

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

The Vancouver Food Asset Map (VFAM) project is an initiative brought by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) based on Toronto's Food by Ward initiative which yielded a resource of the city's food assets. VCH aims to build capacity for community members dealing with food insecurity in Vancouver by providing a current, easy-to-use, and dynamic tool to locate local community food assets. In addition, VCH hopes the map will make it easy for community partners to view and utilize community food assets in order to continue improving local food systems. Our group continued the work started by previous classes to further develop the map. Specifically, we updated the listings under free and subsidized grocery items and trialled the map in our assigned region: the UBC area.

At UBC, the AMS Food bank users doubled from 2014 to 2015, contradicting the misconception that students attending UBC are financially stable (The Early Edition, 2015). VFAM only includes two assets in UBC, including the AMS Food Bank. Our intent throughout this process was to not overlook UBC as a place that could benefit from free or low cost groceries. Therefore, we attempted to find further resources on campus and surrounding areas.

1.2 Significance

Food insecurity occurs when there is limited availability of adequate nutritious and safe food, or lack of accessibility to acceptable food due to social barriers (Radimer et al., 1992). Vancouver is facing this issue partly due to high living costs. Low income has been found to be the primary risk factor for food insecurity (Broughton et al., 2006). According to the Provincial Health Services Authority, the average monthly food cost for an 18-30 year old male or female in BC is \$302 and \$234 respectively (2016). This cost is rather significant

as food is not the only source of expenditure. In fact, over 100,000 people in British Columbia receive help from food banks monthly due to high living costs (Food Banks BC, 2016). This suggests a prevalent need for assistance programs that provide free or low cost groceries.

Many people still do not know how to access free or subsidized groceries from Food Banks or other organizations. This is usually because community workers are not aware of who needs help (Food Banks BC, 2016), indicating that community environments play an important role on food accessibility (Broughton et al., 2006). As a result, there is a need to spread knowledge about food assets around the community to help support vulnerable individuals at risk of experiencing food insecurity.

In Allen's article, she argues about the important role of academics in changing the food system, stating "changes in beliefs and attitudes contribute to the participation of individuals in social change" (2008). Thus, academics can take part in this idea through their research projects. We believe that our contribution in this project will impact vulnerable families by improving their access to food. Furthermore, UBC community partners can benefit by improving their service for the community and better lead them to different food resources according to their needs. Engaging UBC community members will open conversations about food insecurity, hopefully encouraging them to actively participate in alleviating this problem in UBC and Vancouver. Addressing our research questions will help close the gaps in the map and strengthen its functionality.

1.3 Objectives

1. Incorporate free or subsidized grocery items into the food asset map
2. Assess usability of the map by conducting trials in the UBC community

1.4 Inquiry Questions

1. How willing would community members be to use the asset map?
2. Was the information provided on the assets in the asset map clear and comprehensible?

2. Methods

2.1 Data Collection

We used the excel document provided by Teya containing contact information of organizations providing free or low cost grocery items. We contacted these organizations via email and phone following Teya's template (see Appendix A), to update their time of operation, demographic served, and criteria required to receive their services. In addition, we asked these organizations for permission before confirming their addition to the asset map.

2.2 Trialing Map in Community

All group members completed TCPS 2 certification prior to conducting surveys ethically. We contacted several community partners in UBC to ask for an opportunity to trial the map at their locations. Partners that agreed to participate were Seedlings and Old Barn Community Centre. Trialling of the map was conducted on November 16, from 1-4pm at the UBC Nest, Seedlings and Old Barn Community Center. Two members from the group visited one of the three different locations simultaneously to conduct the survey using TypeForm (Link: <https://vancouverfoodassetmap.typeform.com/to/eOfuwb>), which used the questions provided in the Word template given. An online consent through Google Forms (Link: <https://goo.gl/XE3GeU>) was signed by participating community members; a copy of which was sent to them via email. Respondents were informed that their participation is explicitly voluntary and they could withdraw consent at any point during the trial and survey.

3. Results

3.1 Data Collection

Our group contacted 49 food assets; 31 of which granted permission to be included in VFAM while 3 food assets refused to be added. Reasons for refusal included wrong input

of information, having too many attendees already, and one program had been discontinued for 6 years. The other 15 food assets did not follow-up to our contact. Additionally, we added Sprouts Bulk Buying Club as a low-cost groceries asset in UBC.

3.2 Trialling Map in Community

42 community members completed the survey. We were unable to acquire more responses due to time constraints.

