

Assessing Equity within Brandon's Foodscape

A survey of Brandon Citizens

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## Abstract

Food security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century cannot be taken for granted. Progressive communities are establishing baselines of food equity to govern the building of programs and services for citizens. Brandon health and social service stakeholders initiated a survey of citizens to review access to food, to assess awareness and use of community food resources and services and to observe behavior regarding alternative food resources. Respondents completed the survey online, and in phase one of long term research analyzed summary outputs 445 surveys completed from July to October, 2014. Results indicate that there is a range of awareness and use of community food resources and services, and that differences exist across age, food spending budget, and other segments of the community. Food Hampers and the soup kitchen were the most frequently used community food resources. Most people in Brandon get their food from large supermarkets. There is a broad awareness of the Farmers' markets and perceived higher costs prevents people from purchasing fair trade food products.

## I. Introduction

In 2014, the BNRC along with other partners initiated a survey of citizens of Brandon to assess; access to food, interactions with selected community food services and resources, and behavior surrounding Alternative Food Resources. The survey was presented in print and online versions between July and October of 2014. In addition to gathering information for use in program development and policy initiatives, the survey was developed to create a baseline for ongoing time series study of Food Equity among all people living in Brandon and the surrounding area.

Terms: Food Equity, Food Resources

## II. Method

Brandon Neighborhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC) in collaboration with Healthy Brandon and Healthy Together Now (HB, HTN) and Brandon University (BU) to study the principles of food equity and examine how and why communities across Canada are using food equity as a measure of community health. As an outcome of community consultations during the *Food Café's* Community Project, the BNRC applied to Neighbourhoods Alive for more extensive data gathering about food equity in Brandon. A survey was written to capture information about behavior surrounding access to food, interaction with community food services and resources, and use and awareness of alternative food resources. Open ended comments were invited throughout the survey. Demographic information was gathered, guaranteeing anonymity for all respondents. The survey employed four questions types: yes/no, scaled (frequency, comfort level ,etc.), check all that apply, and choose one from a list questions. Several if-yes/no follow up questions, that reduced the subsequent respondent count were also written into the survey. The survey items were divided as follows:

Table 1. Description of the Survey

Survey Section	Items	Description
Referral Channel	1	(print / online)
Personal Demographics	7	Age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, etc.
Household Demographics	5	Person count, children count, housing type, income source, permanence
Access to Food	14	Where, why, travel method, spending, frequency, adequacy, skills, equipment
Community Food Resource Interaction	5	Awareness, frequency of use, barriers to use, use in past year
Alternative Food Resource Interaction	2	Frequency of use, barriers to use
Other	2	Summary Question

N= 35 Survey Items (34 questions, plus referral notification summary)

The survey was posted on Survey Monkey, an open access global, web-based survey development and analysis tool. It was developed by BNRC staff and analyzed using the summary tools within the web-based application.

Between July and October 2014, 445 respondents voluntarily completed the survey entitled *Assessing Equity within Brandon's Foodscape* which remains located online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/HYGXF2P](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/HYGXF2P). For this analysis, no completed surveys completed after October 31, 2014 were integrated into the discussion. Online utilities were used to delimit the sample to valid respondents. Duplicate surveys were eliminated and surveys reporting postal codes outside the geographic scope of the study were eliminated. Ultimately the sample included 445 completed surveys.

BNRC used various techniques to encourage Brandon residents to complete the survey. Posters, newspaper advertising (announcing the web location), social media promotion, email promotion, and presentations were the principle promotional methods. Ultimately, all users completed the survey online. Of the 445 respondents who completed the survey online, 85.5% accessed Survey Monkey through social networking sites. Half of the respondents (49.21%) were directed to the survey through twitter and 35.28% through Facebook. The remaining 15.% were direct to the survey though a web link, in either an email or on a website such as City of Brandon, Brandon RHA, or Marquis Project.

Not all respondents completed every question The respondent count for questions ranged between 403 and 445. In order to meet Brandon University Research Ethics Council standards for a low to medium risk project, questions could not be mandatory. [NLI]

The online nature of the survey had an impact on the population distribution of the sample. The survey was limited to respondents over 18 years of age. Ultimately, the age distribution of the respondents for the food security analysis was younger than the distribution of Brandon based on the 2011 Census.

