



SKAGIT FOOD FOR SKAGIT PEOPLE

Finding the path to a healthy, accessible and
equitable food system



Skagit County

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

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Crafting a Comprehensive Response

This report describes food access concerns for limited-resource consumers in Skagit County, Washington and recommends strategies to promote a comprehensive response through coordinated and collaborative efforts.

Skagit County is a geographically and culturally diverse community with a mix of rural areas and small cities and towns. While the Skagit Valley is rich in agricultural area, many residents experience difficulty accessing healthy food and are food insecure. Limited food access can occur when consumers are constrained in their ability to access nutritious, affordable food due to their distance from a supermarket or large grocery store. [1] Access can be further compromised by lack of adequate transportation. In Skagit County, 25% of shoppers have low access to grocery stores, which may negatively affect diet and food security. [1] Food insecurity refers to the USDA's measure of "reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet," which can include "little or no indication of reduced food intake at the low food security level" to "reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake" at the level of very low food security. [2] Between 2010-2012, 14.6%, approximately one in seven households, was food insecure. [3] In 2013, estimates of food insecurity declined slightly to 13.1%, while 23.4%--almost one in four--children experienced food insecurity. [4] Food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods. In Skagit County, rates of food insecurity for households with incomes near or below the federal poverty level, households with children headed by single parents, and seniors living on fixed incomes are of particular concern. [5]

The focus of this year-long United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded community food planning project, Skagit Food for Skagit People (SFSP), was to build a common understanding of food access concerns in Skagit County and to coordinate the development of a collaborative working relationship among stakeholders to develop and promote a comprehensive response to addressing these concerns. The purpose of this paper is to present the comprehensive response as developed by community stakeholders.

The Skagit Food for Skagit People (SFSP) community food planning process heard from farmers, workers, and eaters, all of whom value a just, secure, and sustainable food system that is accessible and affordable to all. The process began with six listening sessions that allowed those struggling with food access and food insecurity to share their vision for improving food access. Then, a community food assessment was completed to provide current information about food access in Skagit County. Lastly, food system stakeholders were convened twice to use the information from the listening sessions and the food assessment to create a comprehensive response to improving food access. This white paper focuses on the final outcome of this planning process. Details from the listening sessions, community food assessment, and stakeholder meetings can be found in the appendices and in the accompanying document, *Skagit County Community Food Assessment*.

Combined information from listening sessions, assessment of food and farming in Skagit County and input from food system stakeholders create a compelling call for action. With special regard to social justice, food sovereignty and food security, the opportunities identified as possible solutions based on participants' vision of future food access, not only address the needs of the consumer with limited resources, but also build collaborative coordination among the individuals and agencies that are working to meet that need. The more challenging need is in the policy arena and includes solutions that address how low wages and high housing costs contribute to poor food access.

Table 1 summarizes the process and outcome of the year-long SFSP initiative. The first column contains the vision areas that grew out of the six listening sessions held with limited-resource consumers. This was the foundation of the planning process. The second column contains implementation ideas identified by stakeholders during the second stakeholder meeting. These are raw ideas generated during brain-storming sessions and were intended to move the vision of listening session participants for a more accessible food system to the next level and generate connections and ideas that could be the basis for real action. The third column synthesizes stakeholder brain-storming into actionable projects ripe for implementation. Some will require outside funding sources; others may be able to get off the ground with current funding streams or no funding at all. The fourth column shows which agencies and organizations could partner to implement these projects.

Table 1: Development of the comprehensive response from listening session vision area to implementation recommendations

Listening Session Vision Area	Stakeholder Brainstorming Ideas for Implementing Listening Session Vision*	Recommendations for Implementation	Possible Organization(s) to Lead Effort
Interdependency	<p>Low-hanging Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create better information share • Ask clients to volunteer • Let gardeners know they can donate to the food bank • Network gardeners • Upriver education for healthy cooking/living • Grant and education to support purchase of cooking tools, steamers, pots <p>Harder to Reach Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County-wide transition training • More bilingual volunteers • Revitalize Concrete Community Center & provide access to commercial kitchen for rental and community use • Low-income cooking class that provides training, box of locally grown food, recipes, small appliances • Develop technology for the sharing food economy (similar to Airbnb, Uber) • Educate about knowing your food supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate development of Transition groups throughout county with initial focus on communities in eastern Skagit County. (Transitions is a grassroots community initiative to build community resilience. More information can be found at http://www.transitionnetwork.org/) Transition groups build and utilize grassroots action to create more integrated, sustainable, resilient communities where neighbors rely on themselves and each other to meet basic needs. • Establish a “Community Food Hub” that houses a community kitchen, community garden, food resources and a community gathering space for hosting educational events and meetings. Eastern Skagit County identified as possible first location. • Maintain Interactive map of food access points (e.g., food banks, commercial kitchens, community gardens, communal meal sites, etc.) 	<p>WSU Extension</p> <p>Community Action</p> <p>Transition Fidalgo</p> <p>Chuckanut Transition</p> <p>Skagit County Food Bank Association</p> <p>Local Community Garden Associations (e.g., Samish Community Garden, Concrete Community Garden</p> <p>Hospital District 304 Community Health Outreach Program</p> <p>Skagit Regional Health – Skagit Healthy Communities</p>

