

CMAP



CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY



# Bronzeville Food Access Study



March 2014

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# Acknowledgements

Many people participated in this study. We are grateful to the seniors at the South Lendeng's Hansberry Square and Bronzeville residents who participated in the study's survey and focus groups. Their time, commitment, and insights are appreciated. Special thanks are also owed to the staff at the Centers for New Horizons (CNH), who helped facilitate the study. CNH is a 40-year-old non-profit organization whose mission is to develop the capacities of families to become self-reliant. It provides a holistic approach to community development that is centered on strengthening families and assisting them to achieve self-reliance. We would also like to recognize the time and commitment demonstrated by the Bronzeville Alliance and its leadership team. Their vision and support will be critical in implementing the recommendations of this study.

We are also grateful to the Fredrick Blum Neighborhood Assistance Center (NAC) at Chicago State University, the City of Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) and the Hansberry Square Community Center whose staff assisted with the various facets of this project.

The study was conducted by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) under its Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, in collaboration with the CNH, DHED and NAC. CMAP is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment and other quality-of-life issues. See [www.cmap.illinois.gov](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov) for more information.

## **Sponsors**

This project was supported through CMAP's LTA program, which is funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and the Chicago Community Trust. The CNH and CMAP would like to thank these funders for their support for this project.

# Executive Summary

Approximately five years ago, the Centers for New Horizons (CNH) embarked on an ambitious effort to evaluate and improve food access in Bronzeville. The Bronzeville Food Access Study is part of that evaluation process. It is a three-stage effort to improve food access in Bronzeville, which includes identifying the barriers that limit access to healthy food; developing policy recommendations to increase household access to healthy foods; and working toward implementation of local food policy changes. This report includes a brief discussion of the public health effects of lack of access to healthy food, findings of a community survey and focus group discussions and recommended strategies and policy interventions to improve food access in Bronzeville.

The study presents data and information that can be used to assess the needs and concerns of the community, and identifies barriers to food access in the greater Bronzeville area. The community survey and focus group discussions examine barriers to food access as well as how and where residents get fresh produce and other food items. Although the survey primarily targeted Bronzeville residents, individuals that work in the neighborhood also participated. The responses from the survey, as well as the information from the focus groups, will be used to educate the community about food access and security and raise awareness of the unmet needs in the community.

The study provides data to help prioritize future food projects and inform food policy change in Bronzeville and the city as a whole. CNH and its partners will leverage the community survey results and focus groups findings in combination with data from public agencies and key stakeholder feedback to understand the food access needs of the community. CNH will work with the City and community leaders to prioritize food access endeavors. While many of the recommended strategies in this study can be accomplished with existing resources, some will require far more resources than the City or the community can provide and will necessitate the involvement of many stakeholders, including neighborhood organizations, community leaders, and private investors.

The community survey and focus group discussions revealed that there is demand for fresh, quality food in Bronzeville. Community residents have a general preference for large grocery stores, transportation to food markets is a challenge for some residents, and households prefer to shop where food prices are lower. Based on these findings, the following strategies (described in detail in Chapter 5) are recommended to improve access to fresh, healthy food in Bronzeville:

- Encourage existing stores to provide a greater volume and variety of fresh, healthy food.
- Develop and attract additional grocery stores and supermarkets.
- Nurture alternative food outlets including farmers' markets, community gardens, and mobile food vendors.
- Identify ways to better connect people to food outlets through transportation strategies.
- Improve healthy food options in schools.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

Food security is defined as a state in which all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, and culturally acceptable food, allowing them to maintain a healthy and active life. It is a complex and multidimensional concept that is grounded on three pillars: access, availability, and use. Food access is a measure of whether people have sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet; food availability deals with whether people have sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis; and food use addresses the appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.<sup>1</sup>