Table 2. Age Distribution of Respondents

Age(Years)	Food Survey Respondents		2011Census (Brandon) (18 years +)	
	Below and above 50 yrs		Below and above 50 yrs	
18 - 30	21.16%		24.71%	
31 - 40	23.49%	66.28%	18.82%	59.61%
41 - 50	21.63%		16.08%	
51 - 64	26.05%		22.29%	
64 - 74	5.81%	33.72%	8.54%	40.39%
75 or older	1.86%		9.56%	

Because of the sample size, detailed analysis was limited to observation of age segments above and below 50 years. When the age cohorts were combined, there was only a 6.67% differential (toward a younger sample) between the Food Equity Survey and the 2011 Canada Census. The skew toward youth could be because there is greater use of technology and social networks among younger people.

The survey data were observed across the three question categories, Access to Food, Interaction with Community Food Resources, and Behavior Surrounding Alternative Food Resources, for the entire population (n=445) and then across four principle filters: dollars spent per month on groceries (<\$300), Age (>50 years), New to Brandon the past 5 years (yes), and Aboriginal (yes). While the last two filters generated fairly small samples (73 and 54, respectively) the results of the survey are intended to

initiate observation and direction, not necessarily to report indisputable facts. Baseline analysis is indispensable. Further questions that arise from this discussion are important, even considering some possible limitations due to sample size.

Table 3. Observed sub-samples

<b>Parameters of sub-samples</b>	<b>Reciprocal Parameters</b>	<b>n</b>
Filter: New to Brandon in Past 5 years (yes) 17.1% (73)	(no) 82.9% (354)	427
Filter: Over 50 years of age (over) 33.7% (147)	(under 50) 66.0% (285)	432
Filter: Aboriginal Filter (yes) 12.68% (54)	(no) 87.3% (372)	426
Filter: Spent/month on food ((less)(<\$300)) ( 36.5% (156)	(more)(>\$300) 63.5% (272)	428

### III. Results and Discussion

The survey was completed by more women (74.6% (321)) than men (25.87% (112)).

Most respondents (93.4% (403)) have been settled in Canada for more than 5 years. 17.10% (73) of respondents had moved to Brandon within the past 5 years. Of the new Brandonites, 18.1% (13) self-identified as Aboriginal and 15.07% (11) self-identified as New to Canada (5 years), (including three who self-identified as Aboriginal). Most new Brandonites (within the past 5 years) (58.9% (40)) were from elsewhere in Canada (not new to Canada).

Analysis of the ages of the respondents revealed that 90.4% (66) of New Brandonites, and 85.2% (46) of Aboriginal respondents were under 50 years of age compared to 66% (285) of the overall sample.

The survey asked respondents to state their marital status, and characteristics of their household (number of residents overall, and under 17 years, type of housing (rental/owned), and expectations regarding moving from their current home.

While 37% (160) of respondents reported being single, only 18% (80) reported living alone indicating that there is a group of single people who share accommodations, either with a roommate or with family. Most respondents (56% (241)) reported living in a household with 2-3 people and an even greater segment (62% (277)) indicated that there were no children (under 17 years) living in their household. While 5.7% of the full sample (24) reported living with family or friends, double that rate, (10% (7)) of people who are new to Brandon within the past 5 years live with family or friends.

Most respondents either own or rent their home (86% (374), and expect to be living in the same location two years from today (80.4% (345)). Interestingly, fewer respondents (56% (40)) who are new to Brandon, expect to be living in the same location in two years.

Respondents were invited to list all of their sources of income. These are personal responses, not household responses. The survey elicited 609 responses from 430 respondents indicating a 41% (n=179) multiple response rate. Over half of the responses (344/609 (56%)) indicated either full time or part time work as an income source. That ratio goes up to two-thirds (66% (402)) when pension

income is included.

## 1. **Access to food:** (Questions 15-25)

For decades, the issue of access to food has been in the forefront of international concern over malnutrition in developing and war torn parts of the planet. In recent decades, developed countries have begun to address issues surrounding access to food along platforms of rural/urban disparity, food contamination, global preferences, food distribution issues, poverty, and health education. The prevalence of an imbalance of access to food has been recognized in community development research across North America. In Winnipeg, and other Canadian cities of comparable size to Brandon, scans of the state of access to food have been conducted. This is the first time that Brandon has studied the issue.

Universally, survey respondents get most of their food from large supermarkets (92%). When asked to scale factors influencing their choice of shopping location, cost of food (91.24% (5 point scale: no, little, some large influence)) was cited as the most important reason for choosing the large supermarkets. Quality of food (81% for meat and 90% for produce) and ease of access (84%) were also highly influenced choice of food store. The least important reason for choice of food shopping location was availability of coffee and samples.

