

North End Food Assessment Report Winnipeg

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Produced with Support from



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Executive Summary

This food assessment was conducted to examine food security-related issues and resources in the North End of Winnipeg. The key goal of this food assessment was to develop a community profile of the local food system in the North End which will provide a base for capacity building for food related security initiatives.

Specific objectives for the assessment include:

- To develop an inventory of food resources in the community
- To identify current gaps with respect to food security in the community
- To improve the community's understanding about food security
- To identify ways to increase access to local healthy foods
- To document current food knowledge and skills within the community and identify what additional knowledge and skills are desired or needed
- To identify ways to engage community members, service agencies, government and local businesses to actively participate in local food system initiatives
- To become a mechanism for raising awareness about food security issues
- To provide the base on which to build the food planning process and to develop specific food security initiatives – community capacity building



A multi-methods approach was used, to develop an understanding of the food system in the North End. In order to engage the community, the research design incorporated a variety of North End community stakeholders including residents (of various ages and socio-economic backgrounds), local social service agencies and local businesses.

The research was conducted between January 1, 2010 and March 31, 2010.

About the North End

The North End encompasses the neighbourhoods defined by the City of Winnipeg Point Douglas Community.

- North Point Douglas
- Lord Selkirk Park
- Dufferin
- William Whyte

- Burrows Central
- Robertson
- Inkster Faraday
- St. John's
- St. John's Park
- Luxton

The North End is a diverse community which comprises some of the lowest income neighbourhoods as well as having one of the highest urban aboriginal populations in Canada.

In 2006 the population of the area was 35,910 or 6% of the total population of Winnipeg. The population growth over the past five years was 2.8% compared to an overall growth of 2.2% for the city.

Some Key Demographic Facts about the North End:

- There is a much higher Aboriginal population in the North End when compared to the general population in Winnipeg
- The North End has a slightly lower proportion of immigrants compared to the overall city; however, within some of the North End neighbourhoods there are significantly more immigrants
- There is a slightly higher percentage of people under 24 years of age when compared to Winnipeg
- There is a significantly higher number of lone parent families
- Poverty is a significant issue in the area.
 - Average household income is 18% lower when compared to Winnipeg overall
 - The incidence of poverty is significantly higher than Winnipeg overall (by 36%)
- Unemployment rates are higher
 - Higher unemployment typically results in higher numbers of the population on income assistance or other government programs
- There is a higher percentage of people who rely on public transportation or walking as their main means of transportation compared to the general population of Winnipeg
- In Winnipeg, there is a significant gap between shelter allowances and average rents

A profile for each neighbourhood is provided to identify the unique aspects within and between the neighbourhoods that make up the North End. Some of the communities in the North End have neighbourhood revitalization funding through the Province of Manitoba Neighbourhood's Alive! (NA!). The communities that do not have this funding are the communities that have the fewest number of food security initiatives.

Prior to May 2009, there had been no ability for North End food security service providers to partner or organize a North End wide food security initiative. The concept of food security, food sovereignty, food justice, collective kitchens, food security social enterprise, and good food

boxes was not recognized in the North End prior to the formation of the North End Food Security Network in October 2008.

There were very few capacity-building food security related activities, however, the need for and provision of food was very evident by the large number of charitable activities such as food banks and soup kitchens. Five community gardens had been initiated in William Whyte; which were accessible to a small number of residents. Neechi Foods, a small worker Co-op, has been the only social enterprise in the area, for twenty years.

In October 2008, the North End Food Security Network (NEFSN) was launched. Since then there has been significant progress in the community in terms of Food Security, however there is much to be done to move the community from its current situation to one of 'food secure'.

The food assessment conducted an inventory of food security and related initiatives. This inventory includes the main social service agencies, churches, schools, and government organizations that provide food related services and resources for vulnerable persons and those at risk of food insecurity in the city of Winnipeg's Point Douglas catchment area (The North End).

The initiatives are presented in the following categories:

- Short term relief of hunger (charity model)
- Charitable programs
- Capacity building strategies (community development model)
 - Educational Program/Classes
 - Community Kitchens
 - Community Gardens
 - Other Programs
- Food access-grocery stores /delivery/transportation
- Food policy /Social policy development



The Research Findings

Based on analysis from the research the findings merged into a number of common themes as follows:

- Need to move away from a Charity Model in the North End

- The area has a significant number of food banks and other charitable services as noted in the inventory. Many of these agencies are offering a valued service, however, it was noted that the focus of these food services were designed to offer emergency food relief.
- Many people stated that having food is a basic necessity, just as shelter but most charity models do not lead to self sufficiency. The model needs to change.
- The local community is eager for change
 - There is a strong desire for change within the community. Respondents got excited when discussing ideas for change. There will be a need to engage the residents in these changes. Currently many residents are disengaged, and many feel stuck because they don't know how to get out of their current situation.
- Social and family connections
 - Many local residents feel disconnected from their families and even society; Many people are also feel marginalized because of welfare, residential school etc.
 - The lack of family connectedness was evident in many comments that were elicited in response to questions about families eating together.
 - New families in the community do not know what food resources are available and how to access them.
 - This disconnection has been further exaggerated by the lack of transportation in the area.
- Involving youth in food security
 - There was a general consensus that youth needed to be involved in food related activities and that education was an important component of these activities. There was a wide range of suggestions on how to engage the youth.
- The significant role of poverty in its impact on food security
- Health issues in the North End that result from food insecurity and from poverty in general
- The “food desert” in the North End
 - There is a dearth of nutritious and healthy food available in the North End. Although there are many corner stores there is little variety and a lack of nutritious offerings.
 - Local restaurants all offer similar high fat, fried unhealthy food. There is little by way of nutritious offerings.
 - Although there are a few larger stores near the periphery of the north end, people don't have transportation to get there.
- Lack of understanding about Food Security

Currently there are a significant number of programs but these are disjointed. Each agency holds a piece of the puzzle but they are not connected. Agencies need to come together to increase their impact. This can be accomplished when resources are shared and planned with a focus on capacity building. There will always be people that need charity, but many people want to do better for their children.

Recommendations

The recommendations presented are based on the food assessment findings and are presented as next steps to move the North End further along the Food Security Continuum.

Education

Education involves activities that will increase the knowledge and skills of the community towards more sustainable food security.

- Provide information by way of education and training workshops at local childcare centres, schools and agencies.
- Develop a database of available workshops, facilitators, experts and community members who can offer assistance and expertise in food security related projects for the North End.
- Develop more learning kitchen opportunities so that families can cook together.
- Promote information and progress of the community gardens by offering North End garden tours.
- Develop local expertise and resources on gardening that can be made available to community gardeners and that is culturally appropriate.
- Facilitate access to training (such as food handlers) opportunities that are an incentive to job readiness in food service industry and in food programs in the North End
- Facilitate information gathering from residents regarding what they want to learn, through ongoing intergenerational community engagement, sharing circles, information sharing, written workshop and event evaluations
- Develop and implement training for kitchen leaders to contribute to the success of community kitchens
- Integrate culturally appropriate Aboriginal language and teachings so that Aboriginal youth can realize that their traditional culture was rooted in strong food security, food sovereignty and food justice; so that they will be motivated to engage in food security initiatives; in particular social enterprise, as this community is their future.

Facilitation

Facilitation activities presented are designed to engage and inform the internal community in the food security initiatives that bring families and the community together.

- Raise awareness of food security best practises in other communities
- Promote best practises, resources and information through newsletters ,community events such as community clean-ups and the North End Picnic in the Park, and the NECRC website
- Promote and facilitate programs that get families eating together
- Promote gardening as a healthy physical and emotional activity for families

- Hold monthly steering committee meetings and ensure that it represents the entire community
- Connect with residents and organizations to keep informed of gaps and current activities

Advocacy

Advocacy involves promoting the need for external supports and resources by the community.

- Advocate for the North End at food security events in other communities, at City policy making meetings, and at provincial and federal food-related initiative
- Advocate with government and funders to promote the need for increased and more stable funding for food security initiatives. Promote the link between food security, poverty and healthy communities

Food Policy Activities

- Continue to work with Winnipeg food policy group
- Represent the community in the food policy arena

Food Access

Food access recommendations address a wide range of food access issues raised in the food assessment study:

Offer varied and flexible food security activities

Ensure that initiatives are flexible in that they can be customized to meet specific neighbourhood needs. The North End is varied in its demographics, so what may work for one neighbourhood may not work for another one.

Offer transportation services to larger grocery stores

Transportation might be in the form of a North End shuttle or a NECRC van that is part of a community enterprise.

Grocery Delivery Initiatives

Good Food Box

- Response from residents for a good food box is strong. Currently, there is a Winnipeg Good Food box feasibility study being done. One Good Food Box model that is working is located in West Broadway, which distributes about 30 boxes. Partnering with West Broadway might facilitate this activity. The good food box is also an avenue for employment and opportunity for pre-employment.