This study is intended to address one aspect of the food security issue—food access—because physical access and affordability of food are the primary contributing factors to food insecurity in many communities.<sup>2</sup> Historically, two strategies have been employed in addressing lack of access to food in the U.S. The first strategy is the federal allocation of food assistance programs such as Food Stamps and Women Infants and Children (WIC), which are programs managed at the county or municipal level. The second strategy involves the emergency food system, which includes food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens.<sup>3</sup> An emerging third strategy is community food security, which approaches food access with the view that the economic, physical, social, and political infrastructure of a community are the best resources to improve its access to food. Community food security focuses on viable and long-term strategies that can make healthy, nutritious, and affordable food accessible to everyone, particularly in low-income communities like Bronzeville. The strategy involves improving access to supermarkets and farmers' markets, linking local farmers with soup kitchens and food banks, and creating urban gardens in underserved communities.<sup>4</sup>

There are many strategies that can be employed, either in combination or independently, to improve access to healthy food in Bronzeville. This study complements previous and ongoing efforts by residents, community leaders, and local organizations to create a “road map” for improving access to healthy food in the community. It recommends intervention strategies whose implementation will require the involvement of many stakeholders including neighborhood organizations, community leaders, the City of Chicago, private investors, and community residents. The study provides important data to help understand how access to

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, “Food Security,” updated September 2013.

See <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>.

<sup>2</sup> City of Oakland, “Oakland Food System Assessment, Food Security -- Why is it Important?,” Mayor’s Office of Sustainability. March 2006. See [http://oaklandfoodsystem.pbworks.com/f/OFSA\\_FoodSecurity.pdf](http://oaklandfoodsystem.pbworks.com/f/OFSA_FoodSecurity.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 2, P 70.

<sup>4</sup> Serena Unger and Heather Wooten, “A Food Systems Assessment for Oakland, CA: Toward a Sustainable Food Plan,” Oakland Mayor’s Office of Sustainability and University of California, Berkeley, Department of City and Regional Planning, May 2006. See <http://clerkwebsvr1.oaklandnet.com/attachments/14033.pdf>.

healthy food affects the lifestyles and consumption behaviors of most residents. Linking this information to the City's development priorities can help improve access to healthy food, not only in Bronzeville, but also in other underserved communities as well.

## Study Area

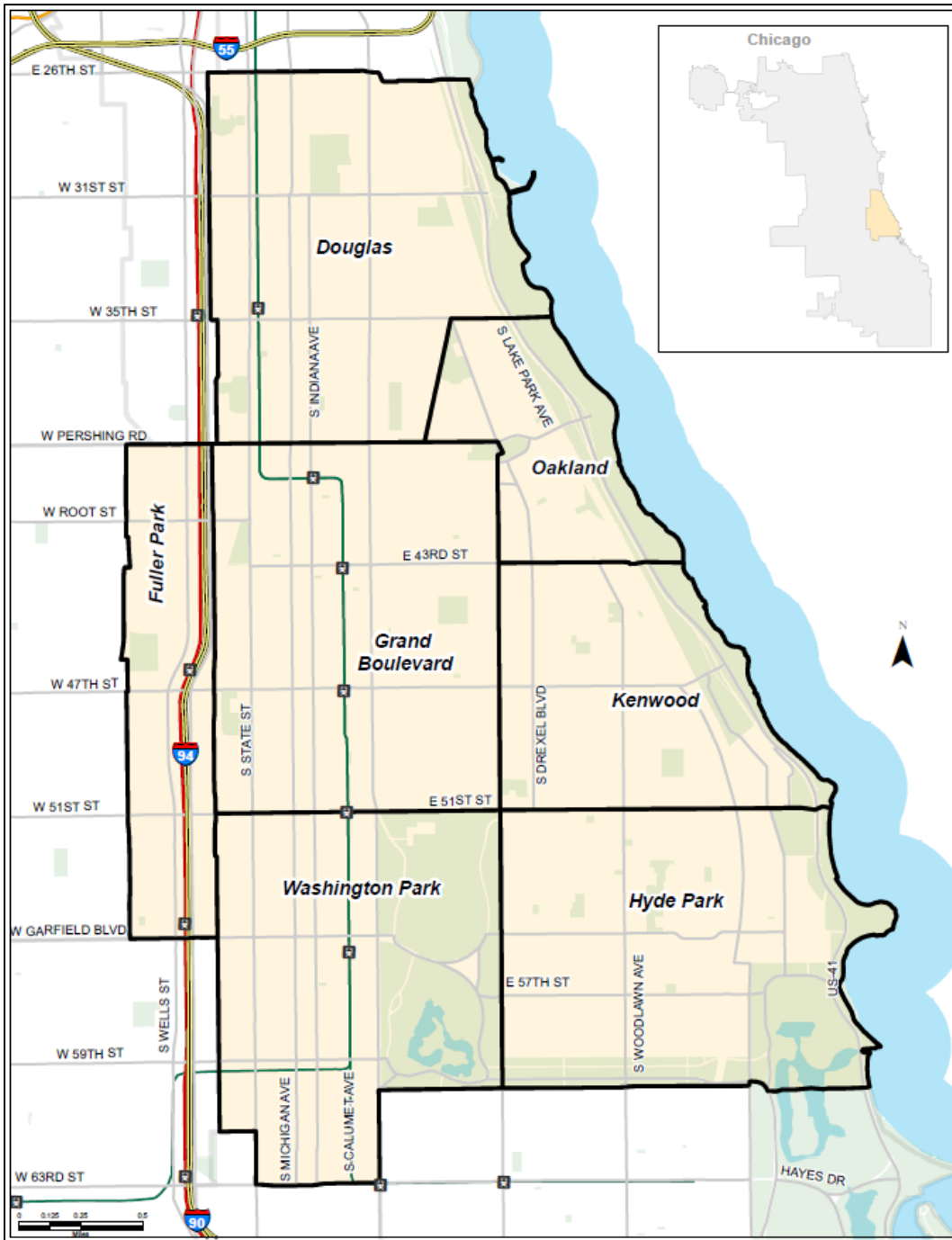
The study focused on Bronzeville, a community located three miles south of downtown Chicago. The study specifically targeted the Chicago Community Areas (CCAs) of Douglas, Grand Boulevard, Oakland, Kenwood, Washington Park, Hyde Park, and Fuller Park. The first four of these community areas constitute what is commonly referred to as historic Bronzeville. The other community areas were included because they are adjacent to Bronzeville. Many residents of these communities also work or shop in Bronzeville and vice versa. The study focused on Bronzeville because it forms the core service area of the CNH, the sponsor of this study.