Our selected survey results are as follows:

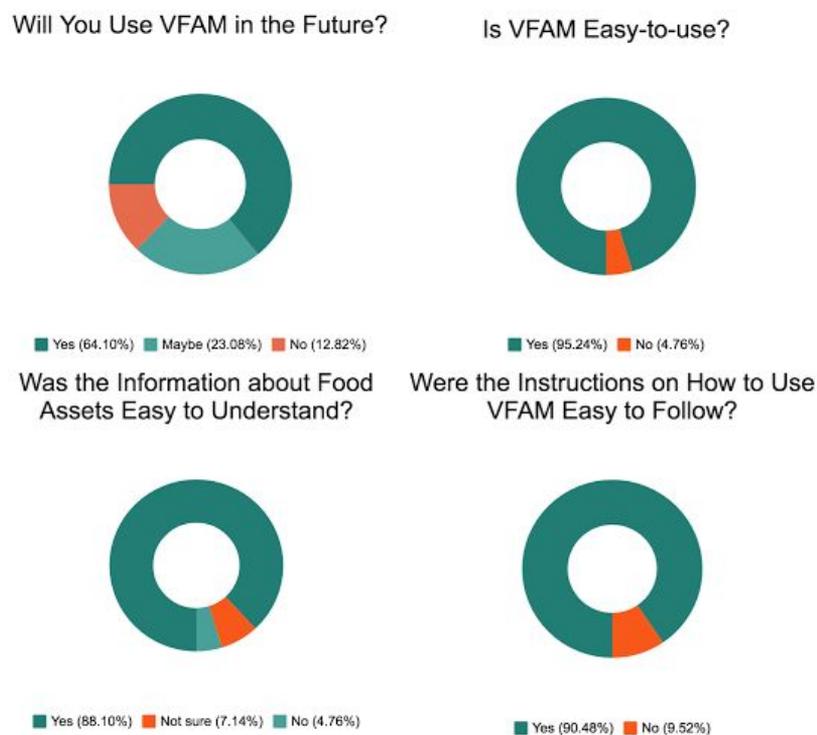


Figure 1. Selected VFAM survey results at UBC Community

Additionally, responders provided feedback on how they would like VFAM to grow in the future. Most significantly, responders would like to see more food assets listed in certain areas such as the UBC campus and the University Endowment Lands. For raw data, refer to Appendix B.

4. Discussion

We completed our first project objective by updating the information for the free or subsidized groceries category. Despite losing assets, the reasons for exclusion demonstrate the issues pertaining to food assets. Firstly, one asset had not been providing low cost groceries for six years, but their information was still available online. This misinformation can potentially be avoided with the use of VFAM as it will allow food assets to update their information on the map in the future. Secondly, the food asset that did not want to be included due to high demand for their services demonstrates the need to continually assess the city's food system. As Allen (2008) states, policies, organizations, and economic structure can affect the food system. VFAM will be important for further development of food assets through government policy and community initiatives as it organizes existing assets geographically, showing areas that have enough resources and those that could use improvement.

The addition of food assets and written survey responses provide insight into further development of the map. One food asset was added in the UBC area. This small addition is congruent with the reported wish of responders to see more assets in the UBC area. Also, this survey response could be an indication of the food access needs of UBC students as stated earlier. Although this addition may seem insignificant, as we learned in lecture, small changes are steps to success. This is a long term project, thus accumulation of small changes contribute to large impacts in the future.

We completed our second objective by conducting map trialling and surveys. Our inquiry questions were answered by the fact that 64.10% of the participants are willing to use this map in the future, and 95.24 % of responders think the food asset map is easy to use. The survey results clearly show the demand and usefulness of VFAM, justifying for its continued development.

Further improvements can be made at the beginning of this project to increase efficiency. Information provided, such as survey forms and instructions, could be sent in a condensed folder. This could help students reduce the time spent organizing this information. The fact that the UBC area did not have an assigned community partner also impacted efficiency. We spent two weeks trying to secure a community partner who would allow us to conduct the survey at their location. This can be avoided by securing community partners who participated in this term. In this manner, future LFS students working on VFAM can dedicate more time to update and add more food assets to the map.

5. Conclusion

According to Allen, although food is necessary for everyone, many people do not have knowledge of food security and food justice concepts (2008). Our survey results are indicative of this as they show that most people in the UBC community were not aware of VFAM and food insecurity issues. In hopes of dealing with food justice problems and enhancing food security, we believe that everyone in the community should be accountable for this issue. As found in our survey, 64% of the responders indicated that they would likely use VFAM again in the future. This shows that VFAM has a great potential to become a powerful tool in alleviating food insecurity. Moving forward, scholars and community workers should address these problems and take the responsibility to educate the public about tools such as VFAM. Limitations of this study include the inability to see who benefits from VFAM. Therefore, future improvements of this project should include the development of features to collect the user's demographic information, be it within or separate from VFAM, to better mould food assets based on the needs of people accessing VFAM.