Delivery from Grocery Stores

- Explore local chain grocery stores about delivery options. Alternatively a community enterprise might be launched to deliver groceries to residents in the community.

- One of the large chain grocery stores delivers to a school, and has affordable prices.
- Expand information sharing about food delivery options.
- Neechi foods might be a partner in this as they have indicated an interest in expanding their business.

Buy Local /Farmers Market Initiatives

- Continue to expand the farmer's market.
- Work with Neechi in possible to open a farmers market by community members. Offer opportunities for local residents and youth to sell produce/baking/crafts at the market.
- Coordinate and share information to agencies, schools, community groups about farmers who are trying to sell locally.
- Encourage a social enterprise to coordinate the ordering and delivery of farm products. This might be a partner with a Ma Mawe program.
- Provide a food security welcome wagon to new residents which could include specials, list of people who will provide transportation, busses, location of local grocery stores, list of other food option etc.
- Encourage groups to talk about accessing food in programs other than food security groups e.g.: mom's at school may discuss health- but not realize that they could shop together or help each other out with shopping/buying, to save money.
- Encourage community restaurants to participate in the community by hiring local young people as part of a pre-employment experience.

Capacity Building

Community Kitchens

- Winnipeg Harvest is planning on building a community kitchen. Although this is outside the boundaries of the North End, NEFSN should be involved as a partner in order to facilitate the development of other potential community kitchens.
- Encourage the development of learning kitchens; for example, where food bank customers can bring in their food and have the tools and guidance to prepare health low-cost meals for their families.

Food Security HUB

Develop a central food security HUB on Selkirk Avenue, which could include the following components:

- A central community learning kitchen would be at the centre of this HUB.
- Collective kitchen leader and worker training for satellite centres and other community kitchens
- Small café with traditional healthy food choice which might include a pay ahead option and pre-employment training programs.

- Monthly café or youth smoothie nights or fundraisers.
- Meal assembly option where local residents could bring or obtain food and prepare it into meals. Freezers could be available for them to store these meals.
- Incorporate gardening /agriculture activities and training into the learning centre.
- Workshops on budgeting, canning, nutrition, etc.
- Information centre on food security.
- Transportation for the local community to get to and from the HUB. Transportation would increase access for the area.

Community Gardens

- Continue to expand community gardens
 - Include a traditional and medicinal component at each garden site.
 - Make gardening projects intergenerational
 - Engage local elders in the planning and mentoring at all garden projects
- Partner with other agencies such as graffiti gallery to incorporate art and creative expression in the garden as a healing activity (for example: Spiral Garden in Toronto)

Social Entrepreneurship Building

- NEFSN could be involved in identifying and advocating for increased capacity building activities that could fill food security gaps in the community for example:
 - Transportation services
 - Grocery delivery
 - Shopping services
 - Promoting healthy eating/cooking
 - Healthy restaurant or deli service

NECRC could work with local food businesses (grocery stores, corner stores and restaurants) to provide education regarding the need for healthy food at reasonable prices. NECRC could provide information on how changes to their offerings and prices could better meet the needs of the community and provide better returns for the business. Some activities might include; the development of a community newsletter which can include regular local food specials, food related information, etc.

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Appendix B: List of local food stores in the North End
Map of local food stores in the North End

Appendix C: Food Survey

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Introduction

This food assessment was conducted to examine food security-related issues and resources in the North End of Winnipeg.

“An assessment is a critical analysis of information for the purposes of guiding decisions on complex, public issues. A key characteristic is that it involves stakeholders to ensure shared ownership of the process and results. It is conducted through an open and transparent process.”¹

A widely accepted definition of community food security adapted and presented in the Community Food Assessment Guide² follows:

“Community food security exists when all citizens obtain safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes health food choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone.”

The researchers, Kaye Grant of Reconnaissance Management Consulting Group Inc, and Margo Malabar, North End Food Security Coordinator, were engaged to conduct this food assessment.

Goals /Purpose

The key goal of the food assessment is to develop a community profile of the local food system in the North End which will provide a base for capacity building for food related security initiatives.

Specific objectives for the assessment include:

- To develop an inventory of food resources in the community
- To identify current gaps with respect to food security in the community
- To improve the community’s understanding about food security
- To identify ways to increase access to local healthy foods
- To document current food knowledge and skills within the community and identify what additional knowledge and skills are desired or needed
- To identify ways to engage community members, service agencies, government and local businesses to actively participate in local food system initiatives

¹ Ross, Sue, and Zena Simces, for the Lydia Drasic, Director, Provincial Primary Health Care & Population Health Strategic Planning, Provincial Health Services Authority , Vancouver B.C, 2008 pg 5

² *Ibid*, pg 7

- To become a mechanism for raising awareness about food security issues
- To provide the base on which to build the food planning process and to develop specific food security initiatives – community capacity building

The goal of Food Security Initiatives such as this is to develop a more sustainable food solution in the North End.

Some of the key questions that this study sought to address are:

- What are local residents buying/cooking/eating?
- How often are families involved in cooking/eating together?
- Where are local residents shopping?
- What food related resources are available to this community?
- Why have community or collective kitchens not been successful in this community? What would it take to make these successful?
- How can social enterprises contribute to food security in the community?
- How can the community take ownership of the food security initiatives?
- What opportunities or methods would facilitate youth to take ownership and leadership in food security related activities?
- What types of food security initiatives would be feasible, engage the community and increase the food security in the Point Douglas area?

Ultimately the key question in food security is how to shift the community focus from the charitable model to self sufficiency. How should community development and capacity building activities be implemented? How could the development of social enterprises, community gardens, community kitchens, farmer's markets, urban agricultural and other food security related initiatives be applied in this community?

The North End

The North End encompasses the neighbourhoods defined by the City of Winnipeg Point Douglas Community. The geographical boundaries are:

- North – Carruthers Ave.
- South – Railway tracks
- West – McPhillips St.
- East – The Red River

The North End is a diverse community which comprises some of the lowest income neighbourhoods as well as having one of the highest



urban aboriginal populations in Canada.

In 2006 the population of the area was 35,910 or 6% of the total population of Winnipeg. The population growth over the past five years was 2.8% compared to an overall growth of 2.2% for the city.

“The people classified as highest risk for being food-insecure are those receiving social assistance, low-income households, lone-mothers, children and urban Aboriginal Peoples.”

Che & Chen, 2001, city of Ottawa, 2001

Demographics

The North End is uniquely different in many ways when compared to the general population of Winnipeg.

Chart A: Population and Distribution³

Area	Total Pop	% Aboriginal	% Visible Minority
North Point Douglas	2225	34.2%	8.8%
Lord Selkirk Park	1365	66.7%	1.1%
Dufferin	2090	46.9%	21.3%
William Whyte	6220	44.5%	22.2%
Burrows Central	4805	19.7%	35.2%
Robertson	4205	11.8%	18.2%
Inkster Faraday	4135	19.1%	23.0%
St. John's	7725	30.4%	18.1%
St. John's Park	575	14.8%	5.2%
Luxton	2565	19.9%	5.1%
North End Totals	35,910	30.8%	15.8%
Winnipeg	633,451	10.2%	16.3%

Aboriginal Population

There is a much higher Aboriginal population in the North End when compared to the general population in Winnipeg (Chart A). In fact Aboriginal people in the North End comprise 30.8% of the population compared to 10.2% in Winnipeg; over a 20% difference. The percentage of Aboriginal people also varies considerably between the neighbourhoods

³ Based on 2006 Census Data

in the North End from a low of 11.9% to a high of 66.7%. Over 55% of Manitoba's food bank clients are aboriginal.⁴

Immigrant Population

Looking at Visible Minorities (Chart A) as a proxy for the immigrant population shows that overall the North End has a slightly lower proportion of immigrants compared to the overall city; however, within the following neighbourhoods there are significantly more immigrants:

- William Whyte
- Burrows Central
- Robertson
- Inkster Faraday
- St. John's

Children and Youth

The North End has a slightly higher percentage of people under 24 years of age when compared to Winnipeg (Chart B). Children and youth who are affected by food insecurity tend to suffer more significant health issues⁵. Almost 49% of people using food banks in Manitoba are children.⁶

Chart B: Population by Age

Area	% Children (under 15)	% Youth (15-24)
North Point Douglas	19.3%	16.5%
Lord Selkirk Park	26.8%	13.4%
Dufferin	19.1%	14.0%
William Whyte	27.5%	14.0%
Burrows Central	18.8%	14.3%
Robertson	18.2%	10.8%
Inkster Faraday	20.2%	13.7%
St. John's	24.6%	13.3%
St. John's Park	14.1%	17.5%
Luxton	21.1%	16.8%

⁴ HUNGERCOUNT2009, Food Banks Canada

⁵ Kreider, Brent, Gundersen, Craig, Bounding the Effects of Food Insecurity on Children's Health Outcomes, *Published in Journal of Health Economics, September 2009, vol. 28 no. 5, pp. 971-983*

⁶ HUNGERCOUNT2009, Food Banks Canada

Area	% Children (under 15)	% Youth (15-24)
North End Totals	21%	14.43%
Winnipeg	17.7%	14.2%

Research has identified youth as a potential target population for food security initiatives, noting that establishing the concept of healthy eating and lifestyles in this group could have significant impact on community food security.