In the early 20th Century, Bronzeville was a key gateway for thousands of African-Americans migrating from the South to seek better opportunities in the northern states. With the increase in population, Bronzeville prospered economically and became one of the nation's most prominent centers of black culture and commerce. Since that time, Bronzeville has witnessed cycles of decay and urban renewal. Its population has declined considerably since its mid-century peak, and household income and education attainment lag city averages. The historic Bronzeville community has lost nearly 75 percent of its population since the 1950s, from roughly 300,000 residents in 1950 to approximately 65,000 in 2010. Between 2000-10, the neighborhood experienced a population loss of more than one-tenth of its residents.<sup>5</sup> If recent interest and investment are any indication of a brighter future for the community, these trends should reverse and show positive change in the years to come. With regard to food access, Bronzeville faces many challenges, especially for its low-income residents. Much of the neighborhood is designated as a food desert by the City of Chicago, which is currently pursuing several initiatives to increase food access in the neighborhood.

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<sup>5</sup> Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, "Bronzeville Retail District Land Use Plan," August 2013. See <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/86173/bronzeville+final+plan+for+web.pdf/ccd11158-8f73-4261-8508-ead5279aaf6c>.

Figure 1.1 Study Area



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

## **Relationship to GO TO 2040 and CMAP's LTA program**

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the official regional planning organization for the Northeastern Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will. CMAP is responsible for developing the region's comprehensive plan that integrates transportation with land use. The agency released its first comprehensive regional plan, [GO TO 2040](#), in October 2010. The GO TO 2040 plan addresses the anticipated population growth of more than two million residents in the region by 2040 and establishes coordinated strategies to help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues. To promote sustainable local food systems, GO TO 2040 recommends that the region work together to facilitate local food production and increase access to healthy food in communities. See [www.cmap.illinois.gov](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov) for more information.

In October 2010, CMAP was awarded a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to assist with implementing the recommendations of GO TO 2040. With this funding, CMAP launched the Local Technical Assistance program to help communities across the Chicago metropolitan region undertake projects that advance the principles of GO TO 2040. A call for projects was issued and the CNH applied for staff assistance to help evaluate food access in the greater Bronzeville area.



