

Food Accessibility Behavior of Indianapolis' Southside Residents

Dr. Debasree DasGupta, Assistant Professor
Dr. Amie Wojtyna, Assistant Professor
University of Indianapolis - Public Health Programs

Presentation at the Indiana Public Health Association (IPHA) Conference
IUPUI Campus | Sept 15, 2016

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 (\leq 80%)
 - **Low access**
 - % of population (>500 people or 33% of the population)
 - >1 mile from a supermarket

Food Deserts – How many are affected?

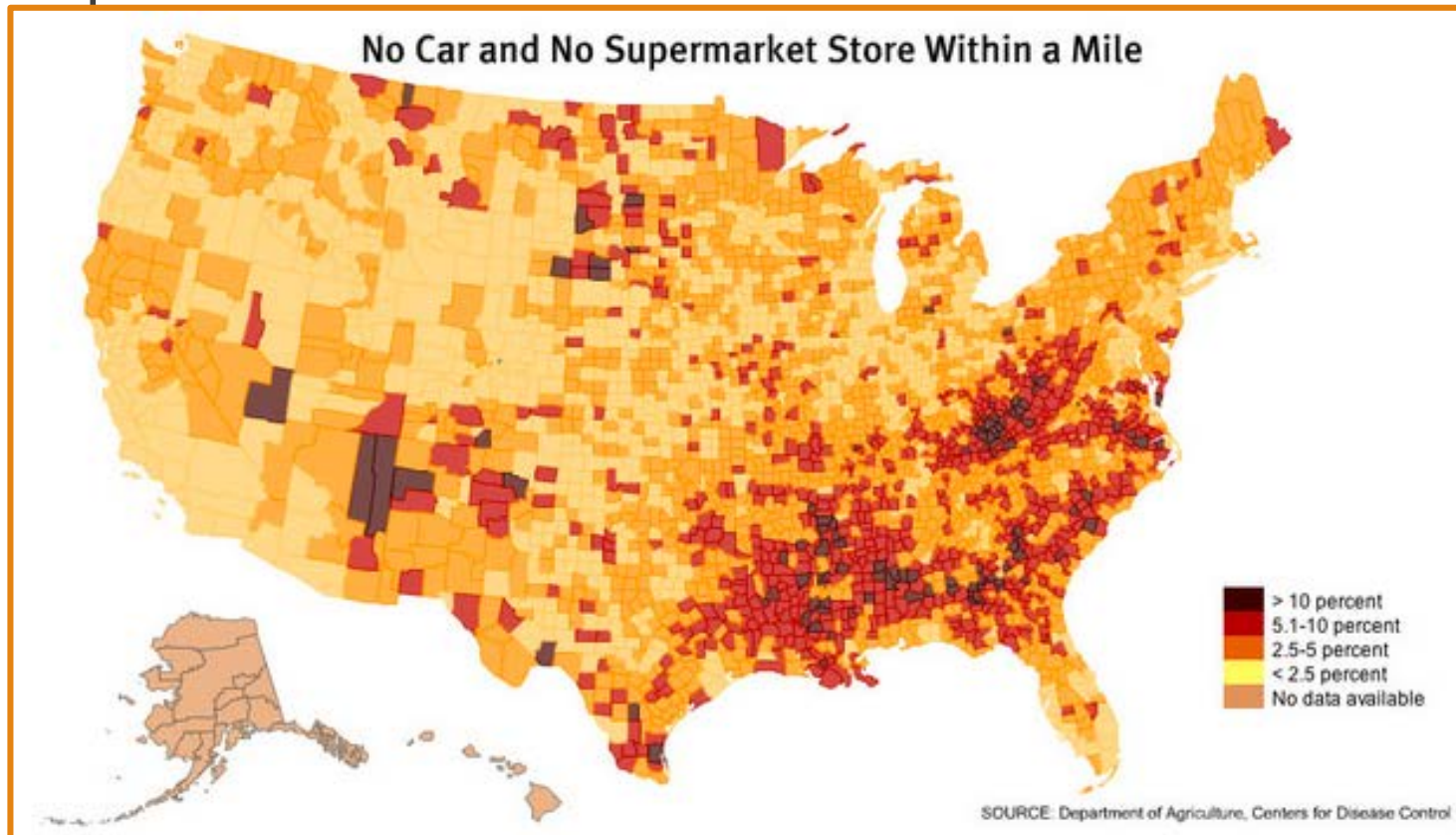
- ❖ Food Deserts:
~7.5% US pop
- ❖ Nutritional consumption levels not met
 - calorie; veggies/whole grains
 - Na (90% pop)



