

# **UCLA**

## **Policy Briefs**

### **Title**

A Transportation Needs Assessment of Grocery Shoppers at the Century Villages at Cabrillo

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1pw724n9>

### **Author**

Fellague Ariouat, Aziz

### **Publication Date**

2022-06-12

### **DOI**

10.17610/T68S3M

July 2022

# A Transportation Needs Assessment of Grocery Shoppers at the Century Villages at Cabrillo



Aziz Fellague Ariouat, MURP

## Issue

The Century Villages at Cabrillo (CVC) is a 27-acre residential community located in Long Beach's Westside neighborhood that caters to formerly unhoused people and veterans. The community is situated within a food desert – meaning residents lack access to healthy and affordable food – and the nearest grocery store is 1 mile away (USDA, n.d.). Furthermore, CVC is surrounded by unfavorable and unhealthy land uses and infrastructure, including industrial land uses, a refinery, two freeways, and a freight railroad. Existing public transportation near CVC is generally inaccessible due to infrequent service and distance from residents' homes, and residents also face personal mobility and technological barriers such as being unbanked or lacking a smartphone, thus limiting them to certain transportation services.

The surrounding environment and existing transportation conditions create challenges for community members' ability to purchase groceries. This study sought to understand the transportation needs of CVC residents that would enable grocery access, and recommend interventions to improve access.

## Study Methods

The researcher surveyed 69 CVC residents to understand their primary mode of transportation to grocery stores, experiences with food insecurity within the past month, and transportation challenges. Respondents were also

asked to propose solutions that CVC could implement. To meet eligibility criteria, all respondents were over the age of 18 and resided in transitional or permanent housing at the time of survey administration.

## Key Findings

- More than half of the residents generally traveled over 2 miles to a handful of grocery stores: Albertsons (2.7 miles), Food 4 Less (3.5 miles), Vons (3.5 miles), and the 99 Cents Only Stores (3.6 miles).
- Most respondents indicated that they rode the bus (46%) or drove (32%) on their last trip to the grocery store.
- Three categories of transportation challenges emerged: personal mobility issues relating to physical health, inaccessible and infrequent public transit, and a lack of car ownership as well as barriers associated with car ownership, such as gas and maintenance.
- When asked about food insecurity, 55% of residents reported that they never or rarely faced an inability to consistently access food within the past month.
- Residents favored three initiatives to improve grocery access: 42% of residents supported a grocery-delivery program; 39% supported a free shuttle bus exclusively for grocery store trips; and 36% supported free or subsidized Uber and Lyft rides. Support for these

Grocery Stores Visited by CVC Residents (2022)

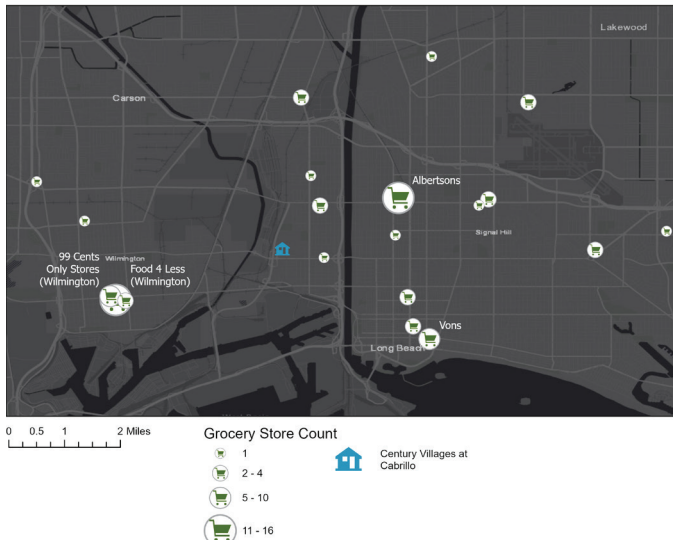


Figure 1. Last grocery store visited by CVC residents

initiatives varied when controlling for car ownership and food insecurity: residents without a car (21 people) favored a free grocery shuttle, whereas residents experiencing food insecurity supported the grocery-delivery service (16 people) and the free grocery shuttle (15 people) at similar rates.

## Recommendations

The findings revealed that CVC residents traveled farther — often on public transportation — to purchase groceries. They also faced several barriers that exacerbated inaccessibility, like limited physical mobility, inaccessible and infrequent bus service, and issues relating to car ownership or the lack thereof. Based on the responses, the researcher proposed four key recommendations for CVC:



Fellague Ariouat, A. (2022). Increasing Access to Groceries at the Century Villages at Cabrillo (Master’s capstone, UCLA). Retrieved from: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4bd2t5sz>.

USDA ERS - Go to the Atlas. (n.d.). Retrieved November 29, 2021, from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas>.

- Establish a grocery-delivery program by partnering with a local transit agency — such as Los Angeles Metro — and service providers to support CVC residents with the greatest need.
- Develop a free shuttle program to transport residents to and from select grocery stores. Recruit CVC residents to participate in the planning process and research the financial feasibility of such a program.
- Improve accessibility within CVC’s campus by creating delivery drop-off zones and bringing groceries directly to residents’ doors.
- Ensure that residents are aware of the new programs by using various marketing methods such as digital advertising, in-person events, and designating case managers as program ambassadors.