The State of Food

A Snapshot of Food Access in Louisville

MAYOR'S HEALTHY HOMETOWN MOVEMENT
FOOD IN NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

2010

Special thanks to Kate Geronemus and
the Congressional Hunger Center for preparing this report.

The State of Food

A Snapshot of Food Access in Louisville

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why Does Food Matter?

"FOOD IS OUR COMMON GROUND, A UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE." – JAMES BEARD

There are few things in human life that are more essential than food. However, there are enormous differences in the ways we purchase, prepare, and access food. The food system is an incredibly complex web of cause and effect, impacted at all levels from the farmer that produces the food to the consumer who shops at the local supermarket. In Louisville, we are deconstructing this web, and addressing the cracks in the system by forming new initiatives and creating solutions to address the inequities that currently exist. This report is intended to highlight important characteristics from our local food system using a meta-analysis of a number of studies that explore the opportunities and barriers Louisvillians have in accessing food.

This report is authored by the Food in Neighborhoods (FiN) committee, a group of non-profit organizations, public health advocates, local government officials, farmers and concerned citizens. Formed under the Mayor's Healthy Hometown Movement (MHHM), the FiN committee began as a convergence between the Food Security Task Force and the MHHM's Family and Communities Committee. Essentially, the FiN committee advocates for access to local, healthy foods for all Louisville Metro residents through community engagement, economic development and evaluation. This mission is in sync with the strategies outlined in the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities* grant awarded to the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a signature program aimed at reducing childhood obesity.

The Louisville Community

The food system is too important to be ignored, or to be allowed to operate without critical input from citizens and advocates alike. In Louisville, the consumer demand for food is about $3 billion a year.[1] Apart from being a huge economic engine, the public health effects of food consumption are vast. As national trends show an increase in diet-related disease and illnesses such as type II diabetes, heart disease and obesity, many of these same health problems plague our community. In West Louisville, an area considered one of Louisville's "food deserts," 37% of residents report having high blood pressure, 74% report being overweight or obese, and 12% report having diabetes.[2] Lifestyle and behavioral risk factors cannot explain these statistics alone. In most cases, the choices we make are shaped by the choices we have.

---

[1] Market Ventures, Inc. (2008). *Building Louisville's Local Food Economy: Strategies for increasing Kentucky farm income through expanded food sales in Louisville.* Louisville Metro Government, Economic Development Department. Portland, ME: Market Ventures, Inc./Karp Resources, 24.

[2] Louisville Metro Health Department. (2006). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Report.* The Office of Policy, Planning and Evaluation. Louisville: Louisville Metro.

Food Retail & Food Deserts

Where are stores located? What do they sell? What type of food is sold in Louisville's many different neighborhoods? Food access has a direct impact on community and individual health. The mere presence of a supermarket in communities correlates with lower rates of obesity and better health. Beyond the health impact, food retail represents a tremendous portion of Louisville's economy, and where dollars are spent impacts the city at large. Where you live in Louisville is a very important determinant in terms of what food you can access. Mari Gallagher, a research consultant, concludes in a 2007 report on Louisville's food environment that the worst access to mainstream grocers exists in West Louisville. Community Farm Alliance (CFA) has found that in West Louisville there is an average of only 1 full-service grocer per 25,000 residents, compared to a Jefferson County wide ratio of 1 per every 12,500 residents.[3] The same report found that East Downtown was also grossly underserved by supermarkets and grocery stores. This problem is compounded by the fact that residents in both areas have the least access to a vehicle in the city. Existing research points out that West Louisville and East Downtown are oversaturated with fast-food restaurants and corner stores that sell mostly unhealthy items, while underserved by full-service grocery stores. These factors create what is known as a "food desert."

The Emergency Food System

The conversation about our food system must include some discussion of the extensive food banking system that exists in Louisville. It is clear that many Louisville residents have inadequate access to food in general, let alone healthy, fresh or local food. In 2009, Dare to Care delivered 13 million pounds of food and groceries to an estimated 192,000 people. Kentucky Harvest, Louisville's other largest emergency food provider, is a food rescue organization which distributes approximately 2.7 million pounds of food annually that is donated from restaurants, caterers, food manufacturers and retailers. Although the emergency food network offers a necessary support for many families in Louisville, its size highlights a failing in our local food system.

Farmers' Markets

Louisville has a rapidly growing number of farmers' markets. In 2007, there were 17 operating farmers' markets throughout the city; by 2009, there were 27 farmers' markets open. Four of the existing farmers' markets are located in neighborhoods that generally lack access to fresh and local produce. The Smoketown Market, Gray Street Market, Phoenix Hill Market, and Victory Park Market in the California Neighborhood are all increasing food access in lower income areas of the City, although disparities in food access in these areas still exist.

[3] Community Farm Alliance. (2007). *Bridging the Divide: Growing Self-Sufficiency in Our Food Supply*. Louisville : Community Farm Alliance, 6.

Local Food Initiatives

In spite and because of the aforementioned inequities in food access in Louisville, many groups are working in new and innovative ways to increase food access. Farmers that are involved in *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)* supplied over 500 individual shares of produce weekly to consumers in Louisville. Similarly, the *New Roots Fresh Stop Project* began in 2009 and offers individuals and families the opportunity to purchase a weekly box of affordable and fresh produce. In 2009, New Roots served approximately 170 families and hopes to expand next season.

Beyond food access, there is also a movement in Louisville pushing towards more local food. *Jefferson County Public Schools* have expressed interest in expanding their purchase of locally grown foods, but have no requirement or incentive to do so to date. Grasshoppers is a local food distribution company selling exclusively locally grown foods and is currently working to expand access to their food through offering payment with EBT for CSA shares. The new *Louisville Farm to Table Project* works to connect providers (farmers) with consumers (individuals, groups, institutions) while working with the farmers' preferred methods of production and selling.

Community gardens are a great way for residents to participate together in growing healthy food. The *Jefferson County Cooperative Extension* manages the city's community garden program, which has ten gardens in Louisville. One local group, *Breaking New Grounds,* has expanded its community garden through composting, and looks to provide nutritious food and sustainable jobs to local communities. *Young Money* is a group of students working to expand food access and better the California neighborhood through managing a community garden.

The *Healthy in a Hurry Corner Store Initiative*, launched in 2009, aims to increase access to healthy and fresh foods by providing technical and financial support to corner stores in low income neighborhoods. To date, Smoketown Dollar Plus is the only participating store, but the Center for Health Equity and YMCA are working together to broaden this initiative to other stores citywide. *Stone Soup Community Kitchen* also expands food access and provides education through collectively cooking dinner using locally grown food available for all who attend and help cook. In the 2008, season approximately 425 different people participated in Stone Soup, not including the farmers who donated food to the events. Food education work is also being done through the *Food Literacy Project* at Oxmoor Farm, a nonprofit offering farm-based experiential education and entrepreneurial youth development programs to bring the field-to-fork experiences to life for local youth.

Food Policy Efforts

Other work is being done in Louisville in regards to public health related policies. Representative Kelly Flood and Senator Denise Harper-Angel introduced *menu labeling* legislation in the Kentucky General Assembly in January 2010. Studies have shown that customers tend to order fewer calories when calories are posted in restaurants, and could therefore have a huge impact on community and individual health.

Louisville Metro began to explore the issue of *artificial trans fat* and its effects on health in December 2007, and developed a "Trans Fat Task Force" to develop a city-wide education campaign and recommend appropriate regulatory action, if any. In February 2010, LMPHW director Dr. Adewale Troutman delivered a report to the Louisville Metro Council calling for a voluntary ban on artificial trans fat with increased funding for a public education campaign. Additionally, the Community Farm Alliance has been working to propose a county-wide *"Buy Local Ordinance"* that would mandate all Jefferson County public agencies to dedicate at least 10% of all food purchases throughout the fiscal year to Kentucky-grown agricultural products.

