipino desserts that you cannot find anywhere else." (Filipino, 35-64)*

Another individual who immigrated to Canada from West Africa was able to find several types of cultural produce at one of the Chinese-run small grocers. The availability of foods from diverse cultural groups demonstrates the ability for small grocer operators to respond to the needs of its diverse customers.

Supermarkets. Purchasing cultural food was not a significant reason why individuals shopped at supermarkets. Several individuals noted that supermarkets are increasing their offerings of ethno-cultural food but still preferred shopping at small grocers for more authentic and affordable cultural foods. While several individuals did shop at supermarkets for cultural foods, all of these individuals were of Chinese descent and shopped at various Asian supermarkets.

Specialty Food Stores: While Asian foods are more readily accessible and available at small grocers, and to a lesser extent, supermarkets, cultural foods of other origins are far less available and accessible. For respondents of Latin American descent, specialty food stores were the only place where they would find foods from their home country. Participants noted that these products are expensive as these goods are typically imported. Consequently, participants shopped for their cultural food items infrequently and would only do so for special occasions. Other individuals changed their eating habits, stating that they stopped cooking their cultural food altogether.

> *"I buy my ethnic food here but it is very expensive. I go here maybe four times a year if I want to do something special from my culture or if I am eager to eat something traditional from my country." (Latina, 35-64)*

Two individuals who ate halal were able to purchase halal meat from two stores in the neighbourhood, one small grocer and one specialty food store. Both participants would purchase in bulk then freeze and store their meat in order to save time and money.

4.3.3 Geographic Access and Convenience

Small grocers were typically perceived as more convenient to walk to while supermarkets were more convenient to drive or take transit to. Regardless of store type, participants were not limited to shopping near their homes. Differences in mode of transport to grocery stores were influenced by what participants buy there.

Small Grocers. 28% of participants shopped at small grocers out of convenience. Participants most often described small grocers as convenient to walk to and "close to home". In fact, 76% of shoppers at small grocers walked while only 11% drove. The convenience of walking to buy groceries allowed participants to have more flexibility in their shopping patterns.

> *"It's convenient to shop here because it's close to home which is a 10-minute walk. I even go here when I walk around the neighbourhood, shopping spontaneously. I buy food every 2-3 times a week." (Filipino, 65 and above)*

For others, walking to buy groceries helped save on transportation costs.

> *"If I run out of something I go to Consumers or Garden… I walk and it's close to my house and it's good exercise. I don't have to spend bus fare." (Filipino, above 65)*

Several other individuals discussed the proximity of two specific small grocers in the neighbourhood. As these stores are located across the street from each other, participants were able to walk between the two to compare prices. The proximity was helpful for participants wanting to save costs.

Supermarkets. 19% of participants shopped at supermarkets for convenience. Unlike small grocers, participants found supermarkets to be more convenient by car. 39% of participants drove to supermarkets, while 36% walked and another 25% rode public transit. Participants would not only describe supermarkets as "close to home", but also as "close to work" or being "on the way" to a destination, such as their children's school or a place of social activity.

Several popular supermarkets that are perceived to be convenient are not located near Renfrew-Collingwood. This finding can be explained by analysing the supermarket's location, which are situated on major driving routes or along accessible public transit lines. Then, it is likely that participants drove or took transit to these supermarkets.

Shopping patterns. The differences in commute mode between small grocers and supermarkets may be explained by the types of products participants choose to purchase at each type of store. As previously discussed, participants are more likely to shop for produce at small grocers but purchase larger, bulk items at supermarkets. Participants typically bought produce in smaller quantities but more frequently to maintain freshness but purchased dried and packaged goods in large quantities, to save costs and reduce the number of grocery trips. Hence, groceries from small grocers are likely to be much lighter and easier to carry by hand than groceries from supermarkets, explaining the need to travel by car or transit.