6. Critical Reflections

6.1 Student 1

Working with the community in a CBEL project has allowed me to reflect a lot on my classroom experience. I have always thought we live in a very privileged environment that are far from food insecurity. However, I learnt that food insecurity can happen anytime and everywhere. Nearly 2 in every 5 students in Canada experienced some form of food insecurity (Silverthorn, 2016). In the VFAM, food assets that provide food support listed under UBC areas are also still very limited. It is upsetting that my team and I had less than 4 months to complete the project and wished we could have more time to contribute towards the development of VFAM. From the survey, we managed to learn a lot about the food insecurity in UBC demographics and I recall my team having a lot of ideas to make the VFAM better but not being able to do so due to time constraints.

I also wish that the project had more room for student's creativity, allowing exchange of ideas between community partner and students. When we first met our community partner, everything was already organized and all we had to do was follow the given instructions. I felt that there were a lot of excellent suggestions made by my group and other students that could be used for the improvement of the VFAM.

6.2 Student 2

The CBEL project of Vancouver Asset Map has provided me with an opportunity to implement what I have learned so far from lectures and tutorials into real life. Through the three months experience doing our project, I developed my communication skills by contacting food assets, and doing survey with community members. More importantly, my group members and I worked collaboratively to overcome dilemma, and we improved our team bonding skills during the three months.

During the process of doing this CBEL project, I have found many different learning approaches. In one of our reading materials, Allen (2008) mentioned that practical learning experiences are necessary since students can gain skills which they can't learn from lectures. Activities, such as trialing the map and doing surveys are effective examples of practical learning method. In addition, there were also several online e-lectures. I was impressed by Ernesto Sirolli's TED Talk (2012) about how to approach community members as an expert. He used the example of experts failing to help indigenous farmers and suggested that when we want to help others, we need to listen to their inquiry first, and take proper actions according to the specific situation. This theory can be applied to our community-based project as well: we evaluated how understandable and easy to use the VFAM is by surveying with UBC community members rather than only in our point of views.

6.3 Student 3

Most lectures in UBC that aim to prepare us in life usually differs greatly from what actually happens in life. The CBEL project reduces this gap by providing a channel for me to work with a research and I is very beneficial towards me.

At the beginning of the year, I would not have understood fully for what “appreciating small victories” meant. But by the end of the term, the feeling of dissatisfaction leaped in because of the thought of, “we could have done more and pushed the process further.” But this phrase helped me see clearly in the benefits: 1) slow changes does not mean ineffective. VFM project required a year before it could be launched in mass area. As LFS students are working on the specifics in the map, the project coordinators worked in another aspect such as government cooperation. 2) Slow projects serves well in different part of the community. Taking VFM as example, this project educated us in how to conduct a research as well as utilizing fully our labour to reduce the workload of the current project

associates to benefit the whole vancouver food system. More than thousands of people is benefited by this project directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, the course taught me more in how to be mindful during the group project. Tutorials for this class had activities that help expose our feelings and taught us how to deal with them in order to excel together.

6.4 Student 4

The CBEL project gave me an opportunity not given by other courses. I was able to apply foundational knowledge from this course and LFS 250 into a meaningful community initiative. While group work is always daunting, the structure of the course, guidelines given by instructors, and readings such as Phillip's *How Diversity Makes us Smarter* (2014), gave me the tools to successfully work as a team to complete the project. In addition, I have seen an improvement in my communication and problem solving skills through this process.

Most significant for me were the discussions that arose in our group. In trying to address our proposal, we looked into the broader significance of VFAM in terms of food insecurity on campus. I found our different perceptions of the issue at hand are most likely representative of the different views within our community. This will be important to consider when working with others and in future community projects such as this one.

I had greater expectations of what I wished to accomplish with this project. However, I still celebrate the small victories. Simply hearing back from one of the food assets saying that they would be delighted to be included in such a great initiative was the highlight of this process for me. It shows me that there are people who are involved in food security initiatives who see the benefit of the work being done.

6.5 Student 5

As our project comes to an end, I am truly grateful for the people that have made this stressful journey more enjoyable. My group members, none of which I knew prior to LFS 350, have been nothing but friendly, helpful, and supportive. We all had our own weaknesses, but also brought out our individual strengths to the team. It was reassuring to have my group members help me out when I stumbled upon a problem. I'm also happy to meet more people and have more friends from LFS!

