

How the Housing Crisis Affects Food Security in Charlottesville, VA

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“Need a Ride?”

Heading home for Fall Break, I call an Uber to the train station. As we slow down to the stop sign at 10th and West Street, an older African-American woman standing at the corner approaches our car.

“Not today, I have a passenger, hun,” my driver called out. “I’m so sorry,” he apologizes.

“No, no, you’re good, it’s no problem,” I quickly reply.

I suddenly find myself in my mom’s 2001 Daewoo Lanos and we’re on our weekly Friday afternoon shopping trip. We’re heading to Bi-Lo and my stomach rumbles for a free chocolate chip cookie from the bakery. I’m 9 years old this year, which means the time is ticking before I am no longer granted the delectable, or as my mom would call it: teeth-rotting, reward. 10-year-olds, apparently, are no longer worthy of such a gift. Along the way, we pass by the Mill Hill’s Lutheran church. Ms. Washington is outside, so my mom pulls over. We always pick her up when we see her.

“Need a ride?” my mom leans over and shouts out the window.

“Thank you, Ms. Cathi,” she says to my mother with a toothy grin. She climbs in the backseat. “Where y’all headed up to today?”

“Bi-Lo!” I reply snappily, twisting around in my seat. “I want a cookie!”

“Ain’t that right, honey?” she chuckles. “I’m heading up there, too—Winn Dixie. My food stamps just came in on the third, last Tuesday.”

It’s a scene that played time and time again. Ms. Washington lived in our neighborhood, but she did not own a car. Seneca, a rural South Carolina town, lacked a public bus system back then. The Mill Hill neighborhood’s sole corner store sold a grand total of zero produce items, although it boasted an assortment of candies, jerky, cigarettes, and beers to entice adults and children alike. Likewise, Ms. Washington relied on hitch-hiking of sorts to make her trips to the grocery store. Ms. Washington was a regular in our car.

I look back up from the Uber's backseat, glancing into the rearview as we accelerate away from the intersection, keeping sight of the woman on the corner. Through the mirror, I make a moment's eye-contact with my driver and wonder if he understood my sincerity.

Introduction

Food insecurity afflicts one in eight American households; that is, at some point in the year 12.3% of households struggled to provide food for their families (Feeding America, 2017). That number is higher in Charlottesville, where 16.7% of residents are food insecure (Thomas Jefferson Health District, 2016).

Inextricably tied to food security are issues of housing and transportation, an intersection which has been dubbed the housing-transportation-food affordability nexus. If rent prices and property tax increase, then there will be less money available for purchasing food. If you do not own a car or a city lacks adequate public transit, then access to grocery stores is likely to be limited. Likewise, planners have largely neglected to focus on all three factors when designing affordable cities.

This paper evaluates the housing-transportation-food nexus in the context of Charlottesville, particularly in regards to the Westhaven and 10th & Page community. 10th & Page is a low-income community which has been especially affected by gentrification and the Charlottesville affordable housing crisis. Likewise, this strain on housing has raised housing costs throughout Charlottesville, and particularly in the 10th & Page neighborhood. The increased rental prices and property tax negatively affect food security among these residents.

Part I provides an overview of food security, the housing-transportation-food nexus, and Charlottesville's housing crisis. Part II maps the local foodscape in an attempt to visualize and contextualize food security issues. Finally, Part III examines the foodscape through a Lefebvrian lens of place-making. This analysis raises to question the role of culture in food security. The paper concludes with a discussion of culture in the context of Charlottesville food environments. Interwoven with it all are my personal narratives on the lived experience of food insecurity.

PART I

Food Security

Food security was defined at the World Food Summit as the “physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets [one’s] dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (1996). Embedded in food security is food availability, food access, utilization, and stability. Food availability is the adequate supply of food through production, distribution, and exchange. Food access is described by FAO as “access by individuals to adequate resources for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet” (2006, p. 1). Utilization refers to the body’s ability to meet physiological needs by nutrient-uptake from food; this is highly linked with public health issues such as water, sanitation, and hygiene (FAO, 2006). Food stability is defined as the continuous, sufficient access to food at all times; stability may concern both food availability and access (FAO, 2006). Lacking in any of these four dimensions may indicate food insecurity.

Food insecurity can be understood in three general forms: chronic, transitory, and seasonal. Chronic food insecurity is characterized by a long-term, persistent inability to meet basic food needs over a period of time (FAO, 2008). More commonly, individuals and households experience transitory food insecurity. This type of food insecurity is temporary or short-termed and results from sudden shocks or fluctuations in food availability and access (FAO, 2008). Seasonal food insecurity occurs in a cyclical fashion and can be viewed as recurring, transitory food insecurity (FAO, 2008).

In addition to chronic, transitory, and seasonal food insecurity, food insecurity may also vary in severity. FAO has produced the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, shown below. Food insecurity in its mildest form may include uncertainty about one’s ability to provide food; in moderate food insecurity, variety may be forgone or meals skipped. Severe food insecurity may entail a complete lack of food for days or longer (FAO, n.d.).



Food Deserts

Food deserts are areas lacking access to healthy, fresh, and affordable foods. The USDA defines these areas as low-income communities with no or limited access to cars and living more than 0.5 miles from the nearest supermarket (USDA, n.d.). According to a report by USDA, 23.5 million Americans live in a food desert and half are low-income (USDA, 2009). Another 2.3 million people live in low-income, rural areas which are located more than 10 miles from a supermarket (USDA, 2009). Furthermore, small corner stores may be reported in the same category as supermarkets thereby underreporting the amount of food deserts (NAICS, n.d.).

Food Swamps

Whereas food deserts are the absence of nutritious foods, food swamps have an abundance of unhealthy food options, such as convenience stores, fast food restaurants, and liquor stores. It is common that food deserts and food swamps co-exist. Poor neighborhoods may lack grocery stores, while corner stores and fast food joints permeate. Americans living in

the poorest areas have 2.5 times more exposure to fast-food restaurants than those living in wealthier regions (Yeh and Katz, 2006). In a food desert, having no good food options, many people must turn to the fast food or convenience stores to meet their food needs.

Food deserts and food swamps characterize the **food environment**. A *local food environment* encompasses “the physical, social, economic, cultural, and political factors that impact the accessibility, availability, and adequacy of food within a community” (Rideout et al., 2015), although they are typically conceptualized around the consumer environment. Food environments come together with other places and spaces where people acquire, prepare, or otherwise engage with food or food meaning, such as the home, community gardens, food banks, and soup kitchens, to create a **foodscape** (MacKendrick, 2014).

