

# El Paso County Food System Assessment – Phase I Report

El Paso County Public Health

An addendum to the Community Health Assessment

May 2, 2018



## Background

### Food Environments and Health

El Paso County lies in east central Colorado and, depending on the year, is either the most populous county in Colorado or the second most populous behind Denver County. In 2015, El Paso County had an estimated 677,022 residents with 66.7 percent of the population living in Colorado Springs. According to the 2017 [County Health Rankings](#), El Paso County ranks 29 out of 58 ranked counties in Colorado in health outcomes and 35 in health behaviors, which include adult obesity, smoking, inactivity, excessive drinking, and the food environment.\*

Life expectancy is a key indicator of the overall health and quality of life of a community. That's because our environments have an effect on choices and behaviors that contribute to chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma. How we interact with the surrounding environment impacts our ability to be physically active, access healthy food and other resources, interact socially, and access transportation options – all of which determine our overall quality of life and well-being. In El Paso County, there exists a 16.1-year difference in life expectancy across census tracts. Life expectancy is as low as 69.3 years in some neighborhoods and as high as 85.4 years in other neighborhoods. (Figure 1).

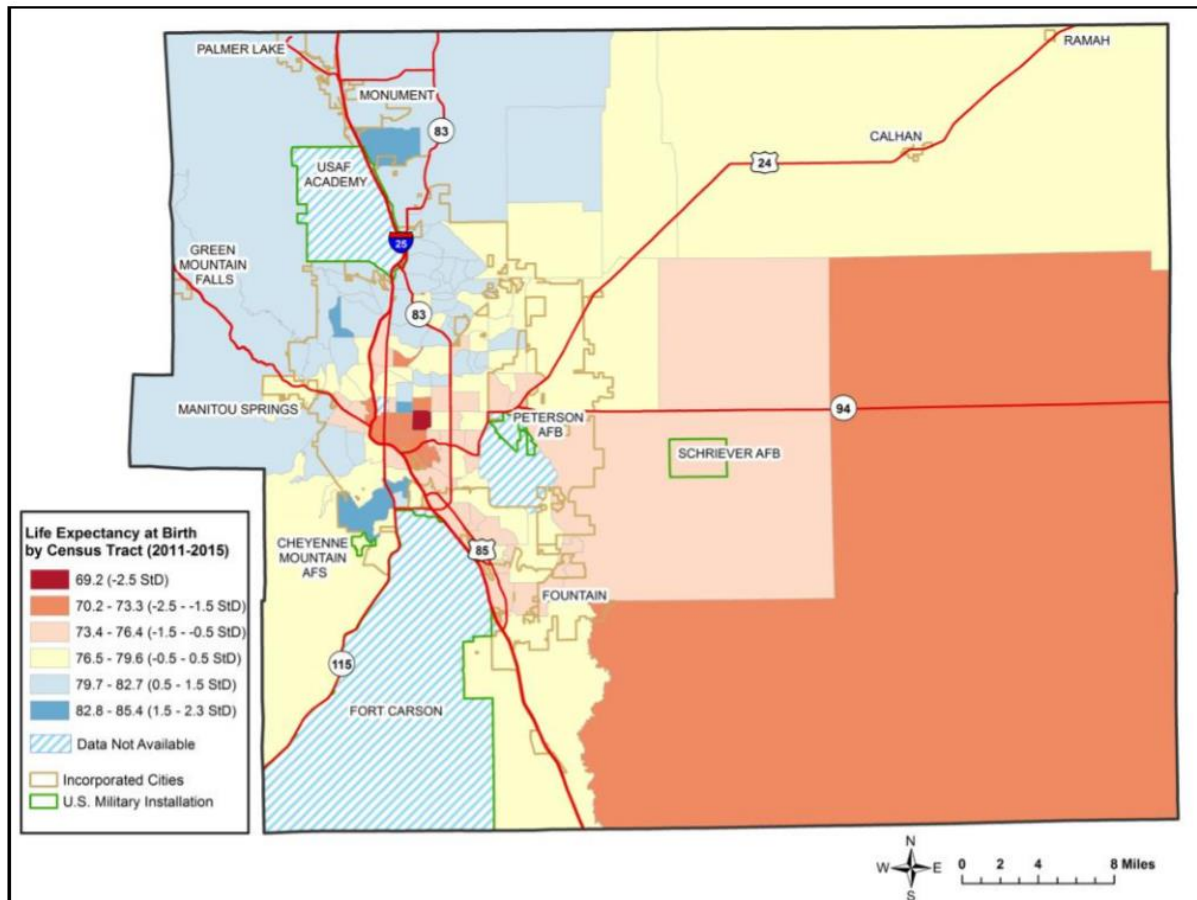


Figure 1: Life Expectancy at Birth in El Paso County

\* The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment acknowledges that generations-long social, economic and environmental inequities result in adverse health outcomes. They affect communities differently and have a greater influence on health outcomes than either individual choices or one's ability to access health care. Reducing health disparities through policies, practices and organizational systems can help improve opportunities for all Coloradans.

The leading causes of death in El Paso County have remained the same for the past decade: cancer, heart disease, and unintentional injury. Contributing determinants include potentially controllable factors such as tobacco use, diet, exercise, access to quality clinical care, access to safe places for physical activity, and access to healthy food options.

A well-designed environment that promotes physical activity and proper nutrition and reduces exposure to toxins and adverse conditions has the potential to alleviate the burden of disease in communities.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, public health with its partners can shape the design of communities in ways that improves health outcomes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, healthy places are those designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders—where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.<sup>2</sup>

A growing body of research shows that food environments impact our health. The food environment is composed of a variety of food outlets in the community, including grocery stores, convenience stores, full-service restaurants, fast food restaurants, farm stands, community gardens, urban farms, etc. Their abundance, location, storage and stock, proximity to residential areas, connection to transportation, and ability to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, among other things, all affect the health and accessibility of the environment.

Practitioners are increasingly utilizing Food System Assessments (FSAs) to develop a baseline understanding and a means to track changes in the food environment. The assessment is typically used to measure the assets and needs in communities, municipalities and regions with regard to **food security, productive capacity of the land, and economic development**. FSAs can be valuable tools for better understanding the social, economic, regulatory and political context of the food system and can point to opportunities for improving the local food environment through policy making and investment.<sup>3</sup>

In 2015, El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs established the Food Policy Advisory Board (FPAB) for the purpose of advising City Council and County Commissioners on matters, policies, programs, operations, and land use rights affecting local food issues and to serve as a collaborative body and forum for responding to the needs of the community as it relates to the food system. The Board operates on the following tenets: 1. **food production, processing, distribution and access significantly affect the public health, land use, economy and quality of life of the residents of El Paso County**; and 2. **the residents of El Paso County should have access to nutritious, affordable, and responsibly grown food**. This assessment is meant guide the FPAB in making data-informed recommendations to City Council and County Commissioners to increase access to affordable nutritious food.

## Methods

### Reasoning

El Paso County Public Health cites the following reasons as justification to conduct a food system assessment locally at this time (*adapted from LiveWell Colorado's [Food Assessment Readiness Checklist](#)*):

- A community food assessment has not been done in our region;
- There is a community-based interest in the food system and knowing more about it;
- There are multiple stakeholders interested in using the results to inform their programs or projects, particularly the Food Policy Advisory Board;
- El Paso County Public Health is willing to coordinate this effort and manage data storage;
- El Paso County Public Health staff have the skills and experiences to moderate cohesive conversations about goals and objectives of the food assessment;
- As a benefit of having member governments participating in the HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Cities & Towns Campaign, El Paso County Public Health has access to an expert at LiveWell Colorado to assist with process guidance, data collection and interpretation;
- El Paso County Public Health and its partners have the means to share the results of a food assessment with the wider community and engage them in the analysis of findings; and
- Several local governments are interested in the results including El Paso County and the cities of Colorado Springs, Manitou and Fountain.

## Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee was formed to guide El Paso County Public Health staff through the process. The Advisory Committee is made up of the following members:

- Beth Anderson (Local Food Application)
- Brianna Rockler (Colorado State University Extension)
- City of Manitou – Karen Berchtold, Wade Burkholder, Nicole Nicoletta
- City of Fountain – Kristy Martinez, Ben Ward
- Penrose-St. Francis Health Services – Sean Svette, Cyndy Wacker
- Lyn Harwell (Food Policy Advisory Board, Founder of Seeds Community Cafe)
- Zac Chapman (Colorado Springs Food Rescue)
- Nanna Meyer (Food Policy Advisory Board, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs)
- Wendy Peters Moschetti (LiveWell Colorado)

## Use of Assessment Findings

***The goal for the Food System Assessment in El Paso County is to identify prospects for policies and priorities for capacity building, innovation and investment in order to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities in our food system (considering roles for both public and private sectors and non-profit partners).*** To do so, there must be a better understanding of:

1. The economic, regulatory, political and geographic context of our food system; and
2. Public knowledge, attitude and behaviors as they relate to our food system.

The assessment is designed to answer the following key questions (and sub-questions) developed by the Advisory Committee and based on the tenets of the Food Policy Advisory Board:

1. What barriers and opportunities exist in our food system to positively influence access to and consumption of nutritious, affordable, and responsibly grown food?
  - Where do we have our biggest gaps in healthy food retail (by geography, demographics)?
  - How does our food environment affect food insecure populations?
  - How much money is being spent on food, and where?
  - How often are people eating at home/out?
  - What are the most commonly reported barriers to healthy food access and consumption (by geography, demographics)?
  - What resources are available for food production at all levels (backyard gardening to large-scale agricultural operations)?
  - What infrastructure exists to get food from farm to plate?
2. What role(s) can local governments and community partners play to advance food production, processing, distribution and access to affect the public health, land use, economy and quality of life for residents of El Paso County?
  - What policies and programs currently exist that support or hinder local food production, processing, distribution and access?
  - Where is there current and potential property for food production intended for human consumption (including community gardens)?

The Assessment will consist of three phases:

Phase I: Compiling secondary (existing) data sets to produce preliminary findings and recommendations.

Phase II: Collecting primary data. This involves a survey, listening sessions, and key informant interviews, guided by the results of Phase I.

Phase III: Asset mapping and policy scans informed by any emerging themes of the primary and secondary data collection.

## Phase I

In an effort to answer the key questions of the assessment, several maps were produced to visually depict some of the potential barriers and opportunities that exist in our food environment that may influence access to and consumption of nutritious, affordable, responsibly grown food (geographic context). The Advisory Committee was presented with the following maps for observation and to extract some preliminary themes and recommendations:

1. The food retail environment as a ratio of healthy to unhealthy food retail overlaid with poverty rates
2. The food retail environment as a ratio of healthy to unhealthy food retail overlaid with transit routes
3. Food access opportunities in conditions of food insecurity
4. Productive capacity of the land in El Paso County (and existing local production)

### **The Food Retail Environment – Proximity to Healthy vs. Less Healthy Food**

Proximity to different types of food retail can contribute to healthy food consumption, positively or negatively. The United States Department of Agriculture has defined typically “healthy” and “less healthy” food retailers. These categories are imperfect but can help provide a general sense of where residents can access the foods they need to feed themselves and their families nutritious meals.

Healthy Food Facility = full-service grocer with available fresh produce, or a fresh produce market. Includes grocery, club, and specialty stores and supercenters. It also includes full-service restaurants.

Less Healthy Food Facility = convenience stores (e.g., 7-Eleven) or small variety stores that sell limited groceries and stock little to no fresh produce, or a facility (e.g., fast food) that primarily sells foods with high levels of sugar, fat, and sodium.

Retail food establishments throughout the county were categorized as healthy or less healthy and then a ratio of those categories was calculated by census tract (Figure 2). There were very few tracts where healthy establishments outnumbered less healthy. And in some cases less healthy outnumbered healthy by as much as 13:1.

Proximity becomes an even stronger determinant when you have inconsistent access to a vehicle and/or are reliant on transit or other means of transportation (Figure 3).