The North End has a similar portion of youth compared to the overall city of Winnipeg with only a .02% difference overall. There are approximately 5,100 youth in the North End that could be potential targets and contributors to food security initiatives.

Family Structure

As shown in Chart C, there is a significantly higher number of lone parent families. This trend was evident for all the neighbourhoods except Robertson and St. John's Park. As a whole, there are 17% more lone parent families in the North End when compared to Winnipeg. This is a significant concern because there is evidence that lone parent families are more likely to be food insecure than two parent families⁷.

Chart C: Family Structure: Lone Parent

Area	% Lone Parent Female	% Lone Parent Male
North Point Douglas	41.1%	9.3%
Lord Selkirk Park	54.2%	6.3%
Dufferin	39.1%	6.5%
William Whyte	33.7%	10.5%
Burrows Central	28.4%	6.1%
Robertson	14.6%	2.1%
Inkster Faraday	25.9%	7.9%
St. John's	28.9%	4.8%
St. John's Park	13.6%	5.6%
Luxton	24.1%	3.6%

⁷ Ledrou, Ingrid, and JeanGervais, Food Insecurity, Health Reports, Vol 16, No. 3, May 2005, Statistics Canada Catalogue 82-003

Area	% Lone Parent Female	% Lone Parent Male
North End Totals	30.4%	6.3%
Winnipeg	16.2%	3.3%
Manitoba	14%	3%

Employment, Income and Education

Analysis of the employment status of the North End also noted that unemployment rates are higher (Chart D). Average household income is 18% lower when compared to Winnipeg overall. However, the incidence of poverty is significantly higher at 36% of households compared to only 15.7% of households in Winnipeg as a whole. Poverty is a significant issue in the area.

“Low income is the most important cause of hunger in Manitoba¹”

HUNGERCOUNT2009,
Food Banks Canada

We know that poverty is a basic indicator for food insecurity. For families barely surviving on a low-income budget, acquiring the types of foods they want and need in sufficient quantities is a serious challenge, which leads to a dependence on community-based food initiatives or charitable donation centers.

Chart D: Employment Education and Income⁸

Area	Unemployment rate	% less than grade 12 education ⁹	Average household income	Incidence of low income ¹⁰
North Point	10.5%	50.7%	\$31,090	50.1%
Lord Selkirk	18.7%	58.7%	\$21,559	74.1%
Dufferin	15.0%	54.4%	\$30,416	52.9%
William Whyte	14.1%	46.4%	\$36,356	44.8%
Burrows Central	5.1%	38.8%	\$44,809	23.6%
Robertson	3.6%	29.9%	\$53,254	7.70%
Inkster Faraday	6.3%	35.3%	\$43,558	25.8%
St. John's	8.3%	38.1%	\$38,327	32.1%
St. John's Park	4.9%	24.0%	\$58,927	28.7%
Luxton	7.2%	26.0%	\$54,041	20.5%

⁸ Based on 2006 Census Data

⁹ For those 15 years and over

¹⁰ After tax - based on total private households

North End	9.4%	40.2%	\$51,542	36.0%
Winnipeg	5.2%	23.1%	\$63,023	15.7%

Research indicates that the cost of housing affects the amount of money that residents have available to purchase food. According to recent research, shelter allowances are significantly less than the current cost of rent¹¹. The gap between shelter allowance and current rents is significant (Chart E). Residents often use their food money to cover rent which reduces what they have left for groceries and ultimately affects food choices.

Chart E: Shelter Allowances compared to average Rents for Winnipeg 2008

Dwelling Size	Shelter Allowance	Average Rents (2008)	Gap
Single person (Bach)	\$285	\$450	-165
Two persons (1 bdrm)	\$387	\$592	-205
Three persons (2 bdrm)	\$430	\$746	-316
Four persons (3+bdrm)	\$471	\$906	-435
Five persons (3+ bdrm)	\$488	\$906	-418
Six persons (3+bdrm)	\$513	\$906	-393

The area also has a significantly higher number of people with less than a grade 12 education which typically aligns to lower income or unemployment. Over 40% of the population over 15 years of age have less than a grade 12 education compared to 23% in Winnipeg overall.

Transportation

A common concern of low-income residents is the lack of accessible affordable food stores in their community. Point Douglas demographics also show that there is a higher percentage of people who rely on public transportation or walking as their main means of transportation compared to the general population of Winnipeg (Chart F). Inability to access low-cost foods increases food insecurity. A comparison of transportation¹² indicates that people in all areas other than Robertson are more likely to be using public transit versus people overall in Winnipeg.

¹¹ Canadian Mortgage and Housing and 2006 Census Housing Series

¹² Census 2006 Data: Note that these statistics are only for the employed labour force and therefore are likely understated for the population as a whole.

Chart F: Mode of Transport¹³

Area	% Vehicle (Driver)	% Public Transit
North Point Douglas	50.3%	30.4%
Lord Selkirk Park	34.5%	22.4%
Dufferin	56.8%	26.1%
William Whyte	42.2%	30.1%
Burrows Central	56.8%	26.1%
Robertson	73.1%	11.7%
Inkster Faraday	63.1%	21.2%
St. John's	52.5%	24.8%
St. John's Park	59.7%	15.3%
Luxton	61.8%	15.1%
North End Totals	50.1%	22.3%
Winnipeg	68.0 %	14.2%

Community Profiles

The North End has a history of being a diverse community. In 1998, the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) was founded to promote social, economic and cultural renewal of the North End of Winnipeg through Community Development and Community Economic Development.

The history of NECRC is rooted in a community economic development (CED) approach. A NECRC backgrounder defines CED as "*Action by people locally to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions in their communities on a sustainable and inclusive basis, particularly with those who are most disadvantaged*".

NECRC supports and partners with neighborhood associations, schools, agencies, businesses and local and provincial government to bring about positive change and growth in the entire North End. In October 2008 NECRC began to host monthly meetings with the North End Food Security Network (NEFSN) which is comprised of a network of service providers. North End Food Security Network started a food security inventory of the north end.

Temporary funding¹⁴ was secured for a community consultation process to determine the support and direction that the North End needed in food security initiatives. In May 2009 a North End Food Security/Greening coordinator was hired by NECRC, through a one year provincial

¹³ Employed Labour Force – Census 2006

¹⁴ From the Public Health Agency of Canada

grant¹⁵. The NFSN mission is to provide opportunities for low-income families living in the North End of Winnipeg to improve their ability to provide sustainable nutritious food for their families through food security and greening activities. The North End Food Security/Greening Project (NEFS/GP) also serves to increase inter-agencies' capacity to share information on their successes and needs to improve food security.

A profile for each neighbourhood is provided to identify the unique aspects within and between the neighbourhoods that make up the North End. Some of the communities in the North End have neighbourhood revitalization funding through the Province of Manitoba Neighbourhood's Alive! (NA!). The communities that do not have this funding are the communities that have the fewest number of food security initiatives.

Prior to May 2009, there has been no ability for North End food security service providers to partner or organize a North End wide food security initiative. The concept of food security, food sovereignty, food justice, collective kitchens, food security social enterprise, and good food boxes was not recognized in the North End prior to the formation of the North End Food Security Network in October 2008.

North Point Douglas

Although North Point Douglas has a 50% incidence of low income, there is a significant number of residents who have created a strong North Point Douglas Residents Committee (NPDRC). NPDRC has recently partnered with the Point Douglas Women's Centre to develop three community garden sites, and is in the process of partnering with Neechi Foods in their business expansion which will be in North Point Douglas.

North Point Douglas neighbourhood currently has the strongest drive and understanding to improve food security. North Point Douglas currently has one corner grocery store, and no large chain grocery stores. There are currently no other capacity building food security initiatives in North Point Douglas.

Lord Selkirk Park

Residents in Lord Selkirk Park (LSP) have the lowest levels of education and income in the North End. They have the highest number of lone female parent households, the highest number of children under 15, the highest unemployment level, and the highest Aboriginal population in the North End. The majority of the Lord Selkirk Park community lives in the Lord Selkirk Park Developments (LSPD), owned by Manitoba Housing. Ninety percent (90%) of the LSPD population is below the poverty level.

¹⁵ Neighbourhoods Alive!

In 2009, community gardens and container gardens were established at LSP through NECRC, NEFS/GP. The community response to gardening and the interest in learning about Manitoba traditional and medicinal plants is high.

