

The Neighborhood Food Project

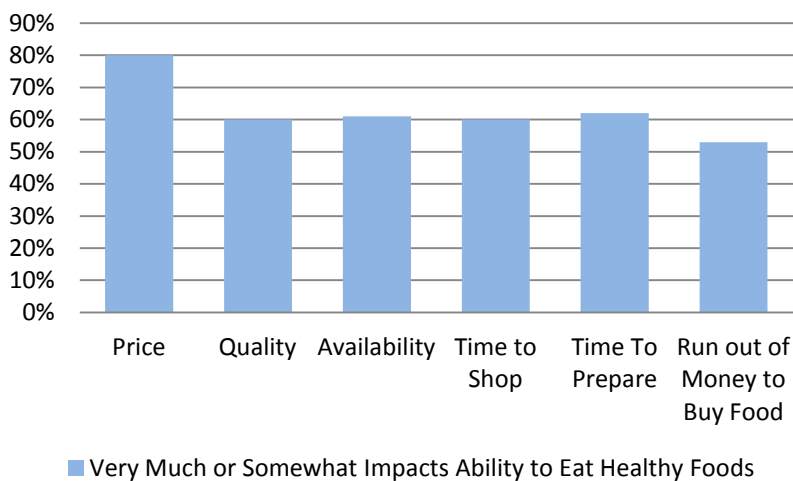
Food Access and Stability Study Findings

March 2012

Summit-University, Thomas-Dale, Dayton's Bluff, Payne Phalen

Most resident respondents were very interested (55%) or somewhat interested (37%) in learning more about healthy eating and improving their overall diet but faced many barriers.

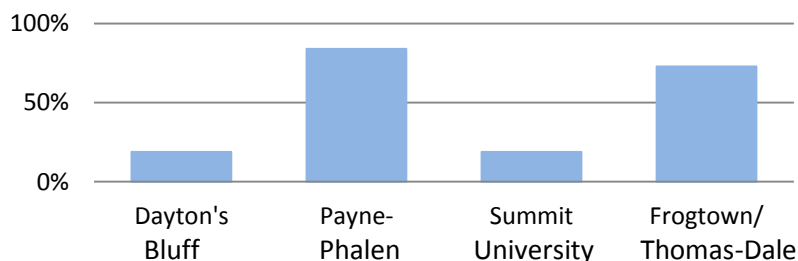
Barriers to Eating Healthy Foods



Residents with lower household incomes may be purchasing food from stores that do not typically have the lowest prices. Lower income households purchased food more often in higher-cost convenience and small neighborhood stores. Residents have very different levels of familiarity with the resources available in their neighborhoods, including smaller markets and foodshelves.

There are significant differences and gaps in the types of stores and food resource availability across the four neighborhoods. Limited food purchasing options within neighborhoods was a challenge to some residents, particularly those without cars.

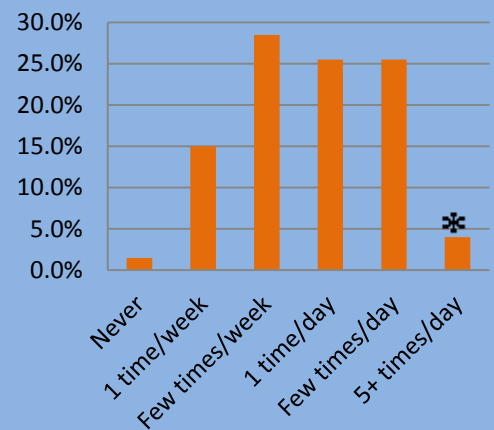
% Residents Who Shopped Within Their Own Neighborhood



The Food Access and Stability Study was conducted in 2010 in four Saint Paul neighborhoods - Summit-University, Thomas-Dale, Dayton's Bluff, and Payne Phalen. The study involved a community food survey as well as 12 focus groups across the study area. The project was carried out by Afro Eco, Community Design Center of Minnesota, Minnesota Food Association, The Minnesota Project and Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health (SHIP Program) with analysis of the data by Wilder Research.

Less than one-third of survey respondents reported eating fruits or vegetables multiple times on an average day.

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Rate



*Recommended serving to improve overall health is 5 to 9 fruit and vegetable servings per day.

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TOP STRATEGIES FOR HELPING RESIDENTS OBTAIN MORE HEALTHY FOOD

MAKE HEALTHY FOOD AFFORDABLE

Seek creative ways to reduce the cost-burden of healthy foods. Eighty percent (80%) of respondents indicated that price was the number one barrier to healthy food consumption and two-thirds (62%) responded that coupons or discounts would be the most useful strategy to enable them to eat more healthy foods.

Increase the number of stores that accept EBT/WIC. One-third (33%) of respondents indicated that increasing the number of stores accepting EBT/WIC would help them eat healthier foods.

BRING HEALTHY FOOD TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Encourage the development of new or improved supermarkets would help residents eat more healthy food, according to one-third (32%) of respondents. Residents in the focus group recommended that the city encourage entrepreneurs and business owners to establish new grocery stores, markets, and healthy restaurants in neighborhoods with vacant storefronts

Increase access to garden plots and farmers' markets. Many residents are unaware of, or have limited access to, garden plots to grow their own food but expressed an interest in gardening. Residents were also interested in purchasing from a farmers' market and CSAs but noted it would be important for those types of businesses to accept EBT cards.

BRING RESIDENTS TO HEALTHY FOOD

Reach out to underserved groups by using a multi-method communication approach and recognizing cultural differences. There were significant differences and gaps in the types of stores and food resource availability across the four neighborhoods – many residents were unaware of resources in their own neighborhood. Food shelves and other community resources to address hunger are seldom utilized by Hmong and Somali residents participating in the focus groups. Residents noted that any material, especially class curriculum, should reflect the cultural group of the community.

Provide alternative transportation opportunities for residents who bus, taxi, and walk to stores to make shopping easier, such as neighborhood shuttles. Residents of Dayton's Bluff and Summit University tend to shop outside of their neighborhood, indicating a need for transportation to the store. Many residents discussed the difficulty and time-consuming nature of grocery shopping by using mass-transit.