Listening Session Vision Area	Stakeholder Brainstorming Ideas for Implementing Listening Session Vision*	Recommendations for Implementation	Possible Organization(s) to Lead Effort
			SeaMar Community Health Centers
Accessible Food Banks	<p>Low-hanging Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase food donations • Increase storage at food banks • Satellite center • Upriver food banks open more days and hours • Flexible grocery cart <p>Harder to Reach Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping Hands Food Bank evolving to Good Cheer Food Bank model • Farmer infrastructure to grow food directly for food banks • Choice system for food banks • More cash to food banks • Coordination of food bank hours to transportation schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support and training for food bank directors to implement a shopping model, develop methods to decrease participant waiting time, and increase available hours. 	<p>WSU Extension</p> <p>Community Action – Skagit Food Distribution Center</p> <p>Skagit County Food Bank Association</p>
Access to Gardens	<p>Low-hanging Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask city councils about unused land • Garden access and education • Free “grow your groceries” class at library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve outreach for existing community gardens 	WSU Extension

Listening Session Vision Area	Stakeholder Brainstorming Ideas for Implementing Listening Session Vision*	Recommendations for Implementation	Possible Organization(s) to Lead Effort
	<p>Harder to reach fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of edible, accessible gardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to build edible landscapes on commercial and/or public properties. Possible partnerships between WSU Extension and Master Gardeners and Mount Vernon Library, food banks, and public schools. • Create demonstration gardens for garden education at Community Food Hub (above), food banks, and/or community gardens. Education to include “Grow your Grocery” class. 	<p>Skagit County Planning Department/City Planning Departments</p>
<p>Affordable Food</p>	<p>Low-hanging Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of adequate income in county <p>Harder to Reach Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let investors and financial advisors know about donating money for fresh produce programs • Increase wages for workers • Increase unionization • Raise minimum wage • Strengthen labor laws • Living wage for all to reduce need for emergency food • Affordable housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because this theme is paramount to all other food system work and is a component to all issues discussed in the listening sessions and stakeholder meetings, initiatives to address this issue are integrated into the six other themes. Further, addressing income inequality, availability of livable wage jobs and affordable housing will take long-term, comprehensive, policy-level approaches that are largely beyond the scope of this project. 	<p>All involved organizations</p>

Listening Session Vision Area	Stakeholder Brainstorming Ideas for Implementing Listening Session Vision*	Recommendations for Implementation	Possible Organization(s) to Lead Effort
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable jobs to address income inequality 		
Close Waste Loop	<p>Low-hanging Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping Hands Food Bank grocery rescue – animals, food bank, Friendship House, teen shelter Samish Community Garden – take excess to Alger Food Bank on 2nd and 3rd Tuesday Gleaning of farms directly to Food Distribution Center Donate waste food to farm animals; farm donates animal back to food bank Food bank collects home-grown eggs Getting donated food Gleaning to capture waste <p>Harder to Reach Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization of left-over restaurant food (National Restaurant Association partnership?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with food bank directors to provide coordination and technical assistance for better system coordination that creates more timely distribution of rescued food to food banks. Convene food bank directors and farmers to determine if food bank waste can be donated to feed livestock, and whether an animal can be donated back to food banks as a protein food for distribution. Explore composting options for restaurant and home food waste that might allow low-income consumers and/or community gardeners. 	<p>Skagit County Environmental Services</p> <p>WSU Extension</p> <p>Skagit County Food Bank Association</p>
Move Food to People	<p>Low-hanging Fruit</p> <p>Harder to Reach Fruit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a mobile farmers market that stops at several locations east of Sedro-Woolley on Highway 20. The mobile market will accept 	<p>WSU Extension</p>

Listening Session Vision Area	Stakeholder Brainstorming Ideas for Implementing Listening Session Vision*	Recommendations for Implementation	Possible Organization(s) to Lead Effort
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home delivery of bulk organics to upriver folks • Infrastructure for CSA delivery for food bank • Senior food access system • Neighborhood nodal food bank drop sites 	<p>multiple currencies, including SNAP and WIC. Incorporate a way customers could trade excess garden produce for credit. Incorporate a discounted pricing system that allows for easier access for lower resource individuals.</p>	<p>Community Action Food Distribution Center</p>
<p>Move People to Food</p>	<p>Low-hanging Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to Skagit Transit • Increase bag limit on bus • Bus passes and low-income resource fair <p>Harder to Reach Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase bus route frequency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to engage Skagit Transit in food access work with long-term goal of creating easier access to food outlets, gardens, and food banks. 	<p>WSU Extension</p> <p>Community Action</p> <p>Skagit County Transit Services and Citizen Advisory Board</p>

*The columns in Table 1 are chronological and reflect the community process. The first column contains the action areas generated in the listening sessions. The second column includes thoughts generated during a brain-storming session with stakeholders. Their comments are presented here verbatim to reflect the process of community-based collaborative work; therefore, ideas are often incomplete and/or not possible under current regulations. Recommendations generated by the listening sessions and stakeholder meetings are presented in the 3rd column.

