Food Accessibility Behavior of Indianapolis' Southside Residents

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Outline

Research Motivation
- Background on US Health & the Food Desert Landscape – Why food deserts?
- Study Area – Why South Indy?

Research Design
- Component 1: Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) – Needs Assessment
- Component 2: Food Accessibility Survey – Primary Household-level Data Collection
- Component 3: GIS-based Mapping – Community Assets Mapping

Preliminary Findings

Future Steps?
Research Motivation

Why Food Deserts?: Background on US Health & the Food Desert Landscape
What are “Food Deserts”?  

- Food deserts are low-income, low-access census tracts  
  - **Low income**  
    - poverty rate (20%)  
    - median family income (≤ 80%)  
  - **Low access**  
    - % of population (>500 people or 33% of the population)  
    - >1 mile from a supermarket
Food Deserts – How many are affected?

- Food Deserts: ~7.5% US pop

- Nutritional consumption levels not met
  - calorie; veggies/whole grains
  - Na (90% pop)

A Street Intersection - Abundance of drive-through & fast-food restaurants
Distribution of Food Deserts in the US

Map of Food Deserts in the US

No Car and No Supermarket Store Within a Mile

SOURCE: Department of Agriculture, Centers for Disease Control
Food Deserts – Health impacts?

Food Deserts V. Nutrition-related Disorders in the US

Source: USDA: ERS
Research Motivation

Study Area – South Indy
Study Area: Why South Indy?

- South Indy – designated USDA food desert area

- UIIndy Vision
  - Community anchor
  - Nutrition & wellness services
Study Area – South Indy

- Map of Quality of Life (QoL) Plan Study Area
Study Area: Why South Indy?

Map showing Food Desert Landscape in South Indy & Study Area

- LI and LA at 1/2 and 10 miles
- LI and LA at 1 and 20 miles
- LI and LA using vehicle access
Research Design

Component 3—GIS-based Mapping: Community Assets Mapping
South Indy Food Establishments – 1

Map showing Grocery & Convenience Stores

- Marion County Health Dept. Inventory
  - 25 convenience stores
  - 9 Grocery Stores
South Indy Food Establishments – 2

Map showing Restaurants & Fast Food Places

- Marion County Health Dept. Inventory
  - 34 Fast Food Places
  - 20 Restaurants
Research Design

Component 1—Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR): Needs Assessment
Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

- Collaborative approach that involves ALL partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths of each.

- Begins with a research topic of importance to the community and combines knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities.
  
  - WK Kellogg Foundation Community Health Scholars Program

- Through community-based participatory research, citizens can take more control of the direction of their communities.
CBPR & South Indy Quality of Life (QoL) Plan

- The South Indy Quality of Life Plan seeks to identify strategies for improving the Southside of Indianapolis through community engagement and a plan for sustained and conscious development.
CBPR & South Indy Quality of Life (QoL) Plan

- Health & Wellness Action Team

  - We envision:
    - Healthier food options that are accessible, affordable, and locally sourced
    - Recreational places and fitness programs that are available to individuals of all ages and abilities
    - Improving environmental issues impacting our neighborhoods
    - Attracting healthcare to our area, improving access to healthcare options, and increasing diversity of available care
CBPR & South Indy Quality of Life (QoL) Plan

- Health & Wellness Action Team
  - Dr. Amie Wojtyna – Chair
  - An iteration of monthly SQoL Action Team meetings were held in Spring of 2016
  - Community residents were asked to participate in formulation of survey questions that they deemed most important regarding food access and security*
    - What is important to them?
    - How have they changed their behaviors as a result?
    - How does the lack of accessibility disrupt in their lives?

*Validated questions from the Current Population Survey of Food Security (suppl) -USDA, National Health and Nutrition Exam Survey (NHANES)- CDC, National Food Survey (USDA)
Research Design

Component 2—Food Accessibility Survey: Primary Household-level Data Collection
South Indy Food Accessibility Survey

- A convenience sample of residents took a needs assessment survey to determine food options and nutritional literacy
  - South Indy Quality of Life member list
  - Garfield Park Farmer’s Market member list
  - Carson Heights Neighborhood Association member list
  - Garfield Park Neighborhood Association member list
  - South Village Neighborhood Association member list
  - University Heights Neighborhood Association member list
  - University of Indianapolis faculty and staff
  - University of Indianapolis undergraduate public health program majors
Preliminary Findings

Broad Overview
Preliminary Survey Results

**Majority of Respondents**
- Do not use SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- Do not access local food pantries in their area
- Do not do online ordering of food items for delivery or pickup

*(N=134; still collecting data!)*
Open ended response to “Enough but not always the kinds of food we want to eat”

- **Price**
  - Fixed incomes
  - Make too much for SNAP but not enough to cover necessary food items

- **Selection**
  - Lack of quality supermarkets
  - Lack of fruits and vegetables
  - Lack of locally grown/organic foods (affordably priced)

- **Access**
  - Lack of quality supermarkets
  - Lack of healthy food options
  - Special diet and food sensitivities – “end up eating things they shouldn't have because we can't afford to get them what they need all the time, and they end up suffering for it”
Open-ended response to: “Barriers to Accessing Healthy Foods”

- **Price**
  - Cost
  - Convenience
  - Budgeting – “spend a very large portion of our income on foods because we are so determined to eat as healthfully as possible; we go without other important things like clothes that fit us properly and household goods in order to be able to buy healthier food choices”

- **Selection**
  - Lack of quality supermarkets

- **Access**
  - Lack of quality supermarkets

- **Knowledge**
  - What healthy foods are
  - How and/or what to prepare for a healthy meal
Preliminary Survey Results (contd.)

- **Budget**
  - Average amount spent in the week prior to the survey
    - Groceries - from $70 for 6 people to $300 (stocking up)
    - Eating-out - from $0 to $200
    - Carry-out or delivered foods - from $0 to $150
Preliminary Survey Results (contd.)

- **Supermarkets**
  - Respondents shop at supermarkets in their local area for food items
    - About half use the store closest to their home
    - Those that do not don’t because the selection of the food at the nearest store is not good
  - Most common grocery items purchased are ready-to-eat and frozen foods
Preliminary Survey Results (contd.)

- **Locally Sourced Foods**
  - >50% of respondents are connected to locally sourced foods
  - 33% of respondents grow some of their own food
    - >50% of respondents would plant a garden if they had the tools/resources/education to do so
  - Respondents would like to have foods and produce produced by local farmers or retailers available in their neighborhoods (year-round)
Future Steps

Feedback / Suggestions?