A Street Intersection - Abundance of drive-through & fast-food restaurants

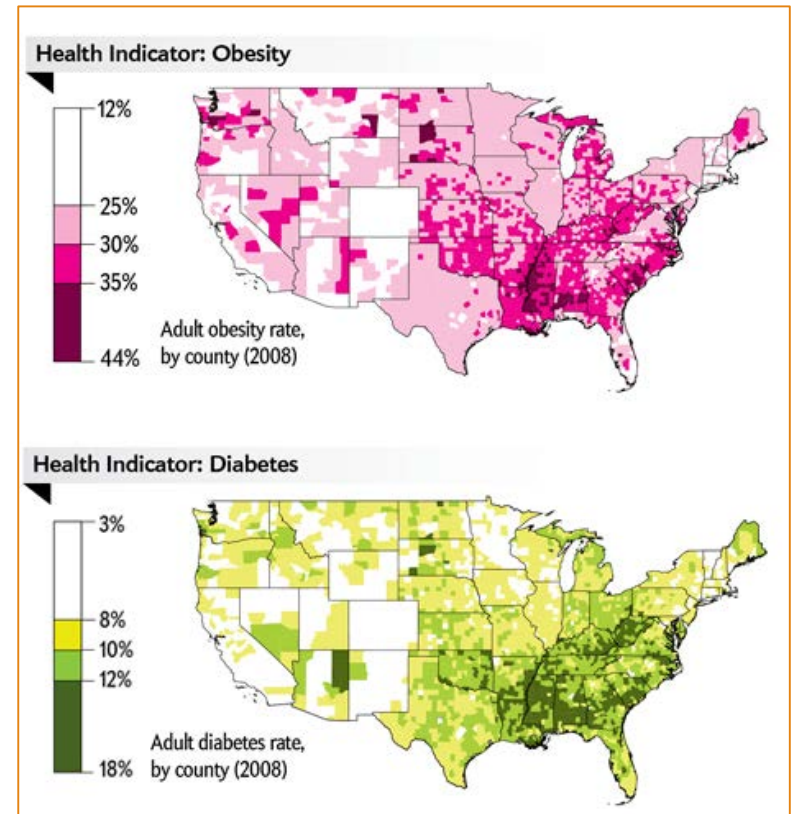
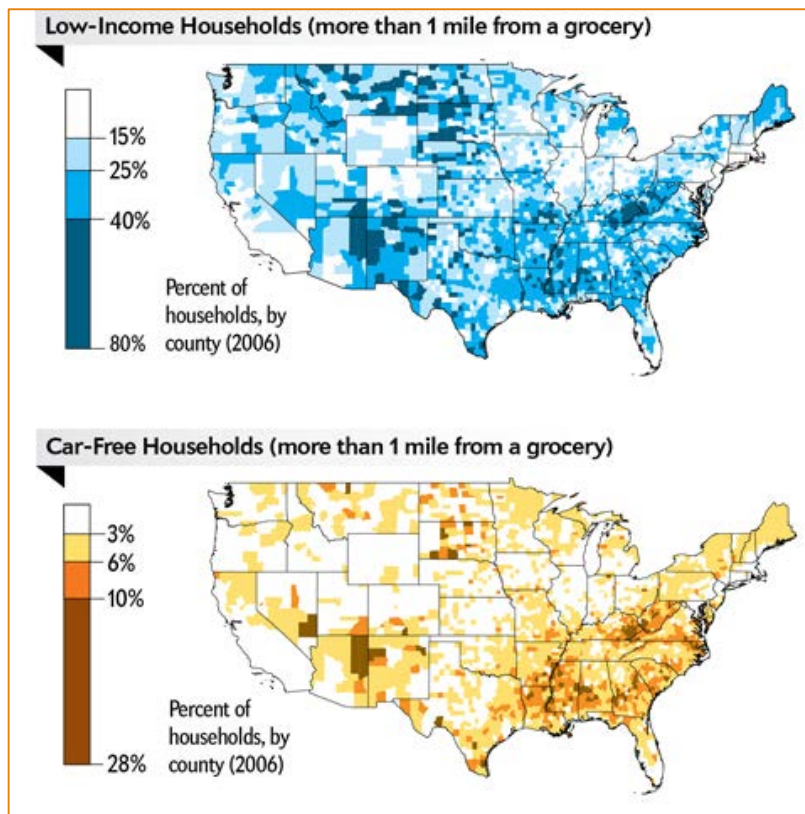
Distribution of Food Deserts in the US