Most respondents (75% (311)) purchase a large quantity of food (enough to fill a shopping cart) 2 to 4 times per month. A view of the less frequent shoppers (once or twice per month) shows that 45% (186) of the overall sample buy large quantities at that frequency. But people who spend under \$300 per month reported shopping less frequently, with 81% doing a large shop only once or twice per month. Respondents with less money for food purchase a large quantity, more seldom, possibly indicating cash flow limitation, transportation cost factors, or very careful planning because of having less money to spend on food.

Very few (0.24%) cited delivery or internet shopping as their food source, which is corroborated by the observation that 90.3% of respondents travel by vehicle (including public transportation) to do their food shopping.

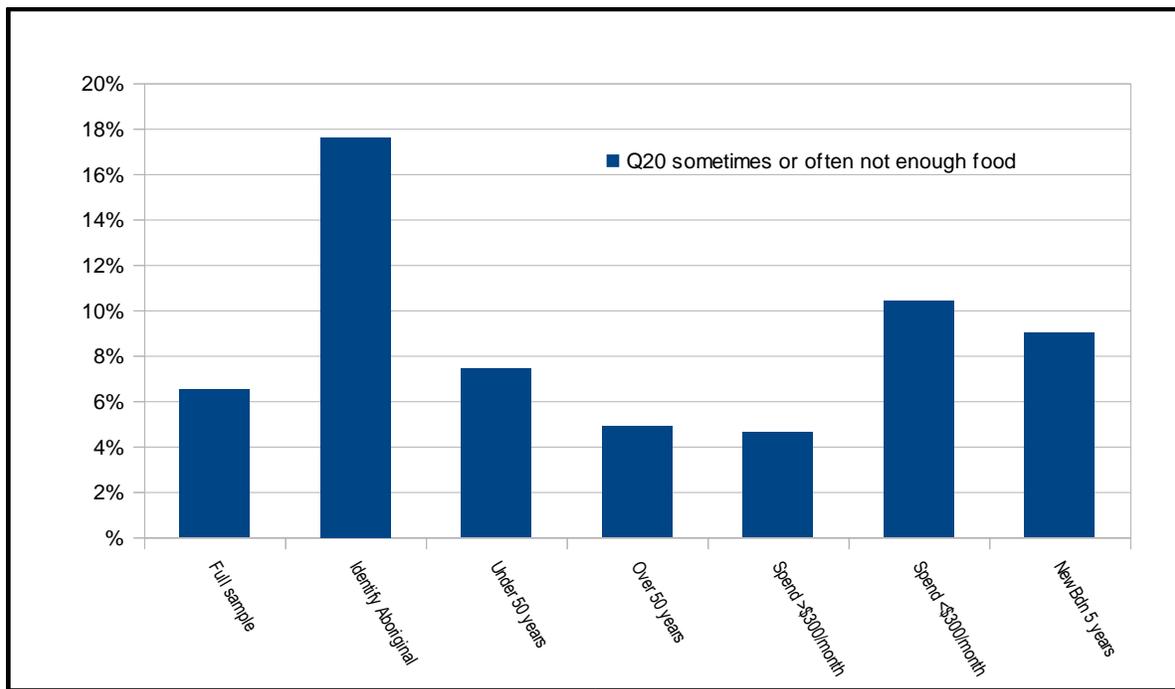
It is natural to assume that people who are single and live alone would spend less per month on their food bill. Indeed, 79% (59) of people who live alone spend under \$300/month on food. However, analysis of the people living in larger households (more than 4 people) who spend less than \$300/month can be an indication of limited food resources. Of 107 respondents living in households with more than four people, 14% (16) spent less than \$300 per month on food.

When addressing food equity, the fundamental question is whether a person has enough food; whether hunger is prevalent in the community. Observing usage of resources is a fair indicator, especially if economics limits a person's or a household's access to food, but ultimately, it is important to ask whether citizens go hungry. This survey addressed the hunger question through an invitation to describe the adequacy level of food in the household along choice (types of food) and quantity (enough) parameters. All sub-samples and the sample overall, generated the highest choice response in: *We always enough of the kinds of food we want to eat.* (47.46%) In an anecdotal observation of the most vulnerable: households who have children, and who spend less than \$300 per month on food

(n=25), 5 households (20% indicated that sometimes/often there is not enough food. At the other end of that spectrum, 28% (7) of this vulnerable group reported they always have enough. (Note: This observation does not meet the *scrutiny* of sample size, but can be used to launch further discussion.)

A more detailed look at the sub-samples of respondents who stated they *sometimes* or *often do not have enough food to eat*, (Fig. 1) indicates that there is not a highly prevalent incidence of hunger in Brandon. But, of course, there is zero tolerance for hunger in our community. That is why programs such as Soup Kitchens, Food Hampers, School Lunches, etc, are built. These data will facilitate strategic targeting, fine tuning, and extension of such programs.