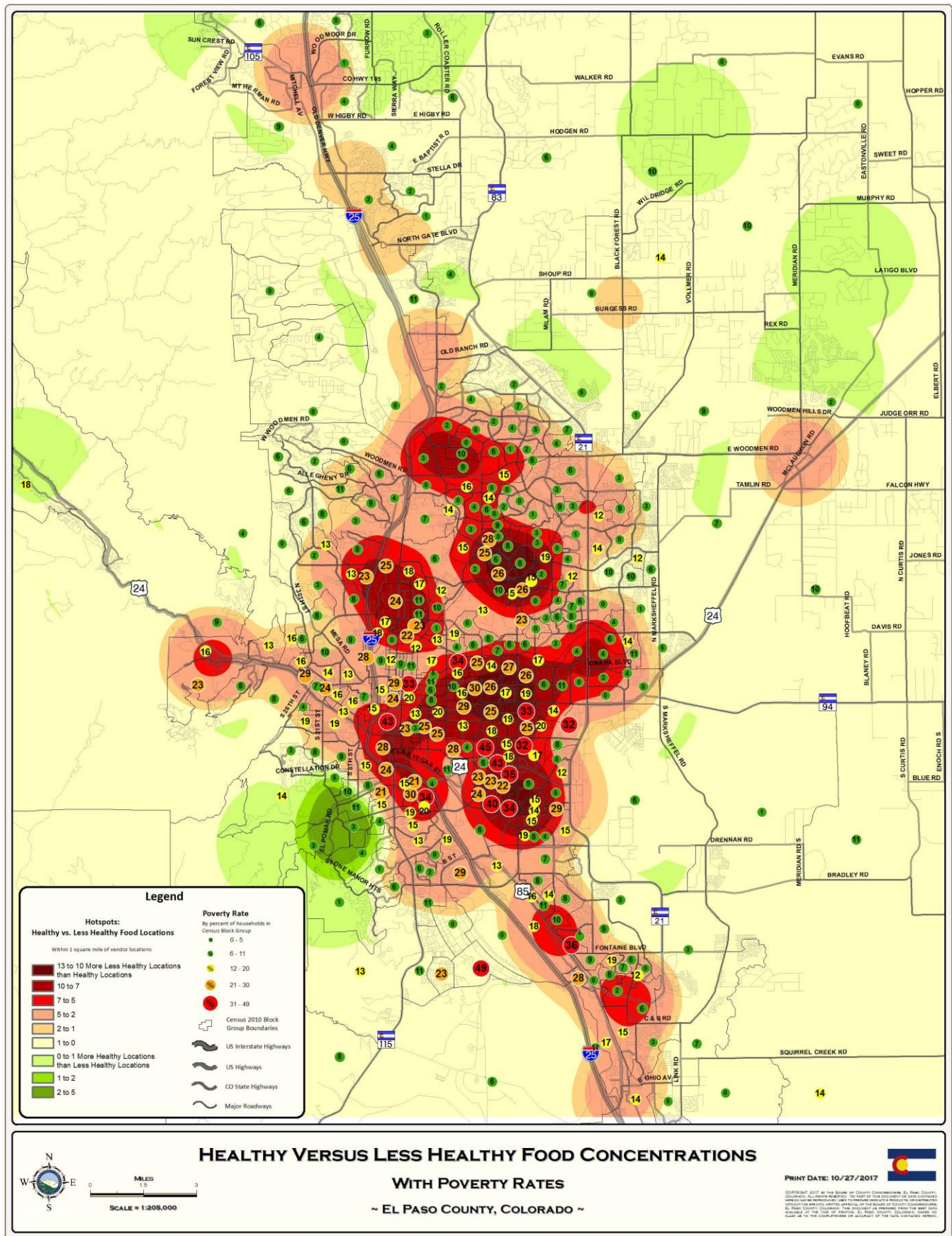


Figure 2: Food retail environment and poverty levels



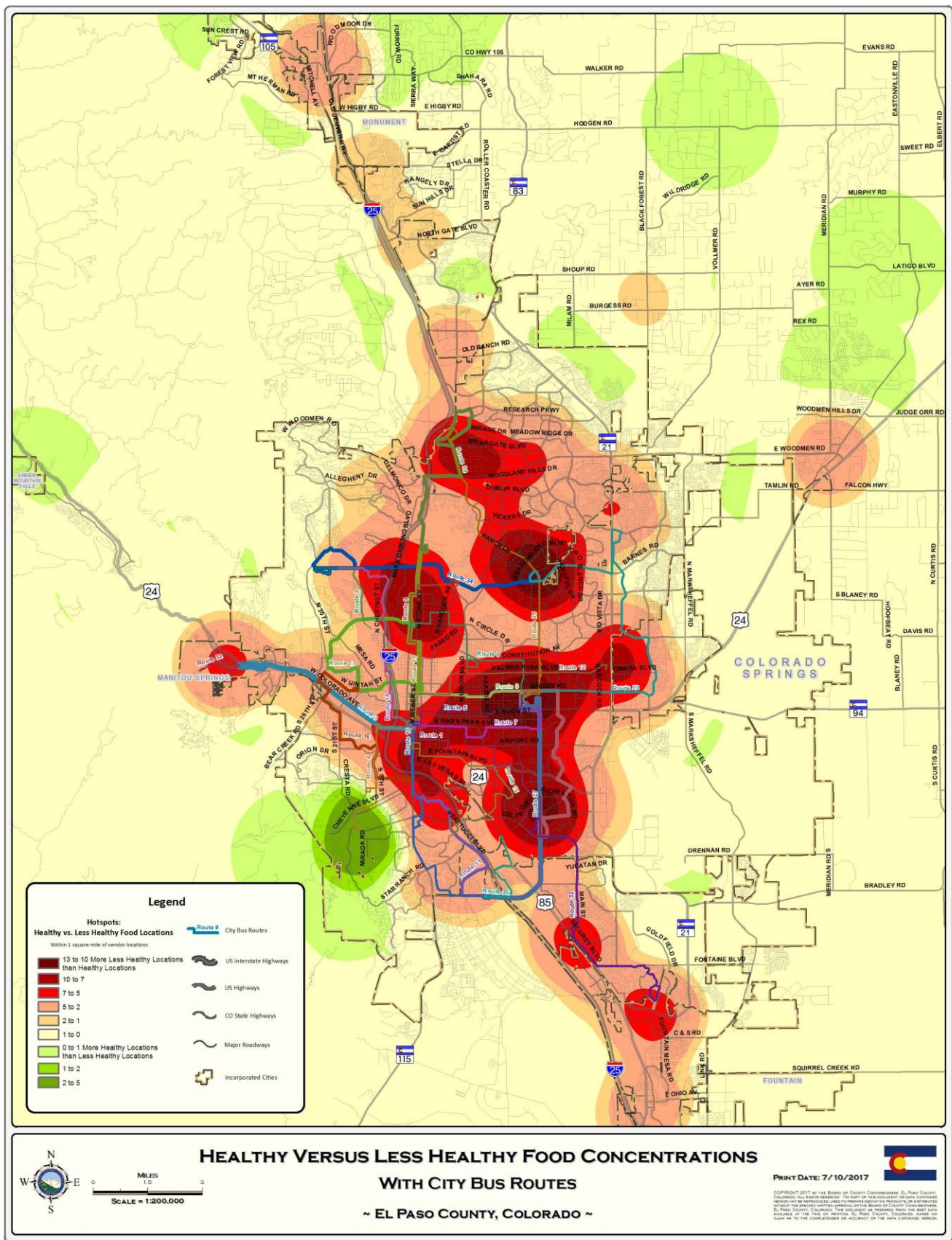
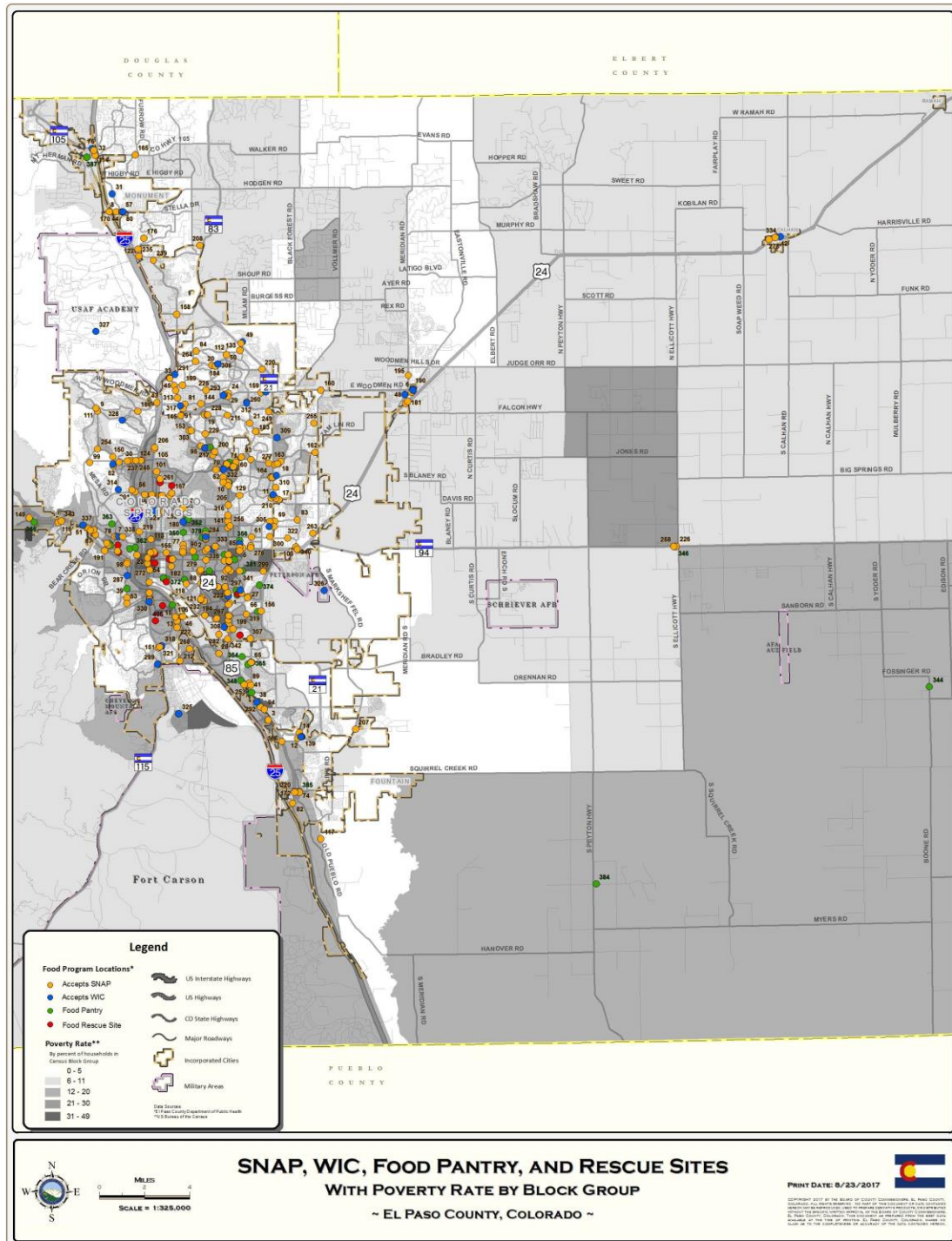


