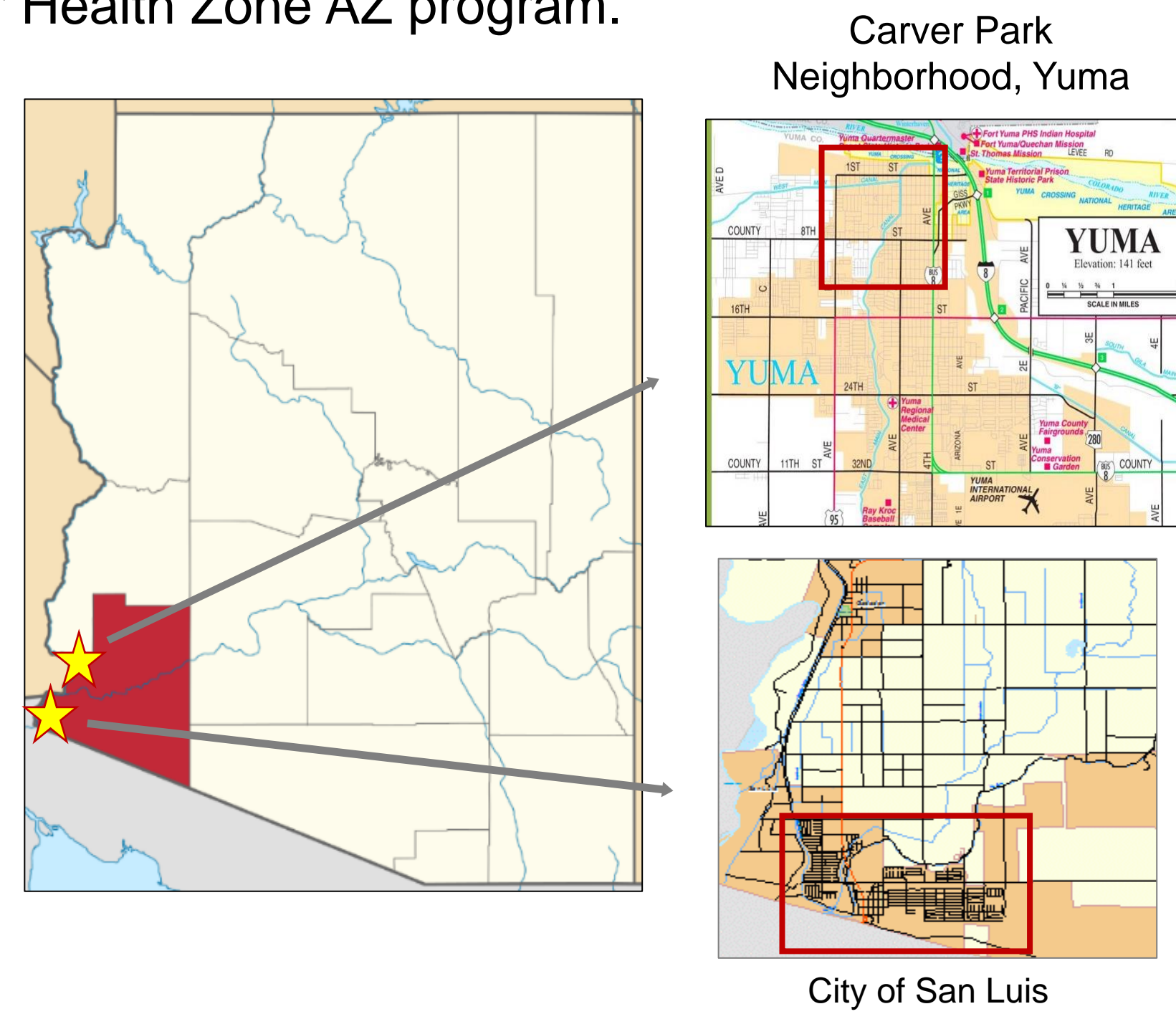


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Introduction

Limited access to nutritious foods and active spaces adversely affect resident health in the city of San Luis and Carver Park neighborhood in Yuma. Knowledge gaps around specific community needs led to a participatory evaluation assessment of each community's food and physical activity environment in 2022. The assessment was led by the Yuma County Public Health Services District (YCPHSD) as part of their Health Zone AZ program.