Figure 1. Percentage\* Samples/Sub-samples where respondents experience a food shortage.



\*No sample studied had more than 18% of respondents experiencing food shortage.

To uncover profiles of awareness of and need for food resources, the survey polled the respondents on lists of services and resources and at the same time, asked them to indicate if failure to use the resource was due to either of lack of need or lack of awareness, .

Expressions, “not needed” and “lack of awareness”, and the response, “not applicable” as *negative* choices, can paint a mirror image of resources that do not normally come into play among a respondents food security concerns.

Table 4. - Issues Not-Applicable as contributing to household food shortages

Issue	Seniors over 50 years	New to Brandon 5 years	Aboriginal Identified	Spend <\$300/month	Full sample
Time	61%	35%	39%	45%	43%
Money	71%	43%	35%	43%	54%
Equipment for Cooking	94%	93%	84%	89%	93%
Sub-sample size	147	73	54	156	

Money and time had the lowest not-applicable coefficients, indicating that these were issues contributing to a lack of food, more so than some of the other issues offered as choices in the question.

Many respondents cited specific issues as being not applicable, to experiencing a lack of food from among time, money, food selection/choices, transportation to/from the store, and equipment for preparation. However there were differences, not only between the levels of applicability for the issues, but also among observed sub-samples. (See Table 4.) For example, equipment for preparation of food, universally is a not-applicable barrier to having adequate food (range 84-95% not applicable). Stoves, fridges, pots and pans are aplenty in Brandon. And, new Brandonites saw both time and money as more pertinent issues than do those over 50 years old. Conversely, for the sub-sample of people spending less than \$300 per month, and for people who identified as Aboriginal, both money and time were barriers to food sufficiency.

## 2. Behavior surrounding Community Food Services and Resources:

(Questions 26-32)

To study awareness and use of existing community food services and resources in Brandon, the survey exposed the respondents to a list and invited them to identify their awareness (and lack of awareness) and their usage history (and lack of usage). From a list of ten community food resource and services (see Table 5), respondents were asked to indicate whether they were aware of any (none), and if so, which. Multiple responses were invited. Respondents were invited to *indicate all* resources in their spectrum of awareness. Naturally, if a respondent indicated *none* (8.44%), that would be their only response (unless they contributed a suggestion as a comment). So, conversely, 92.56% of respondents were aware of at least one of the resources listed.

Using the same observation technique for usage behavior indicates, overall, 18.8% (73) of the sample respondents said that someone in their household had used one or more of the community food services or resources within the past 12 months.

Table 5. Community Food Services and Resources listed.

<b>Community Food Resources and Services and Resources</b>	<b>Awareness Level Multiple responses permitted</b>	<b>Awareness Rank</b>	<b>Used (12 months) Multiple responses permitted</b>	<b>Usage Rank</b>
overall			27% (103)	
Soup kitchen/Hot meals	82.88%	1	37% (29)	2
Food Hampers	79.81%	2	54% (44)	1
School Meal Programs	70.22%	3	27% (20)	3
Community Garden Workshops	56.05%	<b>Not asked</b>		
Meal Delivery	55.58%	4	11% (8)	5
Food Skills Workshops	42.93%	<b>Not asked</b>		
Pre/Post Natal Nutrition	39.70%	<b>Not asked</b>		
Community Cooking Classes	37.22%	<b>Not asked</b>		
Congregate Meals	24.32%	5	5.6% (4)	6
Community Meals	22.08%	6	23% (17)	4
<b>None</b>	<b>8.44% (403)*</b>		<b>81.19% (388)**</b>	
Other (ideas listed in comments) n=10	4.22%			

\* 92.56% of respondents were aware of at least one of the resources or services.

\*\* 18.8% of respondents used at least one of the resources or services.

The ranking of the awareness figures paralleled the ranking of use (yes/no) of any (1 or more) resources.

Frequency of use of community food was determined for respondents who replied YES, indicating they had used one or more of the resources. (range of n= 72-81) Frequency of use was highest for food hampers 51.7% (4 point scale: rarely, monthly, weekly, daily) followed by soup kitchen / hot meals at 47.5% and school meals at 44.75%. The resources with the lowest frequency, in the rarely range, of use was congregate meals at 26.75%, probably indicating a lack of awareness of this community service. Again, the ranks of frequency of use parallel awareness (none) and use, (YES).

With regard to overall awareness of the community food services and resources, the community soup kitchen with hot meals, and food hampers triggered the highest awareness level.