However, shopping patterns are as diverse as the participants' lifestyles and circumstances. Drawing broad conclusions on shopping patterns is not possible with the current study sample size.

4.3.4 Freshness and Quality

Supermarkets were perceived to have higher quality products than small grocers, especially for meat and dairy. Farmers markets were perceived as having the best quality and selection of produce; although most participants felt farmers markets were financially inaccessible.

Small Grocers. 12% of respondents shopped at small grocers because they like the quality of products. Most participants mentioned the quality and selection of vegetables, although several individuals mentioned the quality of meats.

Supermarkets. 16% of respondents shopped at supermarkets because of the quality of food. Most respondents felt that products at supermarkets were "fresh", of "high quality", and could be trusted, especially for meat and dairy products. Several individuals valued having "clean" stores that were cool in temperature for greater perceived food safety.

> *"I like to shop in [Supermarket] because the air conditioning is very good and keeps the food fresh and safe. I always watch the news and some stores have food problems and people get sick. But in [Supermarket] that is not happening. I know that the food in [Supermarket] is much more safe and more expensive but it's important for my body." (18-34, Chinese)*

For several participants, supermarkets have more fresh food and better storage facilities than small grocers, which was their primary reason for shopping at supermarkets over small grocers.

Farmers Markets. 8% of participants shopped at farmers markets. While participants enjoyed the high quality and wide selection of foods, each of the participants were only able to purchase from farmers markets because of the BC Farmers Market Association Coupon Program. Each expressed a desire to either buy more items or buy more frequently from farmers markets. However, the coupons are not enough for participants to purchase adequate food.

> *"I go to the market because of the coupons, not because I can actually buy the things here. I wouldn't go here if it were not for the coupons. It's my dream to go to the farmers market. I get everything here, vegetables, meat, fish, juice, fruit, berries. What I do not like about the farmers market coupon project is that people complain that we recieve a very little ammount and it's true. I have to save my coupons for several weeks to make a good shopping experience…I hope I can recieve a little bit more coupons so I can be able to shop every week because its my opportunity to buy good quality food and you can feel and taste it (the quality)... (65 above, Filipina)*

The quote above highlights the general recognition by participants that farmers markets have high quality, healthy produce and reveals a desire to purchase healthy, high quality foods for themselves. Yet, it also illustrates the financial barriers that many participants face to accessing food at farmers markets.

4.3.5 Familiarity and Sense of Belonging

Participants are more likely to foster close connections with staff at small grocers and believe that small grocers contribute to and believe that small grocers contribute to the sense of community and belonging in the neighbourhood

Small Grocers. 6% of participants highlighted the familiarity with staff and the sense of belonging they feel in small grocers. These individuals have typically shopped at small grocers over many years and have developed a familiarity with the products sold and the store layout. Being familiar with the store was important because it provided participants an assurance that they can buy the products they want. One individual even knew the schedule of when her small grocer replenished its shelves.

> *"I do not go [to this Small Grocer] because of price - it is a bit higher than [another Small Grocer]. I go because of convenience, and familiarity of Filipino food and products and if I am cooking Filipino food, which I do all the time, I trust that I will find the products that I need at this store." (35-64, Filipina)*

The sense of familiarity extended to the connections formed with staff. For one participant, the relationship she developed with the staff led to discounted products.

> *"I like this [Small Grocer] very much. The owner is nice to me. When I buy meat to cook for community lunch programs or when I was cooking food for the Syrian Refugees who lived in the neighbourhood the owner would always give me a discount, five dollars less." (65 and above, Filipina)*

Another individual commented on how the store environment made her feel comfortable and at home:

> *"The staff are very friendly, and [the Small Grocer] ha[s] a TV with the Filipino shows that you can watch while you are in line and paying." (35-64, Filipina)*

Two individuals shared feelings of nostalgia and recalled memories of shopping at these stores with their parents and grandparents. Another participant spoke about how the small grocers "bring culture and character to the area". All of this reveals the intangible characteristics of small grocers that have resonance beyond food. Small grocers appear to foster feelings of familiarity and belonging, and informal social relationships amongst certain participants, and create spaces for people to interact with one another.