INTRODUCTION

In the past three years, a few very crucial and significantly different reports have been produced relating to food security and food access in the city of Louisville. This report seeks to examine the key findings of those reports and understand where discrepancies and holes in research exist. Through compiling existing research, this report aims to act as a resource of information and an impetus for needed research and initiatives relating to food access in Louisville.

The following studies and publications on food access in Louisville serve as the main basis for this State of Food report.

(1) Bridging the Divide: Growing Self-Sufficiency in Our Food Supply (2007)

Produced by CFA, a local non-profit. Available at:
http://www.communityfarmalliance.org/BridgingTheDivide.pdf

Bridging the Divide was produced under the auspices of the West Louisville Food Working Group (which no longer exists in the same capacity) and aimed to "generate a public discussion and discourse in Louisville about markets, local food, food related economic development and the connection between health, nutrition and race in the low-income areas of West Louisville and East Downtown."[4] The mission of the Working Group itself, according to the report, focuses on economic cooperation between urban and rural communities that result in more access to high quality and affordable foods for low-income city neighborhoods and more sustainable livelihoods for small family farmers.[5] The report focuses on community access to affordable local food in addition to taking particular interest in benefits for farmers in the local food economy.

(2) Louisville Retail Market Study (2007)

Produced by Strategy 5, an economic development firm hired by the Louisville Metro Economic Development Department Available at:
http://www.louisvilleky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/FC55F695-8B86-4DA8-A9C3-B91415D7F55C/0/RetailMarketStudyFinal408small.pdf

The goal of the ***Retail Market Study*** is to investigate "access to retail goods and services as necessary infrastructure on regional, community-wide, and neighborhood levels."[6] The study comes from a perspective of economic development for the city and frequently utilizes the terms "demand gaps" to signify unmet demand for retail and "demand surplus" to mean more retail exists in a certain area than is needed to serve the population that lives there.[7]

---

[4] Community Farm Alliance, iii.
[5] Community Farm Alliance, 2.
[6] Strategy 5. (2008). *Louisville Retail Market Study*. Louisville Metro Government, Economic Development Department. Annapolis: Strategy 5, 1.
[7] Strategy 5, 1.

(3) Building Louisville's Local Food Economy: Strategies for increasing Kentucky farm income through expanded food sales in Louisville (2008)

Produced by Market Ventures, Inc. hired by the Louisville Metro Economic Development Department. Available at: http://ww.farmlandinfo.org/documents/37121/FarmersMarketFeasibilityStudyFINAL.pdf

Building Louisville's Local Food Economy set out explicitly to "identify strategies that will most effectively increase Kentucky farmer income through new or expanded sales to Louisville consumers, businesses and institutions."[8] This report mainly focuses on expanding sales of local food for the benefit of local farmers and urban consumers.

(4) Key Sections of Central Louisville are "Food Imbalanced" (2007)

Produced by The Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group contracted by *The Courier-Journal* newspaper in Louisville. Available at: http://marigallagher.com/site_media/dynamic/project_files/CourJourLouvl_FdAcBrf.pdf

Food Imbalanced aims to provide a "first level analysis of mainstream locations to purchase groceries."[9] Past studies by Mari Gallagher have found that residents of large and isolated areas with little to no access to mainstream grocers offering fresh produce are more likely to die prematurely, and suffer from other diet-related diseases.[10]

A review of current literature shows that there already exists a wealth of information and knowledge about food access in Louisville. This report considers the importance of access to food in regards to food retail, farmers' markets, emergency food and food banks, as well as through exploring local, grassroots food initiatives.

[8] Market Ventures, Inc., 5.

[9] Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group. (2007). *Key Sections of Central Louisville are "Food Imbalanced"*. The Courier-Journal. Chicago: Mari Gallagher, 1.

[10] Ibid.

Food Retail & Food Deserts

For the purposes of this report, there are a few main questions to consider when examining existing research on food access in Louisville: where are stores located, what types of foods do those stores sell, and who has access to those stores?

"Grocery" Store in West Louisville

Access to supermarkets is among the most important factors to consider when examining the state of food access in Louisville. According to a study in the April 2006 issue of the American Journal of Preventative Medicine, the mere presence of supermarkets in a community was associated with a lower prevalence of obesity. The same study found that the presence of convenience stores in a neighborhood was associated with higher incidence of obesity.[11] A study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that black Americans' fruit and vegetable intake increased by 32% for each additional supermarket in the census tract.[12] Food access issues, as indicated in the aforementioned study, have tremendous impacts on individual and community health. For this reason, it is important to understand food access in Louisville. As indicated in "Building Louisville's Local Food Economy" 86% of retail food sales take place in supermarkets.[13] Additionally, consumers purchase the majority of their food for at-home consumption from supermarkets, making it particularly important to consider where supermarkets are and who can get to them.[14]

In regards to grocery store and supermarket access, many reports agree that where you live in Louisville is a very important determinant in terms of what food you can access. Mari Gallagher concludes that "the lowest or worst access to mainstream grocers form a long strip to the west..."[15] The report looks closely at "food balance," that is how easy or difficult it is to choose between a mainstream or "fringe food" location. A mainstream grocer is one that

A study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that black Americans' fruit and vegetable intake increased by 32% for each additional supermarket in the census tract.

[11] Wing, S., Morland, K., & Diez Roux, A. (2006). Supermarkets, Other food Stores, and Obesity: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine , 30* (4), 333-339.
[12] Morland, K., Wing, S., & Diez Roux, A. (2002, November). The Contextual Effect of the Local Food Environment on Residents' Diets: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study. *American Journal of Public Health* , 1761-7.
[13] Market Ventures, Inc., 5.
[14] Market Ventures, Inc., 25.
[15] Mari Gallagher, 1.

offers "healthy and fresh choices" and a fringe establishment is described as offering "the opposite" and is generally either a convenience store or fast food restaurant.[16] The report contends that fringe food establishments are not inherently bad, but if they are the primary food source for a community, then diets, health and land use patterns will likely suffer dramatically.[17] By quantifying the food desert reality, Mari Gallagher used a "food balance theory" ratio that found West Louisville to be the most food-imbalanced.

CFA's report, "Bridging the Divide," echoes and adds to the findings of the Gallagher report. This research highlights West Louisville as a "food desert" and contends that "supermarkets and superstores under serve West Louisville and East Downtown" (Figure 1). The report found that in West Louisville "there is an average of only 1 full service grocer per 25,000 residents, compared to a Jefferson County wide ratio of 1 per every 12,500 residents…"[18] The report goes on to indicate that natural food stores and superstores are entirely absent from West Louisville and East Downtown.