Specifically, of the respondents who indicated YES they had used food hampers (n=44), 75% (33) live in households of 3 or more people and 56% (24) spend under \$300 per month on food.

Conversely, for soup kitchen/hot meals (n=29) 43% (12) live alone and 61% (17) spend under \$300 per month on food. While this is a small sample, it does confirm what would be expected, regarding use of a food resource. It also indicates that different populations are utilizing each resource.

Table 6. - Percentage of respondents who used none of the listed food resources in the past 12 months.

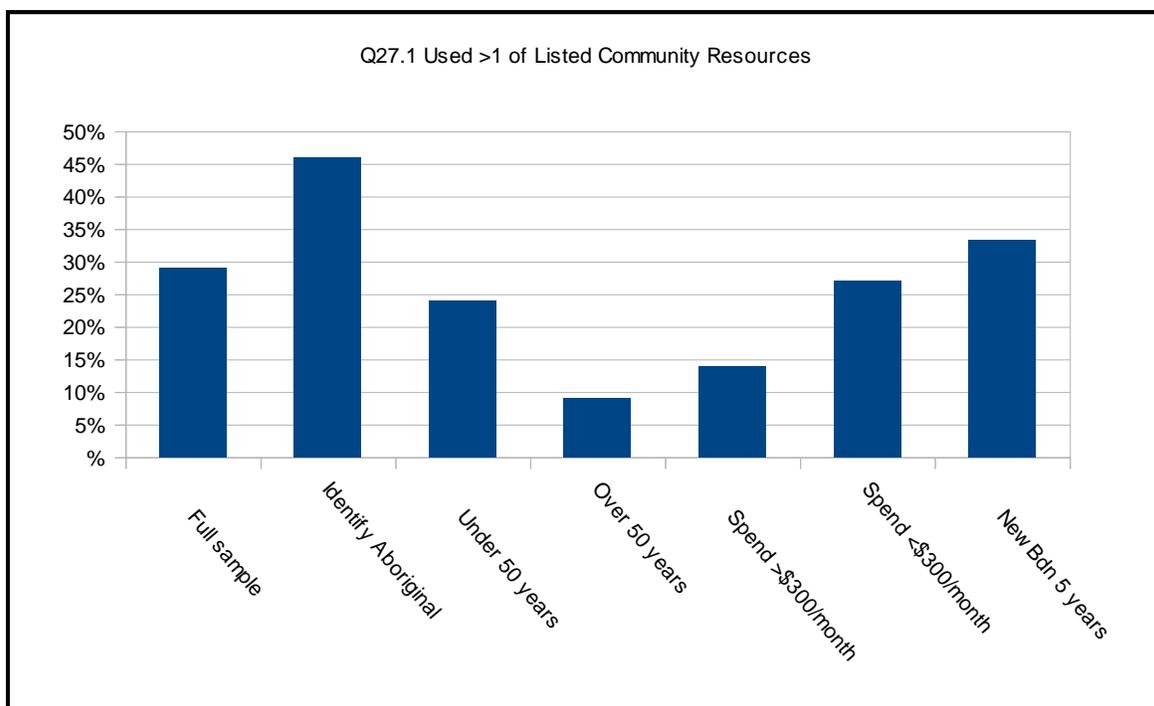
	<b>Seniors over 50 years</b>	<b>New to Brandon 5 years</b>	<b>Aboriginal Identified</b>	<b>Spend &lt;\$300/month</b>	<b>Full sample</b>
Used No Resources	91%	65%	54%	74%	81%
Respondents	123	43	27	103	415
Sub-sample size	135	66	50	140	388

Among the sub-samples responses to usage of resources, Seniors over 50 years (91%) responded most frequently, *none*. They used no community resources nor services. This rate is lower for the other sub samples.

Observation of the overall sample suggests that over 80% of the respondents did not use any food resources in the past 12 months. The high lack of use by Seniors over 50 years (91%) could reflect either self-sufficiency or inability to access the resources. It is apparent that the Seniors over 50 sub-sample is skewing the data, and presenting the city as one where most people do not use food resources. However, when looking at the sub-samples, even though some are fairly small, it does indicate that certain populations within Brandon are finding and using resources. Higher use (lower zero usage percentage) could indicate need, but it may also indicate the presence of close knit communities with good word-of-mouth communication and support, facilitating awareness. It must also be clarified that these are not discrete sub-samples. For example, 18% of people who are new to Brandon in the past 5 years identified as Aboriginal, 24 % of people who spend less than \$300/month on food are New to Brandon in the past 5 years, and 41% of Seniors over 50 spend less than \$300/month on food. Nonetheless, the observations are instructive.