Map of Food Deserts in the US



Food Deserts – Health impacts?

Food Deserts V. Nutrition-related Disorders in the US



Source: USDA: ERS

Research Motivation

Study Area – South Indy

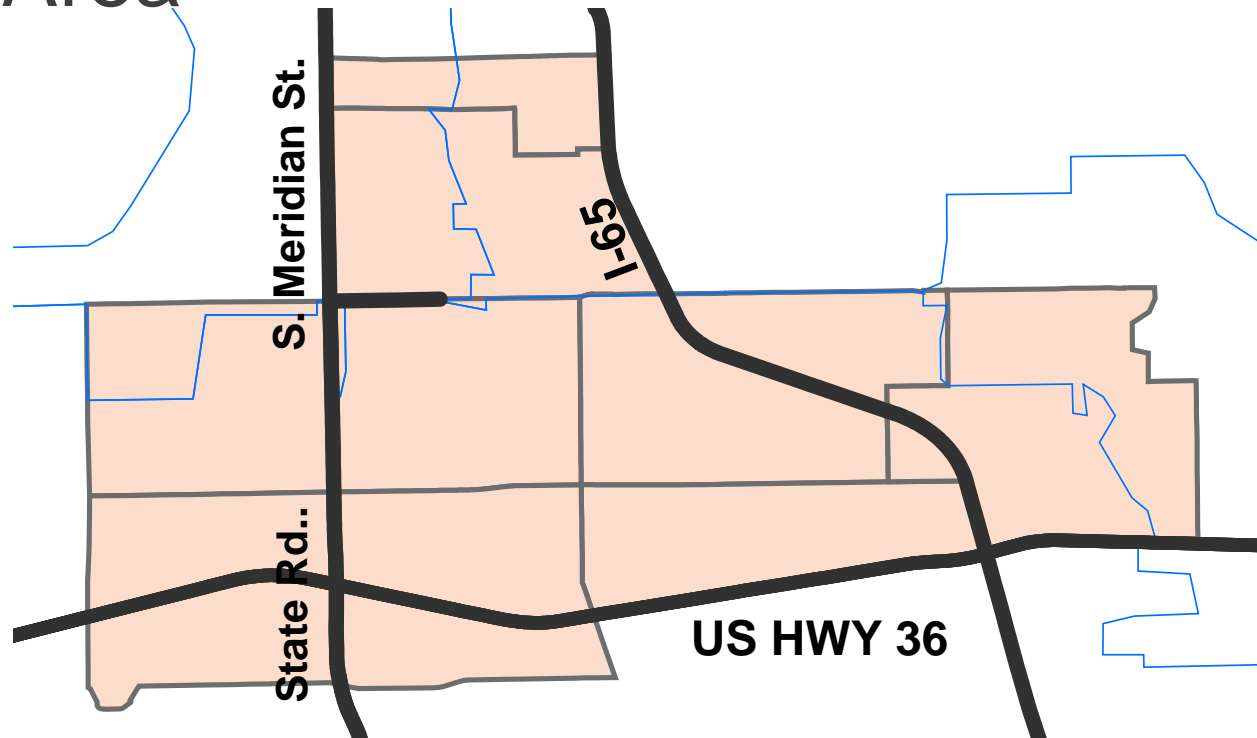
Study Area: Why South Indy?