## Chapter 2: Relationship of Food Access, Health, and Socioeconomics

This chapter explores the connection between socioeconomics, food access, and transportation, and explains how lack of access to healthy food can impact the health outcomes of residents of an economically challenged neighborhood like Bronzeville.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), healthy diets that are rich in fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.<sup>6</sup> Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health. The National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC) estimates that 23.6 million people in the United States suffer from diabetes, 90 percent to 95 percent of those from Type-2 diabetes, which is normally caused by an unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity. Approximately 80 percent of those suffering from Type-2 diabetes are overweight and have a high risk of cardiovascular diseases.<sup>7</sup> In Chicago, obesity rates in Chicago have doubled among adults and tripled among children since 1980.<sup>8</sup>

Poor diet, a major contributor to chronic diseases such as Type-2 diabetes and other health issues, is often a challenge in low-income, minority communities like Bronzeville with low access to

The City of Chicago, with support from the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC), recently developed a citywide plan called *A Recipe for Healthy Places* to address obesity and support healthy lifestyles in the city. The plan presented six community-based planning strategies to encourage healthy lifestyles and change the context in which city residents acquire and consume food. The plan addresses obesity with a hybrid strategy that combines a public health framework with a community planning approach. It advocates changing the context of neighborhood planning and programmatic initiatives in city neighborhoods, especially in communities with elevated risk for diet-related diseases, through health education and providing individuals with information they need to make healthy eating choices and shift their lifestyle. The plan recommends compiling and analyzing data on health disparities to identify priority communities where the City should focus its intervention strategies.

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<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Strategies to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: The CDC Guide to Strategies to Increase the Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables," Atlanta, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2011. See [http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/fandv\\_2011\\_web\\_tag508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/fandv_2011_web_tag508.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases and National Institute of Health, "Diabetes Information Clearinghouse," updated September 2013. See <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/overview/>.

<sup>8</sup> City of Chicago, "A Recipe for Healthy Places," Department of Housing and Economic Development and Chicago Department of Public Health, City of Chicago; 2013, 4. See [http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/a\\_recipe\\_for\\_healthyplaces.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/a_recipe_for_healthyplaces.html).

fresh, healthy food and easy access to fast-food restaurants and convenience stores. In fact, the ease of access to unhealthy foods in low-income, minority communities is often linked to the higher rates of diet-related diseases among African-Americans.

Research on food access points to the need for better access to healthy foods in underserved communities.

- A joint study by the Food Trust and PolicyLink analyzed existing research on food deserts with the intention of informing food policymaking across the country. The study reviewed 132 previous studies, including those published in peer-reviewed journals, those conducted by practitioners or policy researchers, nationwide analyses, and analyses of food access conducted at various scales—from neighborhood to state levels. The study, *The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters*, found a consensus among researchers that accessing healthy food is a challenge for many Americans, but particularly for those living in low-income areas, communities of color, and rural areas that often lack supermarkets and large grocers but have an abundance of convenience and liquor stores where healthy, nutritious foods are generally not found.<sup>9</sup>
- A multi-state study conducted by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2010 found that only eight percent of African-Americans live in census tracts with a supermarket.<sup>10</sup> The same study found that for every additional supermarket in a census tract, the consumption of healthy produce increases 32 percent for African-Americans.<sup>11</sup>
- In Chicago, the Northeastern Illinois Food Security Assessment, a study conducted by Chicago State University and the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, looked at food access in the Chicago metropolitan area as well as five neighborhoods in Chicago and found “food deserts” in both city and suburban communities, with major disparities in food access in Chicago neighborhoods.<sup>12</sup> Hispanic neighborhoods were found to have low access to chain supermarkets, but better access to independent grocery stores. This study shows that low-income, African-American communities are highly affected by the lack of access to fresh, healthy food.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Sarah Treuhaft and Allison Karpyn, “The Grocery Gap: Who has Access to Healthy Food and Why it Matters,” Policy Link and The Food Trust, 2010. See [http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media\\_items/grocerygap.original.pdf](http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/grocerygap.original.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid 8, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid 8, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Block, Judy Birgen and Noel Chavez, “Finding Food in Chicago and the Suburbs: The Report of the Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security Assessment,” American Public Health Association Food and Nutrition Section Newsletter, Spring 2008.

