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Mapping the Lived Experience: Access to Food and Green Spaces in Franklin Park

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Introduction

- The Leonard Parker Pool Institute for Health (LPIIH) encourages and facilitates cross-sector collaboration to enable meaningful, place-based improvements in the health of our community.
- Focus on Franklin Park neighborhood (Census Tracts 18 & 20). Low-income urban environment, with 54.3% of the population being Hispanic (*Allentown, PA / Data USA*). Many LVHN and community partners in the area.
- Eating healthy foods aids weight management, improves heart health, and reduces chronic illnesses. Enjoying nature reduces stress, provides exercise space, boosts mood, and improves air quality. These features improve health and quality of life for residents over time.

Objective:

- Deepen the understanding of the lived experience of the residents of Franklin Park in terms of food access options and natural environment spaces as a next step to addressing the Vital Conditions in this neighborhood.

Methods

Background Research

- Learn about the history of LPIIH & best-practices for addressing access and creating a healthy, natural built environment
- Meet with key stakeholders/partners to get a better understanding of the collaboration and community involvement at LPIIH and to gain a better understanding of food & nature in the local area from their expertise
- Identify food and nature access points for residents in the area

Field Research

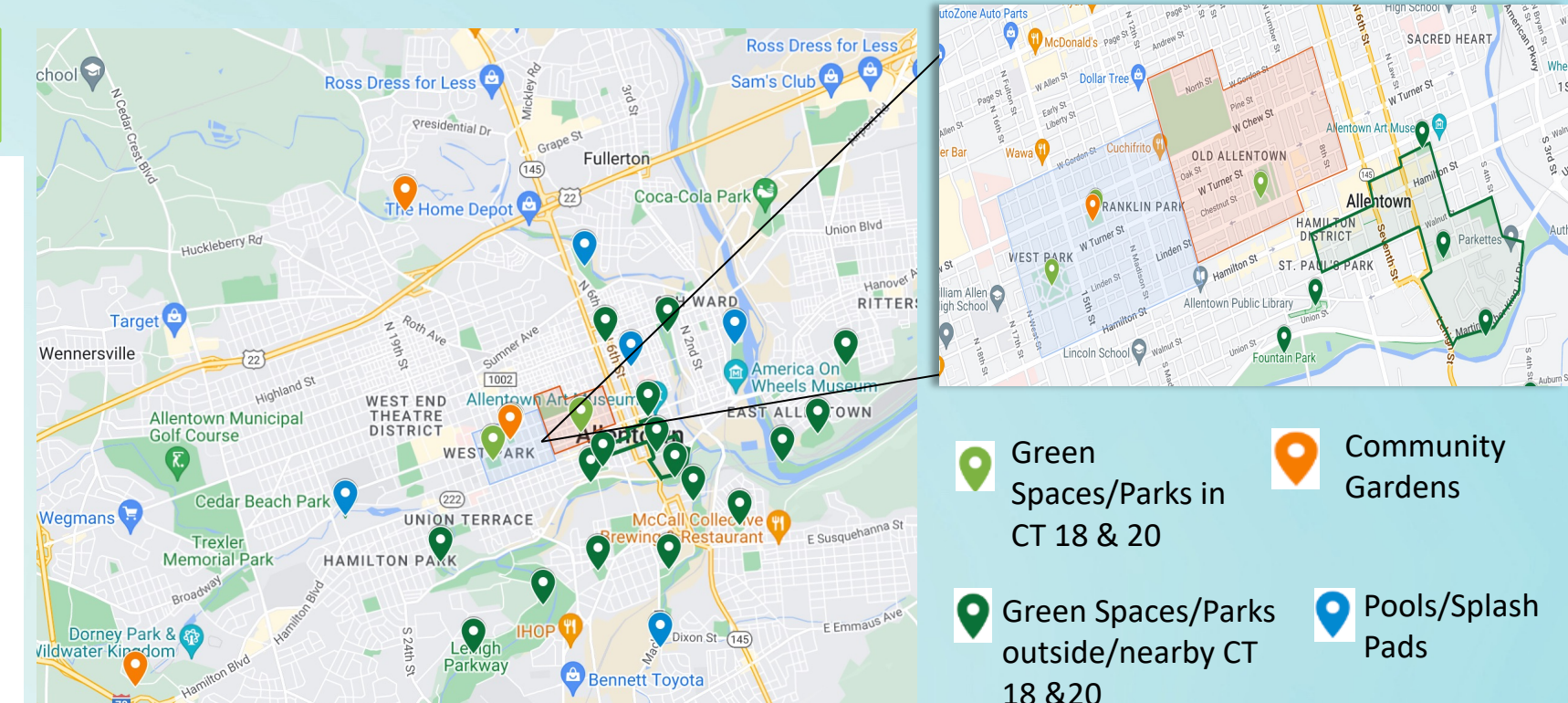
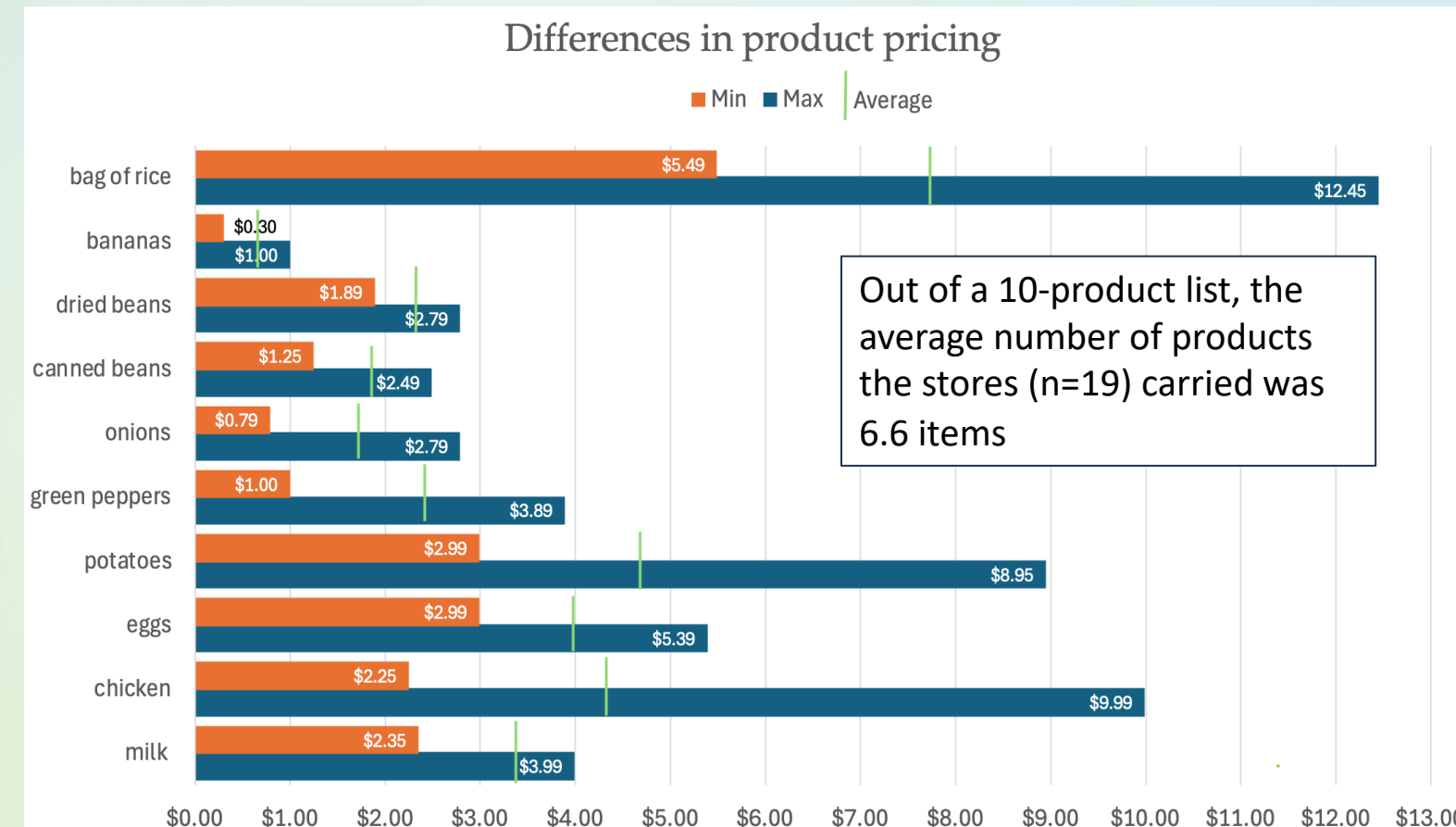
- Walk to food locations to assess product pricing and availability and to build a relationship with store owners
- Develop a data tracking system for food site visits
- Observe green spaces in Franklin Park to determine activity level

Map Creation & Data Analysis

- Map all food and nature access points in Franklin Park by using Google My Maps
- Decipher between the type of establishment by using a color-coding system
- Analyze data from data tracking sheet to understand food availability and pricing

Lehigh Valley Health Network, Allentown, Pennsylvania

Results



Conclusion

- Only 3 parks in the neighborhood – green space is extremely limited in Franklin Park. Transportation limits access to parks that are outside the map region.
- Many of the food locations on the map lack fresh produce, healthy foods, and staples for residents to buy.
- Corner Stores/Bodegas have an important social and cultural impact on the community. Many stores are family owned/operated and have frequent, loyal customers.
- Item pricing varied significantly between stores.

Future Directions

- Further validate these findings by gaining the residents' opinions
- Convene city and non-profit partners to continue to explore the need for research in this field of study
- Develop a strategy to improve access to food and green space in Franklin Park



- Interactive Map
- References & Acknowledgements
- Research Notes