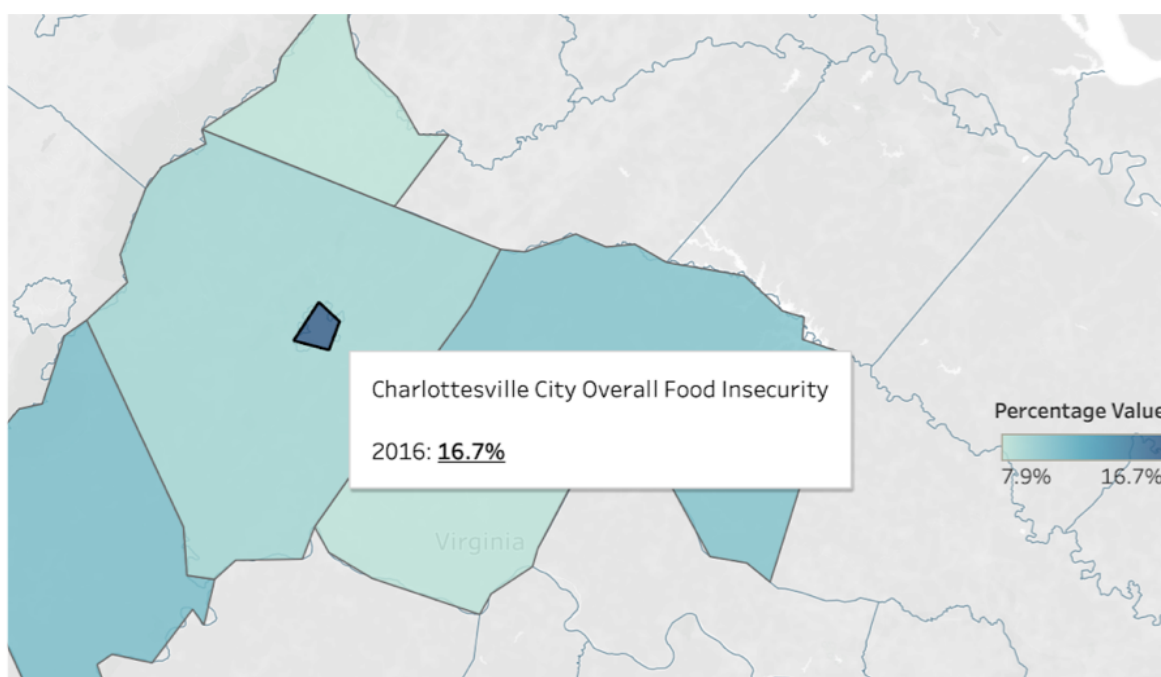
Food Apartheid

Metaphors such as food deserts and swamps liken the food environments to naturally-occurring phenomena. However, the problem here is that these are not naturally occurring food environments. “It’s something that’s planned,” says Toni Lawson, a 71-year-old resident of Southeast D.C, who lives in a so-called food desert. “A desert is natural; it’s manufactured by the planet. This— this is something that’s planned and it’s obvious” (NPR, 2018).

Food justice advocates and anthropologists have re-termed these disparities in food environments as *food apartheid*. The term “food apartheid” brings to the forefront issues of race and intentionality. Like Toni said, deserts and swamps are manufactured by the planet, but food deserts and food swamps are manufactured by racist, oppressive institutions and a neoliberal system. The system itself condones the existence of these food disparities. Likewise, food apartheid literature highlights the racial inequalities of food security, especially in access and availability, whereby communities of color are disproportionately affected.

Food Security in Charlottesville

Charlottesville City has higher levels of food insecurity than surrounding counties, including Albemarle County. According to Thomas Jefferson Health District data, 16.7% of Charlottesville City's population is food insecure (2016). Childhood food insecurity rates are similar to overall food insecurity in Charlottesville City, at 15% in 2016 (Thomas Jefferson Health District). Additionally, Charlottesville has the highest average meal cost among the surrounding counties and cities, at \$3.64 per meal (Loaves & Fishes, n.d.).



Map of food insecurity in Charlottesville City and surrounding areas. Source: Thomas Jefferson Health District, 2016

Food insecurity is closely associated with poverty, especially in terms of chronic and moderate to severe food insecurity. However, nationally, 58% of food insecure households earn incomes above the poverty line (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2017), although, many of these households above the poverty line are nonetheless low-income given how low the federal poverty line is and its lack of geographical variation. These families may earn too much to receive federal nutrition assistance like SNAP, while earning less than \$2,500 per month (Loaves & Fishes, n.d.). Furthermore, it is still important to recognize that even the middle class

is not immune to hunger; shocks such as being laid off a job, a car accident, or medical conditions are increasingly likely to put these families into transitory or mild food insecurity (Chen, 2010).

The rates of food insecurity in Charlottesville are linked to the changing dynamics of its food economy. In the past, neighborhood grocers were more common, however many of these have closed in favor of big box stores and chain supermarkets, as is true in many other suburban American towns (Hays, 2019). The grocers which remained have moved towards corner and convenience stores, rather than full-service supermarkets. However, this is not only a story of market competition, but also racial discrimination. In 1950, Charlottesville had 11 grocery stores owned by African American families (Bingham, 2018). Particularly, there were four grocery stores located in the Vinegar Hill, a predominately African American neighborhood and business district (Bingham, 2018). These grocery stores sourced their foods from black-owned farms (Bingham, 2018). However, Vinegar Hill was demolished during Urban Renewal, along with the black food economy which Vinegar Hill supported.

Housing-Transportation-Food Nexus

The housing-transportation-food nexus stipulates that these three factors together contribute the most to the cost of living, rather than only rent or housing cost which has been the predominate focus of affordable living initiatives (Das, 2017). The nexus works in this fashion: If you are spending more money on rent or housing, then you will have less money available to purchase food or transport. In addition, if you lack access to a car or public transit, or your housing is located far from stores and supermarkets, you are likewise less likely to have proper, affordable access to food. The nexus also emphasizes the need to consider all associated costs together in city planning.

Das coined this term due to a major gap in research intersecting all three topic areas. Based on Das' research, only 13 articles discussed the three areas together, although many articles consider the crux of two of the three (2017). What Das found was that studies on the links between the domains were most relevant to food security research. That is, many studies on food insecurity have revealed that housing and/or transportation influence food security. However, in urban planning, these connections were not as emphasized (Das, 2017). A literature review by Pothukuchi and Kaufman found that food was rarely discussed in planning journals; they found that urban planners saw food as a rural issue, not an urban one (2000). This is a particularly concerning deficient in academia; if those responsible for designing the cities in which we live are not considering issues related to food access, how might that access ever be improved?

The food system is deeply connected with the city—food security researchers have explicated these embedded relationships time and time again. Now, urban planners must also consider food as so—not an “externality” as many assume. Das makes note of many avenues with which planners may serve a role in food systems research, such as influencing community

food goals through zoning and land-use bylaws, studying the relationships between food and planning issues like community land-use, and analyzing the impact of food system activities in areas with food entities and transit (2017).