- ❖ South Indy – designated USDA food desert area

- ❖ UIndy Vision
 - Community anchor
 - Nutrition & wellness services

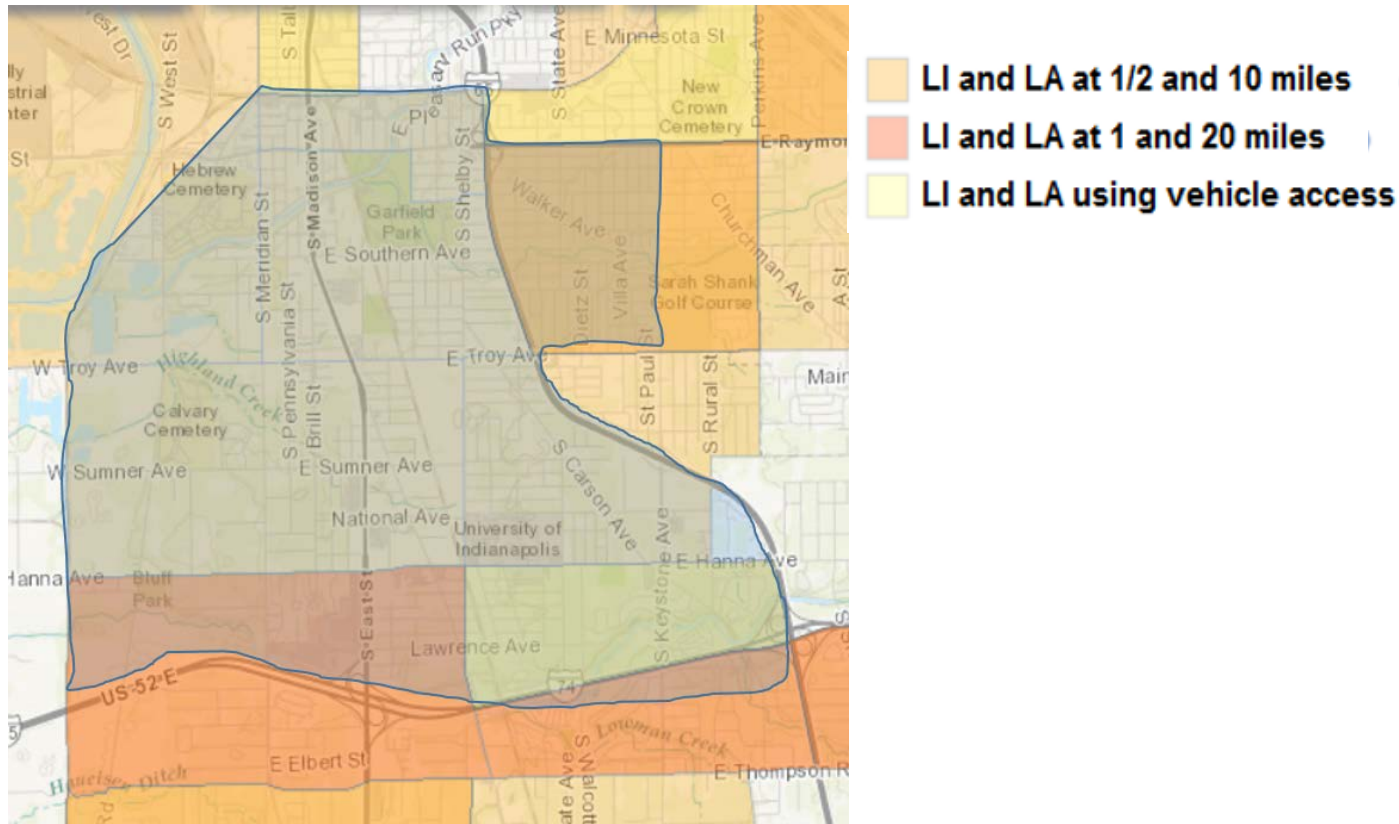
Study Area – South Indy

- ❖ Map of Quality of Life (QoL) Plan Study Area



Study Area: Why South Indy?