See <http://www.apha.org/membersgroups/newsletters/sectionnewsletters/food/spring08/NEFA.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Block, Judy Birgen and Noel Chavez, “Finding Food in Chicago and the Suburbs: The Report of the Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security Assessment,” American Public Health Association Food and Nutrition Section Newsletter, Spring 2008.

See <http://www.apha.org/membersgroups/newsletters/sectionnewsletters/food/spring08/NEFA.htm>.

- Analysis by Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group ranks Chicago as one of the largest food deserts in the nation, with nearly 600,000 people in Chicago living in areas that are considered food deserts. This study found that African-American Chicagoans travel the farthest on average to reach any type of grocery store (0.59 miles) and that in a typical African-American neighborhood in Chicago, the nearest grocery store is roughly twice as distant as the nearest fast food restaurant.<sup>14</sup>
- A study conducted by the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Chicago Food System Collaborative in 2005 measured access to food stores and availability of healthy foods in five low-income neighborhoods (Austin, Chicago Lawn, Hermosa, North Lawndale, and South Chicago). The study found that these neighborhoods have low food access and lack large grocery stores and supermarkets.<sup>15</sup> However, the neighborhoods were found to have more corner stores, which often lack healthy and nutritious foods. The study also found that variety of fresh produce was limited or lacking in lower-income communities.
- A survey conducted by the Quad Communities Development Corporation (QCDC) in 2007 found that the vast majority of food-related businesses in Bronzeville are limited service, low-end grocers, and fast food restaurants.<sup>16</sup> Figure 2.1 shows the location of fast food establishments in Bronzeville. Apart from being deficient of fresh and healthy food, local convenience stores were found to charge higher prices than large grocery stores. The limited number of large grocery stores in Bronzeville and the higher prices charged by neighborhood stores leave residents with the options of either paying more for food in the local stores or spending more time traveling to distant supermarkets. This prompted QCDC to partner with Sustain, an organization that works to connect local farmers and consumers, and O-H Community Partners, an economic development-consulting firm, to create a farmers' market in the neighborhood where residents could obtain fresh, healthy food.
- A study conducted in New Orleans by the USDA Economic Research Service found that for each additional meter of shelf space devoted to fresh vegetables, local residents ate an additional 0.35 servings of vegetables per day.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Mari Gallagher, "Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago," Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group, July 2006. See <http://www.marigallagher.com/projects/4/>.

<sup>15</sup> Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), Chicago Food Systems Collaborative and Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security, "The Challenge to an Apple a Day: The Availability of Fresh Produce in Chicago Communities," 2008. See <http://www.csu.edu/nac/documents/TheChallengeofAnAppleDay.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> O-H Community Partners and Quad Communities Development Corporation, "Bronzeville Community Market Study, Community Survey Results," February 2008. See [http://www.qcdc.org/content/1/documents/QCDC\\_Community\\_Food\\_Survey\\_Report.pdf](http://www.qcdc.org/content/1/documents/QCDC_Community_Food_Survey_Report.pdf).