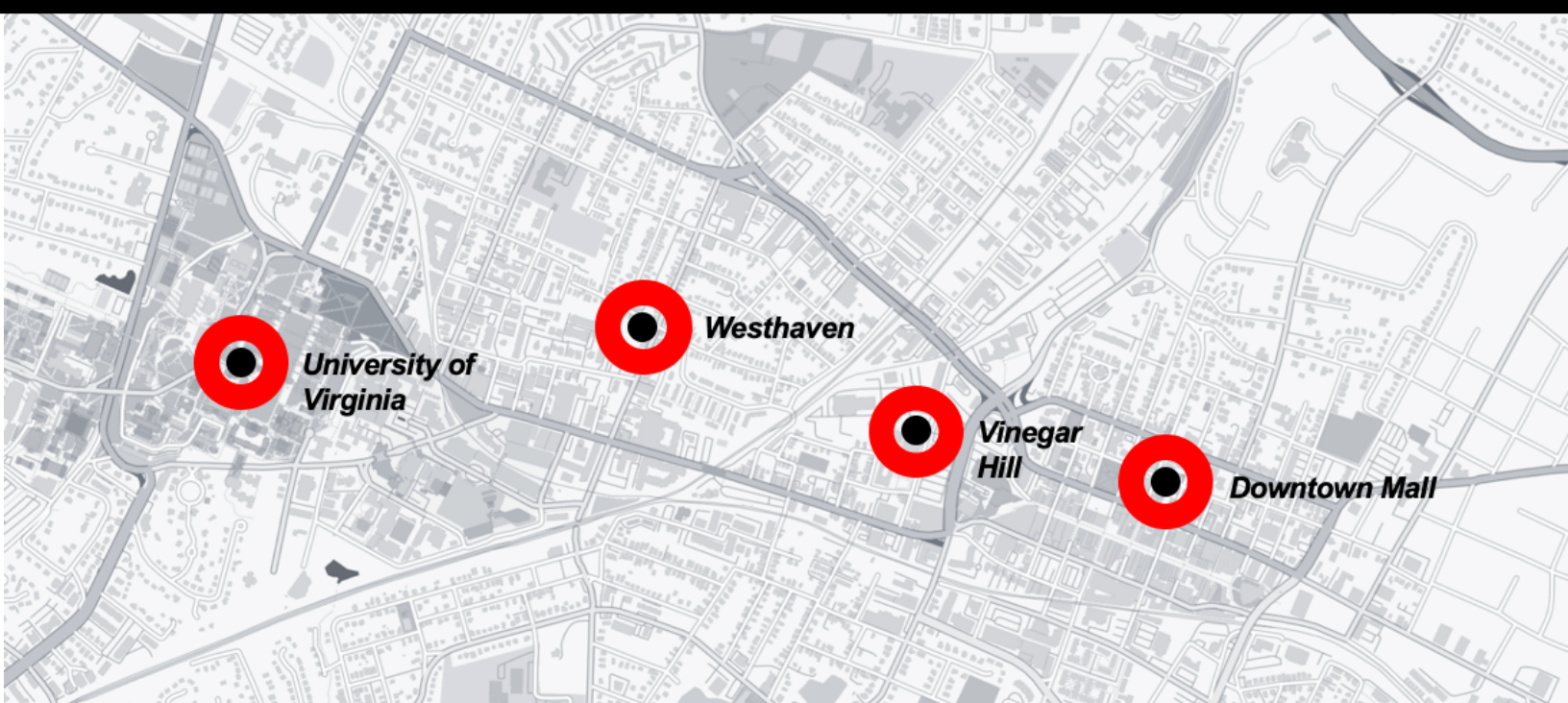
Based on her review, Das suggests a housing-transportation-food affordability index based on the affordability index created by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, which encompassed only housing and transportation. Her model is the following:

$$\textit{Affordability Index} = \frac{\textit{Housing costs} + \textit{Transportation costs} + \textit{Food costs}}{\textit{Income}}$$

Source: Das, 2017

Furthermore, Das provides some recommendations for new and existing developments in relation to this housing-transportation-food affordability nexus. In terms of new developments, she suggests transit-oriented development (2017). Transit-oriented developments focus on walkable and bikeable residential, business, and leisure spaces. She, however, emphasizes the need for non-market affordable units for low-income residents as studies have suggested that transit-oriented developments may induce gentrification (Das, 2017; Padiero et al., 2019). For existing developments, she suggests zoning laws regarding food outlets which may better address the inequalities in access to grocery stores and fast-food restaurants in poor neighborhoods. (Das, 2017).

Charlottesville's Housing Crisis



In the past 20 years, Charlottesville's population has grown rapidly, and these newcomers have primarily been white upper- and middle-income people who drive up the housing market (Yager, 2018). Thereby, fewer options are left for lower-income residents, who are also disproportionately African-American. Today, the average rental price for a two-bedroom apartment in Charlottesville is \$1,400 (Thompson, 2018).

Currently, Charlottesville hosts seven public housing sites. However, a 2018 housing report indicates a need for 3,300 new affordable rental housing units (Saurez, 2018). In order to contribute to affordable housing, developers in Charlottesville must either pay into the city's affording housing fund or designate affordable housing units into their buildings (Thompson, 2018).

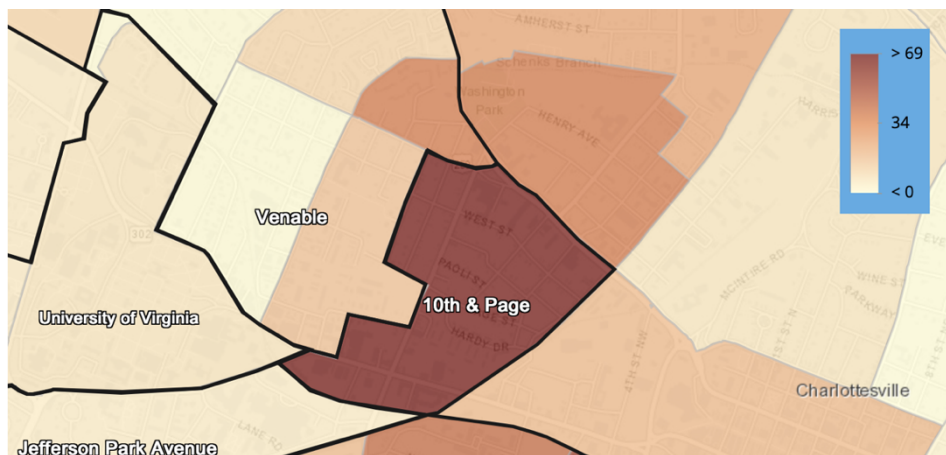
Charlottesville's rise in housing costs affects residents throughout the city, but it particularly affects many residents living nearby the University. There is a lower income

neighborhood called 10th & Page which faces gentrification from student housing and other young professionals associated with the University. Within 10th & Page is also Westhaven, Charlottesville's first public housing project.

Westhaven and 10th & Page

Westhaven is a public housing site of 126 units located in the 10th & Page neighborhood. Constructed in 1963, it was one of Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority's first projects (Ferlic et al., 2009). In part, it was created to house the displaced residents of the Vinegar Hill redevelopment (Ferlic et al., 2009).

The surrounding neighborhood, 10th & Page, named for the cross-streets 10th Street and Page Street, is likewise low-income. The neighborhood borders the Venable and Jefferson Park Ave. neighborhoods, which house large amounts of University of Virginia (UVA) students. The map below shows the African-American makeup of each of these neighborhoods, and 10th & Page, a predominately African-American community, is in stark contrast to the Venable and Jefferson Park Avenue areas which reflect the majority white UVA student body. With that said, dynamics are changing and this neighborhood is also being gentrified. Between 2010 and 2016, the African-American population in 10th & Page has dropped from 72% to 57% (Cameron et al., 2018).



*Map of the African-American population by neighborhood in Charlottesville. Darker shading indicates a higher African-American population.
Source: Cameron et al., 2018*

Vinegar Hill

Vinegar Hill was located west of the present-day Downtown Mall. Following the Civil War, it was a thriving African-American residential and commercial district until it was razed in an urban renewal project in 1965 (Smith, 2017). 158 family homes, 140 of which were black families' homes, that housed approximately 600 residents were destroyed, along with 29 businesses — included four grocery stores and a church (Bingham, 2018; Smith, 2017). According to *Urban Renewal and the End of Black Culture in Charlottesville, Virginia* by James Saunders and Renae Shackelford, in 1959, this area had a collective income of \$1.6 million, which would equate to \$13.6 million today (Saunders & Shackelford, 2005). Not only did this redevelopment project destroy black families' livelihoods, homes, and economy, "it destroyed black people's pride" says Eugene Williams, 90, of Charlottesville. Mr. Williams has been honored by the city for his work in civil rights and affordable housing (Yager, 2017).