From the list of community resources, respondents were asked to select all food resources that they had used in the past 12 months. While it is interesting to observe which food resources were most (food hampers and soup kitchen/hot meals) and least (meal delivery and congregate meals) frequently used, observation of the number of respondents that used none of the listed resources over the past 12 months is instructive. The lower the percentage of respondents in a sub-sample that used no food resources, the greater the overall usage of food resources by that sub-sample of Brandon citizens. In Fig. 2, respondents who used at least one of the community resources are represented. Citizens over 50 years were the lowest users of community resources and respondents who identify as Aboriginal most frequently used at least one community resource. Low use of resources could be because lack of need, lack of awareness, lack of access, or stigma and conversely, higher use can be because of higher need, but also may reflect increased awareness, or improved intra-community communication and acceptance. The data was too sparse to draw specific conclusions explaining this difference, but the speculation invites further analysis.

Figure 2. Sample and Sub-samples: Used one or more listed community resources (yes) 12 months



Survey question 29 asks if-no question about usage of resources:

*We are interested in knowing why you or anyone in your household **did not use** community food services in the last 12 months. Please check all that apply.*

The responses “not needed” and “did not know about it”, are the only significant responses in this question's matrix of responses. These responses paint a reverse image of awareness and usage. Although it is a counter-intuitive way to ask, when a respondent states they did not use a resource or service because they “did not know about it” (awareness), they are exhibiting a latent expression of need for that service because they have chosen that response over “not needed” (need).

Declining the use of a community resource or a service because it is not needed provides a baseline of proficiency in our community. A high not-needed coefficient was generated for numerous resources and services listed in the BNRC survey. By analyzing the reciprocal of the “not-needed” coefficient and comparing the co-efficient across the list of resources presented in the survey, a picture of relative need emerges. Survey questions 29 and 30 invite respondents to express a reason for not using a resource as “lack of need” so observation of the responses across sub-samples of the survey, by showing the mirror image, indicates where need lies.

Table 7. Food Resources NOT NEEDED and Potential Latent Need (reciprocal)

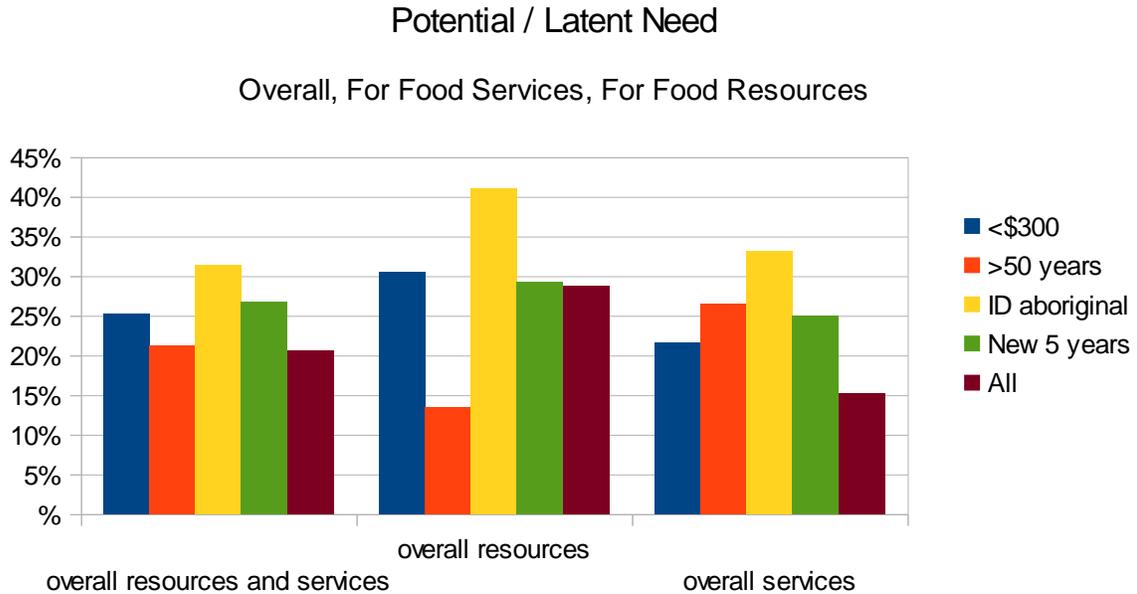
Question 29	% who did not use food resources because not needed				
	<\$300	>50 years	ID aboriginal	New 5 years	full sample
school meals	85%	96%	68%	76%	87%
food hampers	75%	93%	55%	75%	84%
congregate meals	74%	92%	67%	72%	82%
meal delivery	82%	94%	71%	73%	86%
soup kitchen / hot meæ	80%	94%	75%	81%	88%
community meals	74%	92%	65%	73%	82%
% reciprocal of those who did not use food resources because not needed					
	<\$300	>50 years	ID aboriginal	New 5 years	full sample
school meals	15%	4%	32%	24%	13%
food hampers	25%	7%	45%	25%	16%
congregate meals	26%	8%	33%	28%	18%
meal delivery	18%	9%	29%	27%	14%
soup kitchen / hot meæ	20%	6%	25%	19%	12%
community meals	26%	8%	35%	27%	18%