Figure 3: Food retail environment and transit access

## Food Access Opportunities in Conditions of Food Insecurity

There is also a desire to understand where one could access food if they are food insecure and/or limited by budget constraints. Nearly 15 percent of residents of El Paso County are food insecure.<sup>4</sup> The USDA defines food insecurity as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Again, proximity plays an important role in circumstances of food insecurity where budget limitations often also impact access to reliable transportation. For many, food pantries, Colorado Springs Food Rescue and retail sites that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits are the main sources of food.



\*Figure 4: Access to supportive services during food insecurity

\*Legend on following page



# SNAP, WIC, FOOD PANTRY, AND RESCUE SITES

## ~ EL PASO COUNTY, COLORADO ~

### LOCATION KEY

Label	Store Name	Address	Label	Store Name	Address	Label	Store Name	Address
1	Walgreens 0046	1905 S Chelton Rd Colorado Springs CO 80910	136	7-Eleven Store 38999A	3877 Astorson Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916	271	7-Eleven 220091	525 N Pike Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80905
2	Walgreens 0043	920 N Circle Dr Colorado Springs CO 80909	137	MRF GODOO MARKET #031	2701 N Powers Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80922	272	6035 Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80906	
3	Loaf N Jug 601	7055 Algrete Cir Fountain CO 80817	138	MRF GODOO MARKET #607	534 W Highway 105 Monument CO 80132	273	7-Eleven 205130	3004 W Colorado Ave Colorado Springs CO 80904
4	Walgreens 0409	280 Main St Colorado Springs CO 80901	139	Family Dollar Store #630	6960 Mesa Ridge Pkwy Fountain CO 80817	274	Kwik Stop	425 N Murray Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916
5	Walgreens 00731	4305 E Platte Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	140	7-Eleven Store 23731A	338 E Platte Ave Colorado Springs CO 80903	275	Carl's Convenience	3 N Tyeon St Colorado Springs CO 80903
6	Walgreens 09199	7925 McLaughlin Rd Peyton CO 80831	141	7-Eleven Store 20295B	1425 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	276	Kum & Go #61	535 Western Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80904
7	Walgreens 0777	638 N 19th St Colorado Springs CO 80904	142	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 1137	4805 Barnes Rd Colorado Springs CO 80917	277	Sprouts Farmers Market 332	5617 Barnes Rd Colorado Springs CO 80917
8	Vitamin Cottage Natural Food Market	1216 W Baptist Rd Monument CO 80137	143	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 1173	11769 E US Highway 24 Peyton CO 80831	278	Family Dollar 11845	555 Crystal St Calhan CO 80808
9	Walgreens 0188	5570 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80919	144	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 1138	2555 W Woodman Rd Colorado Springs CO 80920	279	Walgreens 5794	3033 E Circle Dr Colorado Springs CO 80910
10	Walgreens 0186	3480 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915	145	Papa Murphy's Pizza C0006	1708 Oakdale Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918	280	Walgreens 3187	3855 Southgate Rd Colorado Springs CO 80906
11	Walgreens 0912	7575 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	146	Papa Murphy's Pizza C0022	2988 N Powers Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80922	281	Albertsons 879	4405 Centennial Blvd Ste 1 Colorado Springs CO 80907
12	Walgreens 0734	1905 Mountain Mesa Rd Fountain CO 80817	147	Papa Murphy's Pizza C0045	2405 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916	282	Schwans Home Service Colorado Springs	13440 Kimball Cir Colorado Springs CO 80910
13	Target Stores T 0739	1630 Cheyenne Mountain Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80906	148	Papa Murphy's Pizza C0047	1203 N Circle Dr Colorado Springs CO 80909	283	SAFeway 1409	2800 N Powers Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80922
14	7-Eleven Store 33043A	7725 Fountain Mesa Rd Fountain CO 80817	149	Toby's Turnaround LLC	1105 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829	284	SAFeway 1387	1125 N Circle Dr Colorado Springs CO 80905
15	7-Eleven Store 23548B	1482 Harrison Rd Colorado Springs CO 80905	150	7-Eleven Store 32386A	4710 Centennial Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80919	285	Walgreens 058A	2921 N Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80907
16	7-Eleven Store 24460B	530 Security Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80911	151	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 1100	715 Cheyenne Meadows Rd Colorado Springs CO 80906	286	Wal-Mart SC 1200	3201 E Platte Ave Colorado Springs CO 80909
17	7-Eleven Store 32748B	6025 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	152	7-Eleven Store 39543A	1901 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	287	Wal-Mart SC 1337	707 B St Colorado Springs CO 80905
18	Walgreens 07142	6075 Barnes Rd Colorado Springs CO 80922	153	Kum & Go #61	2180 Nicks Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918	288	Papa Murphy's Pizza	685 Cheyenne Meadows Rd Colorado Springs CO 80906
19	Walgreens 0383	2781 Dublin Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918	154	Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market 3083	665 N Murray Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915	289	SAFeway 1534	6205 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80906
20	Walgreens 05262	8055 Lexington Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80920	155	Kwik Stop Family Mart	847 E Platte Ave Colorado Springs CO 80903	290	King Soopers 77	6300 W Baptist Rd Colorado Springs CO 80921
21	Walgreens 05621	6011 Rungwood Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918	156	7-Eleven Store 35344A	5280 Astorson Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916	291	Wal-Mart SC 1896	6250 Razorback Rd Colorado Springs CO 80920
22	GreenCrest Center	3725 Van Teylingen Dr Colorado Springs CO 80917	157	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 692	4475 Fennell Rd Colorado Springs CO 80907	292	Wal-Mart SC 1279	61015 US Highway 85 Rt 4 Fountain CO 80917
23	Colorado Farm and Art Market	215 S Tyeon St Colorado Springs CO 80917	158	Kum & Go #65	1206 Interquest Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80921	293	King Soopers 76	3570 Hartzel Dr Colorado Springs CO 80920
24	7-Eleven Store 26959B	3740 Randall Dr Colorado Springs CO 80920	159	Kum & Go #67	7385 Duryea Dr Colorado Springs CO 80923	294	SAFeway 1644	7655 McLaughlin Rd Falcon CO 80831
25	Ranch Foods Direct	1221 E Fillmore St Colorado Springs CO 80907	160	7-Eleven Store 35060A	7718 W Woodman Rd Colorado Springs CO 80923	295	Carriera's Location	1736 E Pikes Peak Ave Colorado Springs CO 80909
26	7-Eleven Store 20343B	1247 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	161	Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market 3082	4125 Arroyo Blvd Ft. Collins CO 80518	296	Vitamin Cottage Natural Food Market LLC	1798 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80906
27	7-Eleven Store 25794A	1681 St Wing Dr Colorado Springs CO 80916	162	7-Eleven Store 35010A	7692 Barnes Rd Colorado Springs CO 80922	297	SAFeway 1792	1425 S Murray Blvd Colorado Spg CO 80916
28	Rivet Gas Station	4140 S US Highway 85-87 Colorado Springs CO 80911	163	Kum & Go #68	6125 Barnes Rd Colorado Springs CO 80922	298	Kmart 4332	3000 N Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915
29	Walgreens 07098	7700 Rungwood Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918	164	Kum & Go #69	5771 N Carefree Cir Colorado Springs CO 80922	299	Loaf N Jug #91	5175 Airport Rd Colorado Springs CO 80916
30	7-Eleven Store 32139C	623 Garden of the Gods Rd Colorado Springs CO 80907	165	Kum & Go #69	1797 N Woodland Dr Monument CO 80132	300	Loaf N Jug #94	6925 Mesa Ridge Pkwy Fountain CO 80817
31	Wal-Mart SC 3277	1622 Jackson Creek Pkwy Monument CO 80132	166	Kum & Go #70	8050 Fountain Mesa Rd Colorado Spg CO 80917	301	SAFeway 1815	7507 McLaughlin Rd Peyton CO 80831
32	7-Eleven Store 30038A	2360 Highway 105 Monument CO 80132	167	Kum & Go #72	3025 Hancock Expressway Colorado Springs CO 80916	302	SAFeway 1815	7507 McLaughlin Rd Peyton CO 80831
33	Dollar Tree 2657	1775 W Uintah St Colorado Springs CO 80904	168	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 1158	5670 Palmer Park Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915	303	Loaf N Jug #98	5625 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915
34	Dollar Tree 3025	2780 S Academy Blvd Ste 100 Colorado Springs CO 80916	169	Luro Market & Deli	4125 Arroyo Blvd Ft. Collins CO 80518	304	Taco John's T 1301	7625 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915
35	7-Eleven Store 24398A	3306 E Fountain Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80910	170	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 4136	1310 W Baptist Rd Colorado Springs CO 80921	305	Wal-Mart SC 3582	1575 Space Center Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918
36	Dollar Tree 2572	6346 S US Highway 85-87 Fountain CO 80817	171	Dollar Tree 4815	3590 Hartzel Dr Ste E Fountain CO 80920	306	Albertsons 840	8750 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80920
37	7-Eleven Store 3888A	1702 S 8th St Colorado Springs CO 80905	172	Family Dollar 10374	108 N Santa Fe Ave Fountain CO 80817	307	Loaf N Jug #99	4700 Drennon Rd Colorado Springs CO 80916
38	7-Eleven Store 2562A	1900 W Baptist Rd Colorado Springs CO 80918	173	Kum & Go #73	1121 S Fillmore St Colorado Springs CO 80917	308	Wal-Mart SC 1301	7625 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915
39	Dollar General 10972	474 Colorado Ave Calhan CO 80808	174	Dollar Tree 5136	7376 McLaughlin Rd Falcon CO 80831	309	King Soopers 98	6300 Stetson Hills Blvd Colorado Spg CO 80923
40	Circle K 270840	7055 Commerce Center Dr Colorado Spg CO 80919	175	El Rancho 2	3819 Mazard Rd Colorado Springs CO 80909	310	Whole Foods Market 10455	3180 New Center Pl Colorado Springs CO 80922
41	Circle K 9841	1780 W Baptist Rd Colorado Springs CO 80918	176	Loaf N Jug #87	7376 McLaughlin Rd Falcon CO 80831	311	Wal-Mart SC 1123	5550 W Woodman Rd Colorado Springs CO 80920
42	Circle K 270983	474 Colorado Ave Calhan CO 80808	177	7-Eleven 33822A	3902 N Carefree Cir Colorado Springs CO 80917	312	Albertsons 803	7035 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915
43	Circle K 270983	7055 Commerce Center Dr Colorado Spg CO 80919	178	Kum & Go #69	6735 N Carefree Cir Colorado Springs CO 80917	313	King Soopers 133	3250 Centennial Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80907
