



AUSTIN HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS INITIATIVE

THE CITY OF AUSTIN OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY





BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH



TIMELINE

March 2015

Fall 2015

March 2016

Spring 2016

April – June
2016

August 2016

Today

Fall 2016

- Plan4Health Grant received

- Food for All: Research collaboration with LBJ School began

- City Council Resolution 20160303-020

- Food for All findings evaluated and provided to the Office of Sustainability

- Stakeholder outreach in response to City Council Resolution

- Budget request submitted to City Council (Austin Healthy Food Access Initiative)

- Planning and building relationships with partners to prepare for implementation

- Austin Healthy Food Access Initiative implementation, pending budget approval

FOOD FOR ALL

- Fall 2015 – Spring 2016
- Collaborated with the LBJ School of Public Affairs to research food access in North Central Austin
- 93 focus group participants, 7 interviews, 310 reached at community outreach events, 268 survey participants
- Developed policy recommendations for the City based on research
- 4 Key areas:
 - Availability of good quality, healthy food
 - Affordability of healthy food
 - Awareness of how to obtain and prepare healthy food
 - Accessibility of food through public transportation and sidewalks



North Central Austin Plan4Health Grant Pilot Area

Red dots – Food access points with no healthy food

Green dots – Food access points with healthy food

Green shaded area: .25 mile and .5 mile radius from retail location

Red shaded area – USDA food deserts

FOOD FOR ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

■ **Improve Availability**

- Ensure higher food quality and safety through frequent inspections
- Monitor Healthy Corner Store initiatives to support retailers with stocking fresh fruits and vegetables
- Provide incentives for retailers to supply fresh produce and other nutritious foods

■ **Improve Affordability**

- Ensure smaller retailers accept SNAP / WIC
- Implement a Double Dollar SNAP / WIC program at food retailers
- Advocate for higher citywide income and affordable housing

FOOD FOR ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

■ **Improve Awareness**

- Develop community hubs to disseminate information about healthy foods
- Facilitate information sharing through community partnerships
- Provide information about food and SNAP benefits and enrollment in a wider variety of languages

■ **Improve Accessibility**

- Require a food impact analysis for all new transportation projects
- Improve and maintain transportation infrastructure, including bus stops, sidewalks, street lighting
- Expand senior transportation programs

CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 20160303-020

- Convene working group
- Work with the Office of Equity
- Develop recommendations to improve food access
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Provide an update on enrollment effort
 - Offer recommendations to reduce enrollment gap
- Report fiscal impact for budget planning