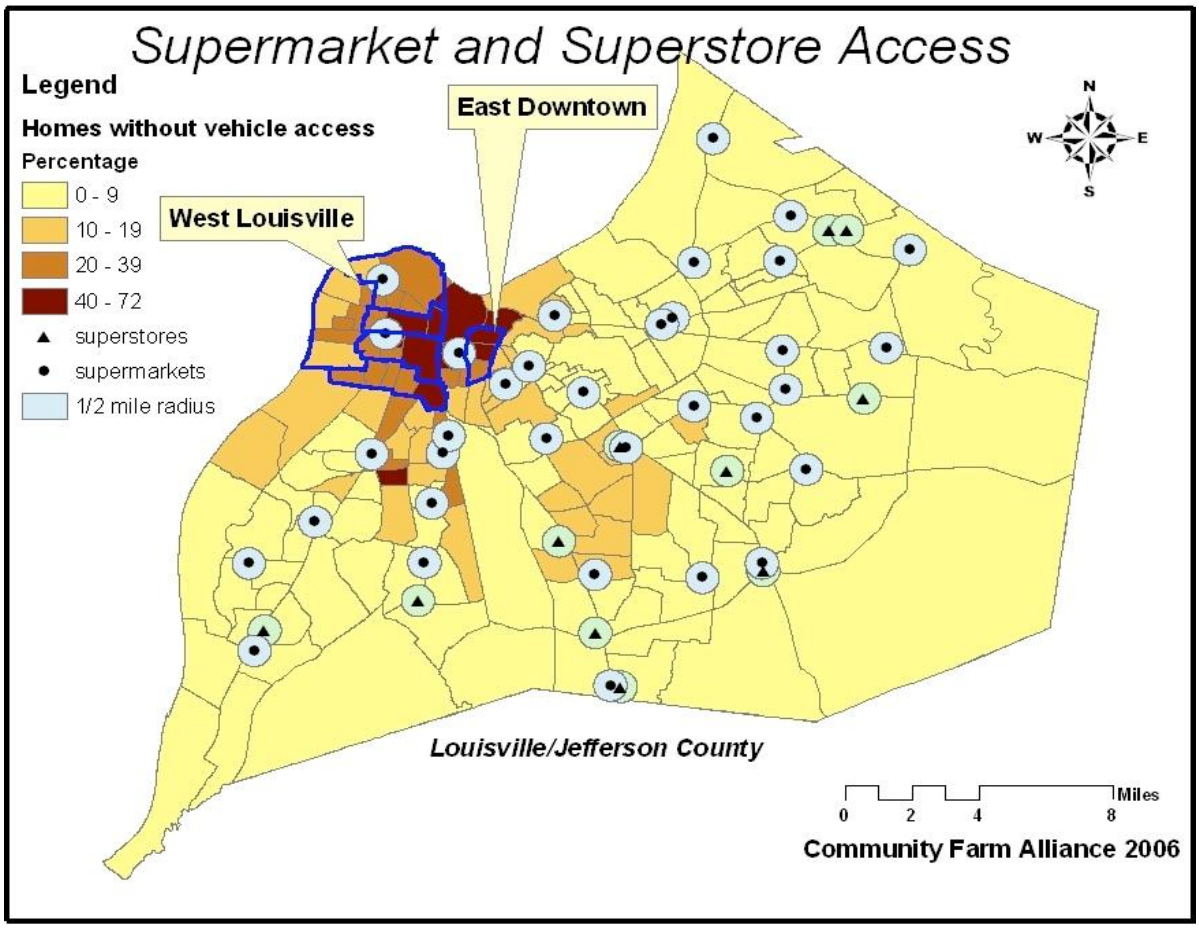

FIGURE 1 - SUPERMARKET AND SUPERSTORE ACCESS FROM "BRIDGING THE DIVIDE"

[16] Mari Gallagher, 3.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

"Bridging the Divide" also speaks to concerns about fringe food locations, concluding that convenience stores are abundant in West Louisville and East Downtown, but come with a set of troubling problems.[19] According to the report, fringe locations like convenience stores charge higher prices than nearly any other type of store and carry items that are poor quality and have lower nutritional value.[20] For many residents of West Louisville and East Downtown, convenience stores are the only food stores they can access. Although West Louisville and East Downtown lack supermarkets, they have a tremendous amount of access to fast food. The report indicates that along Broadway, which runs from East Downtown to West Louisville, there are a total of 24 fast food restaurants in a 2.8 mile stretch, the highest concentration in the state of Kentucky (Figure 2).[21] Interestingly, this report even finds that first tier national supermarket chains sell lower quality goods in low-income neighborhoods.[22] In addition to being underserved by supermarkets and grocery stores, West Louisville and East Downtown residents also have significantly less access to a vehicle than residents of other parts of the city. In Jefferson County as a whole, only 13% of households lack vehicle access. However, 28% of West Louisville households do not have access to a vehicle and a striking 51% of households in East Downtown lack vehicle access.[23]

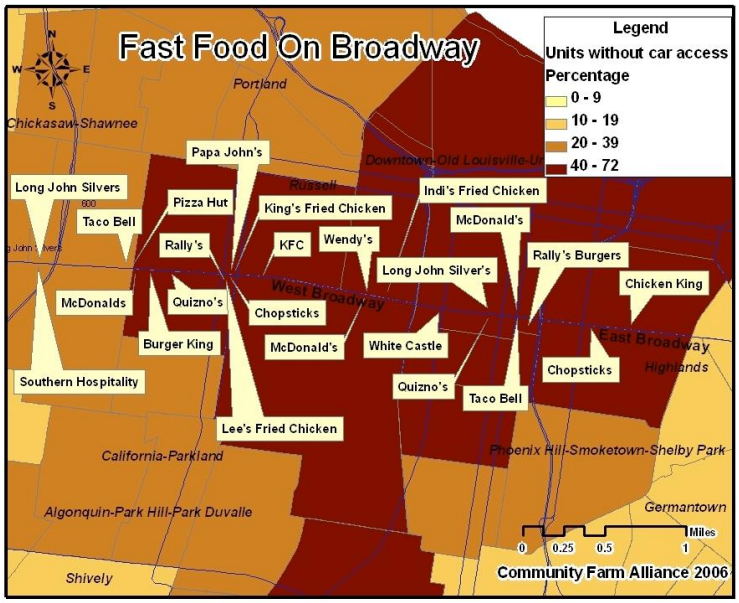

FIGURE 2 - FAST FOOD LOCATIONS ON BROADWAY

Ray Yeager, MPH candidate at the University of Louisville, has continued research on the issue of food deserts. In his practicum project, he uses GIS mapping that examines proximity to nutritious food (grocery store) versus proximity to non-nutritious food (fast-food and convenience) while taking into account vehicle access. His data is based on food inspection reports compiled by the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness that identify various food retail locations, and 2000 Census data on households with vehicle access. Yeager defines a "grocery store" as a "retail location selling a large variety of packaged foods, as well as a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables." The map on the following page is a preliminary analysis that ranks different areas of Louisville Metro by a "risk score" (Figure 3). The red areas (highest risk score) represent areas of the city with the least access to healthy, nutritional options. Conversely, the green areas (lowest risk

[19] Community Farm Alliance, 7.
[20] Community Farm Alliance, 9.
[21] Community Farm Alliance, 11.
[22] Community Farm Alliance, 9.
[23] Community Farm Alliance, 14.

score) represent the best access to healthy, nutritional options.[24] As with the CFA and Mari Gallagher reports, Yeager's preliminary analysis points to an inequity in food access in West Louisville and East Downtown.

