



Food Security in Travis County

August 23, 2012

A Snapshot of Food Security in Travis County

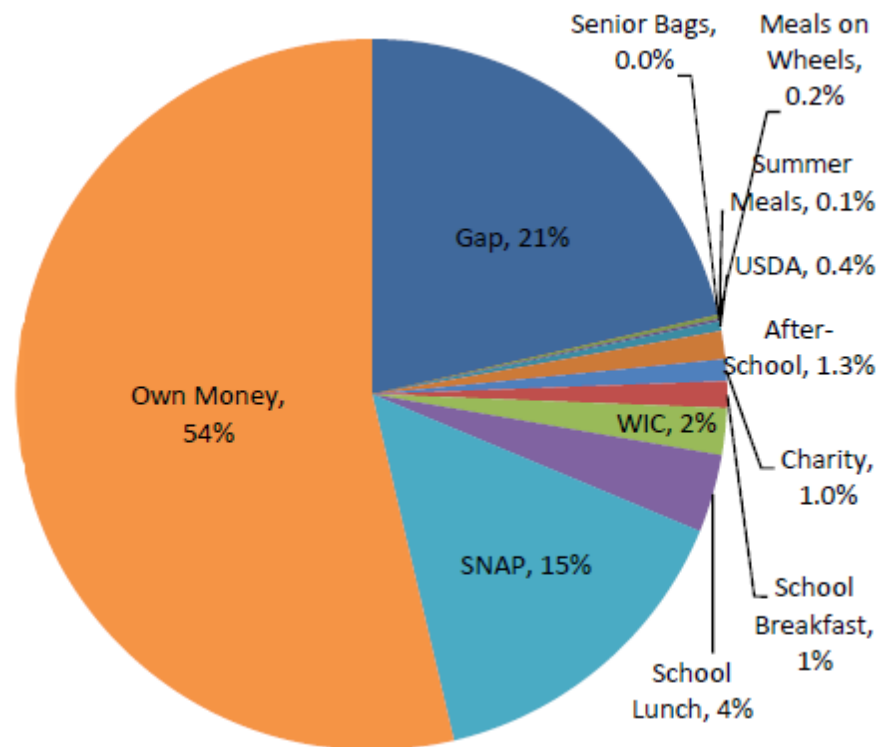
- 162,440 Travis County residents are food insecure (17% of the population)¹
- 40% of families in poverty are food insecure
- One-third of families with incomes up to 185% of the FPL are food insecure²
- Many people in our community are unfamiliar with the breadth of our food security issues



1. Feeding America. (2011). Map the Meal Gap, Food Insecurity in Your County. Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/map-the-meal-gap.aspx>.
2. Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service: Research & Planning Division. (2012). 2011 Community Impact Report Part 1: Community Condition Highlights. Retrieved from http://www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/publications/cir/cir_2011/2011_cir_part_1.pdf.
3. Food Security Working Group. (2012)

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- How Low-Income Populations Acquire Food



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- 53% of Travis County's income eligible population is not receiving SNAP
- \$195,001,654 = Annual Estimated Lost Benefits
- \$349,052,961 = Annual Estimated Lost Economic Activity



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- Hunger is especially prevalent in the eastern crescent of the county
- Full-service grocery stores tend to hug I-35
- Five zip codes do not have a single full-service grocery store