Continuing the Effort

This report is intended to inform policy and decision makers such as the Board of County Commissioners, Population Health Trust, and City Planning councils about issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the health and well-being of the community.

As a result of Skagit Food for Skagit People, an ad-hoc committee has been formed to investigate options for development of a coalition for implementing the recommendations that comprise the comprehensive response developed from this community planning process.

The ad hoc committee will determine the following:

- How to connect or piggy back with existing 1095 Skagit, which is an established organization working to end childhood hunger.
- Explore efforts currently underway to avoid duplication. Determine how to link the different efforts.
- Structure of sustaining coalition, collaboration, or network, including determining mission, vision, and goals.
- Explore an administrative home for future coalition or group.
- Research how other cities have organized and established a food policy council. Obtain training on establishing a food policy council.
- How to engage and provide leadership opportunities for individuals with limited resources in the change process to avoid disenfranchising the population most affected by these efforts. Work toward empowerment rather than “doing to” and “doing for” others.

Appendix I: Steering Committee

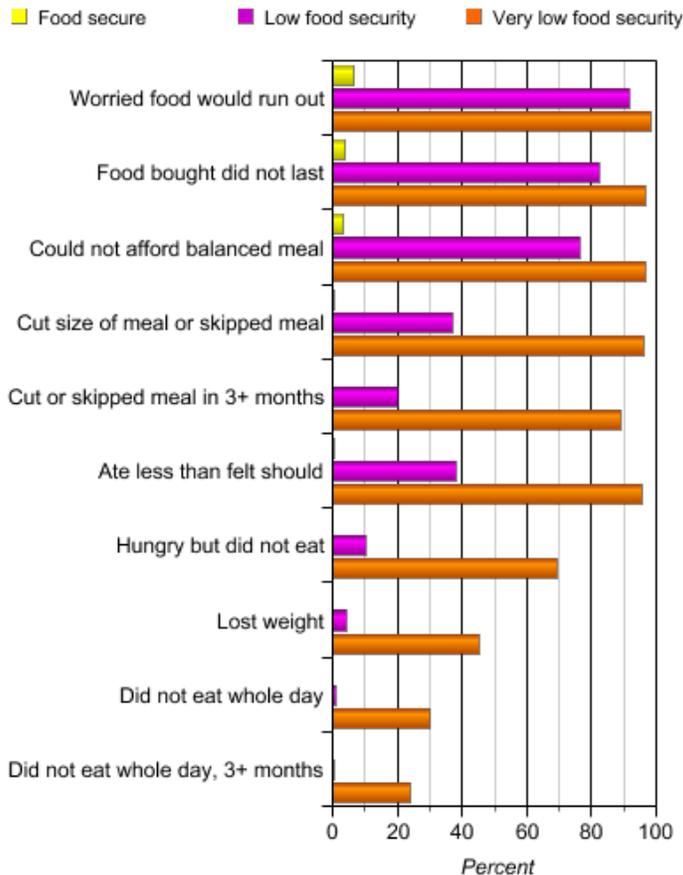
In October 2014, a steering committee of 10 community representatives involved in food access work (farmers, parents, and service providers) came together to guide the year-long process. Of the 10 steering committee members, five self-identified as low-income and received a small stipend to enable their participation. Existing data on food security and health status associated with limited access to healthy food were reviewed and analyzed by the steering committee. Steering committee members were involved in all levels of project planning. They reviewed and provided feedback on the listening session questioning guides, hosted and/or attended listening sessions, provided feedback on early analysis of listening session results, and planned and/or facilitated stakeholder meetings.

Evaluations completed by steering committee members show that their involvement was not only satisfying to them, but that they felt that they made a positive contribution to the group. As one steering committee member said, "I was already involved with many community projects, but I do feel like I gained a sense of validation and confidence."

Appendix II: Understanding the Problem: Food Security, Food Insecurity, Low Food Security

The USDA defines food security as “access by all people, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life.” [2] Food insecurity occurs when consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year. The USDA divides food insecurity into two categories: low food security and very low food security. Marginal food security is characterized by “anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house.” As food insecurity advances, households report “reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet,” which is defined as low food security. The lowest level of food security, very low food security, is characterized by “multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.” The graph below illustrates household food security indicators for a national sample.