Methods

The MPH student trained YCPHSD staff in photovoice methods, provided technical support and guidance, and analyzed all results.

YCPHSD staff facilitated the groups in 3 meetings with 8 Spanish-speaking neighborhood residents. Participants were recruited through community partners of the Health Department and offered an honorarium after the project. Each consented to participate and received an orientation and technical training in photovoice methods, ethics, and photo submission.

Photovoice groups in each community took pictures and discussed the realities of their local food and physical activity environments, favorite aspects of their neighborhood and things they'd like to change.

A public display of select photos from both communities were displayed in San Luis and Yuma Public Libraries in October, 2023 during public presentations of the entire assessment.

Carver Park, Yuma Photovoice	San Luis Photovoice
5 Spanish-speaking residents in or near Carver Park Neighborhood	3 Spanish-speaking residents of the rural city of San Luis
Participants recruited from Parent Literacy Group	Participants recruited from senior public housing site
32 photos submitted	18 photos submitted
3 Meetings per Community Group	
#1 – Welcome, co-creating a safe space	
#2 - Review of the project goals, instructions and practice	
#3 - Group discussion about photo submissions and how the images and themes influence regional food and physical activity environments	

Food Environment

Residents enjoy growing their own food like nopales and squash at their homes or apartment complex garden boxes to save money and eat organic produce.



Walmart and Family Dollar, stores where residents buy food are nearby, easily accessible by walking to a short drive, but may not always have fresh produce.

San Luis Results

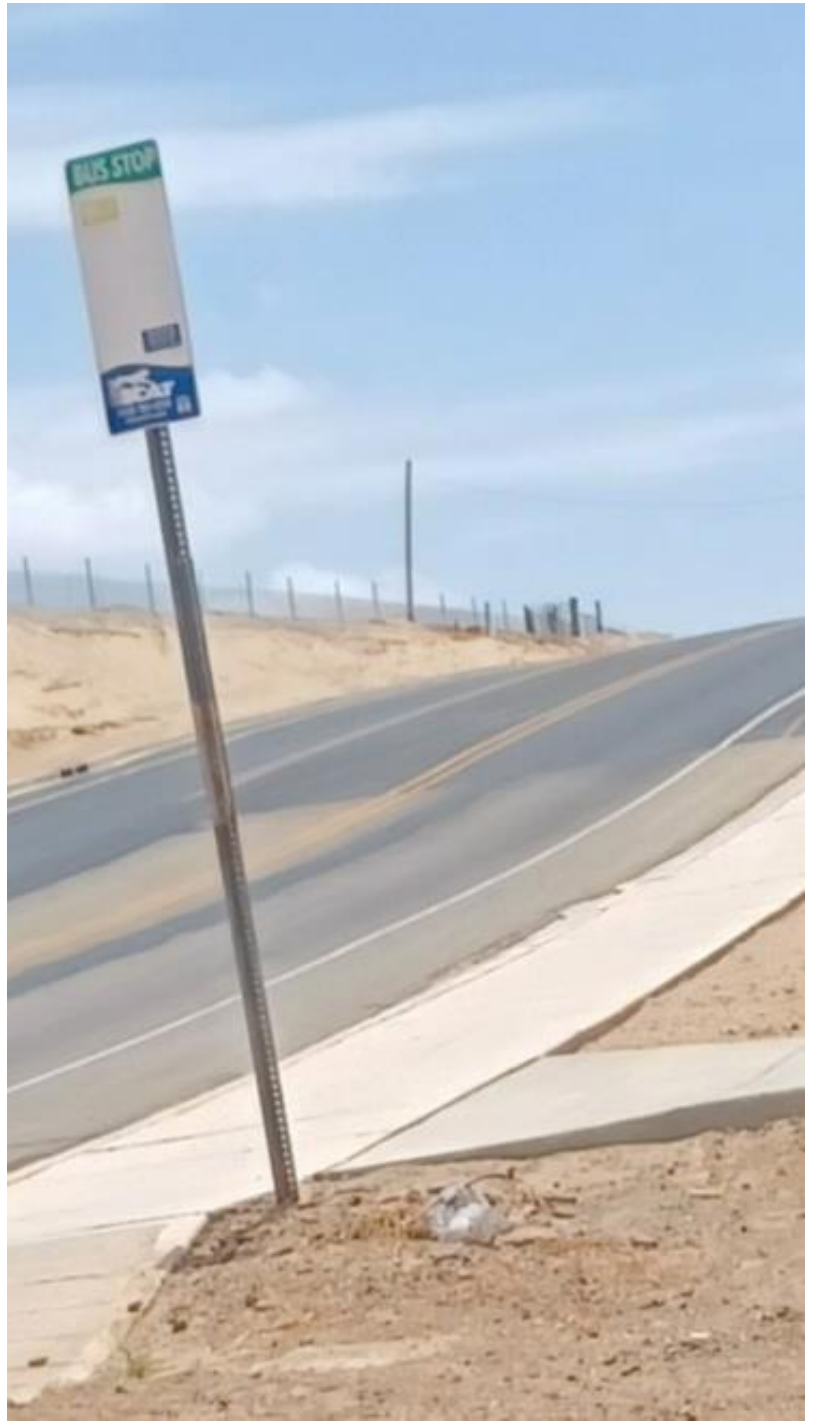
Residents enjoy walking to do errands including getting the mail at the post office, and for exercise. Some sidewalks are unfinished and limit walkability.