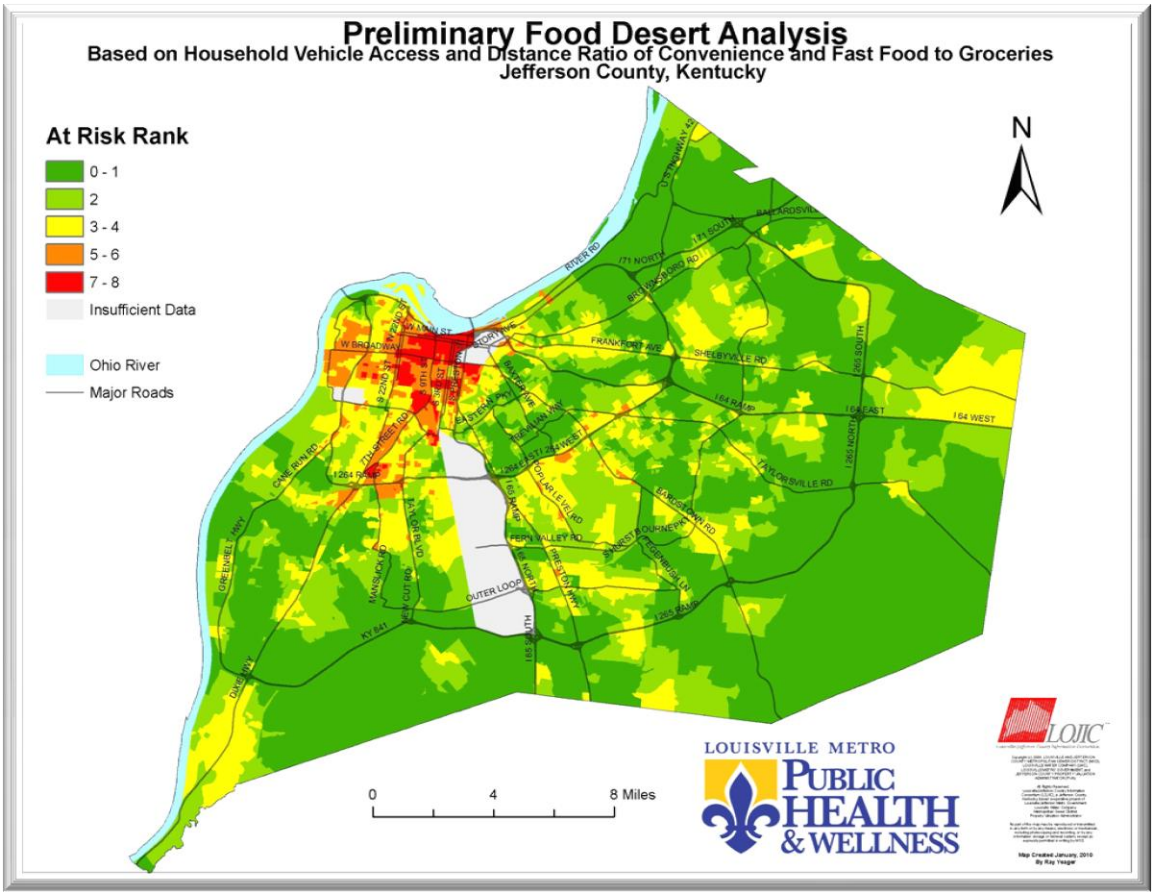

FIGURE 3 – PRELIMINARY FOOD DESERT ANALYSIS

Finally, the Economic Development Department commissioned a "Retail Market Study" to examine economic data to determine whether different areas could financially support new types of retailers. The report divides Louisville into five different "zones" in order to conduct its analysis. West Louisville and East Downtown are located in the "Dixie Zone" and parts of the "Central Zone." At first glance, the report appears contradictory to the findings of Mari Gallagher, Ray Yeager, and CFA. For example, Strategy 5 finds that areas of West Louisville and East Downtown are "well served by grocery stores" counting 47 supermarkets in the Dixie Zone and 46 in the Central Zone.[25] However, some discrepancies between reports may be understood simply by defining the terms used in the research. In Appendix A of the Retail Market Study, a grocery store is defined as "Any retail store selling a line of dry grocery, canned goods or nonfood items plus some perishable items."[26] A grocery for the Strategy 5 report can be merely a store selling largely dry goods, without

[24] Email correspondence with Ray Yeager.
[25] Strategy 5, 40.
[26] Strategy 5, 72.

much availability of fresh produce. What Mari Gallagher refers to as a "fringe" food location, like a convenience store, the Strategy 5 report may count as a grocery store.

The Strategy 5 report indicates that "two neighboring zip codes can support one new additional grocery store in the Park DuValle area."

Strategy 5 does find, however, that the northern portion of the Central Zone "needs an additional grocery," which indicates a lack of food access in East Downtown. Also, the report indicates that "two neighboring zip codes can support one new additional grocery store in the Park DuValle area."[27] In response to Strategy 5's recommendation, the Economic Development Department has been working with a developer to procure an unnamed grocery store in the Park DuValle neighborhood. This retail initiative is an ongoing strategy of Mayor Jerry Abramson's COOL (Corridors Of Opportunity in Louisville) program headed by the Economic Development Department. The COOL program is intended to enhance the quality of life in neighborhoods by developing quality shopping and service opportunities along Louisville's commercial corridors. In 2006, the COOL program helped to incentivize the development of a Kroger supermarket in the Portland neighborhood of West Louisville, a great example of how economic development incentives can increase the availability of fresh food.

[27] Strategy 5, 40.

Farmers' Markets

Louisville's farmers' markets are a rapidly expanding part of the food system in the city. Of the approximately $3 billion dollars in annual demand for food in Louisville, approximately $137 million is demand for fresh produce. In 2007, farmers' markets represented 1.6% of produce sales in Louisville. However, the demand for produce is expected to grow to $157 million by 2012, and farmers' markets have a large role to play in meeting that demand.[28]

Farmers' Market Stand in Louisville

The data suggests that Louisville residents and local food advocates are working to expand the network of farmers' markets. In 2007, 17 farmers' markets operated in Jefferson County.[29] By 2009, there were 27 farmers' markets. So far, four of those markets exist in neighborhoods that generally lack access to fresh and local produce. The Smoketown Market, Phoenix Hill Market, Gray Street Market, and Victory Park Market in the California Neighborhood are all increasing availability of fresh foods to generally underserved areas. The Smoketown and Victory Park Markets, as well as the Phoenix Hill and Rainbow Blossom markets, accept EBT cards. The acceptance of these benefits expands access to residents with lower income, and stimulates the success of markets by bringing Federal dollars to the City. While there is no doubt that the farmers' markets in West Louisville and East Downtown help provide more fresh food to low-income residents, there is still much work to be done to increase the usage of these markets. The Victory Park Market saw $31.50 in EBT sales out of a total $1,232 spent at the market in the 2009 season.[30] Though the sales appear low, increased outreach and marketing in the future can have a significant impact on increased use of the market in the future. The Gray Street Market offers more fresh foods to Smoketown and Phoenix Hill residents, and has coordinated its hours with the Smoketown and Phoenix Hill Markets to offer more options to residents, rather than compete at similar hours. The Gray Street market hopes to attract more neighborhood residents in 2010 by procuring an EBT machine, and increasing outreach to the surrounding community in Phoenix Hill and Smoketown. With steps such as these, progress is being made in West Louisville and East Downtown to ensure more residents can and do access the markets. With assistance from Community Farm Alliance and the Kentucky Farmers' Market Association, more markets hope to accept EBT in 2010.

[28] Market Ventures, Inc., 24.
[29] Market Ventures, Inc., 6.
[30] Phone interview with CFA staff members SteVon Edwards and Erica Dolinky, and Hunger Fellow Danny Burke on 2/2/10.

The acceptance of WIC benefits at farmers' markets could also expand access to fresh foods to low income residents. The state of Kentucky participates in the federal WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which provides $20 vouchers to families eligible for WIC and to seniors who qualify that can be redeemed for fresh produce at farmers' markets.[31] In 2007, Kentucky received $225,077 from the WIC FMNP program and $271,515 from the Senior FMNP program.[32] Nationwide, FMNP has been celebrated as a success in helping farmers' markets in low income areas prosper. In Louisville, only the Smoketown Market accepts WIC vouchers through a grant funded pilot project which began in 2005.[33] Although over 40 markets accept WIC FMNP coupons statewide, Louisville receives none of the WIC vouchers from the state.[34] Also, recent federal legislation changed the WIC Package to include cash value vouchers (CVV) for fresh fruits and vegetables that allocate $6-$10 per month for WIC participants. Many states across the country have authorized farmers (and farmers' markets) as vendors able to accept CVV; however, Kentucky is one of seventeen states that have opted out.[35]

Although over 40 markets accept WIC FMNP coupons statewide, Louisville receives none of the WIC vouchers from the state.