The Role of the University

The University has played a role in the housing crisis and displacement of Charlottesville residents in a number of ways.

First of all, Gospel Hill was a predominately black neighborhood located south of UVA between Jefferson Park Ave. and the Southern Railway tracks (Cameron et al., 2018). Beginning in the 1960's when urban renewal projects were in full-force, the University began purchasing homes and land in Gospel Hill for the expansion of the UVA Health System (Cameron et al., 2018). Now, virtually nothing remains of the former Gospel Hill, nor a semblance of recognition. The redevelopment of this area may have been done in the name of "public good," yet UVA Health System has been complicit in unjustified racial disparities, such as how maternal mortality for African American women is nearly three times higher than white

women at the hospital or how infant mortality of African-American babies is five times the national average (Rife, 2019; Cameron et al., 2018).

Secondly, the University does not provide sufficient, convenient housing for students and thus they seek off-grounds housing, generally within walking distance. The median family income of a student from UVA is \$155,500 and 67% of students come from the top 20% (New York Times, 2017). Landlords have realized this affluent market and risen rent prices accordingly, thereby removing any naturally-occurring affordable housing. In the last 20 years, UVA's undergraduate student population has grown by over 30% ("Undergraduate Admissions," 2019). As the student population expands, it amplifies this trend of increasing rental costs and the housing market is continually strained by the housing demand. Furthermore, developers are not just targeting students, but rather the highest income student, with luxury apartments like The Flats, Lark, and The Standard which boast average monthly rental prices of more than \$1,000 (Cameron et al., 2018).

The Standard, a new development as of 2018, received criticism for its proximity to the Westhaven community (Cameron et al., 2018). The developers of The Standard chose not to place affordable units in the complex and instead paying \$664,000 into the city's affordable housing fund (Thompson, 2018). Dairy Central is a construction on Preston Ave. that is redeveloping the Monticello Dairy Building (Thompson, 2018). Unlike the Standard, Dairy Central will include affordable units side-by-side market-price units (Thompson, 2018). Stacy Pethia, Charlottesville's housing coordinator, says she wishes more developers would take this path and would like to change Charlottesville's zoning ordinances to require affordable units to be built in all new developments (Thompson, 2018).

The Credit Card Bill

Over the course of my four years at UVA, I have lived off-Grounds for three of them. I have lived in three residences, one apartment and two single-family homes. Each year, I have paid increasingly more. My second-year, my first year living off-Grounds, I was paying \$500 on average for my rent and utilities. This year I pay about \$700. However, my wages at the University have not followed suit: My second year, I worked in a lab for \$11 per hour. This year, I work three different jobs and average \$12 per hour.

I am a low-income student. I worked full-time this summer in hopes that I would be able to work fewer hours while interning and overloading this semester. However, after having to replace my laptop at the beginning of the semester, my funds were depleted. In order to keep up with the cost of rent, I've worked 20 hours per week, the maximum amount allowed by federal work-study, to supplement the funds from my financial aid. However, recently, there has been few resources leftover to buy food.

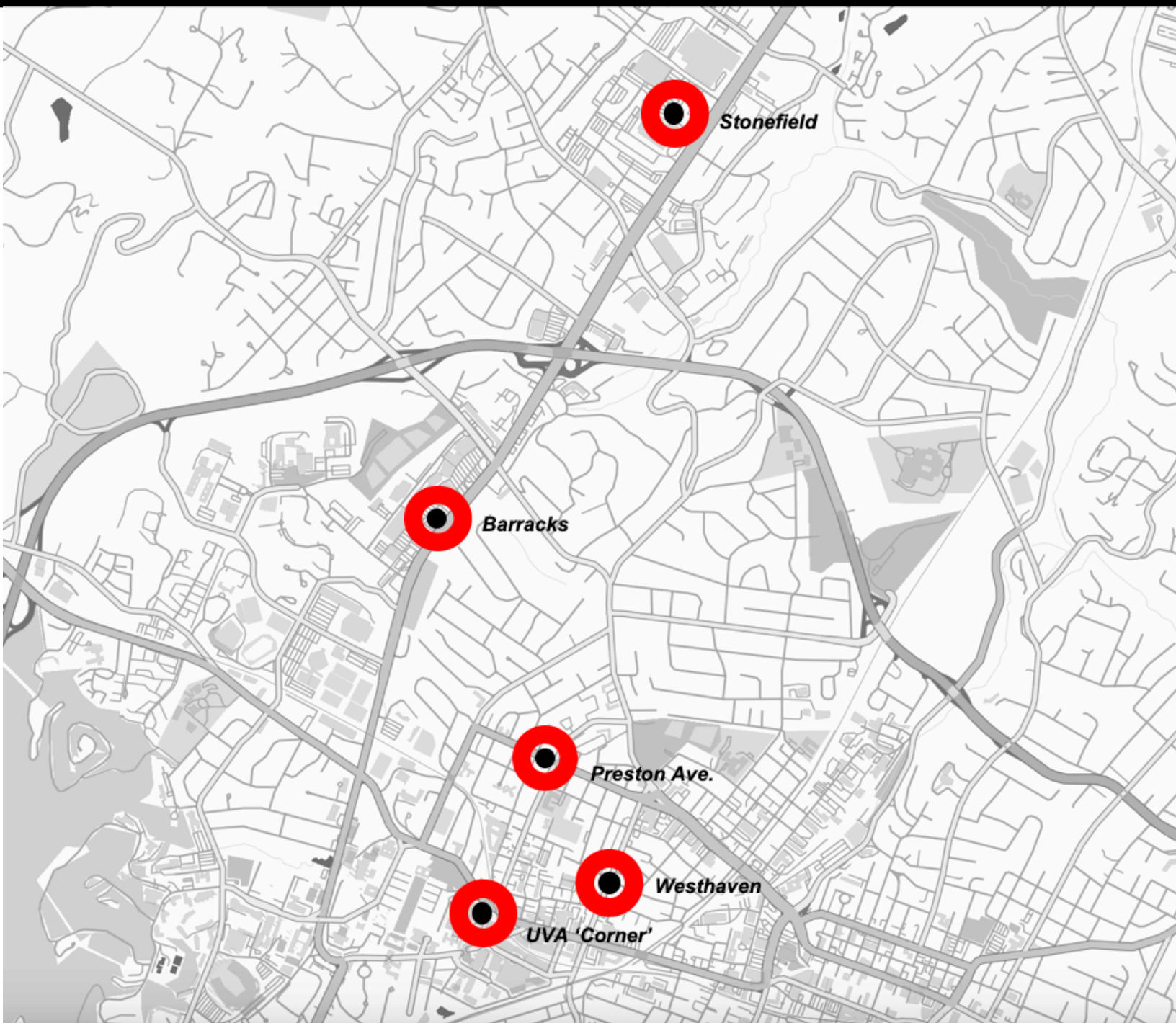
In terms of my food environment, I do not have a meal plan at the University due to their high cost—most plans average over \$9 per meal or swipe. I make most of my food at home, while sometimes seeking out free food events on-Grounds. However, grocery shopping can be difficult as I do not have a car.