Supermarkets. In contrast, only one participant spoke about the intangible, social aspects of supermarkets. This participant mentioned the staff were friendly at his nearby supermarket.

However, none of the participants discussed developing informal relationships with staff or fostering familiarity and attachment to a supermarket.

4.4 WHERE WOULD PEOPLE SHOP IF THEIR GROCERY STORE(S) CLOSED DOWN?

Participants were most likely to switch from shopping at a small grocer to a supermarket, or to continue shopping at another small grocer. These changes have the most impact on buying affordable and culturally-appropriate food, particularly for participants with constrained mobility.

32% of respondents to this question would switch from shopping at small grocers to supermarkets. Six individuals did not perceive this would change their shopping or eating habits significantly. They believed supermarkets would still be able to meet their food needs adequately and would not change their geographic access to stores significantly. It is unknown whether these participants felt that supermarkets were able to provide the same products or if they would adapt their diets to suit what foods were available. It is also worthy to note that this group typically had access to vehicles, affording them greater flexibility in where they shop for food.

However, others expressed concern over increased prices. Since supermarkets were perceived to be more expensive, participants would have less purchasing power. Several individuals feared that the increases in cost would prevent them from providing enough food for their families. Others were concerned about decreased access and availability of culturally-appropriate food. This was especially emphasized by those without access to a vehicle.

> *"If I couldn't go to [the Small Grocer], either I wouldn't know where to get Filipino foods but I would come up with a different menu and [Supermarket A] and [Supermarket B] don't have Filipino foods. I don't go out very far especially now I don't have a car. I'm sure there are lots of Filipino stores but maybe farther away. I would be worried that if they were closed down cause then I would have no where to shop…" (Filipina, 35-64).*

Without a car, this participant and others like her felt they would be unable to buy the food they want and be forced to cook and eat foods they are not comfortable with nor feel a cultural connection to.

29% of respondents to this question would switch from shopping at a small grocer to other small grocers. Participants highlighted the perceived affordability of products and availability of culturally-appropriate foods as the primary factors for their choice. However, seeking out other small grocers would mean having to travel farther distances. There were mixed opinions about the tradeoffs between buying affordable products and traveling longer and further to find the right prices. One participant, a student without access to a vehicle, stated:

> *"I probably would move up to Kingsway because there are lots of smaller markets for produce- but again it's farther away." (Indo-Canadian, 18-34)*

Others were more willing to make this tradeoff.

> *"Prices are most important! I will find another affordable place. I'm ok with traveling farther away for cheaper groceries." (Peruvian, 35-64)*

For one respondent, the loss of her local small grocers has impacts beyond her grocery shopping experience. As evidenced by the quote below, despite the fact that she is able to obtain the food she needs elsewhere, she values the small grocers for the community functions it provides.

> *"If places like [Small Grocer A], [Small Grocer B], [Small Grocer C], and [Specialty Food Store D] were closed I would go to Fraser for Filipino food, but that would suck. These stores don't just exist for food but they*

are also the connectors in the neighbourhood. Aside from their goods, they connect Filipinos to culture and family - the stores sell telephone cards to call people in the Philippines, they have remittance services if you need to send money to people in the Philippines, they have balikbayan boxes if you want to send things home, they even rent Filipino videos. These stores refer their customers to Tagalog Settlement services at CNH and I even see the staff access recreation programs and rent rooms here at CNH too. These stores are part of our community." (Filipina, 35-64

Four participants were unsure of where they would go. Two of these participants typically shop for culturally-specific food that is not common in supermarkets. If their regular stores close down, they would not know where else to buy their food. The other two were relative newcomers to Canada, arriving in Canada within the past 6 months. They expressed a lack of knowledge of alternatives and desired more information on where else to shop and what foods are available.