Percentage of households reporting indicators of adult food insecurity, by food security status, 2014



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

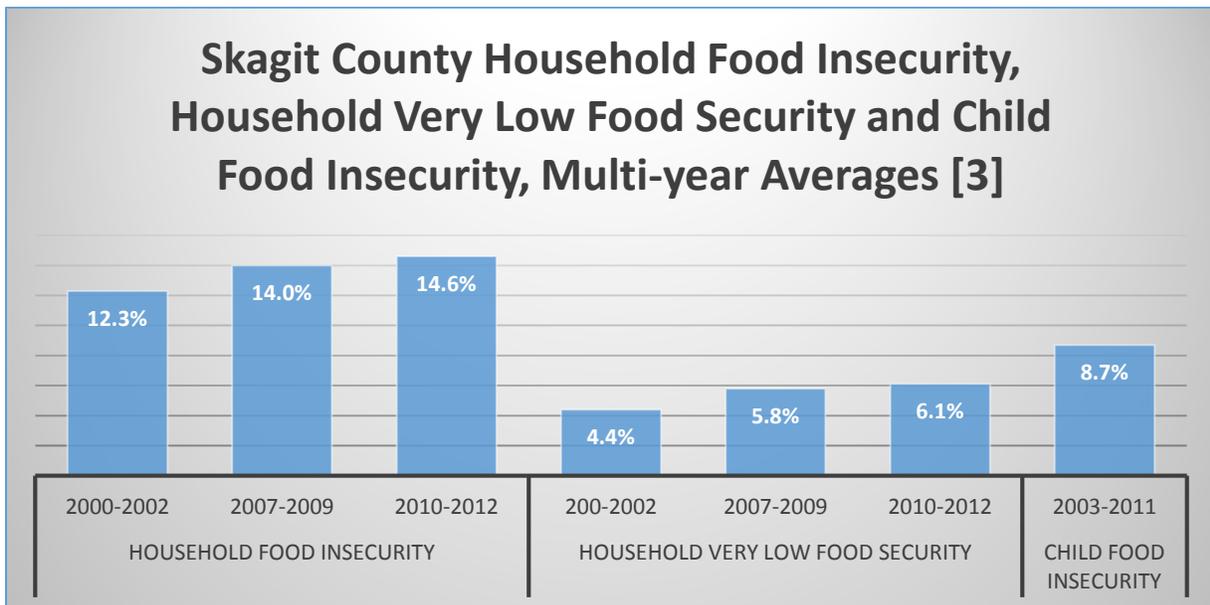
Food insecurity goes hand-in-hand with poverty. Persons most impacted by food insecurity are single parents with children and persons of color. Both urban and rural communities experience the same rate of food insecurity. Local food insecurity data are below:

In Skagit County:

- One in seven households experiences food insecurity [4]
- One in four children lives in food insecure households [4]
- 25% of all households have low access to a grocery store [3]
- 6% of household with children and 5% of households with seniors have low access to a grocery store [3]
- 45% of children participate in the Basic Food Program [6]
- The average SNAP benefit is \$225/month. [7]
- In January 2015, 11,303 households representing 12,143 adults and 8,248 children received SNAP. [7]

In Western Washington:

- There was an 11% increase in the number of seniors relying on food banks between 2013 and 2014 [8]



Appendix III: Listening Sessions: Hearing the Voice of the Consumer with Limited Resources

Six listening sessions were held in Skagit County--two in the East County communities of Concrete and Lyman, and four in Mount Vernon. One session in Mount Vernon was conducted in Spanish. Participants were recruited through a “host” model in which steering committee members and local community leaders, such as food bank directors, church pastors, and job training program staff, invited community members to join. Sessions were held at the Life Transitions program at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon; La Iglesia Episcopal de la Resurrección Church (Spanish) in Mount Vernon; Community Action of Skagit County Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program (WIC) in Mount Vernon; Goodwill Training Center in Mount Vernon; Shepherd’s Heart Food Bank in Lyman; and at Senior Center in Concrete. Each participant received a \$20 gift card to a local grocery store. Additionally, a light meal was served at each session. Participants were invited to bring their children as necessary. A total of 54 participants engaged in the listening sessions and averaged 8 persons per session. Though this was a convenience sample, participant demographic surveys indicate that the majority of participants had limited resources and many participants regularly experience food insecurity. Focusing on locations where those with limited resources frequented allowed for targeted recruitment. The host-recruitment model allowed for very high participation rates. Only a handful of expected participants did not show up to planned sessions. The demographic profile of listening session participants is below.

Table 2: Demographics of Listening Session Participants

54 PARTICIPANTS	
<i>Age</i>	24-74 years
<i>Gender</i>	48 female 6 male
<i>Race and ethnicity</i>	67% White/Caucasian 30% Hispanic 2% Asian
<i>Education</i>	Less than high school – 21% High school or GED – 31% Vocational school – 2% Some College – 33% 2-year degree – 8% 4-year degree – 6%
<i>Food security</i>	72% used food assistance in previous 12 months 35% skipped or cut back on meal because there was no money for food 22% went hungry because there was no money for food

Listening sessions used an Appreciative Inquiry approach, which focuses on pulling forward strengths rather than focusing on deficits by prompting people to focus on what is working so that future successes can be built on current successes. The following questions were asked participants.

1. What is working now about how you get food?
2. What would it look like if getting healthy food was easy?
3. What can be done to make this vision a reality?

Recordings and notes from each session were analyzed in aggregate for emerging themes. Three primary coding structures were created: 1) What's working; 2) Barriers; and 3) Visioning our future. (While groups were never asked about barriers to healthy food access, participants organically began to discuss them in all groups.) The coding structure for these three main themes is presented graphically below using mind maps. Definitions of each code and supporting participant quotes are below each graphic.

