

Expanding Support for CSAs in Low-Income Communities within King County from the CSAs' Perspective

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BACKGROUND

- Community supported agriculture (CSA) is effective in increasing access to local fruits and vegetables but is currently unaffordable or unavailable in many low-income communities.
- King County farmers are also financially struggling, spending \$2,700 more than they are earning each year.
- Making CSAs more accessible to low-income communities would improve the diets of priority populations and increase support for local farmers.



Photo from Tilth Alliance

OBJECTIVES

- Inventory King County CSAs and characteristics (e.g. EBT acceptance, pick-up/delivery sites)
- Interview CSAs on their successes and challenges in attracting and connecting with low-income members
- Summarize results; provide recommendations

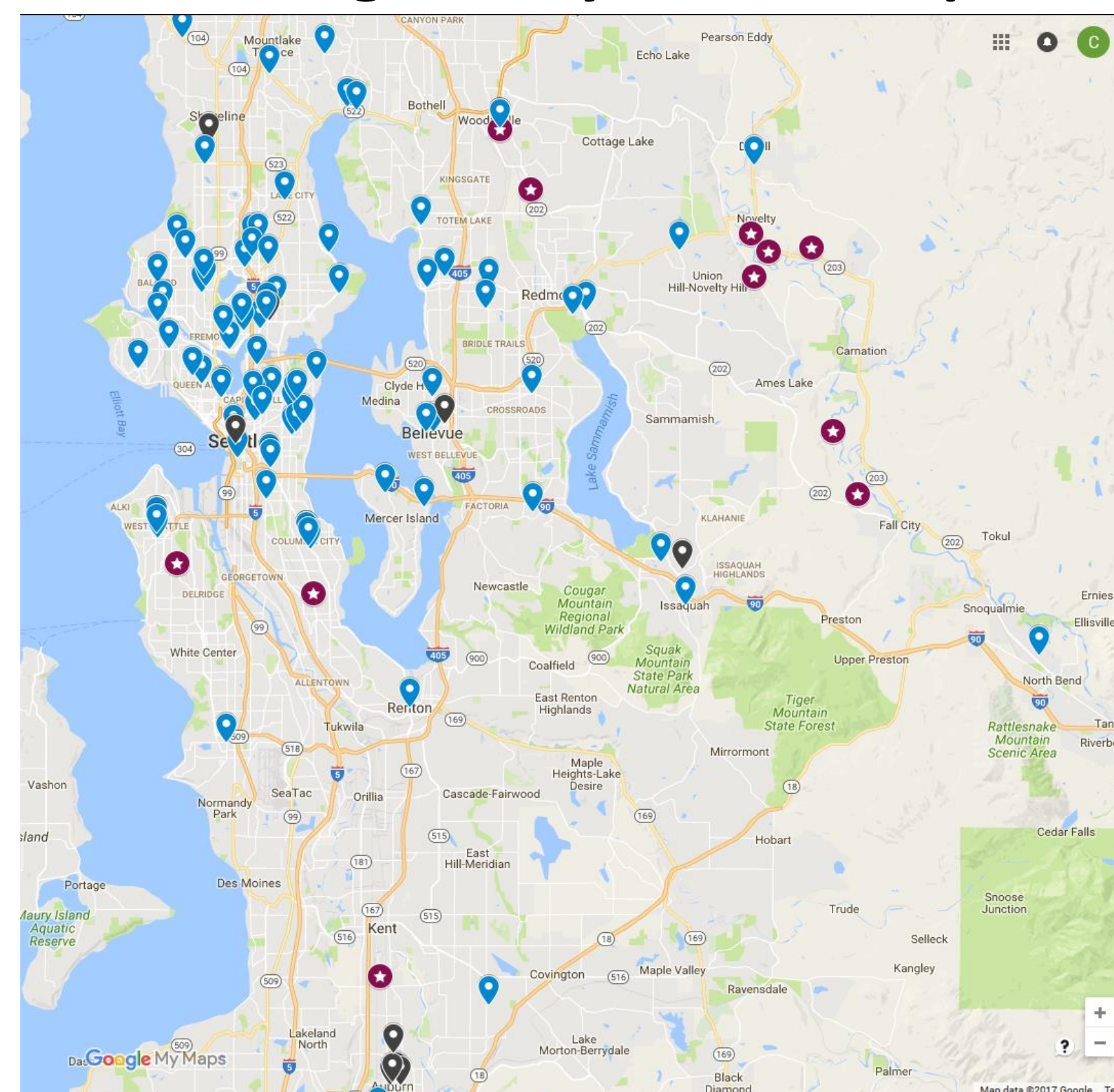
METHODS

Inventory compiled based on information available online. Semi-structured in-person and phone interviews were recorded and organized to highlight common themes.

FINDINGS

- 46 CSAs: \$17/week to \$49.95/week
- Methods of financial help:
 - EBT acceptance (9/46 CSAs)
 - Workshares (6/46 CSAs)
 - Payment installments (12/46 CSAs)
- Current CSAs attract those who have time and money
- Accepting EBT is a challenging process
- Subsidies are needed to lower the cost of CSAs for low-income people
- Workshares can be helpful but burdensome
- Having an efficient delivery route along cooperative pick-ups sites is vital
- CSAs want support in marketing

King County CSA Pick-Up Locations



Magenta stars = CSA HQ/farm

Blue pin = pick-up location

Gray pin = employees or members only pick-up location

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reframe the Message

- Example: Healthcare organizations, schools, and large employers can build relationships with CSAs and promote the benefits of employee participation.

Lower Costs

- Example: The government can allocate more funding toward CSAs, such as awarding grants to cover pre-season costs so low-income members can pay weekly.

Increase Efficiency

- Example: Non-profits, community businesses, employers, etc. can offer their facilities and delivery services.

Fill in the Gaps

- Example: Public Health and food justice organizations can initiate a project similar to this one to better understand these issues from the perspective of low-income communities.

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