Asides from befriending people, I also took away a lot from the project. One of the main things I've been working hard to improve was my professional communication skills, and this project provided the opportunity to do so. Through contacting food assets by phone as well as trialing the map during "flexible learning times", I practiced speaking to strangers and became more comfortable with it. Conducting surveys was especially memorable because I was doing so for the first time. I usually do not like making conversation, but I surprisingly enjoyed the process of map trialing. It helped build my confidence and communication skills while also spreading awareness of food insecurity and the food asset map.

6.6 Student 6

Having taken LFS 250 the previous year, I didn't expect LFS 350 to be much different. However, rather than focusing on many major concepts on a macroscopic scale, this course is driven by CBEL projects focusing on food security specifically. Overall, I enjoyed the experience of being in a self-directed, yet carefully guided project-based learning. Although I am happy about the success my group and I achieved in completing group work and raising awareness about food insecurity, it was not smooth sail the whole way. There were periods where our team members were feeling unmotivated, confused

and hopeless. This was the most prominent when we were one of the two groups to pilot test the UBC area with no established community partner.

It is through enduring these small obstacles that I truly cherish every small victory my team and I achieve. Instead of taking time off during flexible learning, we made an effort to meet up during the scheduled lecture time to touch base on our progress and to plan out our future goals. These flexible learning times allowed our group to reflect on what was covered in lecture and put key ideas into perspective as we incorporate the ideas used in class to our project. The online platform worked perfectly for our group as we did most of our communication, reports and blogs online as well.

References

- Allen, P. (2008). Mining for justice in the food system: perceptions, practices, and possibilities. *Agriculture And Human Values*, 25(2), 157-161.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10460-008-9120-6>
- Broughton, M., Janssen, P., Hertzman, C., Innis, S., & Frankish, C. (2006). Predictors and Outcomes of Household Food Insecurity Among Inner City Families with Preschool Children in Vancouver. *Canadian Journal of Public Health / Revue Canadienne De Sante'e Publique*, 97(3), 214-216. Retrieved from
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41994727>
- Ernesto Sirolli (2012, November 26) Want to help someone? Shut up and listen! Retrived from <https://youtu.be/chXsLtHqfdM>
- Food Banks BC (2016). About Hunger in BC. Retrieved from
<http://www.foodbanksbc.com/about-hunger-in-bc/hunger-count-2013-2/> on October 7, 2016
- Silverthorn, D. (2016). *Hungry for knowledge: Assessing the prevalence of student food insecurity on five Canadian campuses*. Toronto: Meal Exchange. Retrieved from: <http://mealexchange.com>
- Phillips, K. W. (2014). How Diversity Makes Us Smarter. Retrieved November 24, 2016 from
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>
- Radimer, K. L., C. M. Olson, J. C. Greene, C. C. Campbell, and J. P. Habicht. 1992. Understanding hunger and developing indicators to assess it in women and children. *Journal of Nutrition Education* 24 (1 suppl.):36S–44S
- The Early Edition (2015). UBC food bank sees a spike in visits this year. *CBC News*. Retrieved from
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ubc-food-bank-1.3332420>

Appendix A

a)

E-mail Template:

Hello **XXXX (contact person)**,

My name is **XX**. I am a UBC student.

We are writing to ensure we have received your permission to have information about your food asset included on the Vancouver Food Asset Map located at

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?usp=sharing&mid=1XEmhBp-1P0xxH7ZPFMc76sBFb2U>

Vancouver Coastal Health Public Health Dietitians are working with community partners on this project.

Two of the main goals of this map are:

1. To provide a tool to community members and agencies for locating community food assets that is current, easy to use and those agencies can easily update themselves.
2. To build community capacity and support food access for community members dealing with food insecurity.

Instructions on how to use the Map (English or other translated versions) and a Glossary of the categories used on the Map are attached to this email.

We have also attached an Excel document with the information about your asset we plan to include on the map. If you would like to revise or add information to your listing, please make these changes to the information in the attached Excel spreadsheet.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

LFS student NAME

b)

Contacting via phone or in-person:

Hello, my name is **XX**. I am a UBC student. Could I please have a few minutes of your time to ask you a few questions about **XXXX (food asset you are contacting)** and explain our course map project? Is this a good time to speak with you?

(Note: If they are busy, ask if they are willing to have you call or visit at another time. If yes, ask them for a convenient time and day.)

If they have time please inform them of the following:

As part of our coursework, we are working with Vancouver Coastal Health, one of the community partners involved, to update a Vancouver Food Asset Map using a Google map. Two of the main goals for this map are:

1. To provide a tool to community members and agencies for locating community food assets that is current, easy to use and those agencies can easily update themselves.
2. To build community capacity and support food access for community members dealing with food insecurity.

