Health in All Policies: Food Access and Community Gardens

Terrace Park/University Square

Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission

Florida HEALTH

Hillsborough MPO Metropolitan Planning for Transportation

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Introduction

The City of Tampa was awarded a 2016-2017 Planning Technical Assistance Grant through the Department of Economic Development, to review the City’s Comprehensive Plan related to “Health in All Policies” (HiAP) with a focus on food access in the Terrace Park/University Square study area, including community garden opportunities. HiAP is a collaborative process to improve the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across all sectors and policy areas. The Planning Commission, in partnership with the Florida Department of Health – Hillsborough County, Office of Health Equity, and the Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization collaborated to bring this study together.

The objectives of the project were to:

1. Identify existing health-related goals in the current Comprehensive Plan and compare these with examples from other places,

2. Engage the community in possible comprehensive plan policy changes providing direction for health initiatives for the community - focusing on addressing suburban and urban scale healthy, affordable food access, and

3. Discuss the need and location of a potential community garden site in the study area.
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Health in All Policies (HiAP): Food Access and Community Gardens

Literature Review of Health in All Policies and of the Image 2040: Tampa Comprehensive Plan

As a first step staff researched the application of Health in All Policies in the United States beginning in 2009 through the present. A listing of documents researched on HiAP is found in the reference section at the back of this document. HiAP is defined in Health in All Policies: Taking Stock in Emerging Practices to Incorporate Health in Decision Making in the United States as:

“an approach that aims to integrate health considerations in decision making across different sectors that influence health, such as transportation, agriculture, land use, housing, public safety and education”.

Five key elements of HiAP are identified in Public Health Institute and American Public Health Association 2013 Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments include:

• Promote health, equity, and sustainability
• Support intersectoral collaboration
• Benefit multiple partners
• Engage stakeholders
• Create structural or process change

In the context of the City of Tampa’s Comprehensive Plan, measures should include:

• Does the policy language reflect the community’s vision?
• Does the policy language include locally relevant health data?
• How will the policy language be implemented?
• How will the success of the policy language be measured?
• Does the policy language eliminate health disparities?

Staff looked through the adopted Image 2040: Tampa Comprehensive Plan (updated 2016) to determine whether the plan contained comparable health related policies found in the research documents. The Plan is a guide for the community to achieve a shared vision and planning framework for the future. The Comprehensive Plan directs physical, social, and economic development into targeted areas and corridors while protecting and preserving stable neighborhoods. Goals and objectives are grouped into four major components that combined envision the future: People, Places, Natural Spaces, and Governance and Implementation. Staff identified Goals, Objectives, and Strategies related to active living, physical activity, food security, recreation, aging, healthy homes, health services, social capital, and injury prevention. These are found within the planning sections in the major components including mobility, recreation and open space, neighborhood/community planning, land use, housing, and public school facilities.

In order to institutionalize HiAP, From Start to Finish: How to Permanently Improve Government Through Health In All Policies recommends adopting language that “formalizes the jurisdiction’s commitment to using a Health in All Policies approach...” thereby, encouraging local government agencies to make policy and program decisions that affect health. This recognition of the local jurisdictions support of HiAP allows the appropriate spending of funds to implement related policy.
Staff’s review of current best practices of HiAP in the United States, which support the overall active physical and mental health of residents, include the policies in the following categories:

**Traditional Policy Topics**

**Land Use**
- Urban Infill
- Mixed Uses
- Neighborhoods

**Environmental Quality**
- Pollution
- Brownfield Cleanup

**Transportation**
- Safety
- Transit Access
- Traffic Reduction
- Transit Oriented Development

**Physical Activity**
- Parks & Recreation
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities
- Collocation of Public Schools & Community Centers

**Innovative Land Use Topics**

**Environment**
- Climate Change
- Green Building & Development

**Equity**
- Vulnerable Populations
- Equitable Distribution of Opportunity & Risk

**Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco**
- Mental Health
- Nutrition & Physical Activity

**Health Care Prevention**
- Funding & Support for Health Services
- Access to Health Care & Health Services

**Consumer Education**
- Agricultural Preservation
- Local Food
- Urban Agriculture
- Healthy Food Retail Access
- Emergency Food & Food Assistance
- Farmers Markets, Community Gardens, & Food Trucks