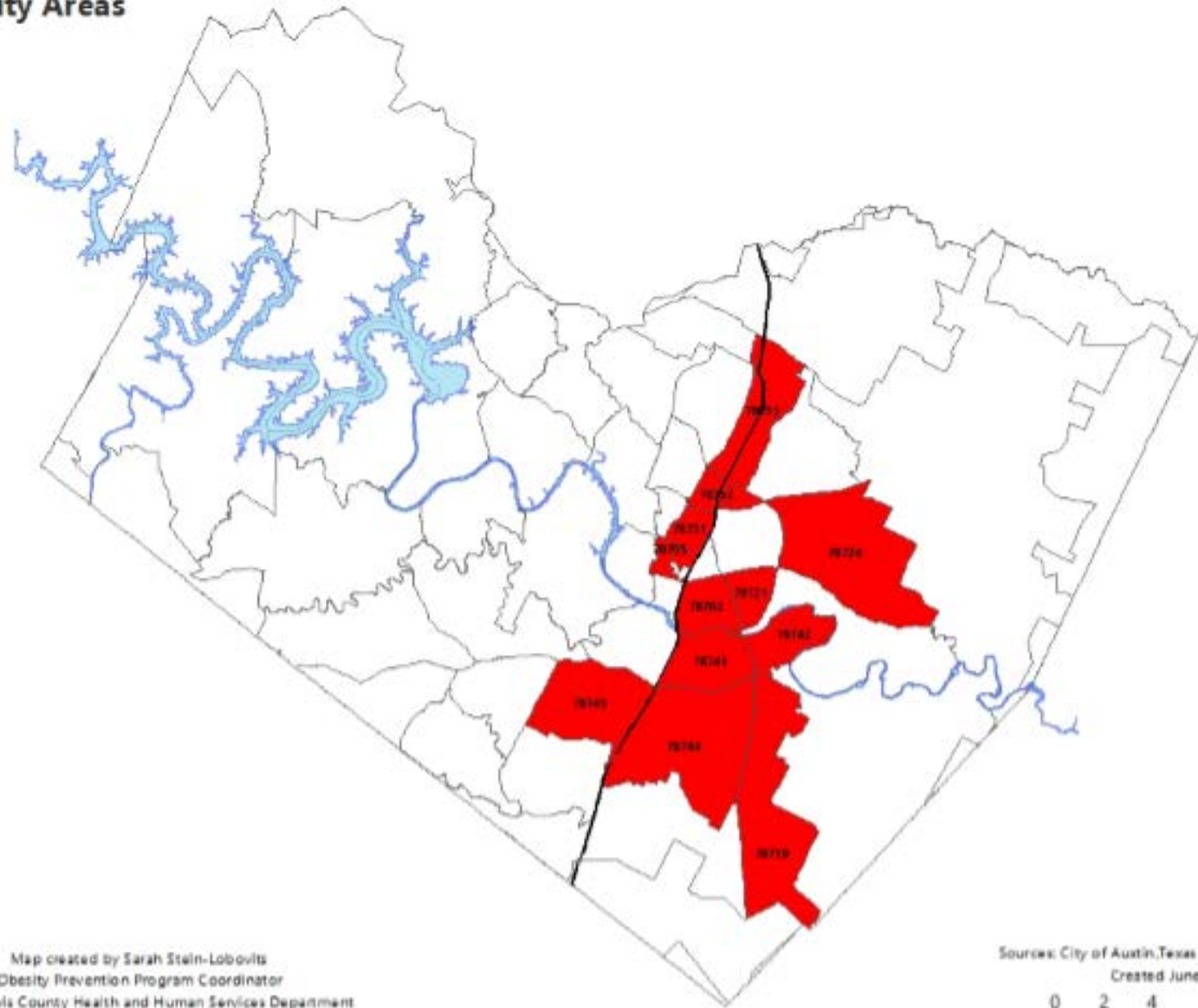


RECOMMENDATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL



Food Access Resolution

Priority Areas



Map created by Sarah Stein-Lobovits
Obesity Prevention Program Coordinator
Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department

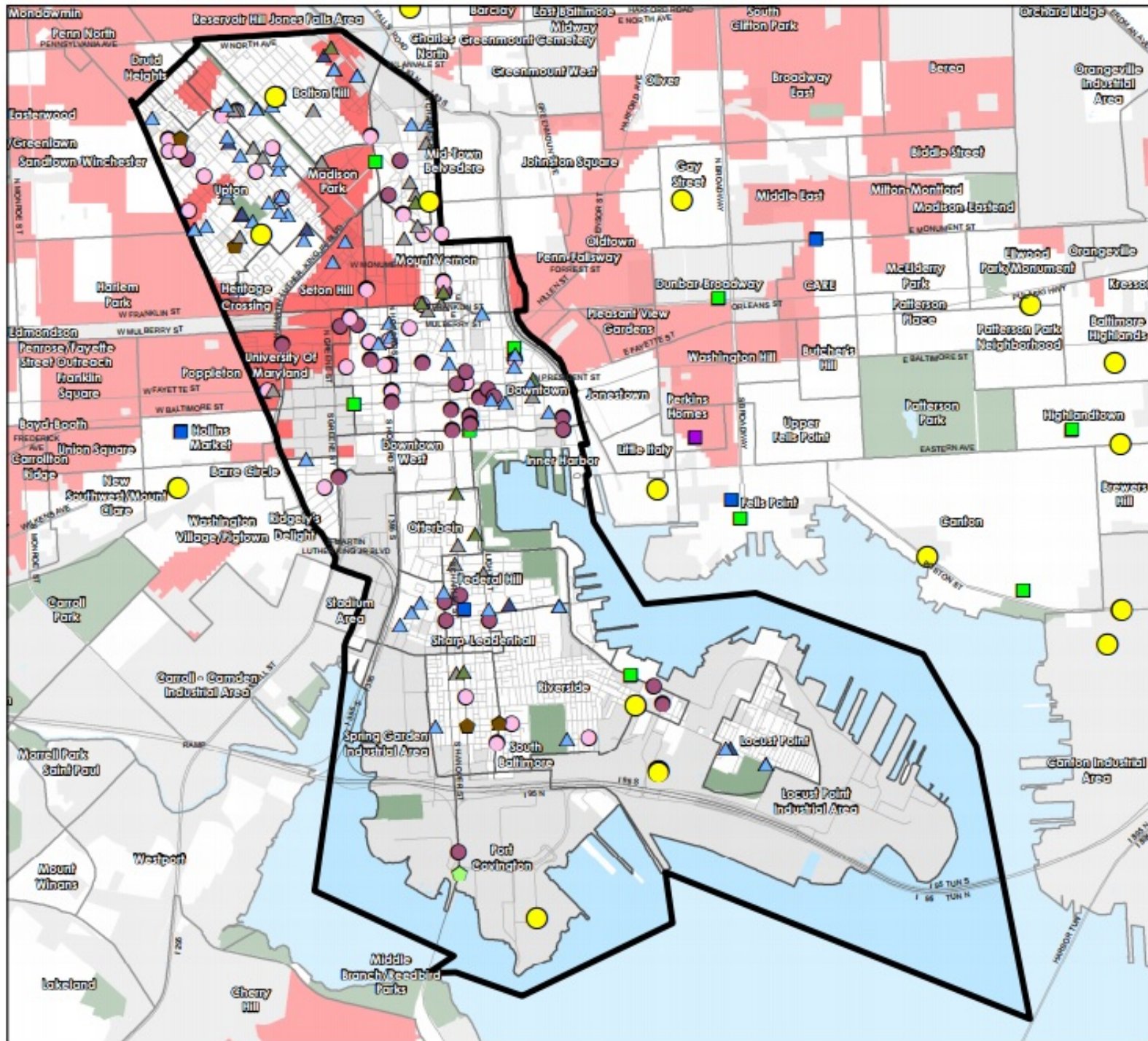
Sources: City of Austin, Texas Hunger Initiative, GAVA
Created June 2010