In January of 2010, Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre opened a small community cupboard, with monthly cooking classes. In February 2010 Turtle Island Community centre completed a six week cooking class. Mount Carmel clinic is located in Lord Selkirk Park. They offer one-on-one counseling for clients on diabetes and healthy eating. There are several drop-in centres and programs that do not include capacity building food security initiatives.

Neechi Foods, a worker co-op, is currently located in Lord Selkirk Park. A food bank operates across the street from Neechi Foods once a week. Neechi has recently purchased a 62,000 sq. ft building to expand their grocery store in the North Point Douglas community.

Dufferin

Dufferin has the second lowest income level (52%), in the North End. In 2009 an 1800 sq. ft. community garden at North End Stella Community Ministry (NESCM) was established through NECRC, NEFS/GP with a very high response from the community. NESCM is currently partnering with several agencies to develop a gardening committee. One youth agency in Dufferin has completed a six week cooking class.

Two community kitchens will be commenced in April 2010 at Niji Mahkwa School. Building Urban Industries for Local Development (B.U.I.L.D.) plans to teach cooking once a week at Niji Mahwa beginning in April 2010. NECRC, NEFS/GP and Niji Mahkwa are partnering for an upcoming community kitchen, to commence in April, 2010.

William Whyte

William Whyte Residents' Association (WWRA) established five community gardens in 2001. WWRA also helps New Canadians with grocery shopping and understanding Canadian foods, through the Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program (NISP). A garden site at Hope Health Care Centre was secured and successfully established through NECRC NEFS/GP in 2009, with youth and new Canadians participating. Splash childcare has a *Kids in the Kitchen* cooking program for school-aged children, that has a nutrition component. They also do vermi-composting and gardening at a William Whyte community garden site.

There are several schools, churches and many agencies located throughout William Whyte that have food security initiatives that are at the charity stage. Recently, Indian Family

Centre has begun capacity building food security initiatives four out of five days each week. These include an indoor 'veggie grow op', a community kitchen, 'Stone Soup Monday' and Bannock making classes. Indian Family centre is one of the partners in the North End Stella Community Ministry Garden.

Burrows Central

Burrows Central does not receive NA! funding, although there are areas of poverty within this community. In 2009 three small gardens (4 ft x 4 ft.) were established through Urban Green Team and CDPI funding. Two six week cooking classes for youth have recently started, but it is unknown if there will be a location to continue this, due to lack of funding.

Robertson

The City of Winnipeg provides community garden plots on property adjacent to the railway line, behind a community centre, where about twelve residents garden. Robertson has no other known capacity building food security initiatives. It has the highest level of vehicle use and the lowest unemployment rate in the North End.

Inkster Faraday

Inkster Farady has no known capacity building food security initiatives or residents' association. When compared to the other neighbourhood areas, Inkster is in the middle in terms of demographics that were studied.

St. John's

This is the smallest by area and population. It has the third highest number of children compared to the other areas. Ralph Brown School has two raised garden beds. The North End Wellness Centre, located at Mountain and McGregor, is occupied by several agencies; two of which are Ma Mawi and Splash Daycare. Ma Mawi, an agency that provides culturally relevant preventative and supportive programs and services for Aboriginal families, has a weekly community kitchen, where six community members learn how to prepare nutritious meals. Ma Mami also provides daily meal replacement through Winnipeg Harvest, where a volunteer assists staff in preparing lunch for drop-in community members of all ages.

Splash daycare has a *Kids in the Kitchen* cooking program for pre-schoolers, that has a nutrition component. Elohim charity has a food bank, and feeds 100 people daily. They also have a community kitchen once a month. St. John's Presbyterian Church has a food bank. No other capacity building food security initiatives in St. John's are known.

St. John's Park

St. John's Park has fewer people who use public transit. It has the highest income levels compared to the other areas (but still less than the Winnipeg average). There is no known residents' association or capacity building food security initiatives.

Luxton

Luxton has a residents' association, but there are no known capacity building food security initiatives. Luxton School has stated that 10% of students come to school hungry, and they have only recently (2010) been able to secure private funding for a breakfast program as they are not one of the NA! communities.

Current Status of Food Security

Prior to October 2008, the term 'food security' was not known or understood by the majority of residents. There were very few capacity-building food security related activities, however, the need for and provision of food was very evident by the large number of charitable activities such as food banks and soup kitchens. Five community gardens had been initiated in William Whyte; which were accessible to a small number of residents. Neechi Foods, a small worker Co-op, has been the only social enterprise in the area, for twenty years.

In October 2008, the North End Food Security Network (NEFSN) was launched. Since then there has been significant progress in the community in terms of Food Security, however there is much to be done to move the community from its current situation to one of 'food secure'.

This description of the current status of the North End is intended to provide the context on which to build the food assessment discussion which follows.

An inventory of existing food security initiatives in Winnipeg's North End is provided in Appendix A.

The initiatives are presented in the following categories:

- Short term relief of hunger (charity model)
- Charitable programs
- Capacity building strategies (community development model)
- Food access-grocery stores /delivery/transportation

- Food /social policy development

The inventory includes the main social service agencies, churches, schools, and government organizations that provide food related services and resources for vulnerable persons and those at risk of food insecurity in the city of Winnipeg's Point Douglas catchment area (The North End).

Short Term Relief from Hunger (Charity Model)

Winnipeg Harvest is the main distributor of emergency food in Winnipeg's North End. Food banks, many of which are faith based organizations, provide grocery hampers to individuals and families. Almost one-half of the individuals provided with food are children or the elderly – two of the most vulnerable populations. A representative from Winnipeg Harvest states that over 1,000 families in North Winnipeg proper use their food banks, and that these people also go to food banks in other areas of Winnipeg, to meet their food needs¹⁶.

"Food bank usage is a clear indicator that government policy and the labour market are failing to provide citizens with the basic necessities".

The Manitoba Child & Family Poverty Report Card (2006)

Daycares depend on Winnipeg Harvest to stretch the food budgets allotted to them. In addition to daycares, community organizations for children and youth depend on Winnipeg Harvest to provide up to 100% of their snack or meal needs.

Winnipeg Harvest also provides food for meal replacement programs to agencies, soup kitchens and community kitchens.

Ten (10) agencies or churches have food banks that provide emergency food on a bi-weekly basis. One church has a food bank every week, but this is for different categories (i.e. one week is for singles, the next week is for families). Thirteen (13) agencies or churches provide emergency food on a five day per week, daily as needed, once a week or once a month basis. Seven agencies or churches provide meals either five days a week, once a week or on a monthly basis.

Every elementary school in the North End has a breakfast program which is part of the Winnipeg School Division budget. Ralph Brown School serves a hot lunch, and David Livingstone also provides snacks during the day.

In addition to the above, one agency provides 200 food vouchers every month, while another agency provides milk to new mothers in need.

¹⁶ (waiting for update for 2009/2010)

Short term relief from hunger depends largely on donations from businesses and residents throughout the City Of Winnipeg. Most programs are run by volunteers and in-kind donations from churches and agencies.

Charitable Programs

Nineteen agencies provide meals and or snacks with their programs, at no cost. One agency provides a meal at cost, for a small group of seniors, once a week. Six of the agencies are drop-in youth centres that run four to six days a week. The food is provided through Winnipeg Harvest and government funding.

Capacity Building Strategies (Capacity Building-Community Development)

Educational Programs/Classes

Capacity building cooking programs include pre-school mother goose and alphabet soup cooking classes, preschoolers, children and teen *Kids in the Kitchen* cooking classes, a youth culinary arts program at a high school, adult cooking classes at two locations, a stone soup kitchen group and community (collective) kitchens. Other capacity building programs include community gardens, nutrition counseling, a freezer purchase plan, nutrition bingo events, a community cupboard, food-handlers certification classes and food security outings.

Two daycares have cooking classes for pre-schoolers. At one of these sites, the preschoolers pick their own vegetables from a community garden when available and use it in healthy food choices.

Ndinawe, an Aboriginal agency, has a life skills program for youth that teaches budgeting and healthy food choices.

Four youth groups, through the NECRC North End Food Security project, have recently completed six week *Kids in the Kitchen* cooking classes. One school has a parent's cooking class, while another high school has a culinary arts program for students. Robertson School has a lunch and snack program where students and parents learn how to make new lunches.

Seven agencies are currently running cooking classes once a week, most of which have started in 2010. Only one of these agencies has members who are contributing toward the cost of the programming. This agency also has recently started 'Stone Soup Monday', where community members bring food items and help to make a soup.

Other capacity building cooking programs are not structured. Three agencies have community meals or one-on-one mentoring for people who have requested help in learning

how to cook or shop or budget for their food. One church has built transitional housing, where a small group of clients learn how to budget and cook. Some of the food that they cook has been grown and harvested by the clients at a farm near Winnipeg.