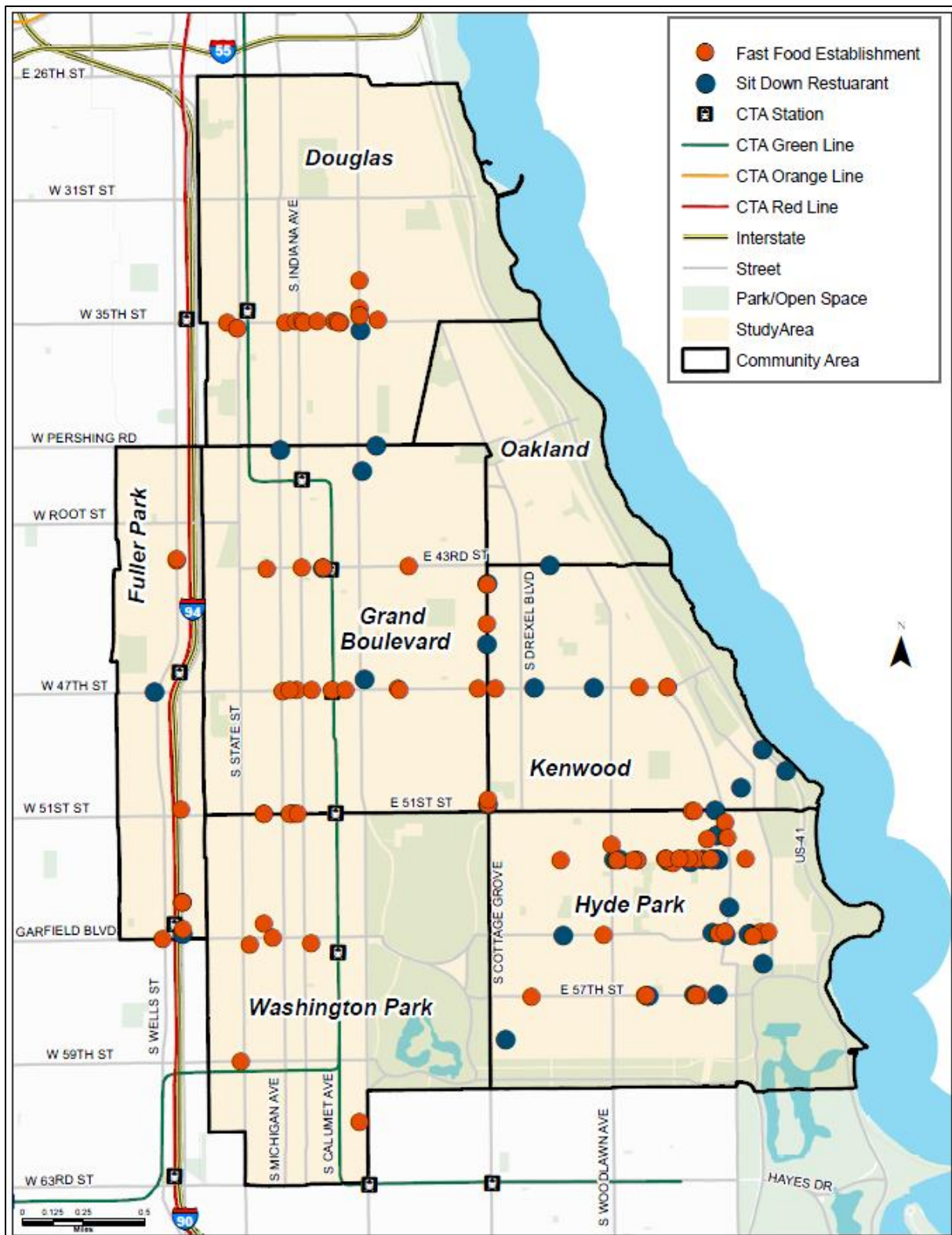
<sup>17</sup> Judith Bell and Marion Standish, "Building Healthy Communities Through Equitable Food Access," Community Development Investment Review, 2009, 79. See [http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/bell\\_standish.pdf](http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/bell_standish.pdf).

A complicating socioeconomic factor is that inadequate transportation can limit the ability of low-income households to access food, given that many have to travel long distances to get to grocery stores. Until 2005, Bronzeville had one of the highest concentrations of public housing in the nation.<sup>18</sup> Under Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) *Plan for Transformation*, the community has undergone a major transformation with many of the former high-rise public housing buildings demolished. However, the community still has many public housing residents and most of them do not have access to personal vehicles and have to rely on public transportation or find or barter for rides from family members and acquaintances. The neighborhood has good public transportation as it is served by eight CTA bus routes, two CTA train lines and three Metra lines. Transit ridership is also relatively high, with over 33 percent of all the work trips in the area completed via public transit. However, most Bronzeville residents do not use public transportation for food shopping trips as demonstrated by the survey and focus group discussions. They prefer to use a car for food shopping trips, which can be a challenge for households that do not own automobiles.

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<sup>18</sup> Derek Hyra, "The New Urban Renewal: The Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville," University of Chicago Press, 2008, 2. See <http://www.amazon.com/The-New-Urban-Renewal-Transformation/dp/0226366049>.