44	Circle K 270987	2880 S Circle Dr Colorado Spg CO 80906	179	Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market 3176	1275 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	314	Walgreens 05647	350 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909
45	Asian Pacific Market	1155 Meridian Market W Colorado Springs CO 80915	180	Smith Farms	6985 Meridian Rd Colorado Springs CO 80918	315	Loaf N Jug #43	1893 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915
46	Wal-Mart SC 4335	6075 Prominent Pl Colorado Springs CO 80924	181	7-Eleven 15008A	331 S Hancock Ave Colorado Springs CO 80903	316	King Soopers 53	6930 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918
47	Target Stores T 2221	9225 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916	182	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 1190	5553 Austin Blvd Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80918	317	King Soopers 58	815 Cheyenne Meadows Rd Colorado Springs CO 80906
48	Walgreens 11863	3143 W Colorado Ave Colorado Springs CO 80904	183	CornerStore 1718	3464 Research Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80920	318	Loaf N Jug #39	2205 S Chelton Rd Colorado Springs CO 80916
49	Walgreens 11864	4310 Centennial Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80907	184	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 405	705 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918	319	Loaf N Jug #80	6025 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80906
50	Dollar General 10977	515 S 8th St Colorado Springs CO 80905	185	Diamond Shamrock Corner Store 1170	205 E Rockinwood Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80919	320	Loaf N Jug #36	710 Cheyenne Meadows Rd Colorado Spg CO 80906
51	7-Eleven Store 2678C	503 S Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80907	186	7-Eleven 12648B	1428 W Colorado Ave Colorado Springs CO 80904	321	Loaf N Jug #53	6695 Galley Rd Colorado Springs CO 80915
52	7-Eleven Store 25061A	201 W Fillmore St Colorado Springs CO 80901	187	Wal-Mart Neighborhood 3175	4142 Austin Blvd Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80918	322	Andy Market	2915 E Platte Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915
53	Valero Corner Store 471	1115 S Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	188	Corner Store 1143	7105 Wargrave Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80920	323	Seas Market	4996 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916
54	Papa Murphy's Pizza	1012 W Baptist Rd Colorado Springs CO 80921	189	Papa Murphy's Pizza C0005	7669 McLaughlin Rd Peyton CO 80831	324	Fort Carson Commissary	1551 Prusman Blvd Bldg 1551 Fort Carson CO 80902
55	Vitamin Cottage Natural Food Market	1825 S Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80905	190	7-Eleven 13079A	1011 S 21st St Colorado Springs CO 80904	325	Peterson AFB Commissary	4001 Stewart Ave Bldg 2019 Peterson AFB CO 80914
56	Bimbo Bakery 9130	4715 Rimside Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918	191	Loaf N Jug 10794	13205 Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80905	326	Air Force Academy Commissary	5126 Comanche Center Dr Ste 100 US A A Academy CO 80940
57	7-Eleven Store 1264A	4825 Galley Rd Colorado Springs CO 80915	192	Kum & Go #71	6211 N Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80918	327	SAFeway 2819	340 Village Center Dr Colorado Springs CO 80915
58	Corner Store 695	3290 Austin Bluffs Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80918	193	7-ELEVEN 3401A	2150 Hancock Exp Colorado Springs CO 80910	328	SAFeway 812	2210 N Wauatcha Ave Colorado Springs CO 80907
59	Corner Store 693	425 W Circle Dr Colorado Springs CO 80909	194	7-Eleven 3676AA	8090 Mendon Road Peyton CO 80831	329	SAFeway 812	3205 S Nevada Ave Colorado Spg CO 80906
60	Corner Store 4064	2625 Arlington Dr Colorado Springs CO 80920	195	Carriera's La Via Chonda	227 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	330	King Soopers 6	1750 W Uintah St Ste A Colorado Springs CO 80904
61	Corner Store 687	1801 Main St Colorado Springs CO 80911	196	Dollar Tree 5436	747 Garden of the Gods Rd Colorado Springs CO 80907	331	Walgreens 138	6820 Austin Bluffs Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80916
62	Corner Store 678	1780 Mt Wing Dr Colorado Springs CO 80916	197	7-Eleven 3370A	6040 Barnes Rd Colorado Springs CO 80922	332	Bimbo Bakery 9124	322 Chelton Cir Colorado Springs CO 80909
63	Corner Store 675	2715 W Colorado Ave Colorado Springs CO 80904	198	Kwik Way 757	3049 Jet Wing Dr Colorado Springs CO 80916	333	Loaf N Jug 50	1025 Shs St Calhan CO 80808
64	7-Eleven Store 2195A	683 E Pikes Peak Ave Colorado Springs CO 80909	199	Taste Of India Grocery	4836 Rimside Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918	334	Loaf N Jug 50	1025 Shs St Calhan CO 80808
65	7-Eleven Store 2662A	5805 Palmer Park Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915	200	Kum & Go #66	2921 N Cheyenne St Colorado Springs CO 80918	335	Loaf N Jug 50	1025 Shs St Calhan CO 80808
66	Walgreens 10057	4715 Rimside Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918	201	The Butcher Block	2817 Dublin Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918	336	Loaf N Jug 50	1025 Shs St Calhan CO 80808
67	Dollar Tree 2661	4715 Rimside Dr Colorado Springs CO 80918	202	Circle K 270291	6135 N Carefree Colorado Springs CO 80922	337	Loaf N Jug 41	8657 State Highway 85 Colorado Springs CO 80915
68	Dollar Tree 3063	1875 S Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80905	203	Circle K 270291	6135 N Carefree Colorado Springs CO 80922	338	Loaf N Jug 40	4335 Airport Rd Colorado Springs CO 80916
69	7-Eleven Store 24438A	955 N Circle Dr Colorado Springs CO 80909	204	Trader Joe's 305	5342 N Nevada Ave Colorado Springs CO 80918	339	Loaf N Jug 45	3705 Drennon Rd Colorado Springs CO 80920
70	Fountain Farmers Market	136 S Main St Fountain CO 80817	205	Abundant Harvest Community Garden	40955 Peaceful Valley Rd Colorado Springs CO 80925	340	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
71	Ham Ma Um	624 Highway 105 Monument CO 80132	206	7-Eleven 30768A	2650 Hawthorne Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80921	341	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
72	SAFeway 1440	325 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	207	Mountain Spring Community School	2904 N Nevada St Colorado Springs CO 80904	342	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
73	7-Eleven Store 2059A	1904 W Uintah St Colorado Springs CO 80904	208	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	343	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
74	7-Eleven Store 30198A	721 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	209	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	344	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
75	Walgreens 10456	721 N Union Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80909	210	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	345	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
76	Sam's Club 6219	1850 E Woodman Rd Colorado Springs CO 80920	211	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	346	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
77	Walgreens 2778A	6920 Palmer Park Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80915	212	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	347	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
78	Kwik Way 740	2434 Rimside Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80920	213	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	348	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
79	7-Eleven Store 34098A	404 N Murray Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916	214	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	349	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
80	Family Dollar 1423	3065 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80916	215	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	350	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
81	Family Dollar 2161	4440 E Union Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	216	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	351	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
82	Family Dollar 2745	451 S Circle Dr Colorado Springs CO 80910	217	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	352	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
83	Family Dollar 3118	350 Main St Colorado Springs CO 80911	218	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	353	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
84	Family Dollar 4088	2325 E Boulder St Colorado Springs CO 80909	219	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	354	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
85	Sunflower Farmers Market 313	1780 Dublin Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918	220	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	355	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
86	Family Dollar 5292	3770 Airport Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918	221	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	356	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
87	Family Dollar 6588	4800 Austin Bluffs Pkwy Colorado Springs CO 80918	222	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	357	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
88	7-Eleven Store 1307A	5 Widenfield Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80921	223	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	358	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
89	Target Stores T 0154	3240 N Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80918	224	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	359	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
90	Luna Market	2805 S Academy Blvd Colorado Springs CO 80910	225	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	360	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
91	Pis General Store	1260 Circle Dr S Rush CO 80833	226	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	361	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
92	Acorn Food Store 3060	305 S 8th St Colorado Springs CO 80905	227	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	362	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
93	Loaf N Jug 99	4086 Arrowwood Dr Colorado Springs CO 80907	228	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	363	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
94	Pha Stores Inc	305 Peterson Rd Colorado Springs CO 80915	229	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	364	Loaf N Jug 54	137 Manitou Ave Manitou Springs CO 80829
95	7-Eleven Store 1308A	312 Mount View Ln Colorado Springs CO 80917	230	Circle K 270287	5885 Constitution Ave Colorado Springs CO 80915	365	Loaf N Jug 54	