[31] Market Ventures, Inc., 30.
[32] Ibid.
[33] http://www.louisvilleky.gov/Health/MHHM/ACTIVE+Louisville.htm
[34] Market Ventures, Inc., 30.
[35] Tessman, N. & Fisher, A. (June 2009). State Implementation of the New WIC Produce Package: Opportunities and Barriers for WIC Clients to Use Their Benefits at Farmers' Markets. *Community Food Security Coalition*.

The Emergency Food System

The discussion of food access in Louisville must include some consideration of the extensive food banking system that exists in the city. In Louisville, Dare to Care and Kentucky Harvest are the two most prominent feeding organizations. The recently released report *Hunger in American 2010* profiles Dare to Care's efforts to provide emergency food for families and individuals in need. The results are staggering.

Dare to Care Food Distribution Site

Dare to Care distributed over 13 million pounds of food and groceries in 2009 to an estimated 192,000 people.[36] A shocking 40% of Dare to Care Food Bank (DTCFB) clients report having to choose between paying for food, and paying for utilities, and 41% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent.[37] This means that over 76,000 Louisvillians have to choose daily between two of life's most basic necessities in order to survive. Many of DTCFB's clients are among our city's most vulnerable; 38% are children under the age of 18.

Dare to Care receives most of its food through the USDA's Emergency Food Assistance Program, as well as donations from food businesses like the Louisville Produce Terminal and Gordon Foodservice Distribution center.[38] DTCFB accounts for 85% of the food in Louisville distributed by pantries, 64% of the food distributed by soup kitchens and 57% of the food distributed by shelters. [39] Dare to Care also distributes some of its food through its Kids Café Program. Kids Café is one of the nation's largest meal service programs and provides free, prepared and nutritious food to children.[40]

Dare to Care Kids Cafe

[36] The Kentucky Association of Second Harvest Food Banks, 8.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Market Ventures, Inc., 6.
[39] Ibid.
[40] http://daretocare.org/?page_id=71

"Building Louisville's Local Food Economy" highlights that Dare to Care has never purchased produce directly from farmers, but as of 2007 had planned to budget $800,000 for food purchases specifically in order to provide more fresh foods.[41] As of the recent *Hunger in America 2010* report, 3 million pounds of the food distributed by Dare to Care was fresh produce.[42]

Kentucky Harvest is Louisville's other largest emergency food provider. Unlike Dare to Care, Kentucky Harvest is a food rescue organization. Each year they rescue and distribute approximately 2.7 million pounds of food that is donated from restaurants, caterers, food manufacturers and retailers.[43] The organization is entirely volunteer run, with approximately 500 volunteers who use their own transportation to pick up food and distribute it to 143 different agencies with clients who need food.[44] Their primary donors include Panera Bread, Tyson, Yum!, Thornton's and Jefferson County Public Schools.[45]

The impact that emergency food programs have on food access, especially fresh food access, in Louisville remains unclear. However, the mere existence of these programs highlights a problem with our food system overall in that many Louisville residents do not have the means or access to purchase their own food, let alone fresh and healthy food. While the emergency food system offers an essential service for the Louisville community, many organizations are looking to other types of initiatives to end hunger and food insecurity.

[41] Market Ventures, Inc., 6.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Market Ventures, Inc., 39.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

Local Food Initiatives

In response to food access problems in Louisville, there are many new initiatives to increase access to healthy, fresh foods throughout the city. This section will highlight and describe several new initiatives that are currently being led by various groups. While this list is not exhaustive, it is intended to paint a general picture of how our community is working to improve the food system.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs)

CSAs are one of the many ways to increase access to fresh, healthy food. The main research that exists on CSAs comes from the "Building Louisville's Local Food Economy" report produced by Market Ventures, Inc. The report found eight CSA farms that distribute to Jefferson County, supplying a total of 451 shares at the time of the report.[46] The report found that the average cost of a CSA share for one season was $450, and that most CSAs distributed at farmers' markets, where they also sell retail to customers.[47] The report goes on to estimate that doubling the number of CSA shares in Louisville could result in $203,000 in new income for Kentucky farmers.[48] The report does not, however, offer any information on how increased CSA membership could improve food access in low income communities or how it could improve community health. The report cites "labor issues" and "lifestyle choices" as the reasons that most CSAs in Louisville have reached their membership capacity.[49] It appears there is much room for CSAs to expand in Louisville. For example, www.Louisvillecsa.com has been created as a resource for farmers and CSA members. CSAs have tremendous potential to expand food access, if made accessible in cost and location to low income communities.

New Roots

New Roots is a non-profit formed in May 2009 which aims to develop a just and sustainable food system in the Ohio River Valley Region. New Roots works to improve access to fresh food for urban residents while providing marketing opportunities for local and regional farmers.[50] The New Roots Fresh Stop Project offers individuals and families the opportunity to purchase a weekly box of affordable fresh produce that can be picked up at a community institution. In the summer of 2009, New Roots worked with three community institutions. In the Russell neighborhood, New Roots partnered with West Chestnut Street Baptist Church in the Russell Neighborhood to serve 75 families in their Fresh Stop Program. In Newburg at the Newburg Apostolic Church, New Roots served a total of 50 families, averaging 30 families per week. Finally, at their Old Louisville location at the 4th Ave. United Methodist Church, they served 40-45 families.[51] In its first year, the group has

[46] Market Ventures, Inc., 6.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Market Ventures, Inc., 29.
[49] Market Ventures, Inc., 78.
[50] Email correspondence with Karyn Moskowitz, one of the founders of New Roots.
[51] Interview with Karyn Moskowitz on 12/4/09.

reached many families and increased access to fresh foods. In 2010, New Roots hopes to expand to additional neighborhoods in 2010.

Jefferson County Public Schools

The public school system in Louisville is a tremendously important figure in the food access arena. According to the Market Ventures report, the Jefferson County Public School system includes over 98,000 students, 57% of whom qualify for reduced or free meals.[52] The school system serves about 58,000 lunches, 24,000 breakfasts, and 1,800 snacks each day.[53] The potential to increase the amount of fresh and healthy foods in the school system is tremendous. According to the report, JCPS has indicated that it has communicated with its distributors its interest in procuring locally grown and raised foods, but as of the report production date there is no requirement or incentive to do so.[54] Since the time of the Market Ventures study, JCPS appears to be increasing its commitment to local foods. They have met with a mill which purchases all its soft wheat and corn from Kentucky farms and have scheduled to meet with some local produce growers and distributors.[55] Although dollars have not yet exchanged hands, this signals JCPS's committed to buying more local foods.

Grasshoppers Distribution

Grasshoppers, LLC is a local foods distribution warehouse selling exclusively locally grown foods. [56] The company has both bulk consumers and CSA customers. The CSA began in 2008 with 75 members. By the Spring/Summer season of 2009, it grew to approximately 400 members. Grasshoppers embarked on their first Winter CSA this season and have about 150 shareholders.[57] Although thus far CSA shares may be too costly for low-income communities, the potential to grant more food access to many is tremendous. Grasshoppers is currently working with the Community Farm Alliance to move towards accepting EBT for CSA shares as an attempt to expand to lower-income customers.