One unexpected effect of bringing participants together to discuss food access was that participants exchanged strategies and resources for improving their personal food access. Information shared among participants is listed below by location of listening session.

Concrete – online food shopping sources that have home delivery

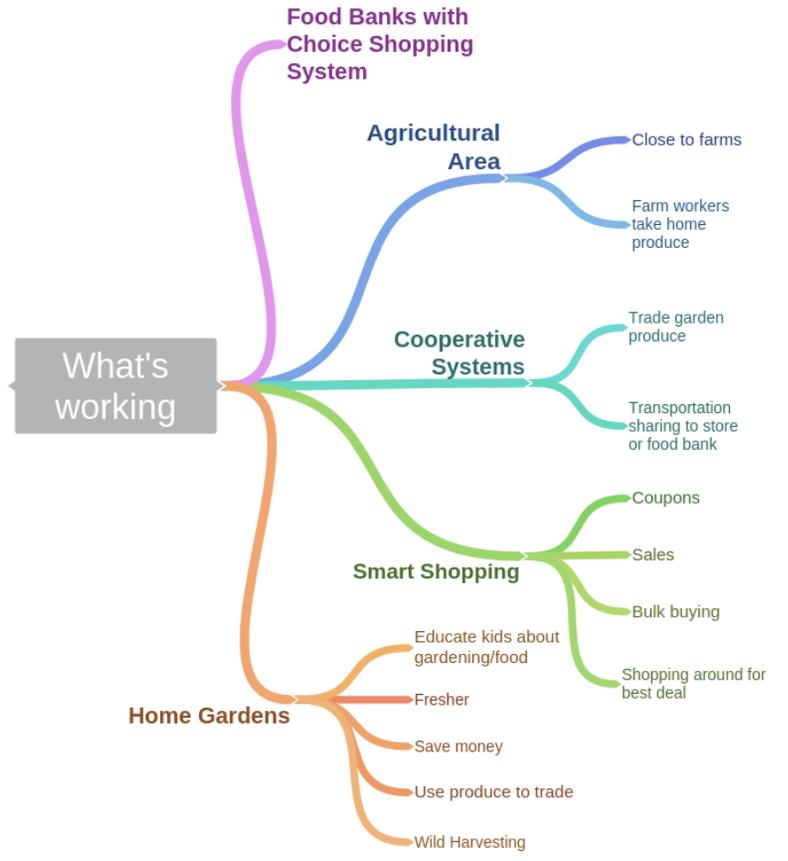
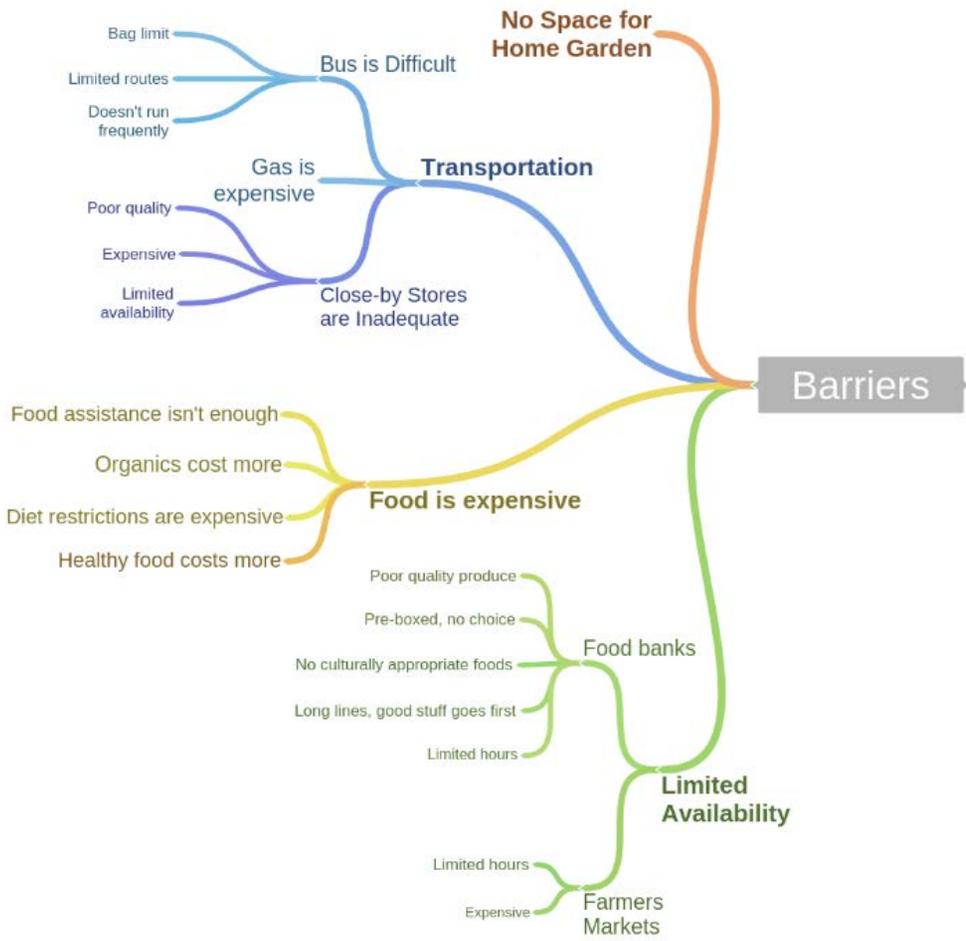
Lyman— location of new shopping opportunities and produce best-buys