– 78617, 78653, 78721, 78725, and 78744



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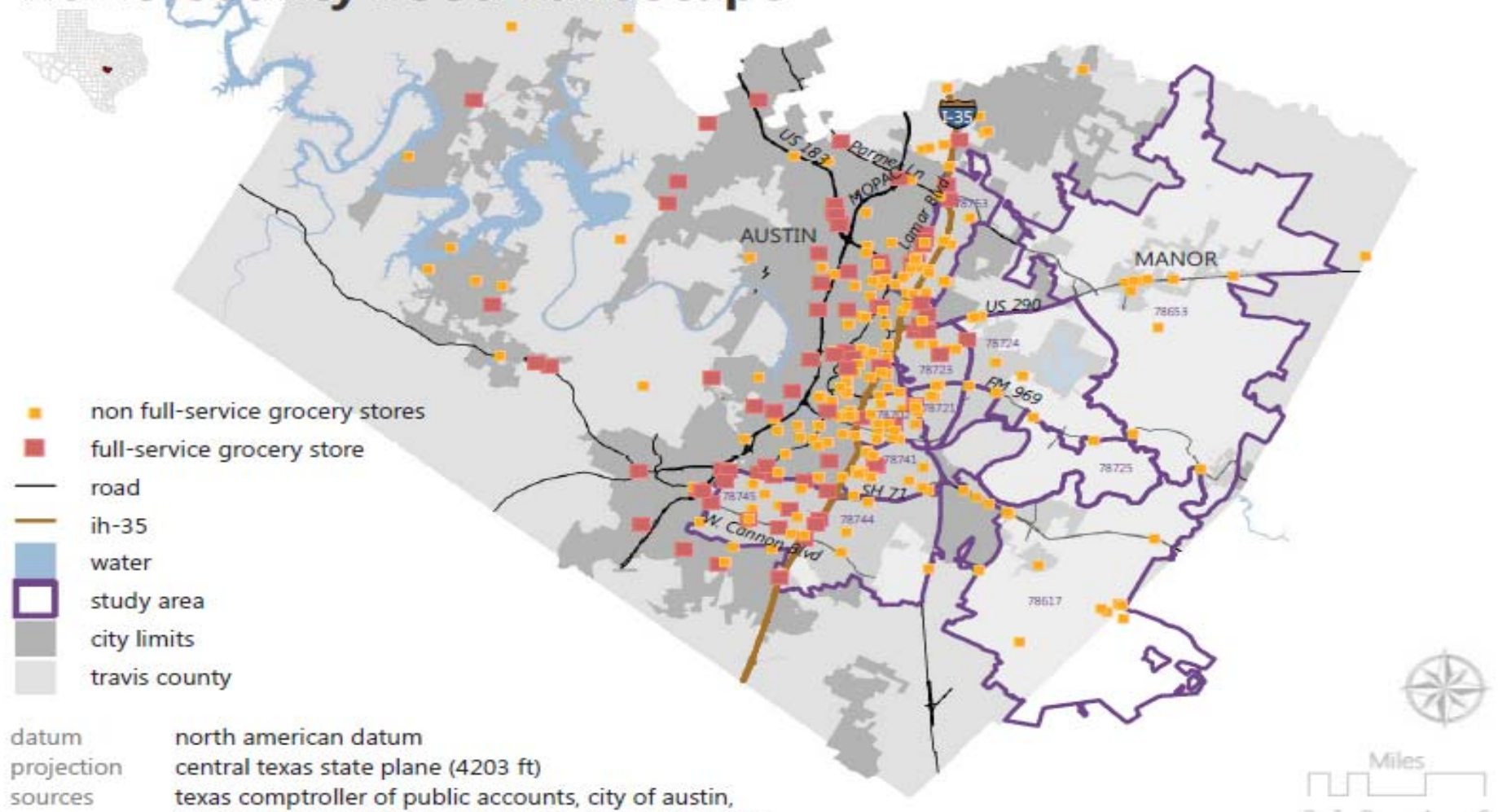
- Zip codes that have the highest volume of calls to 2-1-1 for food pantries are¹:
 - 78741, 78753, 78758, 78723, 78745, 78744, 78702
- 9% of Travis County's low-income population does not live within 1 mile of grocery stores²



1. 2-1-1 Central Texas. (2012). Data provided by Amy Price.
2. City of Austin, Travis County, Central Health, St. David's Foundation, Seton Healthcare Family, and University of Texas: School of Public Health. (2012). Together we Thrive: Austin/Travis County Community Health Plan. Retrieved from http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Health/CHA-CHIP/cha_report_8-24-12.pdf.