Community Gardens

According to the September 2003 volume of The American Journal of Public Health, community gardens are "exceptional" in their ability to address "an array of public health and livability issues…"[58] The benefits of community gardens to a neighborhood can be tremendous. There has been a lot of energy surrounding community gardens in Louisville. A list of gardens can be found at http://www.louisvilleky.gov/Brightside/Beautification/Community+Gardens/.

[52] Market Ventures, Inc., 33.
[53] Market Ventures, Inc., 6.
[54] Market Ventures, Inc., 34.
[55] Email correspondence with Sarah Fritschner, Farm to Table Coordinator.
[56] Market Ventures, Inc., 80.
[57] Email correspondence with Jim Earley, Grasshoppers Staff.
[58] "Community Gardens: Lessons Learned From California Healthy Cities and Communities." September 2003, Vol. 93, No. 9 *American Journal of Public Health*, 1435.

Jefferson County Cooperative Extension manages the city's community garden program, which has nine gardens in urban and suburban locations.[59] They oversee the management of ten gardens on 26 acres containing a total of 838 garden plots throughout the county. In 2008 to 2009 they also provided development for six new gardens which they do not oversee. There are 500 registered gardeners in Jefferson County and approximately 500 more family members or friends who garden with them. The Extension office provides education through four seasonal electronic newsletters, garden visits to answer questions, and assistance with diagnosing problems. They offer additional education through office visits, classes, the Horticulture Hotline, a website and publications. To improve horticultural practices, Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners developed and maintained four demonstration gardens. The Extension office also provided technical support for 26 refugee gardeners from Somalia, Russia and Rwanda. A harvest party is held in late October each year to celebrate the end of the gardening year.[60]

One local group, Breaking New Grounds, has expanded upon the ideas of a community garden to encompass other approaches to impact local communities and food systems. Breaking New Grounds describes itself as a sustainable pilot system which transforms waste into healthy soil, creates neighborhood gardens and nutritious food, as well as provides sustainable jobs.[61] In 2006 when they began, Breaking New Grounds built 14 compost bins which composted 21,000 pounds of organic waste. In 2007, they projected that they would compost 36 tons of food waste.[62] Just this year, Breaking New Grounds constructed a hoop house to grow food during cooler months.

Young Money, a group of students from the California neighborhood, has created their own food-producing garden at Brandeis Apartments on 26th Street. Young Money is a part of the California Collaborative and works in conjunction with the Community Foundation of Louisville and NeighborWorks for financial and technical support. The group has cleaned up vacant lots and the neighborhood at large, in addition to caring for the community garden. Young Money participants remark that the impact on the neighborhood is positive, as well as a great opportunity for young people.[63]

Healthy in a Hurry Corner Store Initiative

In 2009, the Center for Health Equity and the YMCA partnered to launch the Healthy in a Hurry" corner store initiative. The project began with two corner stores, but currently only has one active in the program. This effort aims to increase access to healthy, fresh foods in low income neighborhoods by providing financial and technical support to corner stores who are interested in supplying more fresh produce. The initiative is relatively new, but evaluation shows some promise.

---

[59] Market Ventures, Inc., 41.
[60] Information about the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Office provided via email by Denise Peterson, Horticulture Agent at the Extension office.
[61] http://breakingnewgrounds.org/
[62] Ibid.
[63] Young Money "What's Good in the Hood" Video, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGKZ_YKnCdg.

Smoketown Dollar Plus Owner, Julie Kader, with Meyzeek Middle School Students

The University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences Masters students provided the Center for Health Equity a report entitled "Healthy Corner Store Initiative: An Evaluation," which assesses if there has been an increase in access to healthy food in this underserved neighborhood [Smoketown], the surrounding community and beyond.[64] The corner store chosen for the program, Dollar Plus, is located in Smoketown where 50% of residents have an annual income below the poverty line.[65] The study had many key findings relating to the program's success. The report found that of 34 respondents who reported buying from Dollar Plus, 94% were purchasing more fruit and 97% were purchasing more vegetables since the inception of the "Healthy in a Hurry" initiative.[66] Since "Healthy in a Hurry" began, there appears to be a "general increase in purchasing more fruits and vegetables…on a monthly and weekly basis" and fewer people reported "hardly ever" buying fruits and vegetables.[67] Overall, the program has been a success as the store has not suffered any revenue losses and should therefore be self-sustaining as sales continue.[68] The analysis suggests that more outreach, marketing and advertising could attract more customers.[69] The YMCA and Center for Health Equity will expand this initiative in 2010 by working with store owners in additional neighborhoods.

Figure 4 shows the monthly produce sales data over the past year at Smoketown DollarPlus. In 2009, changes in the federal Women, Infants, Children (WIC) program allowed clients to spend $6-$10 a month in vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetables. Once Kentucky implemented these changes in the Summer of 2009, sales of fresh produce at DollarPlus increased from $199.74 in July to $684.27 in August. This data illuminates the positive impact that policy change can have on food access.

[64] Montgomery, P., Robinson, T., & Van Hoose, B. (2009). *Healthy Corner Store Initiative: An Evaluation.* University of Louisville, School of Public Health & Information Sciences, Louisville, 7.
[65] Montgomery, 9.
[66] Montgomery, 22.
[67] Montgomery, 24.
[68] Montgomery, 25.
[69] Montgomery, 24.

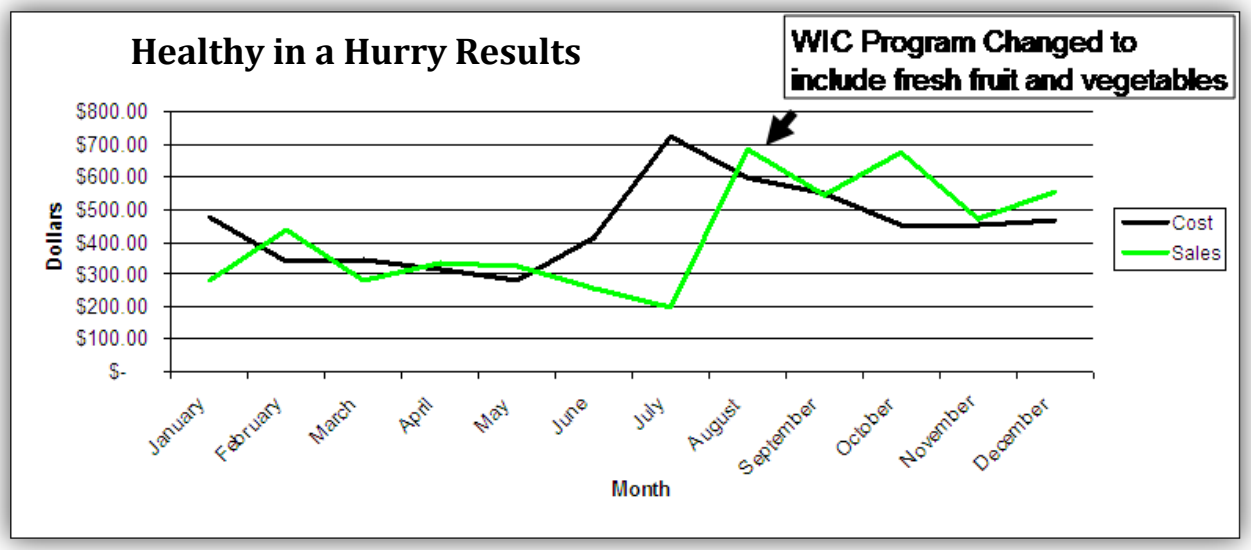

FIGURE 4 – 2009 PRODUCE SALES AT DOLLARPLUS

Stone Soup Community Kitchen

Stone Soup, a program of the Community Farm Alliance, provides monthly dinners in the summer and fall. The dinners, consisting of locally grown foods often donated from local farmers, are free for all who attend. One of the community rules is that attendees must help cook the food and clean up after the meal.[70] Although no data exists on exactly how much impact these events have on the community, they introduce individuals to new foods and preparations of fresh, local produce that they otherwise may not have encountered. According to Stone Soup organizers, during the 2008 season approximately 425 different people participated in one of the six dinners. This estimate does not include the farmers who donated food to the events.[71]