El Paso County has a notably low rate of grocery stores and supermarkets per capita compared to the rest of the state (which is already low compared to the rest of the country.)

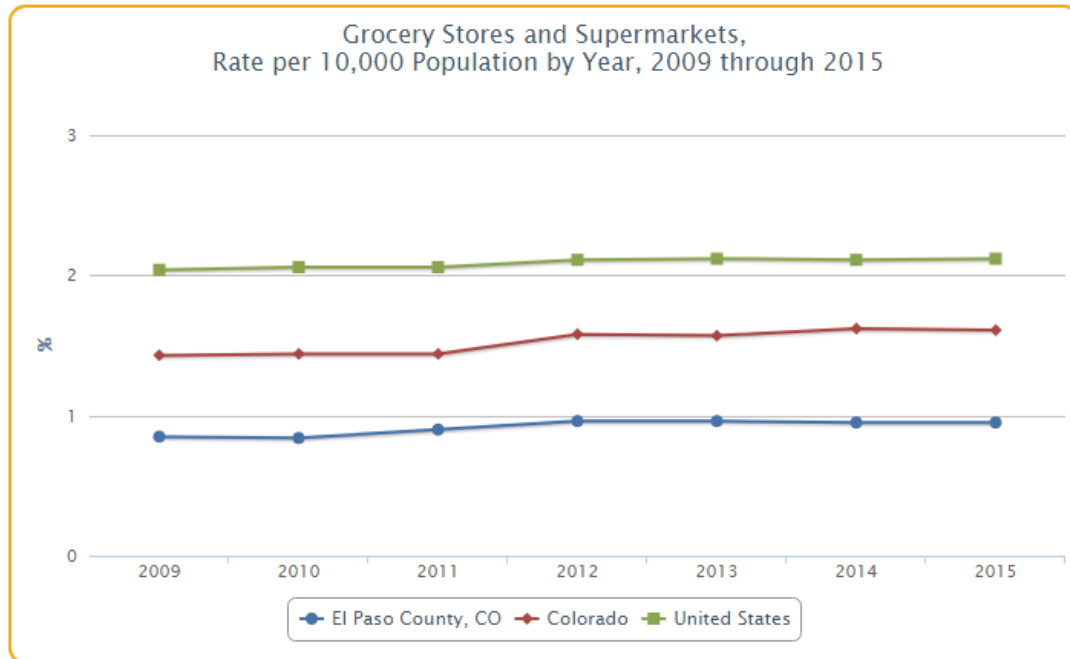


Figure 5. Data Source: US Census Bureau, County Business Patterns. Additional data analysis by CARES, 2015. Source geography: County



