TITLE: Assessing the Intersection of Public Health and Urban Planning to Evaluate Food Equity in Portland, OR

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Urban planners, public health officials, community based program/project mangers and staff, educators, researchers, policy makers

ABSTRACT: Food equity encompasses the equal access of food across race and socioeconomic status; however, the current concepts and measures of food security may not be appropriate assessing if families and individuals have adequate, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. For example, using established metrics a family may not live within a food desert, but still lack affordable access to local grocers. This creates what is known as a food mirage. By adopting the concept of food sovereignty, defined as the ability to control the food system that an individual lives within, we can enhance our ability to understand barriers to accessing healthy food in urban spaces. The urban built environment and elements of public health contribute to both food mirages and food sovereignty, merging two traditionally siloed sectors. By identifying facilitators of food inequity through an interdisciplinary lens encompassing public health and urban planning, food security can be improved by teaching food sovereignty. These solutions can be achieved with assessments such community mapping to identify families and individuals in food mirages, combined with qualitative data to understand what constitutes an appropriate grocer to understand when a family is living in a food mirage.

OBJECTIVE(S): Define food sovereignty and food equity. Evaluate the need for cross-sector collaboration between urban planning and public health to improve urban food security. Explain new methods that have been studied to improve how food security is evaluating, such as evaluating urban spaces for food mirages. Discuss potential impacts of cross sector collaboration food equity and food justice to improve food security.