Food Literacy Project

Founded in 2006, the Food Literacy Project (FLP), a nonprofit education partner to a working farm in Jefferson County, offers farm-based experiential educational experiences and entrepreneurial youth development programs. The programs are designed to encourage youth to get a hands-on farm experience, to try new foods fresh from the field, and to become involved in the work of the farm and food system. FLP partners with Field Day Farm, a subsection of Oxmoor Farm. FLP serves public and private school classes and faculty, as well as community groups, youth and after-school programs, summer camps, and special needs groups. [72]

In 2009, 87% of students served by FLP qualified for free or reduced lunch at school. A total of 1,824 participants "got their hands dirty" on the farm through their group experiential education program, and 353 teachers participated in FLP's Professional

[70] http://www.stonesoupky.org/index.html "What is Stone Soup Community Kitchen?"
[71] Email correspondence with Rae Strobel, Stone Soup Organizer.
[72] Food Literacy Project's Organizational Profile provided by Marigny Bostock, Community Health Specialist at Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness.

Development workshops. Additionally, in 2009 FLP initiated an Outdoor Kitchen Project with the construction of a cob oven.

Farm to Table Project

Louisville Farm to Table is a project that works to increase Kentucky farmers' percentage of Louisville's $3 billion food market. It works to connect companies to produce delivery and on-site farmers markets, matching families and buying clubs with meat orders, introducing restaurateurs to local products, helping large institutions switch their menus to include more local ingredients, working with farmers to market their products and other strategies. In short, it works to connects providers (farmers) with consumers (individuals, groups, institutions) while working with the farmers' preferred methods of production and selling.[73]

The project grew out of the efforts of the Local Food Economy Work Group, a collaborative effort of elected officials from Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer and Trimble Counties and the cities of Shelbyville and Louisville. Poet and farmer Wendell Berry, small and large businesses and county cooperative extension agents also contributed to the projects' creation. This group meets regularly to review progress and advise the project.

[73] http://www.louisvilleky.gov/HealthyHometown/farmtotable

Food Policy Efforts

Louisville is also responding to food related problems with the push towards changing local policy. These efforts address a range of issues around public health and the local food system. The list below is meant to offer an impression of food policy initiatives in Louisville, but is by no means a complete picture.

Menu Labeling

Approximately half of America's food dollars go towards foods consumed outside the home. In 2008, $16.8 billion dollars were spent in the United States on fast food alone. Generally speaking, people eat significantly more calories when eating outside the home, and fast food intake is associated with increased body weight and other health risks.

SANDWICHES	CALORIES	PRICE
HAMBURGER	280	.89
CHEESEBURGER	330	.99
FILET-O-FISH®	470	1.99
CRISPY CHICKEN	550	2.79
QUARTER POUNDER®	430	2.29
BIG N' TASTY®	540	2.29
BIG MAC®	590	2.39
CHICKEN McGRILL®	450	2.89
DOUBLE QUARTER POUNDER®	760	2.99

Figure 5 – Sample Menu Label

Menu labeling legislation proposes that fast food and chain restaurants with 20 or more stores in the country list calorie information on their menus, menu boards, and at drive through windows. Additionally, information on saturated and trans fat, sodium and carbohydrates would be available to customers upon request at cash registers. Studies have shown that customers tend to order fewer calories when calories are posted in restaurants. Menu labeling could have a tremendous impact on community and individual health. Representative Kelly Flood and Senator Denise Harper-Angel proposed menu labeling legislation in the Kentucky General Assembly earlier this year. The two bills, HB 246 and SB 86, are currently still in committee.

Trans Fats

Louisville Metro began to explore the issue of artificial trans fat in December 2007 when Metro councilman Dan Johnson (D. 21st District) introduced a proposed ordinance that would have banned the use of artificial trans fat in restaurants city-wide. After intense

debate regarding a ban, the Metro Council passed Resolution #277, which called for the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness (LMPHW) to study the health effects of artificial trans fat, develop an educational campaign to inform the general public of the harmful effects and dangers of consuming products that contain trans fat and review the issue for possible regulatory action, if any.

In response to this resolution, LMPHW and the Louisville Metro Board of Health developed a "Trans Fat Task Force," held several meetings with key stakeholders, developed a public website and solicited feedback through two public forums. The Task Force has since conducted research about the actions of other municipalities who have considered this issue, their decisions, and any impacts that their actions have caused. A report was released in January 2010 with a summary of the Task Force's findings, including three recommendations on how to reduce the consumption of artificial trans fat in Louisville. In February 2010, LMPHW director Dr. Adewale Troutman delivered a report to the Louisville Metro Council recommending a voluntary ban on trans fat in food service establishments, as well as increased funding for a public education campaign.

Buy Local Policy

The Community Farm Alliance has been heading up the effort to ensure that Louisville Metro Government buys more of its food from local farms. CFA is proposing a county-wide "Buy Local Ordinance" that would mandate all Jefferson County public agencies to dedicate at least 10% of all food purchases throughout the fiscal year to Kentucky-grown agricultural products. The potential benefits of this policy would be an increased market for Kentucky farmers, as well as the possibility of lower local food prices for Jefferson County residents as the demand for local food would increase. This policy could mean more access to healthy, fresh food for Louisville Metro residents. A state-wide Buy Local policy already exists, which indicates that state agencies should purchase Kentucky-grown agricultural products, providing they are available and meet appropriate quality standards.[74] The Louisville ordinance would require no increase in the city's already existing food budget, but simply mandate that 10% of the existing budget be spent on local food.[75] Some city agencies, including the Department of Public Health & Wellness, have already begun working to develop a protocol for buying local.

[74] KRS 45A.645 was modified by HB 669 in 2006 to state that state agencies, as defined by KRS 45A.505, shall purchase Kentucky-grown agricultural products, if the products are available and if the vendor can meet the applicable quality standards and pricing requirements of the state agency.

[75] Information on the Buy-Local Policy is taken from CFA's 2009 FAQs which can be found on their blog at http://www.communityfarmalliance.blogspot.com/. Additional information provided by SteVon Edwards, Community Organizer for CFA via email correspondence.

CONCLUSION

"Food deserts leave too many families stranded and without enough choices when it comes to nourishing their loved ones. And sadly, this is the case in many large cities and rural communities all across this nation. So we need to do more to address the fact that so many of our citizens live in areas where access to healthy food, and thus a healthy future, is simply out of reach." – Michelle Obama[76]

The "State of Food" in Louisville, Kentucky is indicative of both complicated challenges and exciting prospects in the vast web that is the food system. As shown in this report, there exists a large amount of research aimed at deconstructing this web. However, we hope this document will spark interest in filling the gaps in research around food access, and building interest in continuing to evaluate the impact of ongoing initiatives.