Mount Vernon Goodwill – community gardening opportunities, Farmer Market double-up bucks availability

East Mount Vernon – participating in the Skagit Gleaners for affordable food

Mount Vernon Skagit Valley College – Azure Foods online bulk food purchasing

Mount Vernon WIC — availability and locations of Community Gardens, location of new discount food outlet in the community



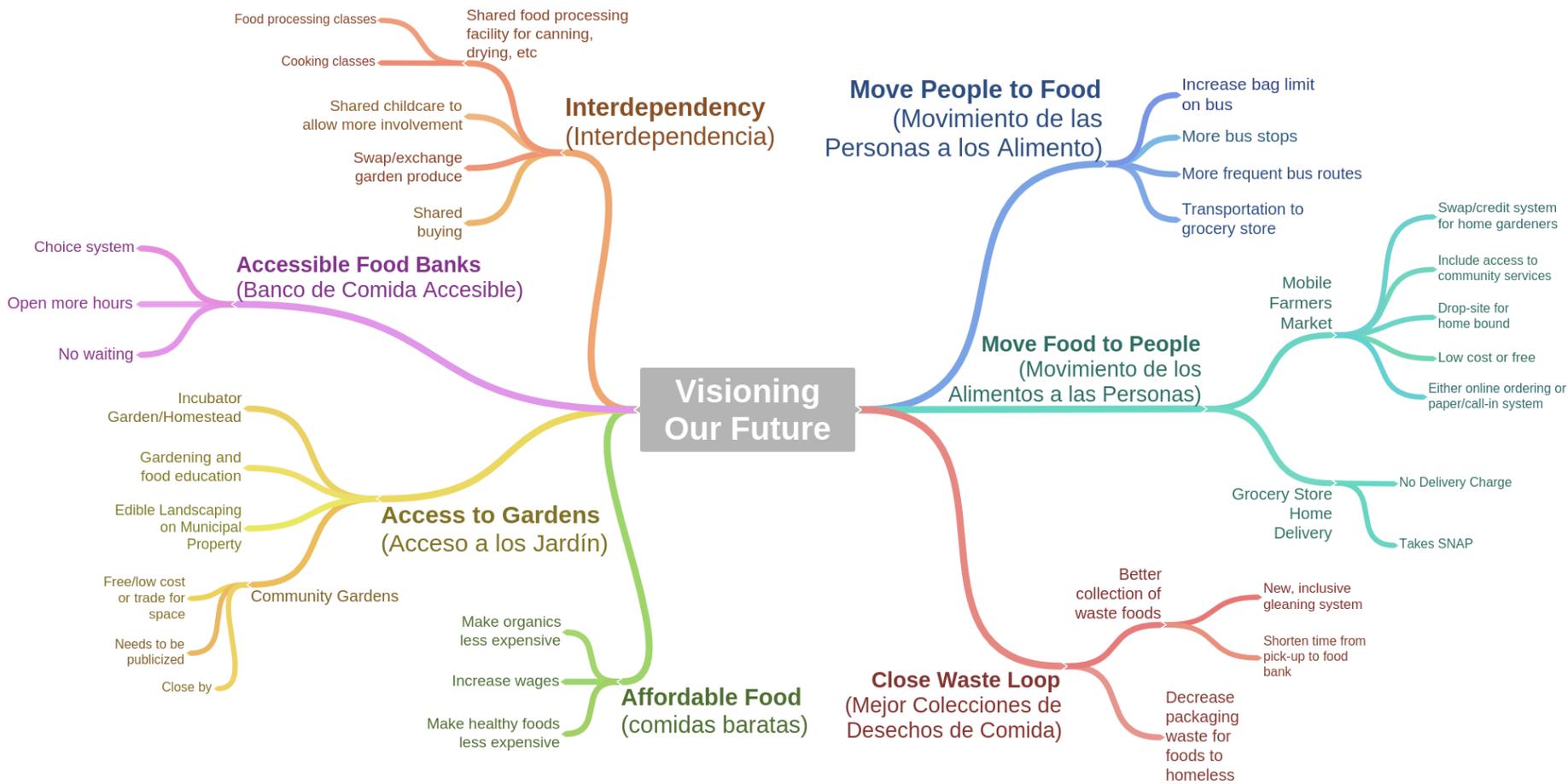


Table 3: Description and supporting quotes for each theme under What’s Working graphic