Some residents fish in the Colorado River canal to save money and eat nutritious food.

Physical Activity Environment

Many residents wait in the hot sun to use the bus traveling to Yuma for services.



Several small neighborhood parks accessible in residential area, and larger public parks in the northwest of the city.

Food Environment



Residents enjoy growing their own food at home or receive harvests from neighbor or family plots. It saves money, helps them eat organic produce, and reminds them of their roots. Residents grow peppers, corn, herbs, tomatoes, nopales, oranges, mango.

Carver Park Results

Farms have positive and negative impacts to the community, via income for farmworkers, and polluted air from pesticides and particles during harvesting seasons.



Neighborhood parks and pathways promote walking, some have little shade.

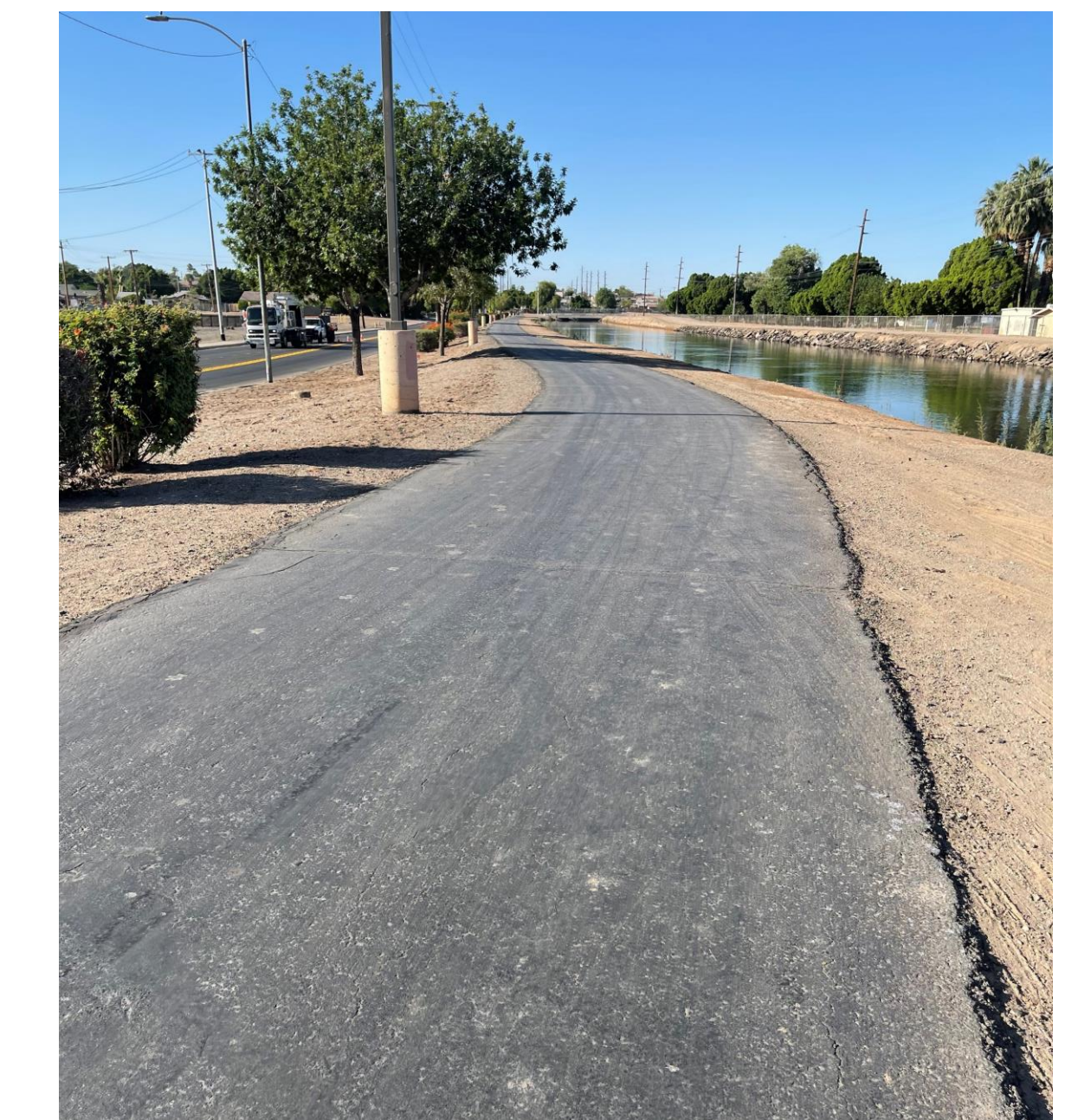


Families enjoy Castle Park in Wetlands Park and Carver Splash Pad as safe places for play, exercise, and socializing. Limited shade parents restricts daytime use.



Physical Activity Environment

Individuals frequently use the paths along Colorado River canal to run, bike, or walk. It provides free and accessible places for physical activity and support social networks that value being active.



Discussion

Photovoice participants shared their experiences interacting with the regional food and physical activity environments in their neighborhoods. Many assets support community resilience and livelihoods despite insufficient access to nutritious food and free physical activity spaces.

Participants recommended several ways to improve access to nutritious food and physical activity environments, including low-cost upgrades to bus stops, parks, walkways, river canal, and local stores. YCPHSD aims to address these recommendations through AZ Health Zone programming, community partnerships and policy change.

Recommendations

Photovoice is an effective method for participatory research about food and physical activity environments. Health Departments and other organizations could build trust and new relationships with residents, as well as learn more about the nuances of neighborhood needs, preferences, and solutions to improve health and wellbeing. Photovoice results can inform culturally relevant solutions to meet individual community needs. Utilizing photovoice can also empower residents to get involved in creative ways in improving their own communities.

The full report can be viewed by scanning the QR code. To support this project, please contact Yuma County Public Health Services District

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