Community Kitchens

There are no self-sustaining or partially subsidized ongoing community or collective kitchens that have lasted more than eight weeks, in which participants contribute to the cost of the food.

Community kitchens have stopped due to lack of funding, lack of consistent participation, or change of staff in agencies. Two of the barriers to setting up similar community (collective) kitchens in the North End, has been lack of commercially approved kitchens, consistency in programming and staff who feel that the clients do not have any money to contribute to the meals. Evidence from Saskatoon and Toronto indicates that successful kitchens are possible. These models are a source of best practices on how to develop new kitchens in the North End.

Community Gardens

William Whyte is the only neighbourhood that has community gardens built prior to 2008. Five community garden sites, on vacant city lots were established in 2001, through the William Whyte Residents Association. About 22 gardeners, including Splash Daycare participated in gardening in the raised garden plots.

In 2008, Aboriginal Visioning established a small container garden site in their back yard, and Mount Carmel Clinic establishes six 4' by 8' raised garden beds.

In the summer of 2009, North End community gardening greatly expanded through the North End Community Renewal Corporation's 'Growing Green Together' project. Five new community garden sites were established in Lord Selkirk Park, North Point Douglas, Dufferin and William Whyte. An estimated 95 new gardeners participated in the gardens. Approximately 90% of the gardeners are Aboriginal and from youth groups. At one garden site, seven agencies partnered for the gardening project. Each garden site has a traditional and medicinal plant component. Garden mentors and elders are available for workshops, and to teach gardeners about Native Manitoba plants, composting, garden maintenance, how to harvest, and other gardening related workshops.

North Point Douglas established two community garden sites in 2009. One of the barriers to their options for their garden sites is soil contamination. Thus, their vegetable gardens are raised beds. They have a garden committee of about twelve community members, and are currently planning on expanding their community gardens.

R.B.Russell school has a horticulture department, where students plant, greenhouse grow and sell vegetables and annual flowers each spring to the public.

Other Programs

Other capacity building programs and events are:

- Mount Carmel Clinic, through Manitoba Health, provides one on one nutrition and diabetes counseling for all ages.
- Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre, through NECRC North End Food Security Project has a community cupboard, with a nutrition focus. Once a month, community members can come and learn how to make new recipes from items sold at the cupboard.
- Several agencies have had nutrition bingo events through C.D.P.I. or NECRC
- NECRC runs summer food security outings, which include trips to strawberry u-pick farms, Fort Whyte Farms, and a rural organic sustainable farm co-op. so that youth can learn about sustainable farming, buying local, organic foods, and animal husbandry. This is a new project that started in 2009, and is in the process of building resources for all neighbourhoods
- Ma Mawe, has a freezer purchase plan, so that families can own their own freezers
- The Point Douglas Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative and Families and Communities Together coalition both fund North End programs that promote healthy eating and capacity building. In the past year, in partnership with NECRC North End Food Security Project, 88 North End residents have passed their food handlers certification test.

There is one Aboriginal worker's Co-op in the North End (Neechi Foods) that hires locally. Neechi Foods has a deli and catering service, and purchases wild rice and blueberries from an Aboriginal community in rural Manitoba.

Food Access

Although the North End is in the centre of Winnipeg, it has been quoted in media reports as being a 'food desert'. Based on our food assessment findings this term is affirmed. This is not to say that there is a lack of stores that sell food. There are 62 corners or convenience stores throughout the area. In a two block distance on Selkirk Avenue (a main thoroughfare street), there are six corner grocery stores. In Appendix B a map displays the twenty five corner/convenience stores in the area of William Whyte. The 'food desert' exists because all of these stores sell a limited selection of food. In particular fresh fruits and vegetables are sold at prices that far exceed those prices at the larger chain grocery stores.

Fifteen (15) stores were assessed for presentation of nutritional versus 'junk food' items. In all of the stores, the front counters and entry shelves had a predominance of candy, chocolate bars, chips, soda pop, pizza pops, ice cream as the main items. If there were any nutritional foods displayed near the front of the store they were apples (usually not very fresh looking), with a minimum price of \$.50 each or Bananas priced from \$.33 to \$.50 each. Hot dogs, pepperoni, salami, bacon and other processed meats were abundant in all the stores visited.

Fifteen (15) corner stores were also checked to see whether the Province of Manitoba Milk board prices of \$1.53 for 2% milk, and \$1.60 for homogenized milk were being followed. Only one of the fifteen stores abides by the milk board prices. The lowest price for one liter of homogenized milk was \$1.59, and the highest price was \$2.29.

Five corner stores were surveyed, one medium chain store and three large chain grocery stores to compare prices on a number of food items that were considered either food staples or popular food items. The five corner stores, the medium chain grocery store, and one of the large chain grocery stores all had similar findings in food prices. Their prices compared to Superstore for some of main food items are as follows:

- Apples are priced 75% higher, bananas are 48% higher and oranges are more than double the price of Superstore
- Iceberg lettuce was the only lettuce available in corner stores, and was priced 33% higher
- Carrots are priced 44% higher, celery is more than double, tomatoes cost more than 3.5 times
- Spaghetti sauce is priced at two and one half times higher
- Apple juice is priced at 81% higher, while orange juice is 48% higher
- All soups surveyed were 29% higher priced
- Frozen vegetables were not available in all the corner stores and were on average 30% higher priced
- Frozen French fries were priced 93% higher
- White bread prices were slightly lower, while whole wheat bread prices were 17% higher and only available in 62% of the stores
- Hamburger buns were priced 36% higher
- Kraft dinner was priced 48% higher
- White flour was priced at 35% higher, and while whole wheat was only 12% higher, it was only available in large quantity in one of the corner stores
- Corner store one liter milk prices were 11% higher than Superstore prices
- Two liter containers of milk were priced at an average of 30% higher. This included the medium and large chain stores other than Superstore
- Four liter milk prices ranged 15-23 % higher, which included medium and large chain stores other than Superstore
- Cheddar cheese was priced at 70% higher
- Ground beef was 40% higher priced, while chicken was 50% higher. The corner stores, other than the meat markets, have only frozen ground beef and chicken, with one exception in North Point Douglas (the south east corner of the North End).
- Bacon was available in all stores and was priced 38% higher,
- Hot dogs!- were sometimes cheaper in the corner stores than superstore, and prices averaged only 5% higher overall
- Eggs were priced 23% higher
- Baked beans with pork were priced 76% higher

- Butter was priced 44% higher, while margarine was the same price

Overall, if one purchased one of each of the items, in this food survey, they would pay 49% more for their groceries. This is significant, when the transportation demographics of the North End are considered. It is estimated that people will not walk more than a few blocks.

There are three large chain grocery stores on either the south or north boundaries of the North End. Only one of these stores has prices that match the Superstore prices found throughout the rest of Winnipeg. One of the large chain stores had the highest prices in some food categories, and matched many of the more expensive corner store prices in many categories.

In six of the 15 stores that were reviewed, the clerk seemed to have a lot of difficulty understanding and/or reading English, when asked if the researchers could conduct a survey in their store.

There are 37 restaurants in the North End. These are comprised of fast food restaurants, where hamburgers and fries are sold, or pizza, and /or fried chicken. Six of the restaurants sell either Chinese or Vietnamese food. There are also two places that sell perogies as their main items. On the West boundary (McPhillips), there is a pizza restaurant that sells salads with ingredients other than iceberg lettuce.

Transportation Access to Groceries

The Point Douglas Seniors Coalition has a van that transports seniors to Superstore, once a month. Survey participants (18%) who did not have a vehicle indicated that friends and family members would drive them to the larger chain grocery stores. There is no other formal transportation in the North End. Focus group participants stated that there are people who wait outside the large chain grocery store to 'taxi' people home at a lower rate than commercial taxis. This informal arrangement exists due to the lack of other affordable transportation options.

Food /Social Policy Development

The North End Food Security Network meets monthly with other groups in Winnipeg. A food policy working group made a presentation to City council for the North End.

Assessment

Methodology

In order to engage the community, the research design incorporated a variety of North End community stakeholders including residents (of various ages and socio-economic backgrounds), local social service agencies and local businesses.

A multi-methods approach was used, to develop an understanding of the food system in the North End. The research was conducted between January 1, 2010 and March 31, 2010.

The research involved:

- Secondary research
- Community forum (January 2009) coordinated by NECRC (North End Food Security Network) and facilitated by Julie Price of Heifer International
- Community *Accessing Healthy Foods* Workshop (March 2009) facilitated by NECRC NEFS/ GP Coordinator
- Manitoba Alternative Food Research Alliance focus group held at NECRC
- Food security inventory of over 50 North End social service agencies and schools
- Grocery store survey
- Residential surveys at a food handlers course, a food bank, a seniors agency, an inner-city Social Work class, and two social service agencies
- Youth and adult agency and school staff interviews
- Focus groups and story sharing workshops with participants from two youth after school programs and three agencies (See Appendix D for details on methodology)

Limitations

This food assessment project is designed to lay the ground work for further food security projects.