During the summer, when I had more time, I would walk the 1.5 hour round-trip to the Barracks Shopping Center, which houses Kroger, an oasis for both affordable and quality groceries. However, it is a difficult trip with more than a few grocery bags—more than once, I have gotten home with my hands red and sore, regretting telling myself I could carry that one extra bag. As a healthy, fit 21-year-old, I can only imagine how difficult this trip may be for a single-mother with two small children she cannot leave at home or a 70-year-old retiree from Westhaven.

During the school year, time is a much more valuable resource and I must bargain between shopping at stores which are close and convenient and paying for Ubers to grocery stores farther away, but cheaper in price. Sometimes, I am able to carpool with friends to shop. However, often times I find myself struggling to afford my groceries, going into credit card debt in the name of feeding myself.

PART II

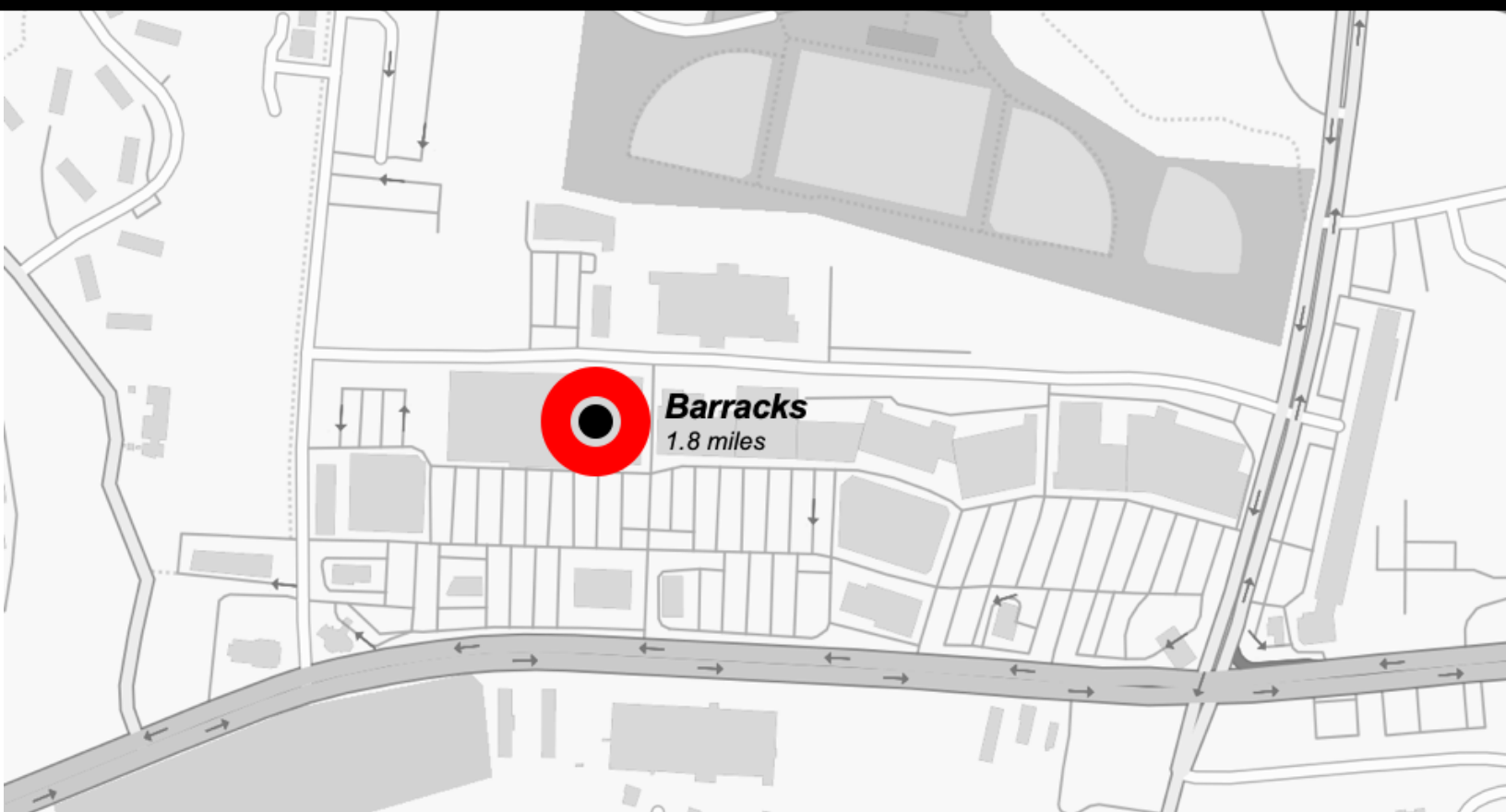
Mapping Food Environments



This map represents the main commercial areas servicing the Westhaven and 10th & Page community. In the closest proximity are the UVA “Corner” and Preston Ave. At a greater distance are the Barracks and Stonefield shopping centers, respectively. These areas represent food environments; each one is network of shops, markets, restaurants and organizations which provide food goods, either by purchase or received as donation. Together, these food environments create a foodscape.

In the following sections, I will evaluate each food environment. For each location, I will detail the number of full-service grocery stores; limited-service grocers, including specialty grocers; corner stores; and fast food restaurants, including ice-cream and other desert shops. The count does not include casual dining restaurants with mainly sit-down table service. Furthermore, I will indicate the distance of each area from the Westhaven community and explain the methods of transportation available. In the final section, I will provide a brief analysis of the mapping.

Barracks



The Barracks area contains the Barracks Road Shopping Center, as well as nearby restaurants along Emmet Street, Millmont Street, Arlington Boulevard, and Barracks Road. The food environment contains three full-service grocery stores, one specialty grocery store, two liquor stores, and 16 fast food restaurants. The three full-service grocery stores, two Krogers and a Harris Teeter, all accept EBT. Kroger and Harris Teeter both offer delivery services, although delivery is not available to patrons paying with EBT.

This area is located 1.8 miles from Westhaven and can be accessed via car or Charlottesville Area Transit bus. This trip to Barracks is approximately 8 to 12 minutes by car. By bus, the route is approximately 30 to 40 minutes one-way and is accessible by Route 7 and Route 8. Each route requires a 0.4-mile walk to the appropriate bus stop. Walking from

Westhaven to the Barracks area would take approximately 40 minutes each way and sidewalks are available throughout the route.