I: FOOD ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS

- Complete Food Retail Analysis for all of Austin modeled on Baltimore's work with Johns Hopkins University
- Will work with Johns Hopkins University to analyze the food retail environment in each district
- Will influence planning of all recommendations and serve as an evaluation tool
- Key data points:
 - Food retail and supermarket locations
 - Household income
 - Vehicle availability
 - Supply of healthy food at food retail locations
- Budget: \$25,000 for student research assistants, \$95,500 for Food Access Program Coordinator



Sample District Food Environment Analysis

- Circles and squares: Food retail
- Triangles: Food assistance
- Hexagons: Locally grown
- Red areas: Food deserts



2: HEALTHY FOOD RETAIL INITIATIVES

- Goal is to increase the availability of healthy food by assisting in the development of new food retail
- Technical assistance and/or start-up capital in the form of grants from the City
- Continue funding for the Healthy Corner Stores, School Farm Stands, and Mobile Markets projects
- Additional funding for community-based food access initiatives
- Grant Manager – Solicit funds from partners to develop the grant fund and oversee grants provided to new retail initiatives
- Grocery Ambassador – Identify potential tax incentives, facilitate the permitting process, and develop systems to streamline funding for food retail initiatives
- Budget: \$750,000 (\$400,000 to continue current projects + \$350,000 for new Grant Fund) + \$191,000 for Grant Manager and Grocery Ambassador Positions

3: URBAN FOOD PRODUCTION

- Goal is to increase urban food production through community gardens and urban farms
- Low-income communities do not have time, funds, or professional resources needed
- Use City funds to alleviate the cost burden of developing community gardens in underserved communities
- Explore fee waivers and provide technical assistance
- Support utilization of City-owned land for commercial urban agriculture
- Budget: \$95,500 for Urban Food Production Coordinator position and \$10,000 for permitting and infrastructure costs



4: NUTRITIOUS FOOD INCENTIVE PROGRAM

- Double Dollars: SNAP participants' purchasing power is doubled at farmers markets
- Pilot program would implement a similar system at traditional brick-and-mortar retail locations
- Eligibility based on multiple indicators, not just SNAP participation
- Will leverage additional funds from partners and federal Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grants
- Budget: \$50,000 for project implementation in addition to existing Double Dollars program

5: COORDINATED AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- Many organizations in Austin working on food access but there is little coordination
- Coordinate outreach and messaging to better serve communities in need and avoid duplication
- Fund Community Health Workers to bridge the gap between services and communities in need
- Fund pilot projects to address the “SNAP Gap,” such as:
 - Mobile SNAP outreach program
 - Translation services
 - Phone hotline
- Budget: \$100,000 for media campaign, \$200,000 for 3-4 Community Health Workers, and \$400,000 for SNAP pilot projects

6: SAFE ROUTES TO MARKETS

- Many obstacles exist for people who need access to healthy food
- Disabilities, missing sidewalks, lack of public transportation, safety concerns
- City must ensure people in low-income communities can safely access food resources
- Use Food Environment Analysis to inform transportation planning efforts (Sidewalk Plan, CodeNEXT)
- No new budget requirements but will utilize existing employee time

OVERALL BUDGET REQUEST: \$1,917,000

Recommendation	Budget Impact	New FTE Impact
1. Food Environment Analysis	\$25,000 (One-time)	\$95,500 (1 FTE)
2. Healthy Food Retail Initiatives	\$750,000 (Annual)	\$191,000 (2 FTE)
3. Local Food Production	\$10,000 (Annual)	\$95,500 (1 FTE)
4. Nutritious Food Incentive Program	\$50,000 (One-time)	N/A
5. Coordinated Awareness Campaign	\$700,000 (Annual)	N/A
6. Safe Routes to Markets	No additional cost	N/A
TOTAL	\$1,535,000	\$382,000



QUESTIONS?