Theme	Description	Supporting Quote
Food Banks with Choice Shopping System	Some food banks in valley have a shopping model that allows for more personal choice.	<i>They let you choose what you want. They say, “do you want beans or rice?” And they give you a fruit or a vegetable, and they ask you which ones you want.</i>
Agricultural Area	Skagit County is a rich agricultural area with many farms.	<i>We work in the strawberries and raspberries, and we can take those home.</i>
Cooperative Systems	Some informal systems of sharing, trading, bartering; most prevalent in east Skagit County.	<i>There is more of a barter system up here. I have this extra. I swap meat for veggies. Five pounds of this and trade for five pounds of that.</i> <i>In our area we access food by checking when we go down river with neighbors and friends. Like if I go to Costco, it’s informal, not like a rideshare or whatever, but I pick things up for people. So the community is helping each other out all the time. It’s like your survival.</i>
Smart Shopping	Increase food thrift by using coupons, store specials, bulk buying. Often visit more than one store to get the best deal.	<i>Looking for the cheapest of the same products. For example, at one store something can cost you so much, but at another store, you can find that same product but at a cheaper price. That is also an important reason why we decide to shop at different stores and not just one.</i> <i>I shop by sales, and I do meal planning. I do whatever I can to make sure I stretch. Usually the last five days of the month, I’m very creative.</i>

Table 4: Description and supporting quotes for each theme under Barriers graphic

Theme	Description	Supporting Quote
No Space for Home Garden	Apartment living makes it difficult to garden.	<i>I live in an apartment, so what am I supposed to do? How do I learn?</i>
Transportation	Limited routes, infrequent bus times, and perceived limit to the number of bags allowed on the bus make using the SKAT system challenging. Traveling by car is expensive (gas, insurance, cost of car upkeep). Stores that are within walking distance or closer are inadequate for full shopping (expensive, limited availability, and/or poor quality).	<p><i>There is a 3 bag only limit on the bus. A friend of mine said that they wouldn't let her on the bus because she had 4 bags.</i></p> <p><i>My mother lives in Concrete, and she doesn't have the extra gas money to drive to Mt Vernon to get a better quality produce or a cheaper price, so she has to go to Albert's where everything is like \$2 more there. It doesn't matter what it is, it is \$2 more. So she doesn't get quality, and it's more expensive.</i></p>
Food is Expensive	There is often not enough money left to purchase food. More desirable food (organics, healthy foods, specialty foods) cost more.	<p><i>I've got \$40 left. It's the 16th. I have a 16-year-old boy. Tell me, how do I spend the \$40?</i></p> <p><i>Makes it difficult for low-income people. If you have a dietary restriction, it's hard to eat on \$200 in food stamps per month.</i></p> <p><i>The stuff that's horrible for you—you, know, the Top Ramen—that's the cheap stuff. They make that super easy to get. And I can't blame somebody else for me being chubby, but when those things are the things that are the cheapest and the things you can afford at the time, then of course, those are the things you have to go after sometimes. It's not that those are the things I want; it's just that that's the easy access. I've never understood why they don't make the healthy stuff the cheaper stuff. It's like they want us to be fat.</i></p>

Theme	Description	Supporting Quote
Limited Availability	<p>Most food banks offer no or limited choice, there is limited availability of culturally appropriate foods, the produce is poor quality, and the best items go quickly. Long lines and limited hours create access barriers at food banks. Farmers markets are expensive and have limited hours.</p>	<p><i>When we go to the food bank, we don't get what we like to eat. If they are giving out two or three tomatoes, I asked if I can have three more and they say no and try to give us something that we don't eat. We don't want to take the food just to throw it away. If we don't take the food, sometimes they get mad. I don't know how to cook it, or it expires, and I have to throw it away.</i></p> <p><i>Food bank has limited availability and pre-packs boxes for you, so there is no choice of foods. Some volunteers will get angry or shame you if you ask for more of a certain thing or say you don't want something because you don't know how to prepare it or don't like it.</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes I have to make a choice between going to the food bank or taking a job that pays money.</i></p> <p><i>You have to be first, have to be there at 9:30 and they don't open until 12.</i></p> <p><i>Working people can't always get to their Farmer Market or Food Bank. They are only open one day a week.</i></p>

Table 5: Description and supporting quotes for each theme under Visioning Our Future graphic

Theme	Description	Supporting Quote
Interdependency	Desire for more sharing of resources, including shared facility for food processing and gardening (canning, freezing, drying); shared systems of childcare to allow more community involvement (food bank, gardens, etc.); more formalized systems for trading/bartering for food; and shared bulk buying. Suggestions included food education cooking, gardening, processing).	<p><i>This is hard to do, but some people have a huge garden. So maybe she could bring five buckets of whatever... and give it to the bus [mobile farmers market] and get a credit, and she would get something she didn't grow.</i></p> <p><i>Teaching people what to do with the vegetables... Tell them how to make it. So maybe more cooking classes. This is what you can do with your garden stuff, and this meal will cost you 54 cents per person.</i></p>
Accessible Food Banks	Desire for food banks that don't have lines, are open more hours, and operate a shopping model that allows for more personal choice.	
Access to Gardens	Desire for community gardening spaces that are close to housing, free/low-cost or trade for space, and well publicized. Ideas include an incubator homesteading program (similar to incubator farming programs, like Viva Farms), more garden and food education, and including edible landscaping on municipal landscapes.	<p><i>Having land to plant a garden. That would help with the price of food. We also like to plant.</i></p> <p><i>That's one of the reasons I don't eat as healthy as I would like to. I prefer fruits and veggies over meat and all that stuff, but not really knowing how to prepare those things or not having access to it.</i></p>
Affordable Food	Desire to lower food budget and/or increase wages so that healthy foods are more accessible.	<p><i>Lowering the price of food would help us immensely. We get paid the same, but the food prices continue to rise.</i></p> <p><i>The money we make does not support the amount of food we need to pay for, so it would be nice to make enough money to pay for it.</i></p> <p><i>They can go higher on the smokes, but not on the food.</i></p>