"I don't know because I'm new here. I would go to another store but I don't know where. Maybe we take a bus and go far away to shop." (Afghanistan, 18-34)

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 SHOPPING PATTERNS

This study reveals that a combination of individual traits (eating preferences, ethnic identification), life circumstances (income, household composition, access to vehicle and mobility) and built environmental factors (residential location, proximity to stores, proximity to transportation options) influence where people shop for foods. Participants shop on average at 4 different stores per month, and not always at the store closest to their home. Some individuals shopped around to buy specific cultural items at certain stores or searched for the best prices at multiple stores. Others only shopped at one store but would wait for items to be on sale before buying them.

For planners and policy-makers, it is important to recognize these diverse shopping patterns when considering policy and programmatic interventions to increase food access. Many municipal strategies focus on reducing geographic distance to food, which prioritizes convenience and walking. While geographic distance is important for those without access to vehicles and for promoting active transportation, the findings of this research highlight other personal and socio-cultural factors that also influence shopping patterns. Policies and programs are at risk of having diminished impact if these other factors are not taken into account.

The majority of participants purchased food at supermarkets or small grocers while only 8% shopped at farmers markets. All who shopped at farmers markets did so through the BC Farmers Market Association Coupon program, an indication of the underlying financial barriers to farmers markets. This study reveals that food retailers, such as supermarkets and small grocers, provide more access to healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate than farmers markets. However, the City's definition of food assets currently excludes food retailers but includes farmers markets. What is defined as a food asset is important because the VFS, HCS and GCAP all utilize food assets as an indicator of progress and success of the City's work on Vancouver's food system. Given that access to healthy, affordable and culturally-appropriate food is one of the goals of the VFS, it is necessary that food retailers are recognized as a food asset to better align the City's actions with the needs of its residents.

5.2 STORE TYPE CHARACTERISTICS AND FOOD ACCESS

The findings of this study also reveal discernible differences between how residents perceive small grocers to provide food access compared to supermarkets. Once again, a combination of personal traits, life circumstances and built environmental factors shape these perceived differences. Consequently, each store type appears to play a unique role in satisfying the

TABLE 6. STORE TYPE CHARACTERISTICS

Store Type	Characteristics
Small Grocers	Affordable produce More culturally-appropriate food for certain cultural groups Convenience by walking, close to home Familiarity and sense of belonging Mixed opinions on product quality
Supermarkets	Affordable products overall Sales and bulk items Convenience by automobile, transit Consistent, trusted quality
Specialty food stores	Authentic and diversity of cultural foods Specific items from country of origins Expensive
Farmers markets	High quality produce Enjoyable shopping experience Expensive, only affordable with Farmers Market Coupon Program

5.0 | DISCUSSION

nutritional needs of residents. The inverse is also important to recognize – that no single store type is able to meet all of the resident's diverse needs.

Small grocers provide more culturally-appopriate food, more affordable produce, and are more convenient to walk to. Individuals have expressed a level of reliance on small grocers for obtaining food, highlighting the contributions of small grocers to reducing barriers to accessing the healthy, affordable and culturally-relevant food. If planners and policy-makers are to strive for a sustainable and just food system, it is necessary to recognize the need for a diverse food reatil environment and to consider the factors enabling this diversity.

5.3 INTER-RELATIONSHIPS WITH CITY POLICY

A diverse food retail landscape supports several other Healthy City Strategy goals. Although food and food retail is not explicitly included in the descriptions of these goals, targets, indicators, and action items, there are conceptual linkages worth noting (see Table 6). As the HCS is reviewed, there will be opportunities to explore how food retail can be recognized as an important contributor to other HCS goals.