Travis County Food Landscape

Food Retail Locations

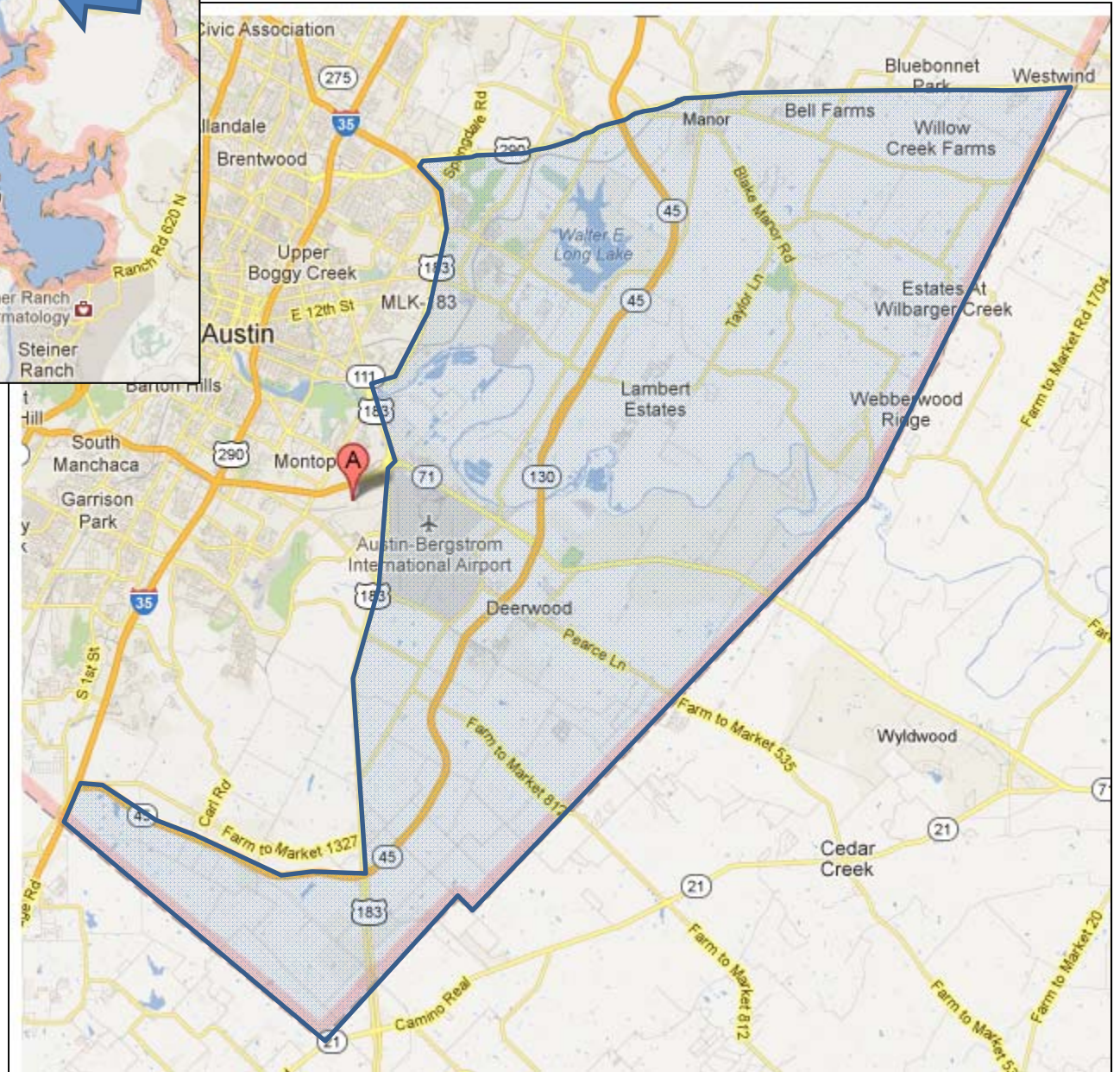
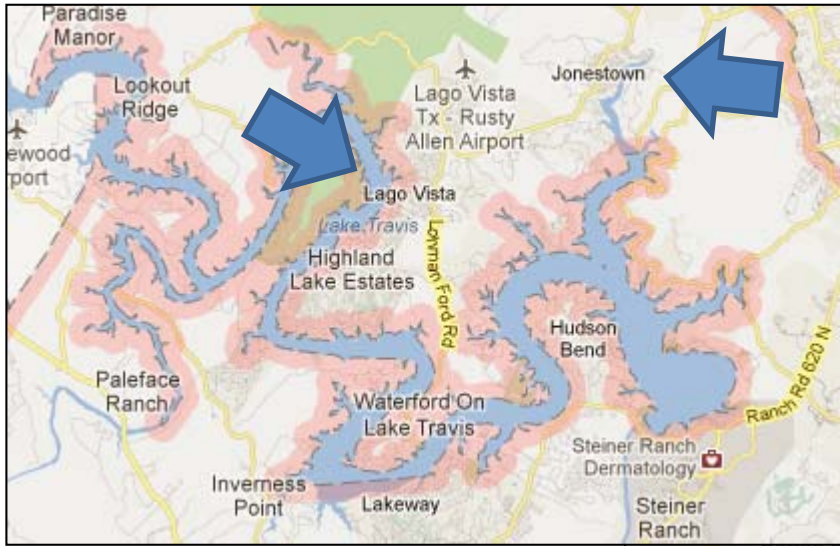