**Raising the Profile of Public Health**
- Articulating health rationale
- Relationship to community design
- Stating importance of health as community recognized guiding principle

The project included a focus on food access in the Terrace Park/University Square study area, as well as community garden opportunities. A literature review of current HiAP policies addressing food access was also completed. Searching the terms: food access, food safety, food security, healthy eating, and nutrition; policies were identified in the comprehensive plans of Austin, Texas; Louisville, Kentucky; Memphis, Tennessee; Baltimore, Maryland; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Metro Boston; Richmond, California; District of Columbia; and San Francisco, California. The tactics include:

- Expand local food market
- Assess real transit options
- Utilize public school educational gardens
- Establishing sustainable community gardens
- Eliminate food deserts
- Provide broad access to fresh foods
- Educate about healthy food choices
Study Area

The study area is located south and west of the University of South Florida and is within the Terrace Park/University Area Community Vision Study boundary (completed in 2013 by the Planning Commission at the request of Tampa City Council). The Community Vision was recognized by resolution and handed over to the City’s Land Development and Planning Division. Staff felt the inventory of existing projects, programs, and services, which were part of the development of the Community Vision study, staff felt was a good background for public involvement to make the system and environmental changes.

The study boundary includes mapped food desert areas, high incidence of diabetes prevalence, and a demographic profile that includes high concentrations of minorities, low-income, elderly (65+), disabled, car-less, and youth. The area was mapped as a community of concern by the Center for Urban Transportation Research.

Terrace Park/University Square Study Boundary

North: East Fowler Avenue
East: North 30th Street
South: East Busch Boulevard
West: North Nebraska Avenue
Study Area Sociocultural Data

**United State Census, American Communities Survey 2015 (ACS)**

**Population Trends**
- Total Population: 15,214
- Total Households: 5,525
- Average Persons per Acre: 9.84
- Average Persons per Household: 2.72

**Income Trends**
- Median Household Income: $30,081
- Population below Poverty Level: 34%
- Households below Poverty Level: 31%
- Households with Public Assistance Income: 5%

**Age Trends**
- Highest %: Ages 50 - 64 at 21%
- Second highest %: Ages 5 to 17 at 18%
- Age 65 and Over: 9%
- Median Age: 32

Communities of Concern

Communities of concern are often defined as areas having greater than average populations of one or more of the following demographic groups: Minority, Low-income, Elderly (typically 65 years or older), Limited-English proficiency (LEP), Disability, Carless, or Youth. This map shows the study area has a high number of communities of concern.

**Map 2. Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission: University Area Communities of Concern**

**Figure 1. Race and Ethnicity Trends: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from 2006-2010 and 2011-2015**
Figure 2. Poverty and Public Assistance: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from 2006-2010 and 2011-2015

Figure 3. Occupied Units with No Vehicles Available: Area of Interest American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from 2006-2010 and 2011-2015

Figure 4. Population by Age Group: American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates from 2006-2010 and 2011-2015
Health in All Policies

“A collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas.”

HiAP may be developed for specific policy areas and/or all policies in an agency or geographic area. For Example:
- Land use
- Environmental Resources
- Housing
- Food Access

How can the **Comprehensive Plan help?**

- Use land use guidance and regulations to improve local households’ proximity to healthy food and support food-related businesses and activities
- Increase food production and access to healthy food and meals in residential settings
- Improve access to healthy foods by enhancing transportation systems and infrastructure for transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists
- Support increased local food production in forms compatible with surrounding development
- Support food-related businesses and initiatives that advance the development of local and regional economies
Where is **food access** low?

Hillsborough County

Green areas show that many residents live more than one mile from a grocery store.

Orange areas show that many residents live more than a half mile from a grocery store.

What does food access mean for us?

Food access is our ability to afford enough food, and get to places to purchase that food.

How easily we can get healthy food is impacted by:

- Store hours
- If grocery stores are close by
- If the food is fresh and affordable
- If we can get there easily by walking, bus or driving

Figure 7. Tampa Heights Community Gardens
What is healthy food access?
According to the American Planning Association, the availability of healthy and unhealthy foods in a community is fundamentally driven by a number of factors:

- Proximity of food outlets to schools and residential areas
- Prevalence and types of food outlets available in neighborhoods
- The presence of food and nutrition programs in a community
- Local policy and regulatory framework (e.g. food policy councils, food charters, school food policy, local plan-making, zoning regulations, design regulations, and other standards)

How does our neighborhood impact our health?
Our health is determined more by where we live (our zip code) than by our genetic code.