A food assessment project is typically spread out over a significant time frame in order to engage as many of the local residents as possible. Due to the limited time frame of this assessment (three months), there was less time available to engage a larger number of local residents and youth. However, the information gathered provided the researchers with a reasonable sample on which to base some preliminary conclusions. The opinions and information gathered is representative of these individuals and may or may not be representative of the general opinions of all residents in the area.

Findings: What We Heard

The researchers reviewed the findings from interviews, focus groups, workshops and community forms in order to identify the key messages. These messages merged into a number of common themes. The findings are presented according to these themes:

- Charity Model in the North End
- The local community is eager for change
- Social and family connections
- Involving youth in food security
- The significant role of poverty in food security
- Health issues in the North End
- The “food desert” in the North End
- Lack of understanding about Food Security

“Whatever mechanism you’re using has to create a sense of worth”

Focus Group Respondent

Charity Model

The area has a significant number of food banks and other charitable services as noted in the inventory. Many of these agencies are offering a valued service, however it was noted that the focus of these food services i.e. soup kitchens and food banks were designed to offer emergency food relief. This relief has moved from a temporary emergency service to an ongoing need.

“The charity model doesn’t give people any reason to change. A culture has been created where people think they should be looked after and it doesn’t work. If things changed, people would change.”

Interview Respondent

Some respondents noted that the quality of food at the food banks is sometimes questionable, and due to the nature of the operation at a food bank there is a lack of fresh food.

Some respondents also noted that standing in line to access food is neither dignified nor sustainable. This situation is not respectful to the individuals accessing the food nor is it respectful to the community.

Many people stated that having food is a basic necessity, just as shelter. Most charity models do not lead to self sufficiency. The model needs to change. Respondents indicated that although there may be a place for charity, capacity building is necessary to move forward away from the charity model.

Change for the Community

There is a strong desire for change within the community. Respondents got excited when discussing ideas for change. There will be a need to engage the residents in these changes. Currently many people feel hopeless; stuck in a rut; they don't know how to get out of their current situation.

When local residents were asked for ideas they had a hard time identifying them, however when posed with specific ideas they got engaged. Some comments from the interviews and focus groups follow:

- Show people how but let them do the work, it makes them feel good
- People will participate if they are working with someone they look up to, there needs to be respect for the people that are working in these activities
- People need to know about what they can do, they need to know the goal; this provides a focus for them *“The best ideas come from the people themselves – simple solutions.”*
Interview Respondent
- There is a need for education, skill building and support but in a safe, and culturally appropriate environment
- There is a need for kitchen training
- Cooking together builds connection and skills
- Offering a healing and nurturing environment helps engage them
- Share the information - make the community aware of the process along the way
- Get all the organizations together on the same page
- The community needs facilitators to engage the community; but to be prepared to back off and let the community take ownership

There were many ideas that started to emerge within the focus groups once the participants got engaged in the ideas. Some ideas are listed below;

- Good food box
- Central learning kitchen
- A place to barter services for food
- Stone soup project
- Programs that teach 'how and why' eating healthy food for parents and kids
- Organic/fair trade fruit and veggie store
- Teaching children how to prepare food
- Community gardens - but they noted that gardens need committed people
- Create awareness of what healthy eating looks like – informal

Social and Family Connections

Discussion in the groups and interviews noted that many local residents feel disconnected from their families and even society; Many people are also feel marginalized because of welfare, residential school etc.

The lack of family connectedness was evident in many comments that were elicited in response to questions about families eating together. Respondents talked about how kids don't come home to eat, kids 'take off', parents are too tired to make a meal at the end of the day and that many parents rely on fast food because it is easier and often cheaper than preparing a whole meal from scratch.

One staff from an agency stated that it is not uncommon for children and youth to be dropped off just about every day at 3:30 p.m. or earlier The children and youth come to the centre hungry and stay at the centre until it closes at 9:00 p.m. All of the youth drop-in centres feed the youth after school.

New families in the community do not know what food resources are available and how to access them. They are disconnected which has been further exaggerated by their lack of transportation.

Youth and Food Security

Information about involving youth in food security was obtained from adult residents, agency contacts and from the youth themselves in two focus groups.

One interview respondent who works with Aboriginal youth stated that youth need to learn about how food security fits in with the medicine wheel teachings (physical, self-development, social, and spiritual) components. These Traditional teachings will motivate them to change. The youth will learn to respect themselves and their community

One barrier cited was that youth have an inability to communicate and express themselves, and that if youth can't be creative and express themselves, they will continue the cycle of addictions of those who have gone before them. There is a tremendous amount of ability and untapped potential in the youth. Planning capacity building and social enterprise food security initiatives could be a way for them to develop skills, learn to communicate and gain self worth as they shape and improve their community.

There was a general consensus that youth needed to be involved in food related activities and that education was an important component of these activities. There was a wide range of suggestions on how to engage the youth such as:

- Workshops (awareness of diabetes, high blood pressure etc)
- Making it a credit course in school – health food and cooking classes
- Working in partnership with local youth program
- Summer camps
- Work placement programs
- Youth advocacy group
- Youth focused fun nights
- Youth role model

“Have youth make their own food security project”

Focus Group Respondent

The youth were quick to come up with ideas about how they could contribute to food security in the community;

- Buy local
- Support local kitchens
- Recycle
- Make a garden
- Help others with seed planting
- Teach people how to garden
- Pick strawberries
- Attend or help at farmers markets
- Help at soup kitchens
- Help at other places with food

Poverty

Poverty is by far the most important cause of food insecurity in Manitoba. It is well documented that the North End has a proportionally higher level of low income population. The findings from the research supported this fact. Some respondents pointed out that social assistance is outdated and punitive. The amount they receive for shelter is much too low. One parent with a disabled child indicated that this wasn't considered and as a result the amount provided was too low.

“Junk food is cheap – nutritious food is expensive!”

Focus Group Respondent

Health Issues

In addition to poverty is the growing health related issues that low income people face. There is a definite link between poverty and health. People living in poverty incur more health related issues.

Addictions and mental health problems were identified by the respondents as significant issues in the community. Smoking was also noted as an issue, particularly with students, cited at 50%. These issues are linked to a lot of other problems and make it hard to cope.

The cost of maintaining addictions as led to people using their food money or selling food vouchers and bus passes in order to serve their addictions.

Respondents stated that bad habits have led to health issues such as obesity and diabetes. There is a definite need for health information, however, unless healthy food is available at reasonable prices the community won't be able to change.

Research is overwhelmingly conclusive that low income is associated with a higher prevalence of diabetes¹⁷. Health Canada states that "From a disease that was virtually unknown among First Nations, Inuit and Métis people fifty years ago, the prevalence of diabetes among First Nations is now at least three times the national average, with high rates occurring in all age groups"¹⁸.

A series of recent news features on CTV ¹⁹(March 2010) have noted that Manitoba has 10 times the national rate of diabetes in children than the rest of the country. Almost 50% of these were in Aboriginal children. Many of these cases are linked to obesity.

Diabetes in First Nations communities is now considered an epidemic, and rates are continuing to increase.

Food Desert

The respondents confirmed what the food survey also identified; that there is a dearth of nutritious and healthy food available in the North End. Although there are many corner stores (over 52 identified) there is little variety and a lack of nutritious offerings. Interviews and surveys with the store owners noted that some have tried to offer more nutritious food however, the cost of this is significantly higher than at the larger grocery stores which have a significantly stronger buying power and thus are able to offer better prices.

Many respondents noted that the local restaurants all offer similar high fat, fried unhealthy food; that there is little by way of nutritious offerings.

Although there are a few larger stores near the periphery of the north end, people don't have transportation to get there. Respondents indicated that they spend a lot of time shopping and typically visit more than one store trying to get good prices. For many people

¹⁷ Association of socio-economic status with diabetes prevalence and utilization of diabetes care services, Doreen M Rabi, Alun L Edwards, Danielle A Southern, Lawrence W Svenson, Peter M Sargious, Peter Norton, Eric T Larsen, and William A Ghali
BMC Health Serv Res. 2006; 6: 124. Published online 2006 October 3. doi: 10.1186/1472-6963-6-124, PMID: PMC1618393

¹⁸ *Diabetes Among Aboriginal People in Canada: The Evidence*, March 10, 2000

¹⁹ <http://watch.ctv.ca/news/latest/diabetes--kids/#clip281567>

this isn't realistic. Lack of freezer and storage space, lack of transportation and time all limit residents in this community from accessing nutritious, healthy food.