## Productive Capacity of the Land

Finally, the abundance and location of food produced locally is an additional indicator of food security affecting the community as a whole (regardless of income). Anecdotally, if El Paso County were cut off from receiving food via freight (highways and rail), the community could run out of food in as little as a few days. Outside of the economic development benefits that local food production offers, El Paso County could view more abundant local production as a means to emergency preparedness. Vacant parcels and parks and open spaces offer an opportunity for greater food production in the region (Figure 6)

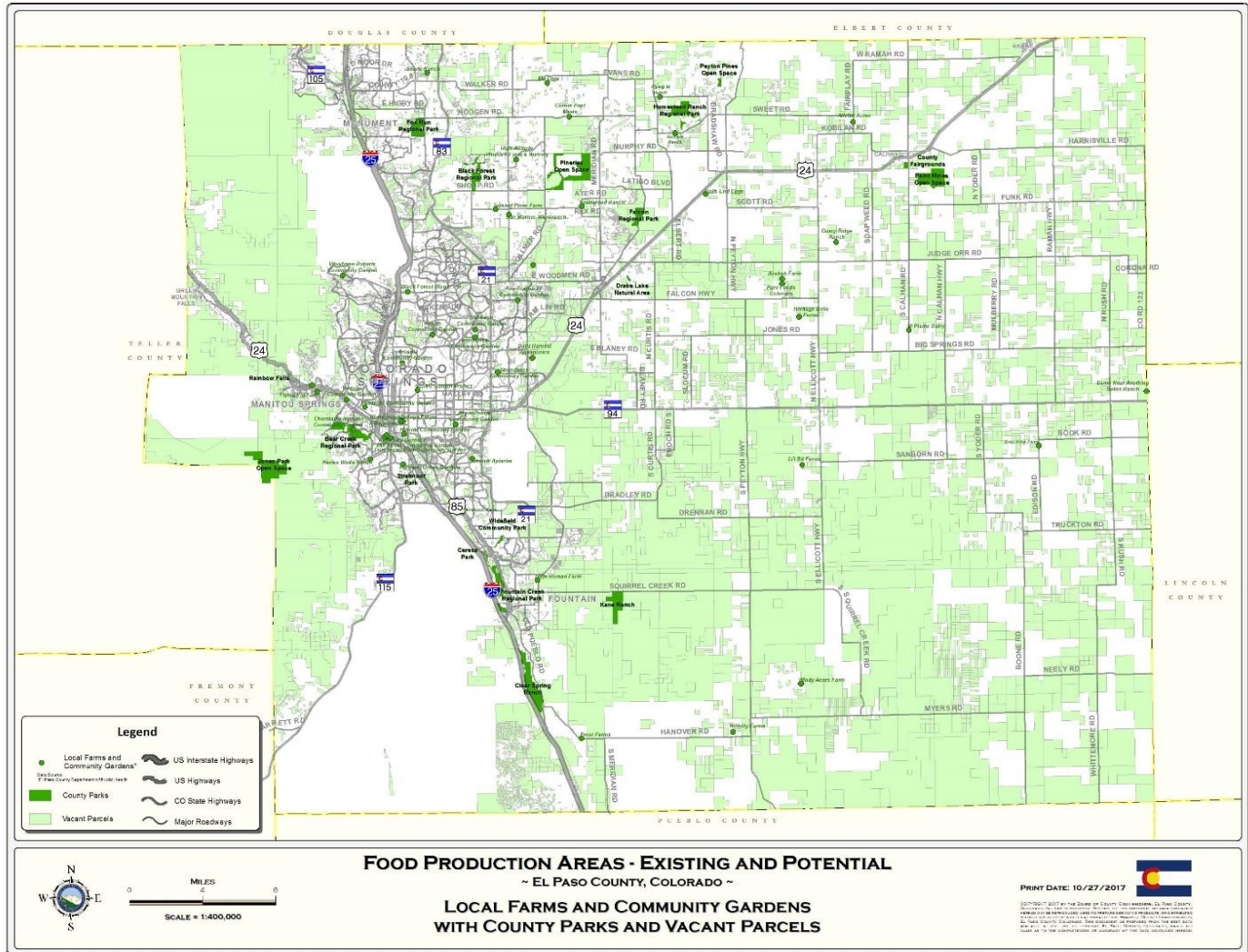


Figure 6: Existing and potential food production sites in El Paso County

There are currently very few farms harvesting cropland for fruits and vegetables and those that are are very small-scale in terms of acreage (Figure 7).

Harvested Cropland for Fruits and Vegetables				
Report Area	Vegetables Harvested for Sale - Farms	Vegetables Harvested for Sale - Acres	Non-citrus Bearing Age (Fruit) - Farms	Non-citrus Bearing Age (Fruit) - Acres
El Paso County, CO	11	17	5	9
Colorado	763	82,038	677	4,752

Figure 7. Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, [Census of Agriculture](#). Source geography: County

In addition, the majority of farms in the County are bringing in less than \$2500 in sales annually (Figure 8).

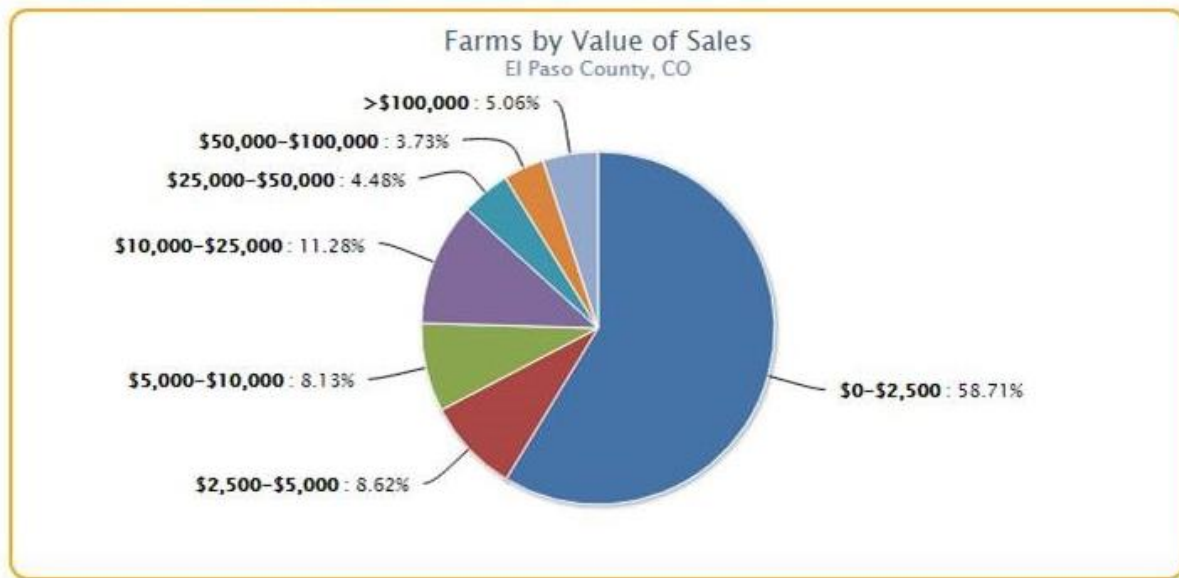


Figure 8. Data Source: US Department of Agriculture, [Census of Agriculture](#). Source geography: County