The conditions where we live dramatically impact our health, because they determine our access to goods and services and their quality. In neighborhoods where individuals rely on walking and biking to get around, and streets lack sufficient sidewalks, adequate lighting, and other pedestrian safety features, it becomes increasingly difficult. Health is impacted to things like food, retail, safe housing, sidewalk connectivity, jobs, educational opportunities, and healthcare providers. Individuals who, for example, cannot get a living wage job to earn enough to purchase adequate healthy foods end up consuming unhealthy foods and may be at higher risk of developing chronic diseases related to poor diets, such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Inequities in access across our community stem from past policies that caused residential segregation and other unfair, unequal, insufficient opportunities for goods and services to develop and thrive in all areas of the community. Inequitable conditions in neighborhoods create health inequities—unfair, unjust, preventable differences in health outcomes among different population groups, often among different races, ethnicities or genders.

Figure 8. CDC Invest in Your Community infographic
What actions can be taken to promote better food access?

A windshield assessment of available food retail was conducted in the project area March 22, 23 and 27, 2017. During this assessment, we identified approximately 15 locations in the project area that sold food. These locations were mapped and shared at the community meeting on February 21, 2017. We also imported SNAP and WIC vendors, using information from the USDA and DOH-Hillsborough Nutrition Division, respectively. In addition, one of our team members conducted a secondary windshield assessment in early March. As a result of this primary and secondary data collection, we identified a total of 45 food retail establishments in the project area. These maps do not include any food retail outside the area, such as other food retail where residents may access by bus, as shared during the community meeting (e.g. a Walmart Supercenter, which includes groceries, less than one and a half miles from the northern boundary of the project area).

To understand food accessibility in more detail for this area, we considered the minimum requirements for both Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) vendors (through May 16, 2017) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) vendors (as of March 10, 2017). However, in our study area, among 45 food retailers, only 29 locations are SNAP vendors and one is a WIC vendor (this store is also a SNAP vendor). To understand food options/variety and cost, as they pertain to food access, we decided to utilize the Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit retail assessment, based on the methodology used by Cohen (2002). We used Cohen’s categories to help define the food retail stores in the area. When importing SNAP vendors from USDA, they are categorized as either grocery or convenience stores. For the purpose of our project, we subdivided SNAP convenience stores into “convenience stores and grocery/gas combinations”, “specialty stores” and “other food stores”. We also decided to categorize “dollar” stores and pharmacies as “other food stores”, as they are combination stores that sell other products primarily.

Requirements: In February 2017, USDA had announced changes to the minimum stocking requirements for SNAP retailers, due to be implemented on May 16, 2017. This change in stocking requirements would have expanded the number of food options and choices for SNAP recipients and would have limited the amount of prepare/ready-to-eat fast food/snack options that could be sold by SNAP vendor. Both would have resulted in healthier options and store environments. As of June 2017, the implementation have been delayed indefinitely with the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 (USDA, 2017). In addition, although there is one WIC vendor in this area, changes to the WIC income verification requirements that became effective on July 1, 2017, for WIC recipients may make it difficult for community members to enroll in WIC or continue receiving benefits. State level policies to minimize eligibility barriers could help increase access to these benefits.

Comments regarding SNAP and WIC policies are based on information collected through this project and do not reflect official views of any of the agencies involved in this project.
After categorizing stores, we sampled eight stores from different categories to assess for food cost, availability, and variety. Following the Cohen tool, we assessed cost and availability of food for the following categories:

1) Fats and oils  
2) Sugars and sweets  
3) Condiments and spices  
4) Frozen fruits and vegetables  
5) Canned fruits and vegetables  
6) Bread, cereals, and other grains  
7) Milk, cheese, meat, and meat alternatives

This assessment aligns with the USDA requirement that stores “must sell food for home preparation and consumption,” and meet the criteria “Offer for sale, on a continuous basis, at least three varieties of qualifying foods in each of the following four staple food groups, with perishable foods in at least two of the categories:

- Meat, poultry or fish
- Bread or cereal
- Vegetables or fruits
- Dairy products” (USDA, March 21, 2016)

Total Weekly Thrifty Food Plan Cost for a Family of Four

Availability products, the volume they were sold in, and the price per certain volume was assessed and recorded. Total costs per store were assessed, with considerations for missing items, to develop a comparison to the USDA Thrifty Food Plan Cost for the reference cost of “a family of four (couple aged 20 to 50 and two children aged 6 to 8 and 9 to 11)” (Cohen). For our assessment, conducted in March 2017, we compared to the closest month available (February 2017), which led us to a reference cost of $147.30. Among the eight stores sampled, only one had a cost below this.
In assessing the types of food available, certain categories of food were missing more than others, in particular, fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and cheese. In comparison, categories that offer less nutritional value and often empty calories were much more abundant, including fats and oils (most commonly available), as well as sugars and sweets, and condiments and spices. Somewhat promising is that canned fruits and vegetables ranked fairly high for availability as well, indicating that although fresh produce may not be available, canned options may be an available alternative.

* Denotes Midpoint

When we looked at the cost of these food items by category, meat and meat alternatives were most expensive, with fresh fruits and vegetables ranking second. Although there is not a USDA Thrifty Plan Cost per category, this helps us understand that a greater amount of SNAP resources is required to purchase nutrient-dense foods such as fresh produce and protein-rich meats. Unfortunately, fats and oils, and sugars and sweets were dramatically more affordable, perhaps meaning one could make SNAP dollars stretch further on lower-nutrient foods because the cost is dramatically lower. Promising, however, is that canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are more affordable than fresh fruits and vegetables, in these locations, indicating there may be other affordable healthy options available if fresh options are not available.
Community Gardens

Community gardens help improve access to healthy food by allowing residents the opportunity to grow food for themselves and their neighbors. By working with established groups in the community to mentor and provide guidance to other gardeners, outcomes can be replicated and spread to other neighborhoods and groups.

The Hillsborough County MPO has previously worked with several community groups to connect community gardens to each other and to surrounding neighborhoods through the Green Artery Trail, a bicycle and a pedestrian route connecting 23 Tampa neighborhoods. This project helped to bring together the groups representing many area gardens and connect them with the wider network of neighborhoods nearby.

The Healthiest Cities project works in partnership with Aetna, the University of South Florida, the Coalition of Community Gardens in Hillsborough County, the City of Tampa, and the East Tampa Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). The goal is to create a replicable model for expanding the number of gardens and to grow existing groups. Currently, this project is working to identify sites with proper infrastructure and ownership to create additional gardens that will continue to be a focal point for neighborhoods.

Map 4. Potential Garden Locations in Terrace Park/University Square Area
One of the first steps in establishing a garden is to speak to residents about their desires. Residents are closest to the pulse of their community. Speaking to residents first and understanding the needs of the community can help ensure that planned projects can be customized to meet the unique aspirations of the community. Projects should be developed as community-led partnerships. Building community capacity is essential to ensuring projects are fully realized.

Conduct surveys, determine how a community garden contributes to resident ideals of a healthy community. Next, determine the physical goals of the project (e.g., block cleanup, harvest for neighborhood festival). Draft a mission statement and vision plan for the garden, integrating ideals and physical goals.

Organize initial meeting with interested community members. Conduct an open discussion with community members regarding the vision and mission plan. Identify community resources including possible garden locations, community partners, and sustainers. Maintain list of potential institutional, business and association support, individual talents and skills, and infrastructure. Schedule routine meetings to establish a timetable and ensure plans are moving forward.

Select a garden leader and establish a steering committee to track membership, expenses, and maintain guidelines. Establish a community building committee to develop outreach events and informational meetings designed to maintain existing support and reach out to potential members. Establish a maintenance committee to maintain garden infrastructure. Establish or identify a preexisting garden mentoring committee to offer training and assistance to garden members.

Conduct visual assessment of potential sites. Gardens should be established on land with 6-8 hours of sun per day and partially shaded. Ensure that site is accessible to the neighborhood. Sites should be in safe walking distance for members of the community.