Figure 2.1 Food Establishments in Bronzeville



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

# Chapter 3: Study Approach

This chapter outlines the purpose of the study and explains the methods used to gather, analyze, and compile data to inform the study recommendations and the implementation strategies outlined in Chapter 5.

## Study Goals

The purpose of the study is to analyze food access challenges in Bronzeville, in order to inform strategies to improve access to healthy food. The study is based on the premise that community residents are in the best position to identify and describe specific food access issues and needs. The survey and focus groups were designed to address the following questions:

1. **Food Access:** How and where do residents currently get their food? Are food resources geographically accessible to residents at all income levels?
2. **Barriers to accessing nutritious foods:** What challenges/barriers exist in obtaining nutritionally adequate and desirable food? Is public and/or private transportation available to access food resources?
3. **Improvements to existing food resources:** What changes would residents like to see in the neighborhood in order to address the need for better quality and more affordable food?

## Survey Method

The study consisted of a community survey and three focus groups. The survey was targeted at those who live and work in Bronzeville, but some living in neighboring communities also participated. The survey was distributed both electronically and as a paper survey. The electronic version of the survey was created in Survey Monkey, posted on the CNH website, and a link was sent to over 300 potential survey takers. The CNH recruited four volunteers from the neighborhood to help distribute the paper surveys. Johnnie Owens of the CNH, trained the volunteers who assisted with community outreach and survey distribution.

The CNH conducted outreach in the community before launching the survey, including making announcements at aldermanic ward meetings, local church services and functions, and other public meetings in the neighborhood. The survey was distributed at local grocery stores, public transit stations, and branch offices of the CNH. The survey was primarily targeted at adults, as they are the main decision makers on household food choices. In order to ensure that all demographic groups were represented in the survey, special efforts were made to reach out to groups that were perceived to lack access to the internet and could not take the online survey.

Special efforts were made to reach low-income households, public housing residents, and seniors since these demographics are most likely to lack internet access and are the most affected by food insecurity. To reach these populations, recruitment efforts were focused on social service locations and transit stations.

Because the study involved human subjects, a decision was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Chicago State University as to whether the study needed IRB approval. The study was performed according to required protocols, including applicable state and federal regulations. The survey was revised several times, based on the comments and suggestions from key stakeholders and the IRB. Because the survey was anonymous and not being used for academic research, the IRB exempted it from further review based on federal regulation CFR 46.101[b]2, which states that an anonymous survey on human subject research, that poses minimal harm to participants, can be exempted from IRB review. To protect the identities of participants, the survey did not ask for identifiable personal information like name, address, or phone number.

The CNH led the recruitment effort and at least one staff member was always on hand at survey events. A recruitment script was developed that was read aloud to potential survey taker before they were handed a survey to fill out. The script included the general premise of the study as well as the Principal Investigator's contact information, time commitment involved in completing the survey, and any risks involved. One hundred and forty-two households were surveyed with 38 percent of survey recipients (the largest share) residing within the historic Bronzeville neighborhood. All others who participated in the survey either resided in the neighboring communities or worked in Bronzeville.

Some survey questions required survey takers to rank different factors with a number, usually 1 through 4, marking 1 if the factor was very important, 2 if the factor was somewhat important, 3 if the factor was of little importance, and 4 if the factor was of no importance. At times, respondents could use one number value more than once; for example, if two of the possible responses were very important, they could mark one (1 = very important) for both. For other questions, the survey respondents were asked to rank their preferred options 1 through 3 (1 = most preferred; 2 = somewhat preferred; 3 = least preferred), but they could only use each ranking once. The survey results are contained in Appendix A.

## **Focus Groups**

As part of the study, three focus groups were conducted with residents, each focus group representing a prominent demographic group in Bronzeville. The groups consisted of low-income/public housing residents, seniors, and moderate-high income residents/ homeowners. Discussions were held at various locations in the neighborhood. The seniors' focus group was held on June 5, 2013, at the Legends South Hansberry Center located at 4016 South State Street. The low-income/public housing resident focus group was held on June 13, 2013, at the James

Pitt Head Start Center located at 226 East 43rd Street. The homeowners (moderate-high income residents) focus group was also held on June 13, 2013, at the CNH branch office located at 4305 South King Drive.