Theme	Description	Supporting Quote
Close the Waste Loop	<p>Capture foods that would otherwise go into waste stream. Include better and more inclusive gleaning system, more efficient collection of waste foods from grocers and restaurants so that food quality is better when food gets to food bank, and decrease packaging waste for food to homeless populations.</p>	<p><i>“If you could go and help clean the fields out and bring some home too. I remember doing that a few times. They would go work in the fields, and then there would be an open access field where you could go help pick that field clean and take it home.”</i></p>
Move Food to People	<p>Two main ideas were proposed: 1) mobile farmers market; and 2) grocery store home delivery to address transportation challenges, especially for east county residents.</p> <p>A mobile farmers market would be low-cost or free, include some kind of ordering system for delivery, include a drop-site for those who are homebound, would be an access point for community services, and include a produce exchange for home gardeners.</p> <p>Desire for grocery store home delivery to not charge a delivery fee for low-income individuals and to accept Basic Food EBT cards as payment.</p>	<p><i>“There are people who are in the sticks and transportation is a problem, so if there was a way to get food to them. Like we did with the mudslide. Have the truck stocked and loaded and delivered.”</i></p>
Move People to Food	<p>Desire for increased transportation options, including grocery store shuttles and a more connected bus system that runs routes more frequently and doesn't limit the number of bags that can be taken on the bus.</p>	<p><i>“If [my mother] had a van pool to pick them up to take them to a grocery store, that would give her more options.”</i></p>

Appendix V: Stakeholder Meeting 1 Summary

A stakeholder work session convened on April 21, 2015 to present findings from listening sessions, share current data on food insecurity and health status, and establish a forum to exchange information and ideas among participants. The meeting was announced in local newspapers, posted on social media and email distribution lists. Thirty-three participants representing local residents, businesses, non-profits, farmers, government, and social service agencies attended.

The opening activity provided an opportunity for attendees to consider individual food histories by listing food related events on a timeline categorized into “personal,” “local,” and “global” events. Every attendee had a story to tell about their relationship with the food system and to recall specific events that impacted the food system on a local, regional or global scale. This activity allowed participants to get to know each other and provided a local history on which the activities of the day were built.

The keynote speaker, Kathy McCabe, executive director of the Good Cheer Food Bank on South Whidbey Island, shared her inspiring story of developing a shopping model that shows dignity and respect to those accessing the food bank. The Good Cheer Food Bank is funded from proceeds of a thrift store and has over 300 volunteers. An onsite garden provides additional produce for distribution. Using a retail grocery store design, Good Cheer is open six days a week. Participants are allotted points to use as currency; healthier foods require fewer points to purchase.

Following presentations about hunger food access in Skagit County and findings from the listening sessions, stakeholders were asked to consider the information presented and were invited to identify three listening session themes they could incorporate into their work.

List of Themes and Ranking of Interest:

Interdependency – 21 votes

Accessible Food Banks - 9

Access to Gardens –14 votes

Affordable Food – 13 votes

Move Food to People – 14 votes

Close the Food Waste Loop – 5 votes

Move People to Food – 1 vote

Participants self-selected into one of the seven themes to answer the following questions. Each participant had time to participate in two different groups.

- Who else should be invited/involved in this work?
- What information is needed?
- What are the collaborative possibilities?
- What are the unresolved questions?
- Who else to involve in this work?

A full report of the meeting can be accessed at: <http://ext100.wsu.edu/skagit/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/03/stakeholder-meeting-report-2.pdf>

The group decided to convene a smaller group to determine the structure of an ongoing group to coordinate continued food access work in the identified areas. Each group exchanged contact information to continue collaboration and discussion, and a listserv and Facebook site has been created by SFSP staff for communication among stakeholders.

Luncheon keynote speakers, Jason Miller, Mayor of Concrete, and Marla Reed, Concrete School Food Service Director, shared information and stories of their collaborative efforts in Concrete and gave examples of how collaborations and partnerships across agencies and businesses resulted in the Concrete Community Garden where community members are able to rent space, and youth under the age of 18 have plots at no charge. After lunch, a panel of speakers spoke on sustaining collaborative efforts. Sarai Stevens of Chuckanut Transitions, Rosalinda Guillen of Community to Community, and Ellen Gray of Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network, discussed how they sustain collaborative efforts in their work.

A full report of the meeting can be accessed at: <http://ext100.wsu.edu/skagit/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/03/SFSP-Staekholder-2-meeting1.pdf>

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