Stonefield

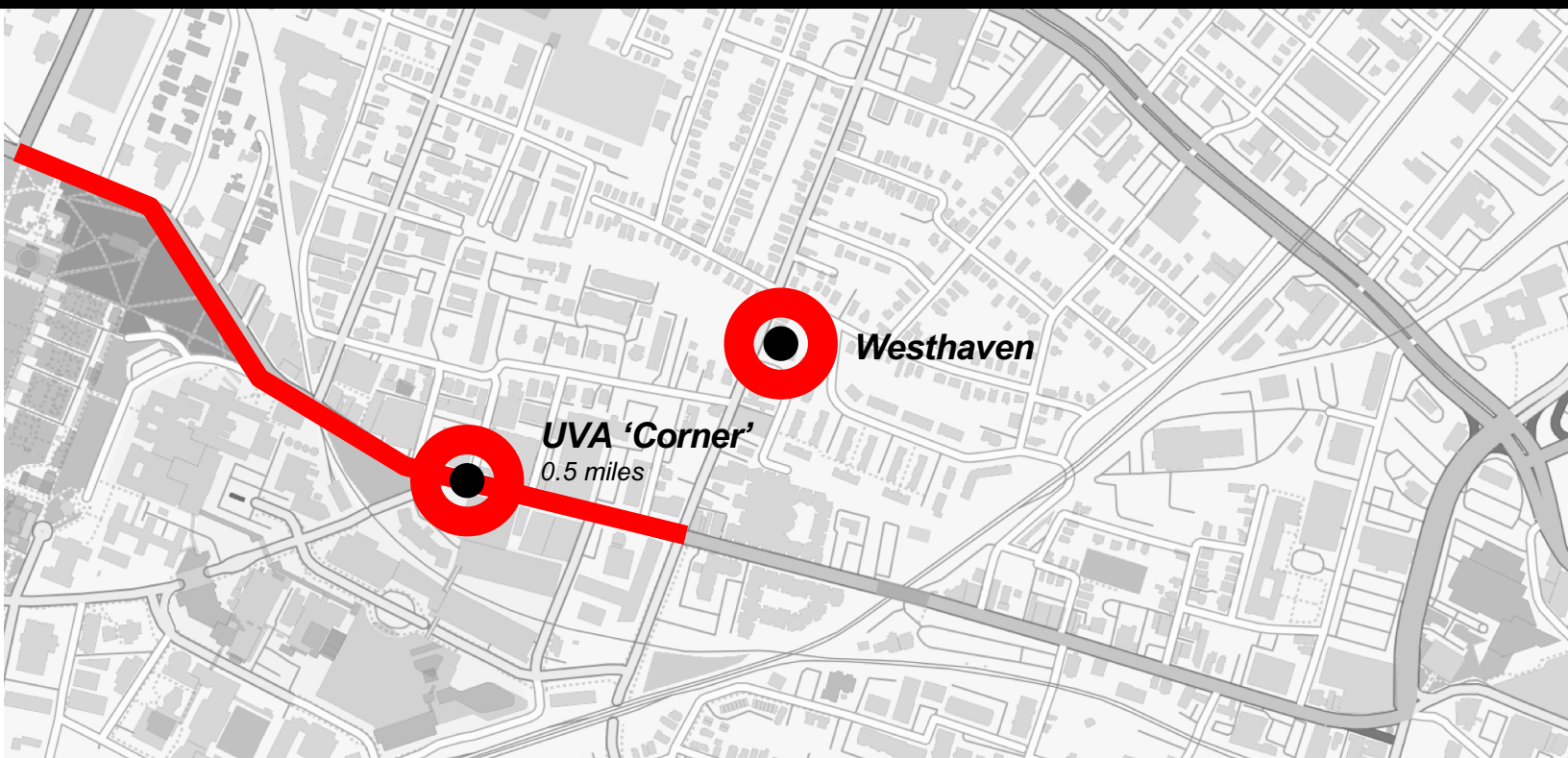


The Stonefield area contains the Shops at Stonefield shopping center, as well as nearby stores and restaurants along Seminole Trail, Hydraulic Road, and Greenbrier Drive. The food environment contains two full-service grocery stores and five fast food restaurants. The two full-service grocery stores, Trader Joe's and Costco, both accept EBT. Shopping at Costco is by paid membership only. Costco offer delivery services, although delivery is not available to those paying with EBT.

Green Market at Stonefield is a seasonal farmer's market located at the Shops at Stonefield shopping center. The market is open May through October on Thursday afternoons, 4pm to 7pm, and Saturday mornings, 8:30am to 12:30pm ("Green Market at Stonefield," n.d.).

This area is located 2.5 miles from Westhaven and can be accessed via car or Charlottesville Area Transit bus. This trip is 10 to 15 minutes by car. By bus, the route is approximately 40 to 50 minutes one-way and is accessible by Route 7 and Route 8. Each route requires a 0.4-mile walk to the appropriate bus stop. Walking from Westhaven to the Stonefield area would take approximately one hour each way, however sidewalks are not available throughout the route.

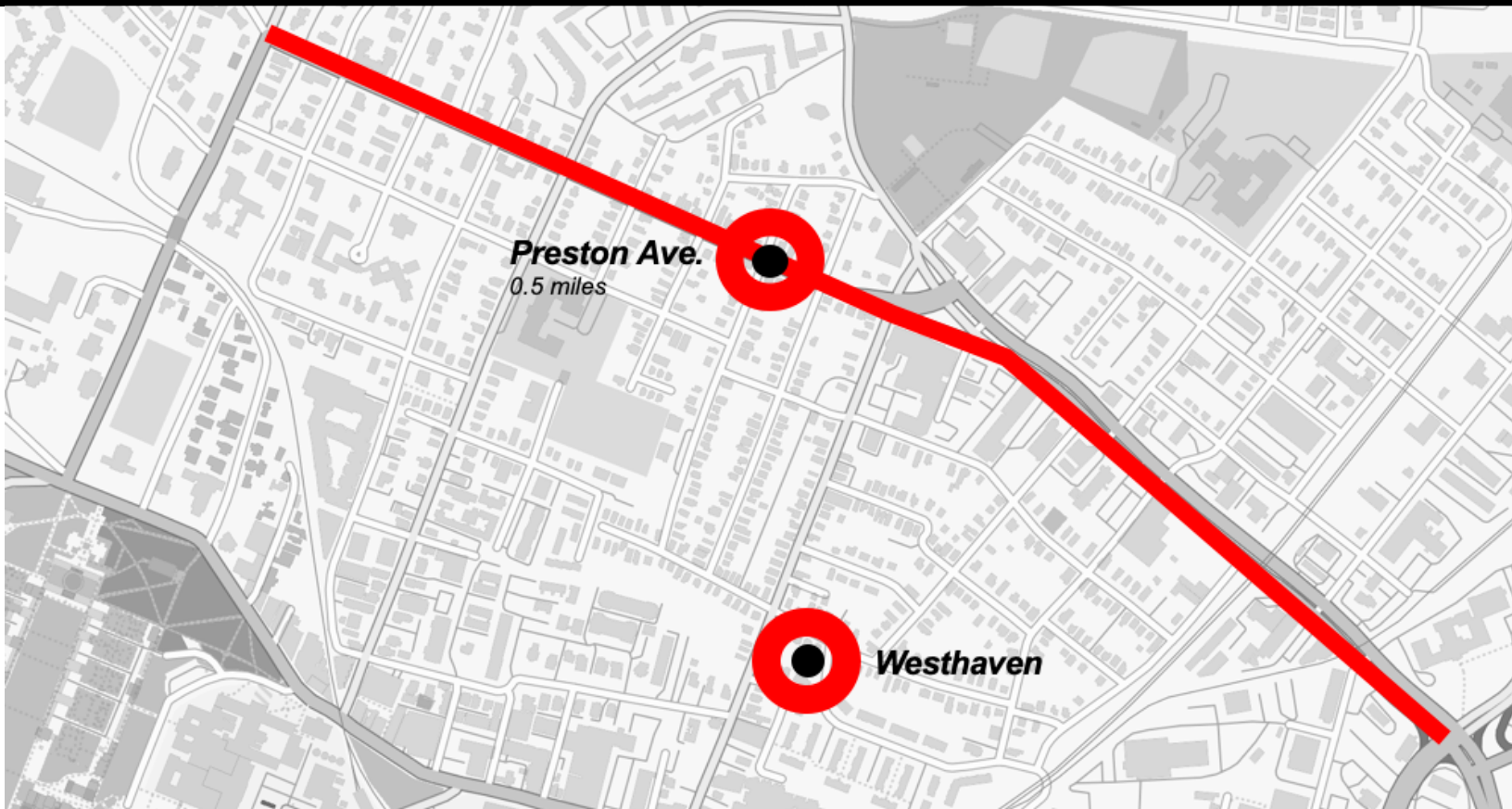
UVA “Corner”



The UVA “Corner”, also called Historical Corner, is located along University Ave. This area is adjacent to the University of Virginia. The food environment contains three corner stores and 17 fast food restaurants. Of the three corner stores, only one, Sheetz, accepts EBT.