Resident Survey

The survey was conducted with 40 individuals, however not every respondent answered all questions. (See Appendix C for Survey questions.) The findings presented below are analyzed based on the actual number of respondents for each question. The information is presented under the main topical areas from the survey.

Traditional Food

Many respondents have eaten traditional foods in the past 12 months.

- All respondents who answered this question ate bannock or fry bread in the past 12 months.
- 56% had eaten moose, caribou, bear deer or buffalo
- 43% had eaten fresh water fish
- 46% had eaten berries or wild vegetation

Budgeting for Groceries

A significant number of respondents (62.5%) sacrificed groceries to pay rent, gas medicine or utilities. (29% indicated that they paid rent with their grocery budget). Several respondents stated that they shop for bargains, and go to different stores to try to find the lower prices.

Where did you get your food? (Past 2 months)

- 44% of respondents use corners stores
- 95% food bank recipients use the corner stores
- Half of the recipients that were surveyed used food banks

Fruits and Vegetables

An overwhelming number of respondents (81%) agreed that the fresh fruits and vegetables are expensive in the North End. If asked specifically about prices at North End large chain stores 56% still felt they were expensive.

Meat and Protein

There was mixed response to the quality of meat and protein available in the North End with 47% agreeing that they could access quality meat and protein, however, 88% of respondents agreed that they were expensive.

Grocery Stores in the North End

Over 50% of respondents did not agree that the quality or choice of grocery stores in the North End was good. In fact 68% of respondents agreed that it is difficult to grocery shop

in the North End. Interestingly, 71% of respondents were satisfied with the nutritional quality of the food they got.

Of the respondents, 44% indicated that some foods are difficult to get in the North End. The types of foods that they had difficulty getting ranged from specialty foods to basics like fresh vegetables, milk and meat.

Transportation to Grocery Stores

- 60% have no vehicle
- 28% public transit
- 28% drive themselves
 - significantly more seniors have cars compared to other age groups
- 25% walk
- 18% are driven by someone else
- 32% would join a car pool

Bulk Buying

There was mixed response to the bulk buying with seniors being less interested. Only 44% of respondents said that they would join a bulk buying club.

Preparing Meals

In the past week 51% of respondents indicated that they had prepared a meal from scratch at least five times.

Seventy seven percent (77%) of respondents did not sit together with their families for a meal in the past week.

What They Ate

When asked what they prepared or ate in their last meal there was a mix of responses, however, many did not include all four food groups in this meal, notably missing was fruit and vegetables.

Most frequently eaten foods in the past week (5-7 days in the week)

Milk and dairy	73%
Bread and other grain products	80%
Meat	65%
Veggies (not potatoes)	57%
Fries, chips, etc	53%
Processed meat	42%

Foods eaten rarely or never in the past week

Fast food: burgers, pizza, hotdogs	63%
Green Salad	54%
Eggs	49%

Desserts (sweets)	41%
soft drinks or pop	40%
Pasta	40%

The majority of respondents also indicated that they added salt or sugar to their food on a daily basis.

Added salt	53%
Added sugar	56%

Access to Cooking Tools

Respondents indicated that they have access to kitchens, cooking pots and utensils but access to storage containers and freezers is lower.

Community Kitchens and Gardens

- 47% of respondents have access to a community kitchen
- 38% have access to a community garden

If a community kitchen was offering six learning sessions 62% of respondents would participate. Seniors were much less interested. Nutrition, canning/preserving, cooking for special diets, low-budget health cooking and community supported agriculture were of interest to the majority of the respondents.

Workshop subjects	Yes	No
Nutrition	69.6%	30.4%
Canning/preserving	57.1%	42.9%
Medicinal plants (traditional)	31.0%	69%
Composting	30%	70%
Benefits of organic food/fair trade	30%	70%
Cooking for special diets (eg: diabetes)	52.2%	47.8%
Container gardening for your balcony/yard	45.4%	54.6%
Making Baby food	26.3%	73.4%
Low-budget healthy cooking	68.2%	31.8%
Community Supported Agriculture (share a farm/farming)	55%	45%

More than 50% of respondents indicated interest in all of the following: (seniors predominantly indicated no interest in these options.)

- Farmers markets (fresh, local, organic foods)

- Direct Purchasing from organic farmers
- Veggies and fruit delivered to home or agency
- Participating in Food policy discussions

Meaning of a Meal

The following definitions were supplied by the respondents when asked what a meal meant to them:

- Hope that there's enough for seconds. Preparing your own home cooked healthy meal. Having a meal everyday. Having all the food to cook and sit down and enjoy.
- A good dinner with your family. Happy; a meal is using the food groups(home cooked); good food; food; family;
- A meal is good to have, like breakfast, dinner and supper. And I like cooking at home and making all sorts of things.
- It means I know I will not be hungry during the rest of the day;
- Too actually be filled, not feeling empty once your done eating;
- Food on the table; Four food groups on sitting hot or cold;
- Healthy, complete with food groups; being satisfied; When you sit down as a family and eat together;
- Full sit down meal prepared by cooking; hungry children around the world starving; A well rounded breakfast, lunch and dinner; food;

Meaning of Food Security

The following definitions were supplied by the respondents when asked what food security meant to them:

- Never to go hungry, no expired food, need fresh food. Means being able to cook a meal with fresh meat and produce.
- Making sure your food is good to eat (I think)I don't really know; I don't go hungry; it means save more money learn to budget your money save more;
- Food security is good to have and I like having food in my place all the time, and I make sure of that.
- There should be more; knowing there is not a day where you will be hungry.
- Safety in ones food supply/environment;
- Eating my food without looking at it every second to *make sure it is safe to eat*. i.e. Raw, hair...
- Not to sure; safe, clean, trusted place to buy my food; not sure;
- Potatoes, veggies, meat Supper/ soup, salad or sandwich Lunch/Cereal, juice/coffee/tea toast Breakfast;
- Food that is safe and good to eat; That it will last till you need it for you or your family;

Improving Food Security

If they had a magic wand to improve food security, respondents indicated the following:

- Nothing, there's a lot of sources. More support for families teaching the youth how to prepare their own healthy meals.
- Having food to eat. Good quality food; making sure your kids have good food for them to eat (home cooked food), You could teach your kids to prepare meals with you.

- Magic cupboards so that cupboards replenish themselves at command.
- It would create a lot of money and saving.
- If I was to get this magic wand I would be so happy for the food to go down and not be so expensive or get a job but I can't because I'm sick.
- More places for youths to learn to know how to shop or budget food when they grow up or for us adults;
- The children would have actually eaten nutritionally; we would all have enough and never be hungry (each one teach one).
- Community Food co-ops/gardens and Healthy families; everyone have the chance to grow their own gardens and grow what they choose.
- Not sure; I don't know; More community gardens. Courses for children/young adults teaching nutrition;

Discussion

"We need to get on the same page-all the organizations need to do is say -let's do this together"

On-going community relationship building is necessary.

Interview Respondent

This needs to happen at several layers to move the community forward. Activities must engage the total community by being intergenerational. Residents must feel safe and comfortable participating in and developing food security activities.

A repeated request from the community has been to 'bring the family back to the dinner table together'.