Contact the local water company about performing a site investigation, which determines whether water is or has been supplied to the site in the past and if there will be costs to reestablish service. Contact landowner and explore lease options. Conduct soil testing and research local land use laws to determine whether garden is compliant.

Research the number and size of plots needed. Determine site amenities. Sites should have a shed, shaded location for rest, an area perimeter, an irrigation system, and composting. Secure funding. Utilize the community resource list to determine if local businesses are willing to donate time or goods. Communicate the benefits of a community garden for all residents. Prominently display contact information for garden leader at entrance to garden. If plot fees are collected, provide signage for individual plots.
Transportation Improvements

To analyze the transportation improvements that could be made in the area and analyze their likely impacts, staff relied on data from a number of sources including SUGAR Access, described in earlier submittals for this project. By using this tool to determine populations with low access to healthy food sources, the areas of least access were determined. This information was layered with sidewalk data, transit routes and stops, and cycling facilities. The following series of maps depicts this analysis and proposes interventions to improve access to food sources and other services.

Cycling Network

There are existing and proposed cycling facilities that connect through the study area that could be extended to improve access for residents. Particularly for those who use a bicycle out of necessity to access services and jobs, safe facilities that reduce the risk for these users are very important. The proposed construction of a cycling facility on Bougainvillea Avenue will improve the east-west access on the northern portion of the study area and allow an alternative to Fowler Avenue, which has cycling facilities but is a high-volume roadway that creates risks for vulnerable users. The extension of the existing bike lanes on Linebaugh Ave. will improve east-west circulation as well, but additional north-south connections are needed. Improvements to 22nd Street, such as those completed north of Fowler, would be a welcome addition to support transit users as well as nonmotorized users.

University Sidewalks and Cycling Facilities – All Services

This map shows the accessibility for all households to reach a combination of all services by walking. The low coverage of sidewalks in the area means that pedestrians are exposed to additional hazards as they make their way to transit corridors. The yellow and orange areas of the map show lower areas of access internal to the study area represented by the pink square. Increasing sidewalk coverage in these areas could help provide safe routes to access transit facilities or services directly.

Map 5. University Area Sidewalks and Cycling Facilities
Sidewalk Needs

While there is a great need for pedestrian facilities throughout the Tampa Bay area, the need for sidewalks in high transit use areas and communities of concern is much higher. The fragmented pedestrian network creates barriers to access, particularly for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children. Creating safe pathways for residents to access transit and other services are critical to the needs of the community. The existing sidewalks are shown on the map in green. They offer a low level of connectivity and abruptly end and switch sides of the street. Additionally, many lack appropriate facilities to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The proposed sidewalk segments show a first tier (in red) of critical gaps to provide additional access for residents in the interior of the neighborhood to be able to access transit facilities and thereby, access services. Additionally, for persons with disabilities, the lack of sidewalks can be particularly challenging and dangerous.

Completing a minimum network to allow for improved access to transit will help to facilitate better access to a variety of services. Further expanding the sidewalk network to the majority of streets, as shown on the map, will enable greater access for all residents as well as allow for safe pathways to and from jobs and services.

Map 6. University Area Sidewalks and Sidewalk Needs
Transit and Grocery Access (map on the next page)

This map has many of the same characteristics as the walking access map, however, we can see that access is expanded in the southeast corner of the study area due to the transit lines. Access is still low in the center of the neighborhood. All of the routes in this area are higher volume, and the stop volumes for boarding are highest in the areas near Fowler Ave. and Busch Blvd., which are the areas with the highest number of services along the roads. The total number of daily boardings in the study area is 1,918. Excluding the transit stops at the margins of the study area, which may include many transfer boardings, the number of boardings from interior bus stops is 759 people per day. For an area this small, this number shows very high transit use for the population size.

![Map 7. University Area Walking Access to Grocery](image)

Walking Access to Grocery

The darker purple areas indicate greater household access to groceries by walking. The accessibility of groceries continues to decline as we move southeast through the study area. This reflects the presence of grocery stores along Fowler Avenue and the barriers that are created by this major roadway for pedestrian access. This may indicate that if a garden or farmers market is proposed, the southeast quadrant of the study area may be a desirable location where it can have a greater impact.