5.4 CHANGING RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

The implications of losing small grocers are complex. Individual characteristics, life circumstances and built environmental factors shaped participants perceived adaptation to a changing food retail landscape shopping patterns. There was no consensus on where people said they would shop, nor were

TABLE 7. RESEARCH FINDINGS & HCS GOALS

Store Type	Research Finding	HCS Goal
Small Grocers	Have more culturally appropriate food	Being and Feeling safe and included Sense of belonging. Seeing and having the ability to buy foods from one's country of origins can help one feel at home and welcome
Small grocers	Are more convenient and more accessible by walking	Environments to thrive in/Getting around Most errands can be accomplished by foot Majority of trips by foot, bicycle or transit A diverse food retail environment will allow greater transportation flexibility to shop
Small grocers	Foster familiarity and sense of belonging	Being and Feeling safe and included Sense of belonging Long-time businesses foster relationship between staff, customers and their surrounding community Cultivating Connections Social networks and interactions Long-time businesses act as social spaces, particularly to immigrant populations
Small grocers and supermarkets	Carry affordable products	Making ends meet Adequate income to cover basic necessities, access to employment Food is an essential need. Price is an important decision-making factor for food choices

the perceived impacts the same for all participants. However, those with financial and mobility constraints as well as cultural food needs expressed the most concern over how the closures would impact their financial and physical access to food. Participants described a loss of familiarity and a loss of space for informal socializing and community.

As small businesses are facing a multitude of challenges city-wide, this research has demonstrated that there can be negative implications if more isn't done to retain existing businesses or facilitate new ones from opening. Anectdotally, rising rents, lack of succession planning, challenges in attracting new employees and shifting neighbourhood demographics are thought to be putting pressure on small businesses, including small grocers. New mixed-used developments are seemingly attracting large-format supermarkets, yet much fewer small grocers if any. These trends seem to indicate an increasingly homogenous food retail landscape, potentially resulting in unmet food needs for large portions of the population.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support small grocers

a. Evaluate new developments and community planning processes for its impacts or contributions to the food retail environment.

This study reveals the need for a diversity of food retailers. New developments and updates to zoning and land uses in a neighobourhod should retain if not increase more diverse food retail. There may be opportunites to utilize certain aspects of a Social Impact Assessment or a Health Impact Assessment as an impact evaluation tool.

b. Research into trends, factors, challenges for businesses

Ensure the upcoming City of Vancouver study on city-wide retail trends includes all diverse food retail. Given the complex nature of the food system, it is important for the study to capture upstream factors that may be impacting food retailers.

c. Research into and pilot policy and programs for retaining existing and facilitating new small grocers

Growing pressures on small businesses city-wide may result in decreased diversity of food retail, justifying the need for policy and programmatic responses to support small grocers and other small businesses. Alternative development financing models, alternative food retail business models, grants, and leveraging City-owned property are possible avenues of investigation.

2. Monitor the food retail environment

a. Redefine the City's definition of food assets to include supermarkets, small grocers and specialty food stores.

This study revealed the importance of food retail relative to other food assets in providing food access. Integrating food retail in the food asset definition will mean its inclusion in the VFS, HCS and GCAP goals. Future interventions on food retail can now be better justified as a result of closer alignment with City policy and goals.

b. Improve business license data reliability

Current business licenses do not accurately depict the food retail environment. Stores are frequently misassigned categories, missing categories or show up under multiple categories. Greater clarity in these classifications will facilitate more reliable monitoring of the food retail environment and will provide better baseline understandings of neighbourhood access to food retail.