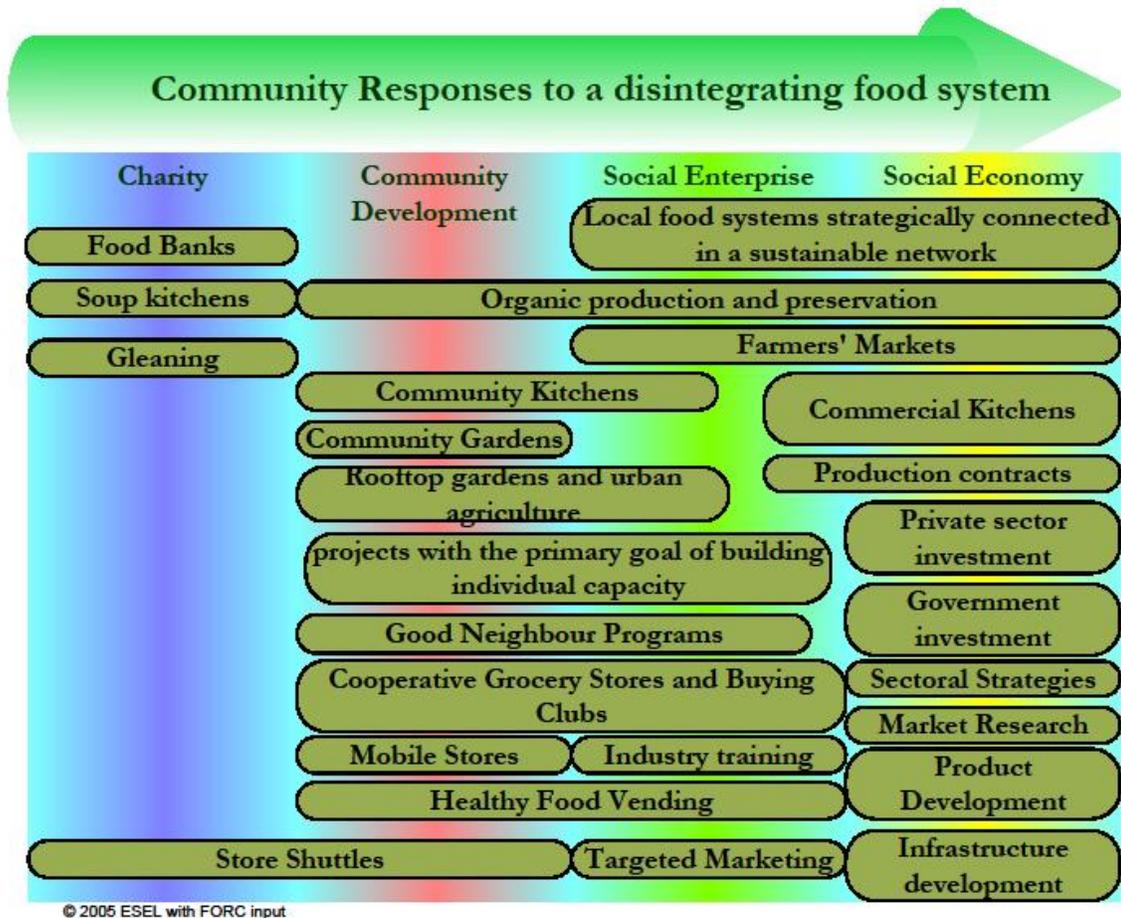
Currently there are a significant number of programs but these are disjointed. Each agency holds a piece of the puzzle but they are not connected. Agencies need to come together to increase their impact. This can be accomplished when resources are shared and planned with a focus on capacity building. There will always be people that need charity, but many people want to do better for their children.

Many people who are now parents were raised in a charity model; they do not have the skills or resources to move beyond that. Engaging the full family in family focused activities should be a significant focus of food security activities. Engaging parents, youth and children can help to move a family from food insecurity to a more secure situation.

The community has indicated its desire to move forward, the relationships within the community are starting to build. The recommendations presented here are intended to continue to build on this groundwork.

Recommendations

Based on the research, the North End community is primarily in the first stage of the Food Security Continuum²⁰ which is the Charity stage. Some recent initiatives have included community development. The recommendations presented are based on the food assessment findings and are presented as next steps to move the North End further along the Food Security Continuum.



Education

Education involves activities that will increase the knowledge and skills of the community towards more sustainable food security.

The community wants to know:

How to have more 'Food Security'.

²⁰ 2005 ESEL with FORC input,

This theme was requested by the community for NECRC' s North End Food Security/Greening Project.

- Provide information by way of education and training workshops at local childcare centres, schools and agencies.
- Develop a database of available workshops, facilitators, experts and community members who can offer assistance and expertise in food security related projects for the North End.
- Develop more learning kitchen opportunities so that families can cook together.
- Promote information and progress of the community gardens by offering North End garden tours.
- Develop local expertise and resources on gardening that can be made available to community gardeners and that is culturally appropriate.
- Facilitate access to training (such as food handlers) opportunities that are an incentive to job readiness in food service industry and in food programs in the North End
- Facilitate information gathering from residents regarding what they want to learn, through ongoing intergenerational community engagement, sharing circles, information sharing, written workshop and event evaluations
- Develop and implement training for kitchen leaders to contribute to the success of community kitchens
- Integrate culturally appropriate Aboriginal language and teachings so that Aboriginal youth can realize that their traditional culture was rooted in strong food security, food sovereignty and food justice; so that they will be motivated to engage in food security initiatives; in particular social enterprise, as this community is their future.

Facilitation

Facilitation activities presented are designed to engage and inform the internal community in the food security initiatives that bring families and the community together.

- Raise awareness of food security best practises in other communities
- Promote best practises, resources and information through newsletters ,community events such as community clean-ups and the North End Picnic in the Park, and the NECRC website
- Promote and facilitate programs that get families eating together
- Promote gardening as a healthy physical and emotional activity for families
- Hold monthly steering committee meetings and ensure that it represents the entire community
- Connect with residents and organizations to keep informed of gaps and current activities

Advocacy

Advocacy involves promoting the need for external supports and resources by the community.

- Advocate for the North End at food security events in other communities, at City policy making meetings, and at provincial and federal food-related initiative
- Advocate with government and funders to promote the need for increased and more stable funding for food security initiatives. Promote the link between food security, poverty and healthy communities

Food Policy Activities

- Continue to work with Winnipeg food policy group
- Represent the community in the food policy arena

Food Access

Food access recommendations address a wide range of food access issues raised in the food assessment study:

Offer varied and flexible food security activities

Ensure that initiatives are flexible do that they can be customized to meet specific neighbourhood needs. The North End is varied in its demographics, so what may work for one neighbourhood may not work for another one.

Offer transportation services to larger grocery stores

Transportation might be in the form of a North End shuttle or a NECRC van that is part of a community enterprise.

Encourage development of a large chain grocery store in the North End

Work with community partners, City of Winnipeg, land developers and large chain stores to encourage the development of a larger chain grocery store to be situated in the North End. Identify what will entice these stores to locate in the area.

Grocery Delivery Initiatives

Good Food Box

- Response from residents for a good food box is strong. Currently, there is a Winnipeg Good Food box feasibility study being done. One Good Food Box model that is working is located in West Broadway, which distributes about 30

boxes. Partnering with West Broadway might facilitate this activity. The good food box is also an avenue for employment and opportunity for pre-employment.

Delivery from Grocery Stores

- Explore local chain grocery stores about delivery options. Alternatively a community enterprise might be launched to deliver groceries to residents in the community.
 - One of the large chain grocery stores delivers to a school, and has affordable prices.
 - Expand information sharing about food delivery options.
 - Neechi foods might be a partner in this as they have indicated an interest in expanding their business.

Buy Local /Farmers Market Initiatives

- Continue to expand the farmer's market.
- Work with Neechi in possible to open a farmers market by community members. Offer opportunities for local residents and youth to sell produce/baking/crafts at the market.
- Coordinate and share information to agencies, schools, community groups about farmers who are trying to sell locally.
- Encourage a social enterprise to coordinate the ordering and delivery of farm products. This might be a partner with a Ma Mawe program.
- Provide a food security welcome wagon to new residents which could include specials, list of people who will provide transportation, busses, location of local grocery stores, list of other food option etc.
- Encourage groups to talk about accessing food in programs other than food security groups e.g.: mom's at school may discuss health- but not realize that they could shop together or help each other out with shopping/buying, to save money.
- Encourage community restaurants to participate in the community by hiring local young people as part of a pre-employment experience.

Capacity Building

Community Kitchens

- Winnipeg Harvest is planning on building a community kitchen. Although this is outside the boundaries of the North End, NEFSN should be involved as a partner in order to facilitate the development of other potential community kitchens.
- Encourage the development of learning kitchens; for example, where food bank customers can bring in their food and have the tools and guidance to prepare health low-cost meals for their families.

Food Security HUB

Develop a central food security HUB on Selkirk Avenue, which could include the following components:

- A central community learning kitchen would be at the centre of this HUB.
- Collective kitchen leader and worker training for satellite centres and other community kitchens
- Small café with traditional healthy food choice which might include a pay ahead option and pre-employment training programs.
- Monthly café or youth smoothie nights or fundraisers.
- Meal assembly option where local residents could bring or obtain food and prepare it into meals. Freezers could be available for them to store these meals.
- Incorporate gardening /agriculture activities and training into the learning centre.
- Workshops on budgeting, canning, nutrition, etc.
- Information centre on food security.
- Transportation for the local community to get to and from the HUB. Transportation would increase access for the area.

Community Gardens

- Continue to expand community gardens
 - Include a traditional and medicinal component at each garden site.
 - Make gardening projects intergenerational
 - Engage local elders in the planning and mentoring at all garden projects
- Partner with other agencies such as graffiti gallery to incorporate art and creative expression in the garden as a healing activity (for example: Spiral Garden in Toronto)

Social Entrepreneurship Building

- NEFSN could be involved in identifying and advocating for increased capacity building activities that could fill food security gaps in the community for example:
 - Transportation services
 - Grocery delivery
 - Shopping services
 - Promoting healthy eating/cooking
 - Healthy restaurant or deli service
- NECRC could work with local food businesses (grocery stores, corner stores and restaurants) to provide education regarding the need for healthy food at reasonable prices. NECRC could provide information on how changes to their offerings and prices could better meet the needs of the community and provide better returns for

the business. Some activities might include; the development of a community newsletter which can include regular local food specials, food related information, etc. Businesses could be encouraged to employ local residents, or specialize so that there is not an oversaturation of one offering.

