



**Vancouver Chinatown
Food Security Report Presentation**

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Angela Ho

About hua foundation

- Youth driven non-profit organization based in Vancouver Chinatown
 - *Our mission is to empower youth in the Asian diaspora to fully participate in advancing social change through exploring our racialized identities and building resilience in communities.*
- This report is a part of the Choi Project
 - *Goal: Advance the role of culture in food security efforts by promoting food and cultural literacy, education, and community engagement.*



Impetus for research



Background definitions

Food security is defined by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization as “a “situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

Background definitions

Cultural food security expands this definition by emphasizing food security as a state where people are “able to acquire food in ways that are culturally acceptable, [empowering], and personally dignifying.” (Rocha & Liberato, 2013).

B.C.'s Chinese food distribution system



Photo credit: James Crookall, Vancouver Archives

B.C.'s Chinese food distribution system

- Agricultural sector was not free of racism and anti-Chinese sentiments
 - Efforts put forth to limit economic competition from Chinese farmers
 - Problematic narrative about Chinese farmers & their businesses dominated public discourse
- Policy measures
 - Produce Marketing Act of 1927 enacted by provincial government sought to regulate produce allowed onto market, targeting Chinese farmers, wholesalers, peddlers, greengrocers, etc.

B.C.'s Chinese food distribution system



Photo credit: James Crookall, Vancouver Archives

B.C.'s Chinese food distribution system

- Older, longer established Chinese food distribution system operates in parallel to newer, rapidly expanding mainstream local food movement (Natalie & Wittman, 2013)



Photo credit: James Skitt Matthew, Vancouver Archives



Photo credit: James Crookall, Vancouver Archives

Chinatown: What's at stake



Photo credit: Julian Fok Photography

Cultural food assets

- Food assets are defined by the Vancouver Food Strategy as “resources, facilities, services or spaces that are available to Vancouver residents, and which are used to support the local food system.”
- Cultural food assets are businesses and services that provide a similar, if not identical function as food assets defined by City of Vancouver.
 - Supports cultural food distribution system
 - Supports neighbourhood food security
 - Spaces for maintenance & transmission of culture

Cultural food assets



Cultural food assets



Cultural food assets



Cultural food assets



Cultural food assets



Research focus

- Document the loss of cultural food assets in Chinatown between 2009 to 2016
 - Case study for understanding state of assets not formally recognized as active contributions to food security in Vancouver
- Analyze municipal policy to identify gaps relating to the inclusion and support for cultural food assets in Vancouver

Area surveyed

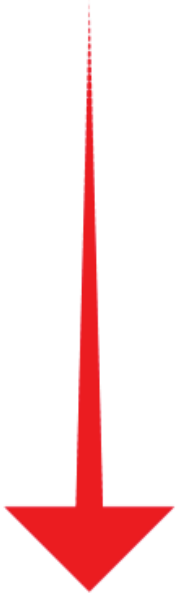


Methods

- Primary research using Google Maps to survey rate of loss during 7 year timeframe
- Losses were identified through following characteristics:
 - Changes in store signs
 - Different property use
 - Closures
 - Construction activity
- Data compiled, rate of loss calculated