Vulnerable Users (on the next page)

In 2016, there were a number of crashes involving vulnerable transportation users. These crashes largely occurred on the boundaries of the study area, where transit lines and stops are clustered. This is further exacerbated by the volume and number of lanes for these roads, and the distance between crossings. Finally, these crashes are located nearby to food sources, which are clustered along these high-volume roadways. Taken together, this means that to access food sources, transit users and other vulnerable users of the transportation system must cross dangerous roadways.
Map 8. HART Routes, Stops, Volumes, and Grocery Access Via Transit

Map 9. Vulnerable User Crashes
Survey Results

Are the following locations safely walkable from your home?

Figure 14. Are the Following locations safely walkable from your home?

Overall, the Terrace Park | University Square area residents expressed that they have trouble walking safely to different locations. 45% of respondents mentioned that it is not safe to visit their community center and 63% said that it can be dangerous going to their post office. Furthermore, 58% respondent’s choices said that the medical clinic is not safely walkable from their home which means that people with health problems cannot seek help without access to a vehicle. In addition, all other locations presented above in the graph are not safely accessible since most responses suggest that residents are not safe and have low-access going to everyday locations in their neighborhood.

How often do you walk in your neighborhood?

Figure 15. How often do you walk in your neighborhood?

33% of respondents said that they walk daily in their neighborhood while 18% walk weekly. About 17% residents walk two to three times a week. By making the neighborhood more accessible to different locations, residents will be able to walk more often. Lack of sidewalks and generally low-access to locations can play a significant role in why residents choose not to walk in their neighborhood.

How long does it take you to get to where you have access to food?

Figure 16. How long does it take you to get to where you have access to food?

55% of respondents said it takes them “less than 15 minutes” to access fresh foods and 27% “less than 30 minutes”. Furthermore, 10% of the respondents mentioned that it takes them “less than 1 hour” to get to where there is access to fresh food.
How do you get to the store or place where you get your food?

89% of respondents choices use their personal or household vehicle to get to the store. This remarkable amount of residents that use their car shows that the neighborhood is in need of alternative modes of transportation such as taking the bus, walking or even biking. In order to promote more walking or transit usage, more sidewalks and bus stops must be addressed resulting in better access to food for the Terrace Park | University Square area residents.

Do you feel safe traveling these ways to get food? (Staff felt that is question was misleading.)

The majority of respondents said that they feel safe traveling with their personal or household vehicle (90%). The two least safe options traveling to get food was borrowing a vehicle (13%) or using a taxi (13%).

I feel safe and comfortable walking in my neighborhood at night. Do you agree?

54% of respondents reported that they do not feel safe and comfortable walking in their neighborhood at night while the remaining 46% said that they do. It is concerning that the majority of residents do not feel safe walking at night. This can be due to the fact that their walking routes are not well lit which promotes crime and other illegal activities in their neighborhood. Investing in street lights and more security could help residents feel safer to go out at night.

Figure 17. I feel safe and comfortable walking in my neighborhood at night. Do you agree?

Do you receive SNAP benefits (also called EBT or Food Stamps)? SNAP provides money each month on a debit card to pay for food.

64% of respondents do not receive any SNAP benefits while 35% receive those benefits.

Do you receive WIC? WIC provides education about healthy eating and a debit card for certain food items to pregnant women and families with children under the age of five.

86% of respondents did not receive WIC while 14% said that they did receive WIC benefits.

During the past year, were there times when your household did not have enough food?

Figure 18. During the past year, were there times when your household did not have enough food?
What would be the best way to make sure there is fresh, healthy food available in your neighborhood?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One large grocery store</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A combination of these</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community gardens</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community supported agriculture</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller grocery stores</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food co-op</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular choice amongst respondents (49%) was the best way to make sure there is fresh, healthy food available in their neighborhood would be to have a farmer’s market in their neighborhood. The second most popular choice (44%) was to build one large grocery store and (35%) to build a couple of smaller grocery stores placed in different locations. The idea of creating a community garden or another community supported agriculture is among the top five choices the residents selected. It is clear that the neighborhood wants better access to fresh food rather than having multiple fast-food stores that have low quality food.