This area is located 0.5 miles from Westhaven and can be accessed via foot or car. This trip is 5 to 10 minutes by foot. By car, the trip is less than five minutes, however street parking is limited and parking lots incur a fee.

Preston Avenue



Preston Avenue is a street with many businesses, including grocery stores, corner stores, and fast food restaurants. Included in this count is a corner store located on Grady Avenue, one street down from Preston Ave. The food environment contains one supermarket, one specialty grocer, two corner stores, and three fast food restaurants. Reid Super-Save Market (supermarket), Integral Yoga Natural Foods (specialty health foods grocer), and The Market at Preston (corner store) accept EBT.

This area is located 0.5 miles from Westhaven and can be accessed via foot or car. This trip is 10 minutes by foot. By car, the trip is less than five minutes one-way.

Analysis

While some of the commercial areas are technically walkable, the areas that are most practically walkable from Westhaven area are the UVA “Corner” and Preston Avenue. Between these two areas, there is one supermarket, one specialty grocer, five corner stores, and 20 fast food restaurants. Both the supermarket and grocer accept EBT, although only two of the corner stores accept EBT.

The supermarket is Reid Super-Save Market (Reid) and the specialty grocer is Integral Yoga Natural Foods (Integral Yoga), a health food store. Likewise, the prices tend to be higher at Integral Yoga than Reid. Currently, apples are priced at \$1.66 per pound at Integral Yoga and \$0.89 per pound at Reid. Integral Yoga stocks organic and local produce and a wide range of vegan and vegetarian specialty foods. Reid’s organic selection is limited to pre-packaged salads, although they are known for their meat selections.



★★★★★ a month ago
Best meat in the area. Great folks to deal with .

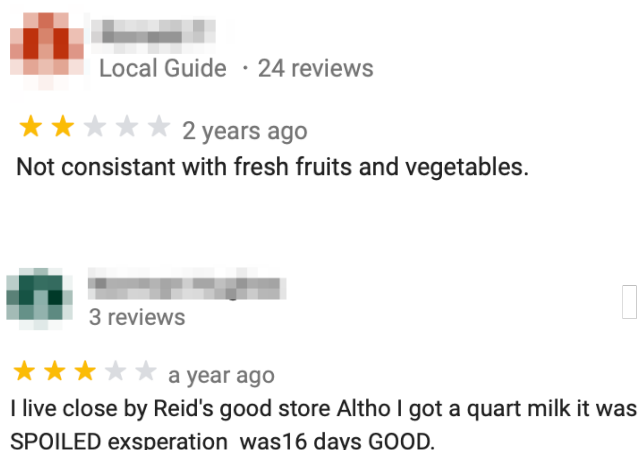


★★★★★ 3 months ago
Hands down the best quality meat and best meat prices for miles!

Google Reviews for Reid. Source: “Reid Super-Saver Market,” 2019

These two grocers cater to different audiences and this translate in their prices, food selections, and consumer base. While most UVA students living in the area between the UVA “Corner” and Preston Avenue have likely heard of or been to Integral Yoga, many have never been to Reid. Integral Yoga targets an affluent, mostly white population. Reid, however, provides more affordable groceries and likewise has attracted customers from nearby lower-

income areas, such as 10th & Page. There is a 'walking-train' of people coming to purchase their groceries throughout the day, reports Hays (2019). However, the quality of food is not always to standard. A few customers left the following reviews to this effect:



Google Reviews for Reid. Source: "Reid Super-Saver Market," 2019

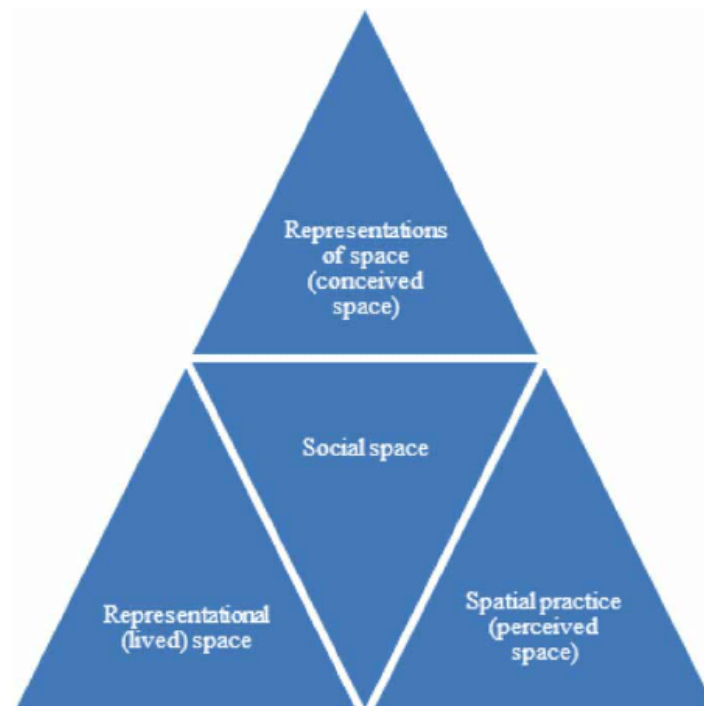
As Reid is the only grocery store that may be both physically accessible and affordable for many of the low-income residents in the 10th & Page neighborhood, residents may be buying all their groceries exclusively from the store. Seeing as Reid has a selection of affordable meats, but may lack supplies of fresh fruits and vegetables, this is yet another example of food apartheid. However, across the street, for a premium price, more affluent consumers have access to fresh, organic, and local produce at Integral Yoga. Furthermore, black Americans are 1.4 times more likely to be obese than whites (OMH, n.d.). It is the differential access as pictured in this example which furthers this public health disparity. Black Americans are disproportionately likely to live in poverty and thus find their food and transportation options limited (Sauter, 2018). Accompanying these barriers are many more such as policing, social exclusion, and racism.

PART III

Place-Making

“Places are sites where people live, work and move, and where they form attachments, practice their relations with each other, and relate to the rest of the world...They have a distinct materiality.” (Leitner et al., 2008, p. 161)

Lefebvre’s “spatial triad” is a model which defines the way in which space and place is made. The three aspects of space are conceived space, perceived space, and lived space (Pierce & Martin, 2015). These loosely parallel to the mental, physical, and social conceptualizations of space, respectively. Conceived space is the abstract space articulated by architects and planners. Perceived spaces are the spaces of daily life. Lived space is the symbolic value or meaning of space. Together, these aspects of space interact and create place.