We wanted to ask you a few questions about **XXXX (food asset you are contacting)** and request permission to include **XXXX (food asset you are contacting)** and the information you provide on the map to help community members learn more about your food asset.

Figure 1. Template in Contacting Food Asset; a) via e-mail, b) via phone/in-person

Appendix B

Type	Name	Who is this for?	Cost	Key Information (+ delivery options)	Day and Time
Free Grocery Items	BackPack Program @ Strathcona Community Center	People at age 18 or under, who is a Strathcona Community family member and part of the Liesure Access Program (low income family). Applicant must complete application process. Application is available at the Strathcona Community Center Front desk.	Free	Parents have access to fresh produce and other food staples to take home for the weekend.	Every Friday contact us
Free Grocery Items	Basics For Babies @GVFBS	Members with babies Cost Low-income, people living outdoors and senior pet guardians	Free	This is a collaboration between JRfm and Lower Mainland Food Banks that provide diapers, baby food, formula and pabulum.	register an month after
Free Grocery Items	Charlie's Food Bank @ SBCA		Free	Vancouver Animal Hospital provides free pet-food and other services for dogs, cats, birds and small animals.	Thursdays

Click to view:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/0lng1jqxwnp4dbw/Free%20or%20Subsidized%20Grocery%20Items%20Sept%2022%202016%20GROUP%2011.xlsx?dl=0>

Figure 1. Updated Food Asset Excel Sheets

Today's date	Location	Before attending	If yes, what was the focus	If you answered	Were the information	If you answered	Was the information	If NOT, why is there any	What food will you use	Other general	Start Date (Submit Date)
2016-11-16	Old Barn Co	Not sure	Yes	Not sure	Didn't use	Yes	Yes	More options	Yes, I found	It would be	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Old Barn Co	Not sure	walking, w	Yes	na	Not sure	nobody rea	Yes	Yes	you need t	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	old barn co	Yes	google	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	yes, very good	2016-11-16 2016-11-16	
2016-11-16	Ubc	Yes	Google	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, because	Thx!	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Bean Arour	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Cheap heal	Yes	Nice work	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	UBC	Not sure	Google	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Cheap vege	Yes, new tc		2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-12-13	UBC	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Potluck	Yes I will Th		2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Seedlings	No	N/A	Yes	Easy to use	Yes	Logical basi	Yes	Look at ad	Possibly-se Cool projec	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	Yes	ams site	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	a way for u	sure if I hav	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	old barn	No	google map	Yes	Yes	Yes	none	Not sure	More comm	yes.	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Seedlings	No	No	Yes	Na	Not sure	A little bit c	Yes	Na	Yes	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Seedlings	No	No	Yes	Na	Yes	Na	Yes	Na	No	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Free food	No, not intr	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	UBC	Yes	My cooper	Yes	It was all cl	Yes	No	Not sure	They could	Yes	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not sure	Cheaper fo	I live in Rich	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Seedlings	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Description	Yes	Services th	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Seedlings	No	Word of m	Yes	It took som	Yes	Yes	Not sure	Sliding scal	Yes, I woul	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	UBC Nest	No	n/a	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	more food	Yes, probab	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	The Nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not sure	Not sure w	Yes	More infor	I would use Great proje	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	idk	Probably n	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Ubc	Not sure	N/a	Not sure	I think it is	Yes	Yes	Yes	I think it w	Maybe. I m	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	Not sure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	groceries	Sure I gues	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not sure		It's pretty u	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Ubc Campu	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Directions	yes, if I eve	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	add a pictu	yessss zou are gre	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	ubc nest	No	na	Yes	na	Yes	na	No	na	perhaps in	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	Nest UBC	Not sure	Google ma	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	Yes	Farmers' m	yes	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	UBC	No	n/a	Yes	n/a	Yes	n/a	No	more cultu	yes if need	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	UBC NEST	No	No resourc	Yes	It was prett	Yes	Pretty easy	Yes	The colours	No	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Help for stu	Yes, because	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	UBC Nest	No	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not sure	not really	yes to see v	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	food banks	Yes -helpfu	2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, I woul		2016-11-16 2016-11-16
2016-11-16	nest	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		2016-11-16 2016-11-16

Click to view:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/x6w5tklnwbw5bcq/Vancouver%20Food%20Asset%20Map%20Feedback%20-%20Community%20Members-report%20%282%29.xlsx?dl=0>

Figure 2. Map Trialling Survey Results