### General Observations

El Paso County Public Health staff and the Assessment Advisory Committee offer the following observations from Phase I:

- Areas of food insecurity and areas of abundant “less healthy” options are fairly dispersed, but there are several explicit “hot spots” that present themselves as areas of opportunity for a greater understanding of assets and challenges: several neighborhoods along the Academy Boulevard corridor, Fountain, and Manitou.
- Areas of higher poverty tend to have a greater ratio of unhealthy to healthy food retail options.
- Transit routes run primarily through areas of higher concentrations of unhealthy food retail, along arterials and between commercial centers.
- There is a definite lack of SNAP and WIC authorized retailers in rural areas.
- Eighty-three percent of SNAP retailers in our area are convenience stores or limited availability grocers (classified as less healthy).
- There are areas of high poverty with no easily accessible food pantry (e.g. south of Citadel Mall).
- The food environment maps don’t account for zoning determinants that encourage/discourage certain land uses.
- Our current food environment is not oriented around neighborhoods, but rather along arterials and commercial centers.
  - Makes the reliance on a vehicle an additional barrier to accessing healthy food
  - Affords an opportunity for more localized food sales, community kitchens
- Anecdotally, there has been a steady decline in the presence of neighborhood markets.
- Big box/grocery stores moved east from Academy to Powers as the population grew in eastern Colorado Springs (leaving a void of healthy food retail outlets in more central areas).
- The productive capacity of our local lands is highly underutilized (demonstrated by limited production compared to vacant parcels).

### Emerging Themes

Several themes have emerged through examination of the secondary data that frame the recommendations that follow:

- Dispersed, but defined, areas of opportunity
- Zoning as a promising tool to shift the food environment in a more favorable direction
- Neighborhood-based approaches – small grocers, restaurants, community kitchens, community gardens, urban farms, farmers’ markets, farm stands
- Very little food production overall – be it small farms, large agricultural operations or community gardens



- Land potential for scalable, more profitable operations in both rural and urban areas that could offer greater food security and economic benefits for the region

## Recommendations

### Preliminary Recommendations

#### *Areas of opportunity*

Several geographic areas of opportunity have emerged that prompt a deeper dive to better understand their specific assets and challenges. Characteristics of areas of opportunity include a higher ratio of less healthy to healthy food retail, transit access, and high poverty combined with the potential for neighborhood-based interventions and readiness. The areas to look closer at are:

- Neighborhoods surrounding Academy Boulevard and Platte Avenue
- Neighborhoods surrounding Academy Boulevard and Austin Bluffs Parkway
- Neighborhoods surrounding Academy Boulevard from Fountain Boulevard to the Hancock Expressway
- Fountain
- Manitou Springs

The process will be to focus on these neighborhoods/municipalities and combine all the data sets to tell a more complete story in each. We will be able to see food retail sites and their accessibility (by distance), vacant parcels for potential food production, and food pantries and other resources for those experiencing food insecurity all together. Phase II will be focused in these areas, surveying residents and key informants about their greatest perceived barriers and behaviors and attitudes as they relate to our food system.

#### *Zoning*

Certain land use and transportation patterns can be maximized for better health. For example, zoning procedures can create the conditions in which grocery stores and other retail outlets where people can purchase nutritious food outnumber convenience stores and establishments that serve fast food.

Zoning policies can help achieve improvements to the food environment through regulating land use of a community by:

- Allowing designation of community food production and farmers' markets; and
- Limiting commercial food retail, such as fast food businesses, or allowing as-of-right or incentives to those businesses that increase access to healthy food.<sup>5</sup>

To increase the ratio of healthy food retail to less healthy, a municipality may consider re-zoning to incentivize grocery stores, neighborhood markets, restaurants and other healthy food retail, especially those that accept SNAP and WIC, particularly in areas of opportunity where the ratio of less healthy to healthy foods is upwards of 13:1.

#### *Neighborhood-based approaches*

Potential interventions at the neighborhood level include small retail markets, farmers' markets, community gardens, community kitchens, backyard farms, farm stands, CSA pick-ups at schools, mobile pantries and markets, partnerships between small-scale food producers and corner/convenience stores, expansion of Double Up Food Bucks and Produce Rx. These hyper-localized practices are sustainable, smaller-scale ways to improve the food system when there may be challenges at the municipal level, especially in those neighborhoods that have more barriers to healthy food access and vacant spaces available for said interventions.

Phase II will verify the neighborhoods of greatest need and barriers and opportunities specific to those neighborhoods.

#### *Productive capacity & scalable food production*

Considering the amount of vacant parcels, parks and open space in El Paso County, there is potential to allocate or incentivize these lands for more local food production. Understanding the limiting factors of agriculture specific to our region – be they regulations, a lack of skilled farmers, water, financing, profit potential or demand – is the first step in changing this trend and capitalizing on the economic and productivity potential of the land. It is recommended that there be intentional inquiry to better understand the

limiting factors to agricultural production in the region – both small and large and on either private and public land. It may also be helpful to develop a matrix for identification and prioritization of high-potential lands.

All of the preliminary recommendations are in alignment with the potential policy approaches identified by Colorado Springs' City Council and El Paso County Commissioners during the establishment of the [Food Policy Advisory Board](#):

- Strengthening private property rights to encourage urban agricultural activities;
- Working towards reducing barriers for local food producers who wish to sell local food products;
- Building awareness among residents regarding nutrition, food skills and the sources of their food;
- Seek ways to improve access to safe, affordable, nutritious food for residents, regardless of their income level or geographic location;
- Assessing the effects of urban land use policies and regulations on the viability of food production, processing, distribution, and access.

### Primary Data Collection

Phase II of the Food System Assessment will commence in 2018 with a community-based survey focused heavily on the Areas of Opportunity. The purpose of the survey will be threefold: to ground truth to the secondary data; to identify prevalent perceived barriers to access to and consumption of nutritious, affordable, responsibly grown food; and to inquire about self-reported behaviors like purchasing patterns, meals at home and fruit and vegetable consumption. Staff and the Advisory Committee will work through schools, community centers, and organizational constituents (with intentional effort to reach youth, older adults, monolingual, and very low-income who may not respond to surveys) to collect the data.

In addition, the Advisory Committee recommends a series of key informant interviews to better understand:

- Where there may be existing community kitchen spaces, community garden potential (including at food pantries), and other neighborhood-based spaces and groups that are trusted by the community
- Marketing issues/opportunities
- School sites for Care & Share and other resources
- Any “under the radar” food pantries
- Markets that are not SNAP and WIC authorized – why not?

Phase III will include a policy scan at the municipal level to better understand what policies, ordinances, and regulations currently exist, do not exist, support, or counter the goals of the Food Policy Advisory Board and recommendations from this assessment.

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