What matters to you when you buy fruits & vegetables?
The freshness and cost of fruits and vegetables are the two top preferences that matter to the Terrace Park | University Square area residents when visiting a store. Furthermore, fruits and vegetables that are pesticide-free, locally grown and healthy were still very important to the residents.

What would make it easier for you to access fresh fruits and vegetables?
The top choice that would make it easier for the Terrace Park | University Square area residents to access fresh fruits and vegetables was having “Fruits and vegetables sold closer to home” with 64%. The fact that the majority of residents agree that they do not have easy access to fresh food shows that building a community garden in the neighborhood would be ideal since it will benefit a lot of residents.

What would make it easier to afford fresh fruits and vegetables?
92% of respondents choices said that it would be easier to afford fresh fruits and vegetables if they were cheaper. 10.2% would like to see cheaper prices in bus tickets.

Would anything else make it more likely that you would buy fresh fruits and vegetables?
58% of respondent’s choices said that they would likely buy more fresh fruits and vegetables if they were fresher in the stores. 54% would like to see more types of fruits and vegetables offered at the store. The third most popular answer (23%) would like to learn how to prepare fruits and vegetables.

During the past year, were there times when your household did not have enough food?
Even though 66% responded “No” to this question, 34% is still a significant amount of residents that did not have enough food in their household during the past year. Children and adults need to have the proper nutrition. Creating programs within the neighborhood that provide daily nutrition needs such as teaching how to plant vegetables and fruits, creating a community garden, providing for fresh food stands or van, and cooking and nutrition education to stretch dollars are examples of ways to address the problem.

If yes, how did you make it work during those times?
54% of the respondents choice was stretching their budgets to make it work in times when their households did not have enough food.
Would you be interested in growing your own fruits and vegetables in a shared garden space?

70% of respondents are interested in growing their own fruits and vegetables in a shared garden space while the rest (30%) said they are not. The majority of residents said they would like to see this in their local community center or at an empty lot in their neighborhood. This means that residents want to have fresh food closer to their home and better use of a vacant lot in their neighborhood.

What do you think a shared garden space needs to be safe and easy to access?

The first three choices that would make the shared garden space safer and easy to access based on the respondent’s choices is to have a fence, water source, and lighting.

What would encourage you to grow fruits and vegetables in a community garden?

76% of the respondent’s choices were having “Free seeds/starter plant”, 70% “help from a trained/ experienced gardener” and 63% “gardening tools. Residents are willing to grow their own fruits and vegetables in a community garden as long as they have the proper equipment, whether is help from others or proper tools. A community garden can help residents provide food to their households without the need of a personal vehicle or walking long distances to access it.

What sort of education would you be interested in related to a community garden?

The top choice for this question (72%) was learning how to garden. Second best choice (67%) was learning about Florida’s growing seasons.
Recommendations

Recommendations based on staff research, community and subject matter input, and public participation outreach for The City of Tampa Comprehensive Plan include:

Review the adopted Comprehensive Plan and identify the specific language for the vision and planning framework for community values, public health, and health equity. Goals, objectives, and strategies should be written to integrate health considerations in decision making across different sectors that influence health, such as transportation, agriculture, land use, housing, public safety, and education. Areas to be considered would include: promote health, equity, and sustainability; support intersectoral collaboration; benefit multiple partners; engage stakeholders; and create structural or process change. Because promoting health and wellness may involve a variety of partners, the evaluation should include a responsibility matrix to guide effective implementation.

Based on findings within the study area, staff recommends evaluating the potential for policies to address food access and community gardens that can be considered for application to the City as a whole.

Increasing food access in neighborhoods:
- Incentivizing markets in the area
- Non-profits
- Community development agencies/corporations
- Area chambers of commerce
- Neighborhood/civic associations
- Public/private partnerships to run/own/operate farmers market
- Partnering with Community Garden Coalition/TBNEH grow boxes program

Co-Location:
- Schools
- Churches
- Community Centers
- Parks
- Non-profits

Land Development Code:
- Farmer market
- Encourage vegetable stands
- Residential gardening (front and side yards)

Transportation Improvements:
- Traffic calming/complete streets (including sidewalks/lighting)
- Slowing speed along 15th and 22nd Streets, and Linebaugh and Bougainvillea Avenues to make it easier for residents to walk
- Public transit options
- Connections to bicycle and pedestrian facilities
References