Banks, Karen. (2011). Sustainable Food Center. Central Texas Foodshed Assessment. Retrieved from http://www.sustainablefoodcenter.org/about/Central%20Texas%20Foodshed%20Assessment_English.pdf.

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- Areas with a general lack of food establishments:
 - Jonestown
 - Lago Vista
 - Area bordered by I-45/I-30/183/290/County Line





A Snapshot of Food Security in Travis County

- **Childhood Hunger**
- **More than a quarter of Travis County children are food insecure (24% or 56,100 children)**



A Snapshot of Food Security in Travis County

- An average of 84,880 children participate in the free and reduced school lunch program on a daily basis
- In contrast, an average of 6,614 children participate in the summer meal lunch program on a daily basis
- The number of children receiving lunches drops by 92% from the school year to the summer



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- An average of 39,779 children participate in the free and reduced school breakfast program on a daily basis
- In contrast, an average of 2,362 children participate in the summer meal breakfast program on a daily basis
- The number of children receiving breakfast drops by 94% from the school year to the summer



Major Barriers to Solving Food Security Issues

- Production
- Distribution
- Access
- Quality



Production & Supply



Production & Supply

- **Urban growth inflates land values and utility costs for farmers. This can lead to:**
 - Over utilization of land to bring in profit
 - Under utilization of land as selling land becomes more profitable than farming it



Production & Supply

- Food banks/pantries have a shortage of certain items (dairy, fresh produce, meat)
 - Less surplus of these items is coming to food banks from grocery stores due to increased efficiency
 - Food banks/pantries must purchase needed food items



Production & Supply

- Taxation of farmable land can make farming of the land cost-prohibitive
- Climate changes often have impacts on food production



Distribution



Distribution

- A non-profit's ability to distribute food is dependent on funding
- A significant amount of space is needed to house and distribute food to populations in need
- Gas/transportation costs



Access



Access

- **Barriers to Utilization of SNAP**
 - **Application process**
 - Length of application
 - Location of places where people can apply/Transportation issues
 - Hours of SNAP offices
 - Poor customer service



Access

- **Barriers to Utilization of SNAP**
 - Distrust of government programs (especially among the Hispanic community)
 - Eligible populations don't apply
 - Because they don't know they qualify
 - Due to stigma



Access

- **Summer Meal Programs for Children**
 - Participation in food programs drops significantly from school year to summer
 - Number of summer feeding sites has declined
 - CAFB has limited staff capacity to fill in gaps
 - AISD facilities are not always accessible in the summer which limits their use as meal sites



Access

- **Food Deserts/Limited Access to Groceries**
 - Participants in the CHA described the built environment as a challenge to accessing groceries – Travis County is a largely car dependent region



Quality



Quality

- **Importance of fresh foods that promote good health**
 - Local food banks/pantries have a shortage of “quality” foods
 - Transportation issues sometimes prevent people from accessing fresh foods
 - Some populations report difficulty finding foods that are culturally appropriate
 - General lack of understanding about what it means to eat healthy



Capital Area Food Bank. (2012).

City of Austin, Travis County, Central Health, St. David's Foundation, Seton Healthcare Family, and University of Texas: School of Public Health. (2012). Together we Thrive: Austin/Travis County Community Health Plan. Retrieved from http://austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Health/CHA-CHIP/cha_report_8-24-12.pdf.

Quality

- **Importance of fresh foods that promote good health**
 - Participants in the CHA noted that when healthy food is accessible, the cost is often prohibitive



What data are we still missing?

- Maps showing farmable land
- What are the specific gaps with summer food issues?
- A more extensive food landscape map showing grocery stores, farmers markets, community gardens, etc.



Discussion

- What else do we need to know?
- What action do we need to take based on what we do know?
- Who needs to be at the table?
 - Production
 - Distribution
 - Access
 - Quality