There is clearly a growing movement to balance the local food system both locally and nationally. However, this community has much work to do if we are going to address the public health crisis that has a clear correlation to the accessibility of healthy food, including locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The following are a sample of recommendations that can help further advance food security and equitable access to healthy food:

- Extend the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to include participants in Louisville/Jefferson County, AND authorize farmers as legitimate WIC vendors so that participants can use their cash value vouchers at farmers' markets;
- Further investment in the COOL program, and strategic development to increase the amount of healthy food retail in underserved areas INCLUDING small-scale outlets such as corner stores;
- Zoning ordinances that regulate the proximity of unhealthy food sources to public schools AND/OR increase the amount of healthy food retail in proximity to schools;
- Revising the current standard for what is served in public school lunches to include more fresh fruits and vegetables, etc;
- The creation of a Louisville Food Policy Council (FPC). A Food Policy Council is a group of stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors (consumers, growers, vendors, etc.) to examine how the food system is operating and to develop recommendations on how to improve it. FPCs have been successful at educating officials and the public, shaping public policy, improving coordination between existing programs, and starting new programs. Examples include mapping and publicizing local food resources; creating new transit routes to connect underserved areas with full-service grocery stores; persuading government agencies to purchase from local farmers; and organizing community gardens and farmers' markets.[77]

[76] Remarks by the First Lady at The White House Garden Party on June 16, 2009. Full transcript available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-First-Lady-at-the-White-House-Garden-Harvest-Party/.
[77] http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC.

Gaps in the Louisville Food System:

What it looks like today….		A vision for tomorrow…
Food deserts in Louisville with little or no access to fresh, healthy food	→	Accessible and affordable nutritious foods in all areas of Greater Louisville
A preponderance of marketing materials promoting poor nutrition and healthy behaviors	→	Coordinated educational programs and social marketing campaigns to support and increase healthier food choices
A lack of policies that promote a healthier food system and existing policies that are barriers to improving the local food system.	→	A Louisville Food Policy Council that guides policy development that supports a healthier food system
Disjointed efforts and use of resources resulting in pockets of success but little impact on the entire food system.	→	Organizations strategically working together collaboratively to improve the local food system

The Food in Neighborhoods committee is always looking for active voices in the movement to achieve adequate access to healthy food for all Louisville Metro residents. Whether your interest is evaluation and research, or community outreach and engagement, our committee would love to have additional support. Please contact us to become involved and help us develop local solutions together.

Mike Bramer
Food in Neighborhoods Committee Chair
502-582-3615
mbramer@ymcalouisville.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Food in Neighborhoods Committee partners include, but are not limited to:

YMCA
Metro United Way
Community Farm Alliance
Louisville Metro Economic Development Department
Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness
Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Office
Center for Health Equity
Dare to Care
Breaking New Grounds
Farm-to-Fork Catering
Natural Awakenings
Junior League of Louisville
Rainbow Blossom
Earth's Promise Farm
Louisville Farmers' Market Association
University of Louisville
Real Food Watch Club

Additional Resources

Figure 5 – WIC Client Locations by Zip Code

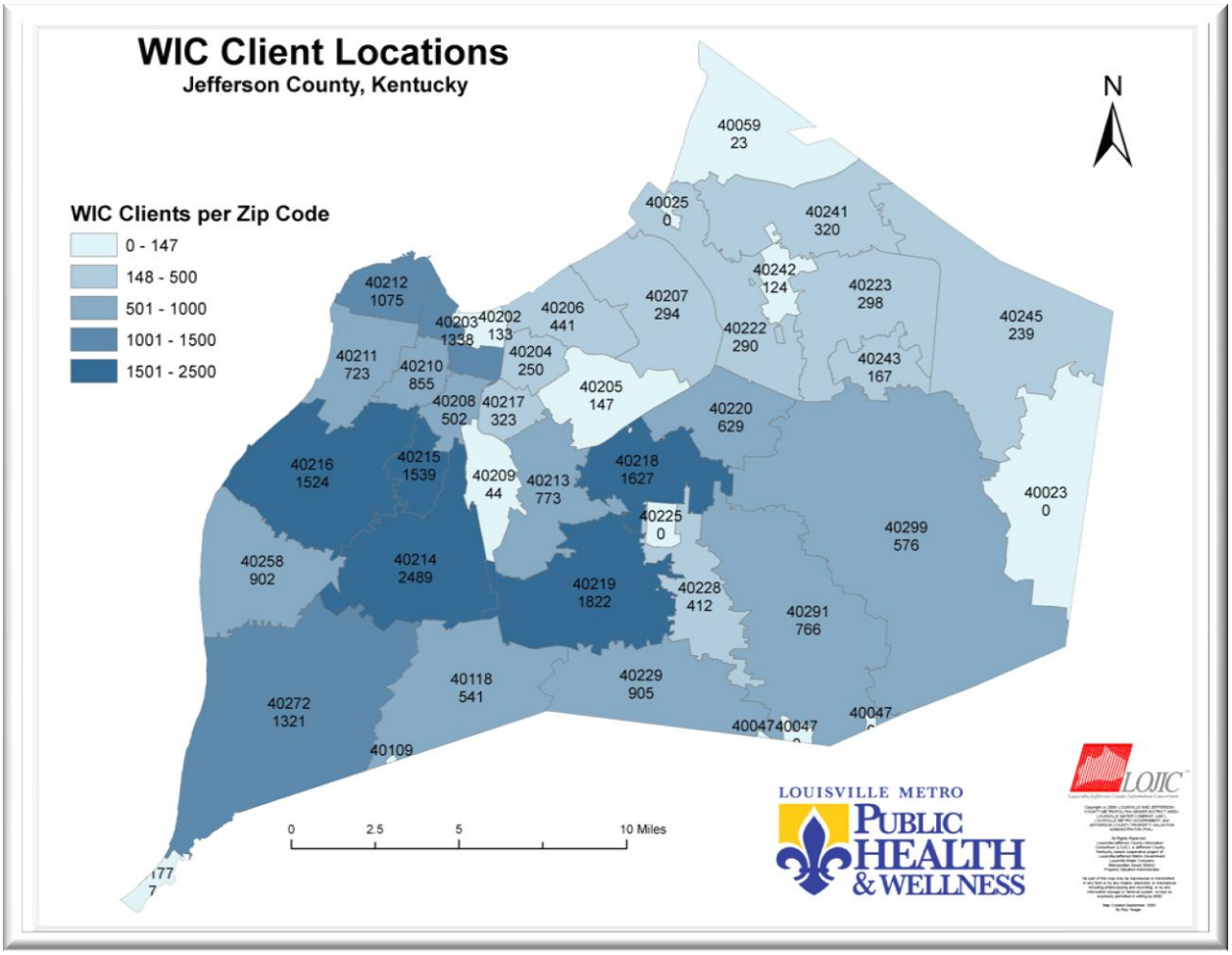

Figure 6 – Food Stamp (SNAP) Redemption in Jefferson County in FY 2009

FISCAL YEAR 2009 JEFFERSON COUNTY, KY					
Store Type		**Total Stores**	**Total Purchases**	**Total Purchase Amount**	**Average Purchase Amount**
BB	Specialty Food Store - Bakery/Bread	17	58,196	$807,346.27	$13.87
CO	Combination Grocery	140	448,839	$4,379,795.61	$9.76
CS	Convenience Store	209	1,164,435	$7,274,839.08	$6.25
DR	Delivery Route	4	9,761	$1,261,375.30	$129.23
FM	Multi-stall Farmers Market	3	190	$5,571.71	$29.32
LG	Large Grocery	7	127,434	$2,660,851.15	$20.88
ME	Specialty Food Store - Meat Products	11	13,134	$340,473.23	$25.92
MG	Medium Grocery	34	148,027	$2,404,687.77	$16.24
SG	Small Grocery	54	246,519	$3,820,314.91	$15.50
SM	Supermarket	49	2,267,953	$79,093,864.48	$34.87
SS	Super Store	47	1,491,360	$60,378,264.92	$40.49
	TOTAL	**575**	**5,975,848**	**$162,427,384.43**	**$27.18**