3. Research into the unique food needs of residents and opportunities to increase cultural food security

a. Identify gaps and challenges to accessing food for marginalized communities (eg. newcomers, non-Chinese ethnic minorities)

Findings of this research will help improve understanding of how Vancouver's diverse communities access food and will help identify assets and gaps in the food environment. There are opportunities to leverage student researchers from LFS 350. Students from this class have already conducted similar studies with

Chinese and Afghani residents with potential to extend this study to other groups. Interviews and focus groups are an ideal form to capture complexities of residents' decision-making.

b. Further research into the food production, distribution, processing systems and networks of culturally-appropriate foods

Key questions to ask are: what types of crops do farmers grow and for whom? While mainstream and Chinese food distribution systems seem to be robust, what is the status of distribution and processing systems of Latin American, Middle Eastern and other ethnocultural foods? Results from this research can help increase access to culturally-appropriate food.

c. Explore opportunities to encourage greater local/ regional production of culturally-appropriate foods

With an understanding what crops farmers grow and for whom, there may be opportunities to encourage more local production of culturally-appropriate foods, which will increase local access to culturally-appropriate food.

4. Explore opportunities for food retail and other food assets to be included in other Healthy City Strategy goals.

Food can support many other goals. Inclusion in the language of the policy updates will bring greater attention to its relevance.

APPENDIX 1.

APPENDIX 1. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

STORE TYPE CHARACTERISTICS		
Organization	**Document Name**	**URL**
StatsCan	North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=307532&CVD=307534&CPV=445&CST=01012017&CLV=2&MLV=5
Vancouver Coastal Health	Food Assets Map 2016	http://www.vch.ca/public-health/nutrition/vancouver-food-asset-map
Centre for Disease Control (CDC)	Census Tract State Level Maps of the Modified Food Retail Environment	ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/publications/dnpao/census-tract-level-state-maps-mrfei_TAG508.pdf
City of Toronto	Toronto Food Strategy: 2015 Update	http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2015/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-80219.pdf
Seattle/King County Public Health	Healthy Foods Here: Recommendations for Future Programming	http://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/nutrition/~/media/depts/health/nutrition/documents/healthy-foods-here.ashx
City of Baltimore	Mapping Baltimore's Food Environment: 2015 Report	http://mdfoodsystemmap.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Baltimore-Food-Environment-Report-2015-11.pdf
Food Marketing Institute	Supermarket Facts	https://www.fmi.org/our-research/supermarket-facts
USC	Ethnic Food Access and Barriers in San Diego	https://socialinnovation.usc.edu/files/2016/12/USC-Sol-Price-Center-for-Social-Innovation-Policy-Brief-Ethnic-Food-Access-and-Barriers-Web-Ver-1.pdf

APPENDIX 2. LIST OF INTERVIEWS

LIST OF INTERVIEWS BY PROGRAM				
Date	**Program Name**	**Location**	**Number of Participants**	**Interviewer**
June 10	Personal interviews	CNH	4	Crecien B.
June 13	Community Lunch Program	CNH	2	Crecien B.
June 14	Personal interviews	CNH	2	Crecien B.
June 20	Tuesday Social	RPCC	7	Ignatius B.
June 20	Community Lunch Program	CNH	2	Crecien B.
June 25	Personal interviews	CNH	1	Crecien B.
June 27	Personal interviews	CNH	1	Crecien B.
June 28	Community Lunch Program	CNH	5	Crecien B.
June 29	Coffee Social	CNH	3	Ignatius B.
June 29	Personal interviews	CNH	1	Crecien B.
June 29	Community Lunch Program	CNH	4	Ignatius B.
June 29	Personal interviews	CNH	1	Crecien B.
June 29	Personal interviews	Independent	1	Crecien B.
June 30	Personal interviews	CNH	1	Crecien B.
June 30	Renfrew Community Lunch	RPCC	7	Ignatius B.
July 1	Youth Celebrate Canada Day	RPCC	4	Crecien B.
July 4	RC Food Security Institute Advisory Group	CNH	4	Crecien B. & Ignatius B.
July 5	Personal interview	Independent	1	Crecien B.
July 10	Walking Club	CNH	1	Ignatius B.
July 10	Families Branching Out	CNH	6	Ignatius B.
July 13	Focus Groups at Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)	CNH	14	Crecien B., & Ignatius B.

APPENDIX 3.

APPENDIX 3. INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FOOD RETAIL ACCESS: INTERVIEW GUIDE
Please circle one of the choices for questions 1-4.