Lefebvre's model of the "spatial triad." Source: Hansen, 2013, p. 489

Traditional conceptions of space express space as fixed and distinct from the sociopolitical actors of their production (Pierce & Martin, 2015). However, Lefebvre's theory of space and his academical decedents incorporate sociopolitical entanglements into their making of space. "Places are inherently, irreducibly hybrid" writes Pierce and Martin, in that they "transgress and displace boundaries" (2015, p. 1289). Every element of space exists in and of itself, and together the elements create new place (Pierce & Martin, 2015). Pierce and Martin call place-making an "affective experience" that is "co-constituted" by social relations (2015, p.1289).

Culture

Culture is an aspect through which place is made; culture contributes both to the lived space, the symbolic meanings of space, and conceived space, the abstract conception of space. The ways in which cultural understandings of space manifest work to include some and exclude others. This is especially true in the context of Charlottesville's food environments.

As aforementioned, there are limited store options for buying food within walking distance of 10th & Page and Westhaven. On top of those limited options is the culture of these stores. Because of their location, right by the University of Virginia, many of the stores' cultures reflect that of the University rather than the local neighborhoods like 10th & Page. In some ways, the store's culture is a product of them catering to the affluent, student market. However, in other ways, the student's presence causes a cultural shift. Together these forces co-create new places which may be less welcoming of the non-UVA community, especially those of lower incomes.

Stores on the UVA "Corner", such as Corner Grocery, Sheetz, and Integral Yoga, are examples of these culturally exclusive stores. In addition to more affluent and white shoppers side-by-side other shoppers, this also translates to a shift in product selection, such as less ethnic food choices, and changes in price. In the context of Integral Yoga, the store caters to vegan and vegetarians, which is a particularly white demographic. Their selection of food is predominately organic and local, but therefore also more expensive. On the grocer's website, alongside the sales flyer is a section on healthy eating ("Monthly Sales Flyer," n.d.). In comparison, on Reid's website, there is a recipe section which includes some healthy recipes, but also includes things like "Max Mac and Cheese," sugar cookies, and chocolate cake ("Recipes," n.d.) In addition, the Reid's website includes a tab for manufacturer's coupons, which is not available on Integral Yoga's website ("Coupons," n.d.).

Moreover, there is also the aspect of explicit and implicit racism by both the University community and Charlottesville at-large. Charlottesville's troubled history of Buck v. Bell, Vinegar Hill, Gospel Hill, and the Unite the Right rally, reflect the still-present racism and racial division. That racial tension is present in more subtle ways, but ways which make day-to-day life more difficult. An African-American gentlemen left the following review for the Quik Mart corner store on Grady Avenue, briefly discussing his experience compared to shopping at other stores in the area:



Google Review for Quik Mart. Source: "Reid Super-Saver Market," 2019

Residents of Friendship Court voiced similar sentiments. Friendship Court is an affordable housing site located approximately two blocks from the Downtown Mall. Claudette Grant is a community organizer in the neighborhood, and she said the following in an interview: "They all said, 'We don't go downtown, we don't like downtown, we don't like the Mall, we don't feel comfortable there'" (Yager, 2018). Not only is the Downtown Mall full of high-end clothing stores, expensive eateries, and mostly wealthy, white patrons, the Downtown Mall also represents Vinegar Hill and the Unite the Right rally of August 11 and 12, 2017. To the black community, these events reinforce the idea the space was not made for them. Beginning with the conceived space, with the Vinegar Hill urban renewal project, the city of Charlottesville conceived the space as one that did not include African-Americans. The perceived space changed as the former black business district was wiped out and the Downtown Mall was built up. The space grew increasingly white and gentrified following this. Finally, the lived space had already been understood as exclusionary after Vinegar Hill's destruction, but the lived space garnered new meaning following the Unite the Rally events. While there was a

countermovement to the white supremacist and neo-Nazi protestors, there are many ways in which Charlottesville as a city was complicit in the events that transpired that left the black community further ostracized from the greater Charlottesville community.

Finally, the gentrification of 10th & Page has likewise left many black residents feeling uncomfortable in their own community. In a C-Ville Weekly article, James Bryant, who has been a resident of 10th & Page since 1981, said “As white families move into the neighborhood, they put up fences around their property... when you put a fence up, it says, ‘I don’t want to be bothered.’ It makes me feel like a stranger in my own neighborhood” (Yager, 2017). As 10th and Page becomes gentrified, it not only contributes to the housing crisis for the community, but also continues to recreate the culture of the nearby commercial districts. Likewise, this culture will continue to exclude the black community it used to serve.

As Stacy Pethia suggested, there are ways to mitigate gentrification, the housing crisis, and therefore the cultural shift. By including more affordable units in new developments, displacement and rent-forced racial housing segregation may be limited. However, there is currently a lack of incentives for developers to take this path when they may instead opt to pay a single payment into the city’s affordable housing fund. Therefore, zoning ordinances may be required in order for this option to be utilized. It is, however, necessary to make progress on gentrification in order for further action to come about.

“It Was Our Place.”

“Where do you usually buy groceries?” I ask fellow FGLI student, Isaiah. Walmart and Harris Teeter, he tells me.

“Why these places?” I question.

“Well, Harris Teeter has the student discount and the store membership discount,” he says. It’s a matter of affordability. “And Walmart... I’ve just always felt more comfortable there, for sure.”

I pry at his food environment growing up. He tells me how he always went to Walmart with his mother when he was young. “It was our place.”

This sentiment Isaiah highlights is something I have often experienced myself. Beyond the economic aspect of the choices we make, there is much to be said for the cultural aspect. Like Isaiah, Walmart was our store. It was the place of great deals and people we knew, or at least families that looked like us. We would snicker at the Mercedes pulling into the Publix, the ‘prissy’ grocery store. ‘Do they even sell poor-people’s food?’ we’d ponder. We went there once, to buy my sheet cake for my 12th birthday, spoiling ourselves for a special occasion. It was \$10 more than the cakes we would get at Bi-Lo and less delicious than its cheaper counterpart. To this day, that’s the first and last day I’ve stepped foot in a Publix.

I likewise find myself shopping at certain stores versus another out of regards to their culture. As a vegan, Whole Foods carries some vegan specialty items which draw my attention. However, the prices and influx of white 30-year old women in athleisure wear, swiping an AMEX, do not create this space as one in which I feel included. Myself, standing in the aisle deciding which of two items I can afford, is in stark contrast to the affluent culture of this store. Likewise, I primarily shop at other stores such as Kroger and Wegman’s.

Conclusion

While the majority of the existing literature on food security identifies the economic and sociopolitical reasons for why shoppers purchase and acquire food in the ways they do, there is less said in regards to the cultural influence on these decisions.

In the context of Westhaven and 10th & Page, there are two grocers in the walkable area, approximately 15 minutes walking distance. To reach the main shopping centers in Charlottesville, Barracks or Stonefield, individuals must take 40- or 50-minute trip by bus and foot. For many working individuals, parents and particularly single-parents, and elderly persons, this trip is unrealistic. This severely limits their food choices. In the vicinity of 10th & Page, many of the stores and grocers cater to the students of the nearby University of Virginia. Grocery stores that target students and the students who shop in the stores work to co-create these spaces as ones exclusive to other residents, like those of 10th & Page.

Furthermore, due to 10th & Page's proximity to the University, they are being affected by increasing prices of rent, food, and transportation costs, such as gas, for those with vehicles. These costs together define the cost of living and it is becoming more and more difficult to live in Charlottesville as a low-income person. This contributes to the overall gentrification of neighborhoods throughout Charlottesville, particularly the 10th & Page neighborhood; this gentrification also works to recreate the culture of Charlottesville and its food environment.

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