Map showing Food Desert Landscape in South Indy & Study Area



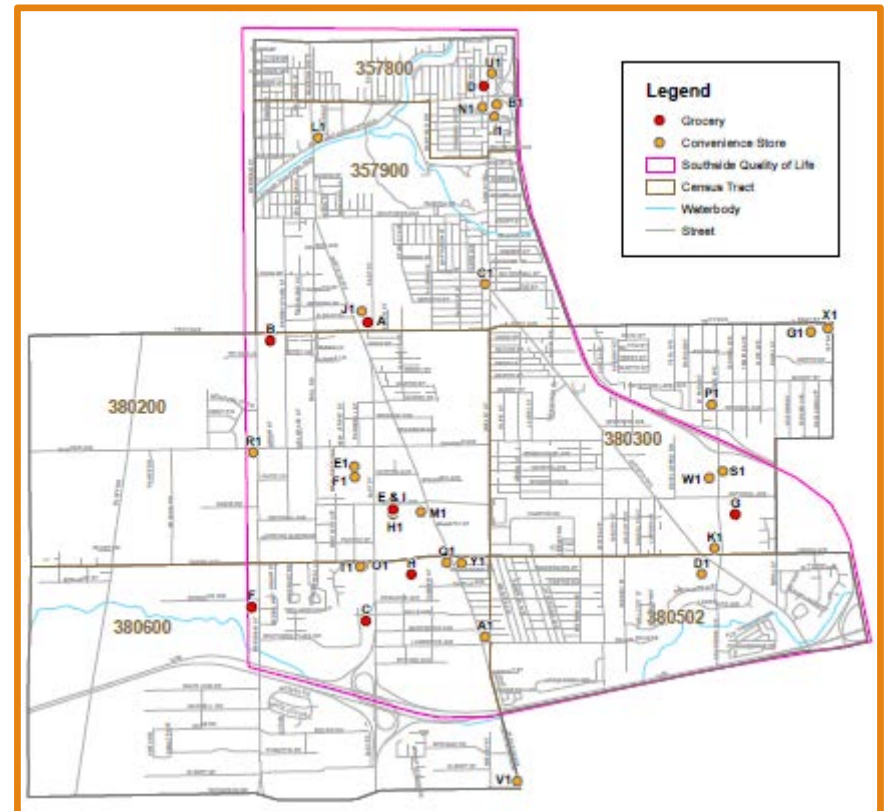
Research Design

**Component 3—GIS-based
Mapping: Community Assets
Mapping**

South Indy Food Establishments – 1

Map showing Grocery & Convenience Stores

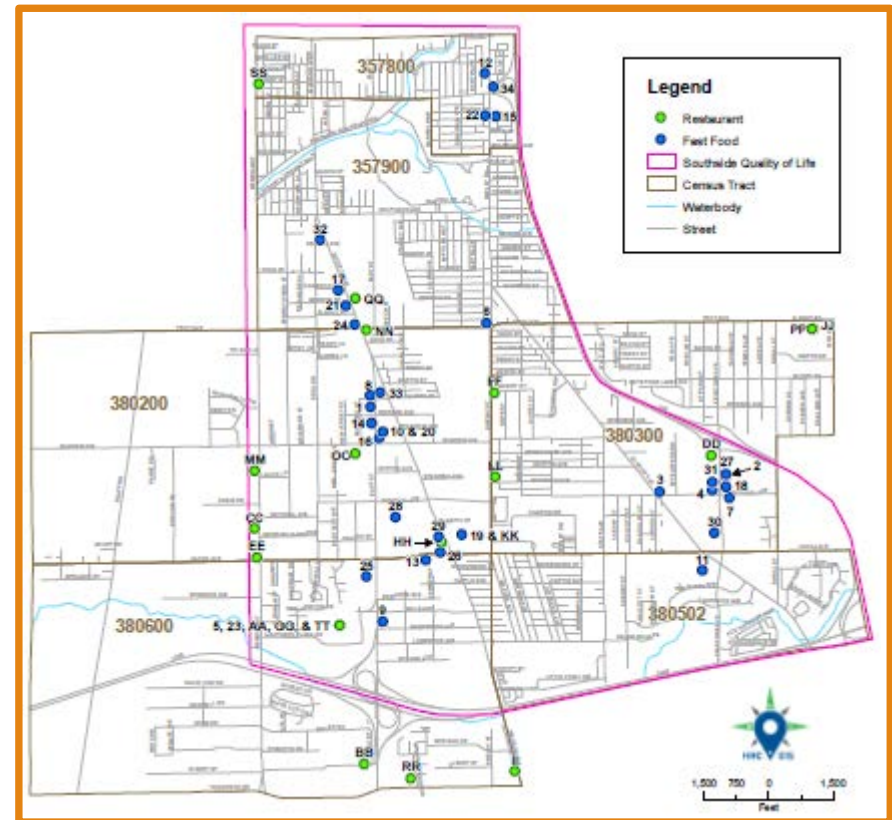
- Marion County Health Dept. Inventory
- 25 convenience stores
- 9 Grocery Stores