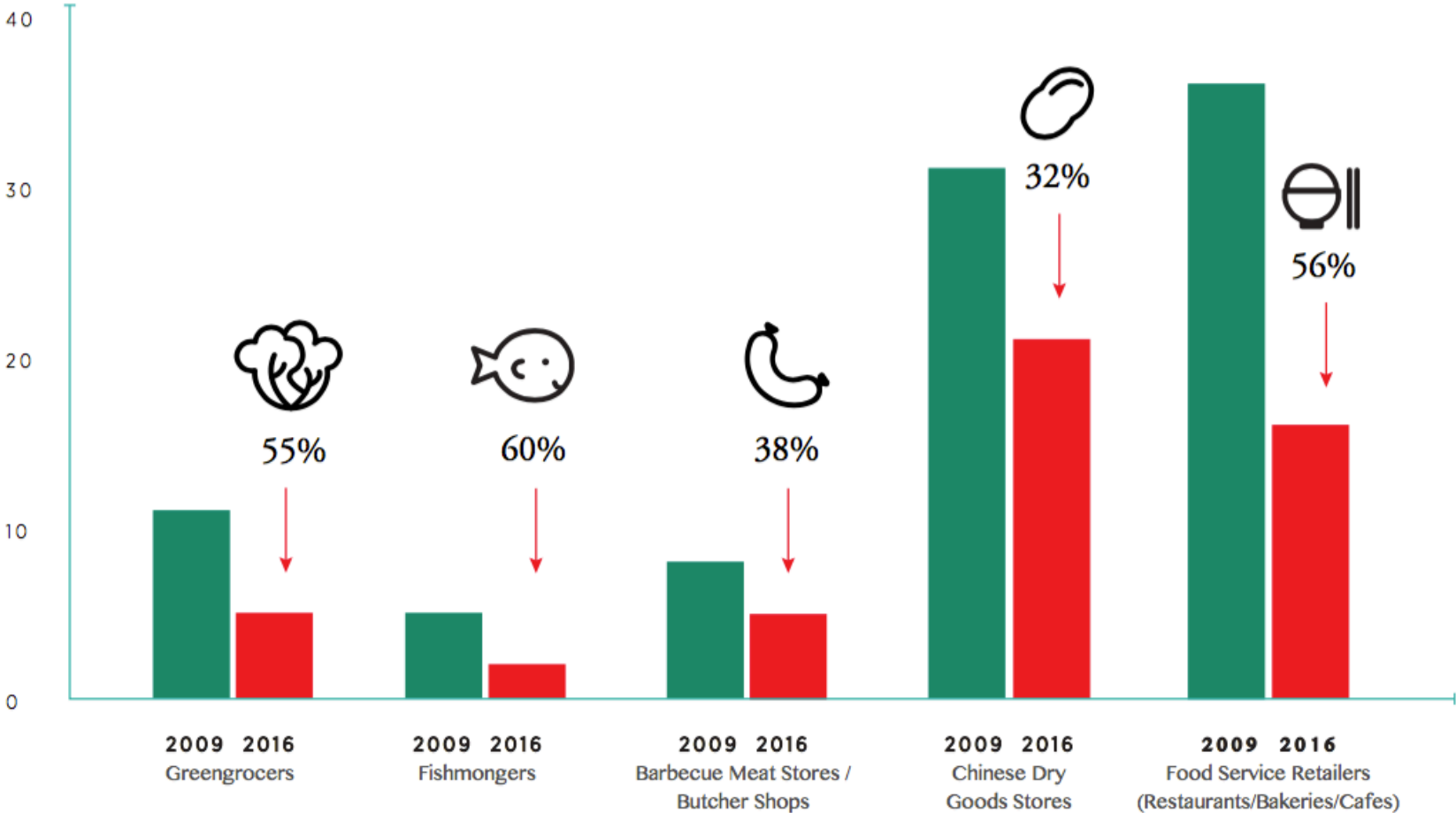
$$\frac{\text{\# of cultural food assets lost between 2009 - 2016}}{\text{Existing number of cultural food assets in operation in 2009}} \times 100 = \text{\% of cultural food assets lost between 2009 - 2016}$$

Findings



50% of fresh food stores^{ix}
lost between 2009 to 2016

Findings



What do these losses mean?

- Impact on food security
- Loss of cultural space
- Loss of community

Contributing factors

- Decreased business activity in Chinatown
- Increasing rent & property value
- Changing socioeconomic landscape
- Lack of succession planning & continuity



Chinatown Policy Analysis

- Analyzed 5 policy documents:
 - Vancouver Food Strategy
 - Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy
 - Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan
 - Downtown Eastside Social Impact Assessment
 - Healthy City Strategy

Arts & culture paradox

- Policy tends not to recognize culture beyond its physical manifestations or conventional forms of artistic expression



Arts & culture paradox

- What about food?
- Results in exclusion often intangible forms of culture, such as food, in policy discussions of arts and culture in Vancouver



Exclusion by omission: Who is included in policy?

- Importance of cultural food assets to Vancouver's local food system is not well captured within municipal policy documents, despite their overlap in achieving similar policy objectives.



Exclusion by omission: Who is included in policy?

- Food assets recognized within policy:
 - Community gardens
 - Orchards
 - Urban farms
 - Farmers markets
 - Food processing infrastructure
 - Community composting facilities
 - Neighbourhood food networks
- But what about cultural food assets such as greengrocers, fishmongers and butcher shops?

Exclusion by omission: Who is included in policy?

- City of Vancouver municipal target to “[increase] city-wide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% over 2010 levels by 2020.”

Exclusion by omission: Who is included in policy?

Feeding ourselves well

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The City works with community organizations to create sustainable and just food systems. In partnership with the [Vancouver Food Policy Council](#), the City created and adopted the [Vancouver Food Strategy](#) in 2013. The Strategy addresses a number of gaps and vulnerabilities in the food system.

Our goal: A healthy, just, and sustainable food system

Our target: Increase citywide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% by 2020



LOCAL FOOD

42%

increase in the of neighbourhood food assets in Vancouver since 2010

[Read our success stories](#)

Exclusion by omission: Who is included in policy?

- Even in Chinatown alone, drastically different picture when we broaden our understanding of what can be considered a food asset



Exclusion by omission: Who is included in policy?



Opportunities

- Support the inclusion of culture as a fourth pillar of sustainability
- Include & support cultural food assets in the next iteration of the Vancouver Food Strategy
- Support further research on cultural food assets in other neighborhoods and cultural food distribution systems

Progress updates

- Updates to Vancouver Food Strategy passed by Council in October 2017
- Three new focus areas:
 - Diversity of Voices & Inclusion
 - Food Access (Financial accessibility & availability)
 - Resilience

Final thoughts

- We still have policies in place that don't meet the needs of diverse communities—this isn't new.
- Policy in and of itself isn't enough for tackling issues of power & privilege within local food movement.
- Collaborative potential between academia & community organizations

Contact

To read/download the Vancouver Chinatown Food Report, visit:

huafoundation.org/foodreport

To get in touch, contact:

Angela Ho

angela@huafoundation.org

@angelakmho