Table 8. Food Services NOT NEEDED and Potential Latent Need (reciprocal)

Question 30	% who did not use food services because not needed				
	<\$300	>50 years	ID aboriginal	New 5 years	All
cooking workshop	62%	82%	48%	61%	65%
food skills workshop	68%	86%	59%	70%	73%
garden workshop	61%	82%	51%	61%	66%
pre/post natal classes	87%	96%	78%	91%	81%
reciprocal of those who did not use food resources because not needed					
	<\$300	>50 years	ID aboriginal	New 5 years	All
cooking workshop	38%	18%	35%	39%	35%
food skills workshop	32%	14%	27%	30%	27%
garden workshop	39%	18%	34%	39%	34%
pre/post natal classes	13%	4%	19%	9%	19%

While amalgamating percentage values over limited samples is not an ideal way to study the state of a community, for comparative purposes, this study created a value called overall latent need, for the 2 categories Community Food Services (n=4) and Community Food Resources (n=6) to compare the two categories and the net latent need, across sub-samples to see whether patterns emerged.

Figure 3. Potential / Latent need for Resources and Services



A glance at figure 3 shows that respondents who identify as Aboriginal express higher need (lower “not needed” coefficients) for items on both the food resources list and the food services list. Respondents over 50 years, see a lesser need for items on the resources list, but have a potential need for items on the services list. Sub-samples of respondents who spend less than \$300 per month on food and those who are new to Brandon in the past 5 years both have a comparatively lower need than the other two observed sub-samples, for both community resources and services, but their latent need is still higher than the sampled population as a whole.

This survey's assessment of latent need can be readily tackled in this fashion, over time, and for other sub-samples not explored in this report such as gender, number of children, income source, etc., as the data pool expands.

In the same way that the survey invited respondents to identify the reason they did not use a resource or service as being *not needed*, they respondents could also choose as a reason, *not aware*. These responses can be directly interpreted for program considerations. When a respondent says they failed to use a resources because of lack of awareness, they are indeed, expressing a latent need. Although the sub-samples are small, and are not discreet, meaning each may comprise a portion of the same respondents, after estimating some populations of those *needing* service, the reason expressed in these limited samples, for *not* using a resource indicated:

- lack of awareness may have affected usage of food safety workshops
- inconvenient time/day may have affected usage of gardening workshops
- used last year was also cited for usage of gardening workshops indicating that they have no need to repeat the training, and could be used as mentors for others being exposed to gardening.

### 3. Interaction with Alternative Food Resources (Questions 33-34)

Table 9. Alternative Food Services and Resources Listed.

<b>Alternative Food Resources and Services</b>	<b>Never used Level</b> Multiple responses permitted	Awareness rank (ascending)	<b>Not used because not needed</b>	Not used because not needed rank (descending)
Farmers Markets	22.49%	1	16.94%	1
Farmer Direct Produce	38.34%	2	25.81%	2
Personal Garden	44.24%	3	32.57%	5*
Farmer Direct Eggs	45.38%	4	27.36%	5
Fair Trade Products	49.59%	5	30.23%	5
Farmer Direct Meat	51.64%	6	31.65%	5
Upick	52.21%	7	31.92%	5
Fishing	63.24%	8	42.99%	8
Hunting	81.82%	9	51.39%	11
Community Shared Agriculture	86.98%	10	48.70%	10
Community Garden	87.43%	11	59.38%	12
Fruit Share	87.74%	12	47.53%	9

\* narrow difference among these 5 items. All = Rank 5.

In Table 9, the lowest “not needed” and “never used” values indicate the alternative community resources and services that are perceived as being most important.

Declining the use of a community resource or a service because it is *not needed* provides a baseline of proficiency in our community. It is an attitude, a decision, a choice. A high-not needed coefficient was generated for numerous alternative resources and services listed in the BNRC survey. By analyzing the reciprocal of the “not-needed” coefficient and comparing the co-efficient across the list of resources presented in the survey, a picture of relative need emerges. The question invited respondents to express, from among multiple possibilities reasons for *not using* a listed resource, lack of need as one of the reasons. Observation of the *not needed* responses across sub-samples of the survey, by showing the mirror image, indicates where need lies.