South Indy Food Establishments – 2

Map showing Restaurants & Fast Food Places

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



Research Design

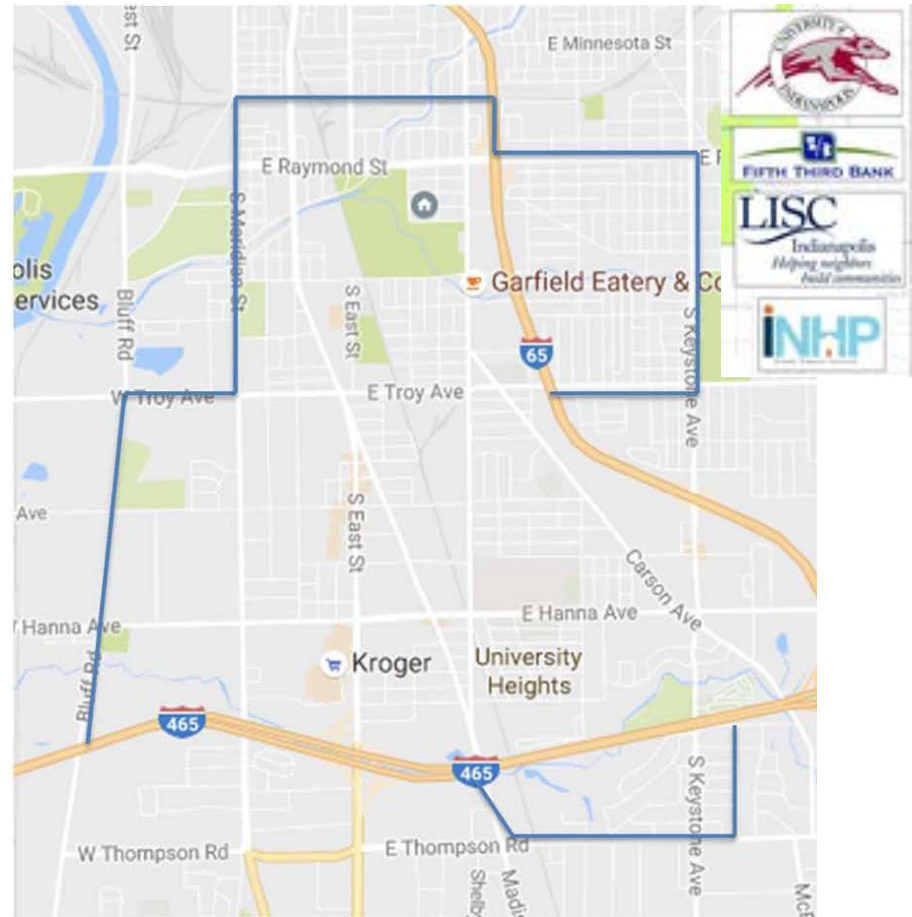
Component 1—Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR): Needs Assessment

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!)**

Preliminary Survey Results (contd.)

- ❖ **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”*

Preliminary Survey Results (contd.)

❖ 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?