1. I live at the intersection of ________________________ & ___________________________.

2. I do most of my grocery shopping WITHIN / OUTSIDE the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood.

3. I am (18-34) / (35-64) / (65 and above) years old.

4. What is your ethnicity(optional)? ___________________________________

5. Where do you buy your groceries? Please include all the stores you would regularly go to in a month.

Where do you buy your groceries?	Why? (price, quality, convenience, foods from home country, familiar staff)	Other comments

APPENDIX 3.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Grocery Shopping Worksheet

Name: ______________________________ Date: ________________________________

Please complete the answers as best you can.

1. What is the most common dish you make at home? Why do you make this dish?

____

____

2. How often do you make this dish?

____

3. Where do you get the ingredients? Why do you decide to shop there?

____

____

____

4. What is your top priority when deciding where to shop? Why is it important for you?

____

____

APPENDIX 4.

APPENDIX 4. AUDIT TOOL

In-Store Audit Tool

Store Name: ____________________________	Observers: ______________________
Date Visited: __________________	

Availability

1. How many types of fresh fruits are for sale? ________________

0. How many types of fresh vegetables are for sale? ________________

Quality

0. Please circle the number that most describes the overall quality of the fresh produce.

At this site, what is the overall quality of the...	**Poor quality** (brown, bruised, over-ripe, wilted)	**Low mixed quality** (more poor than good)	**High mixed quality** (more good than poor)	**Good quality** (all fresh, excellent colour, no soft spots, bruised, rotting or moldy items)
Fruits	1	2	3	4
Vegetables	1	2	3	4

Pricing

0. Please choose the lowest priced variety in the preferred purchase unit for each item.

Item	**Purchase unit**	**Price**	**Calculation** 1kg = 2.20426 lb	**Price per unit (kg)**
Fruits/Vegetables				
Apple (cheapest variety)	Loose		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg

Oranges	Loose		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Bananas	1 lb		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Bok choy	1 lb		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Tomatoes	1 lb		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Onions	Loose		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Potatoes	Loose		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Grains: For bread, price the brand that is cheapest, excluding the in-house bakery brand. Write down price per kg				
Bread, 100% whole wheat, sliced	450-675 g		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Rice	4-5 lb		Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Meat: Package sizes will vary and do not have to be a particular size. Please limit pricing to meat packages that are less than 3 kg. Write down price per kg				
Ground beef, lean	_______ g	$___________	Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg
Chicken breast, skin-less, boneless	_______ g	$___________	Price/lb x 2.20426 =	$________ /kg

5. Please measure the length of each display for the assigned foods. Do not measure the depth of the display.

Item	Display Number	Display Length
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables **INCLUDE:** raw vegetables and fruits in salad bars, fresh herbs, fresh garlic		

Canned fruits and vegetables **INCLUDE:** mixed fruit, fruit cups, applesauce, chopped tomatoes, tomato paste, canned green beans,canned bamboo or chestnuts **EXCLUDE:** dried fruit and vegetables, fruit with added sugar, fruit leather, fruit candies, mixed canned goods (ie: soup, stews, chili, refried beans, salsa, olives), cured, salted, preserved, pickled or fermented fruits and vegetables, canned lentils, canned beans that are not green (black beans, kidney beans, turtle beans, chick-peas), pasta sauce		
Frozen fruit and vegetables **EXCLUDE:** frozen fruit desserts, mixed dishes, frozen dinners, frozen fried potatoes		
TOTAL LENGTH FRUITS & VEGETABLES		

Cookies and Crackers **EXCLUDE:** breakfast cereals		
Doughnuts and Pastries **INCLUDE:** doughnuts, pastries, baked sweets, pies, cakes **EXCLUDE:** unprepared baking mixes, pop tarts, granola bars, energy bars, Chinese-style buns, waffles, breakfast cereals, bagels		