For example, the alternative community resource, Farmers Markets reported both the highest use and the highest need, as well as a low likelihood (7.64%) that lack of awareness prevented use of this resource. Conversely, Fruit Share and Community Shared Agriculture reported over 30% lack of use due to unawareness, over 85% had never used the resource, and high, but not the highest not-needed coefficients. Under further scrutiny, this suggests that expression of a lack of need, could stem from a lack of awareness. So, a modest need expressed for a resource or service that exhibits a low awareness coefficient, could reflect a net, greater need. Observation of increased use a resource that exhibited low

awareness would reflect this latent need.

The survey listed barriers that might have prevented a person from using an alternative food service or resource. Not Needed and Unaware were the only two listed reasons that had significant responses. Most other listed reasons: stigma, transportation, access to facilities, waiting list, cost, used past year, and hours of operation, generated few responses. Anecdotal observations are interesting in a few cases:

- 12.62% cited hours of operation as a barrier to using the farmer's market.
- 8.5 – 10% of respondents selected access to facilities as a barrier to using farmer direct food.
- 14.51% of respondents said that cost was a barrier to using fair trade products. This value was almost 10% higher than the next two highest cost barriers, for farmer's markets (4.65%) and Upick (4.89%). So, fewer than 5% of respondents perceive the farmer's market and Upick to be too expensive, but more respondents perceive cost as a barrier to using fair trade products.

The “used in the past year” generated fairly high percentages of responses, not as an indication of a barrier to using the resource, but more so, as an indicator of overall use of the alternative resource or service. Fruit Share, Community Garden, and Community Shared Agriculture all showed fewer than 5% of respondents having used these resources in the past year. The Farmers Market showed the highest usage in the past year (53.28%) of respondents with Personal Garden and Farmer Direct Produce next (37.75% and 37.10%)

#### **IV. Limitations and Scope**

It is critical for organizations and citizens using the findings of this survey to acknowledge that the sampling method (voluntary, online, limited promotion) and the present sample size (n=445) need to be identified as limitations to researchers presenting further findings based on these data. They are not however, limitations that cannot be overcome. The sample of 445 is just short of 10% (9.7%) of Brandon population and comprises 6.9% of Census division 07 which includes the surrounding municipalities, and citizens who regularly use Brandon services. The voluntary, online nature of the study can potentially skew the data in the direction of those aware, or concerned about food equity (stakeholders, program constituents, etc.) but over time, this limitation can be mitigated by attentive data gathering programs. The sample size limitation is only a short term issue, as the intention is to continue to expand the database, enabling more detailed observations. If intended a [NL2] long-term study, in spite of the limitations, releasing preliminary findings is important to broaden the base of the survey so stakeholders can begin to observe long-term changes. An annual review of the findings will render priceless information. And these short-term findings will trigger awareness of the topics addressed, and potentially action, directed by citizens and stakeholders alike.

## V. Conclusions and Recommendations

There are many more questions that can be asked of these data. This report is meant to be a scan of what will become a long term analysis of food security issues in Brandon. Researchers are invited to contact BNRC for permission to use this data set for subsequent analysis.

It is important to take ideas beyond stereotypes and to confirm or contradict the stereotypes, even if sometimes the sample is small. Trend, or propensity data can trigger subsequent research, encourage attitude change, and be used as leverage for communication and educational initiatives.

Most of the observations in this report are limited to descriptive comparisons of the sample as a whole, and selected filtered sub-sample. Survey Monkey has utilities for predictive and comparative analyses. These kinds of questions can be asked of the data, once the sample population is larger.

From this initial scan of the data it can be concluded:

- Access to food is not equivalent for all segments of Brandon Community.
- There is a solid foundation of awareness for Food Hampers and Soup Kitchen/Hot meals programs by Brandon citizens overall.
- Though there is a high expression that food resources and services were not used because of lack of need, this expression was not universally high. Need exists for resources and services at varying levels among specific segments of Brandon. Higher levels of need were expressed by respondents who spend less than \$300 per month on food and by respondents who self-identified as Aboriginal.
- Brandon citizens mostly get their food from large supermarkets and travel by vehicle (including public transit) to get their food.
- Brandon citizens choose their shopping location because of lower cost of food. Higher quality of produce was also a strong reason for choosing a shopping location.
- There is a high awareness of the Farmers Markets and U-picks, neither of which were perceived as having higher prices.
- Inconvenient schedule was listed as the main reason for people not using the Farmers Market.