Each focus group session lasted approximately one and a half hours and was facilitated by CMAP staff. The topics discussed by the focus groups included access to healthy food, resident eating and food shopping habits, locations where residents purchase fresh produce and other food items, and barriers to accessing food resources in the community. Food resources were defined broadly to include retail food stores, farmers markets, food cooperatives, food pantries, and various food assistance programs.

**Figure 3.1 Focus Group Discussion for Seniors**



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Focus group participants were recruited by the CNH through neighborhood organizations, the CHA and local churches. Overall, the proportion of females in the seniors and low-moderate income focus groups was higher than in the overall population in Bronzeville. The homeowners' focus group had more men than women. The low-income focus group examined food access issues for public housing residents while the senior focus group concentrated primarily on access challenges for seniors. The homeowners group focused on general access issues for families in the neighborhood.

CMAP staff developed a consent form and the questions used during the focus group discussions. Discussion guides, developed by CMAP in consultation with the CNH and Chicago State University Neighborhood Assistance Center, were used to prompt and facilitate discussions. CMAP staff facilitated and transcribed discussion sessions. The CNH provided a staff person to assist with each of the focus groups.

The responses from the online and paper surveys were compiled into a central database. Together with information from the focus groups, this data was analyzed to assess the needs and concerns of the community, and identify barriers to food access in the greater Bronzeville community. The analysis provided information that can be used to educate the community about resourceful food practices, and raise awareness of the unmet needs in the neighborhood. A report summarizing the focus group discussions is contained in Appendix C and the discussion guide can be found in Appendix D.



# Chapter 4: Survey Analysis and Findings

This chapter summarizes the findings of the survey responses and focus group discussions. The analysis revealed a number of issues that affect food access in Bronzeville. It is important to note that although only 38 percent of the survey respondents indicated that they live in Bronzeville, the other respondents were mostly employees of social service agencies in Bronzeville and the CHA. Most of them are social workers and case managers that serve low-income families in Bronzeville and work to address food access challenges in the community. They are therefore very familiar with their shopping preferences and eating habits. All the focus group participants lived in Bronzeville.

## 1. *There is demand for fresh, quality food in Bronzeville*

Overall, there is demand for healthy fresh food in Bronzeville. Although Bronzeville has a few mid-size grocery stores, most of them only stock a limited variety of fresh, healthy food. The variety and quality of fresh fruits, vegetable, meat, dairy alternatives, and organic foods is almost lacking in the neighborhood convenience stores. Fifty four percent of the survey respondents reported that they could not get certain produce in the neighborhood, with peaches and grapes being the most difficult fruits to find in Bronzeville.

**Figure 4.1 Fresh produce sold at community gardens in Bronzeville**



Source: Centers for New Horizons.

According to the survey, residents value the freshness of produce and other food items that they buy. An overwhelming majority of respondents (94 percent) rated freshness of produce as the most important factor when choosing a place to shop for food. This characteristic rated higher than other factors like affordability (83 percent), free of chemicals and pesticides (75 percent), availability of prepared/ready to eat food (61 percent), and food grown by farmers who treat farm workers fairly (51 percent). Asked why they do not buy food from the

neighborhood, 69 percent of the respondents who indicated that they do not buy food in the neighborhood mentioned poor quality or lack of freshness, and 32 percent stated lack of variety. Other reasons given by the respondents for not buying food in the neighborhood stores include high prices and poor customer service. The focus groups gave the same reasons but also added that the local stores do not carry ethnic foods or vegan options.

There is also a general lack of awareness of the existence of alternative sources of fresh produce such as community gardens and farmers' markets. Bronzeville has a number of community gardens and a farmers' market, the *Bronzeville Community Market*, which is located at 4400 South Cottage Grove Avenue. The farmers' market operates every summer, from June to October, and provides alternative source of quality fresh produce. There are also farmers' markets in the neighboring communities of Hyde Park (53rd Street and Hyde Park Boulevard) and Woodlawn (6100 South Blackstone Avenue). All the farmers' markets accept LINK cards but many low-income community residents are not familiar with these markets and do not shop there. Figure 4.3 shows the locations of famers' markets and community gardens in the study area.

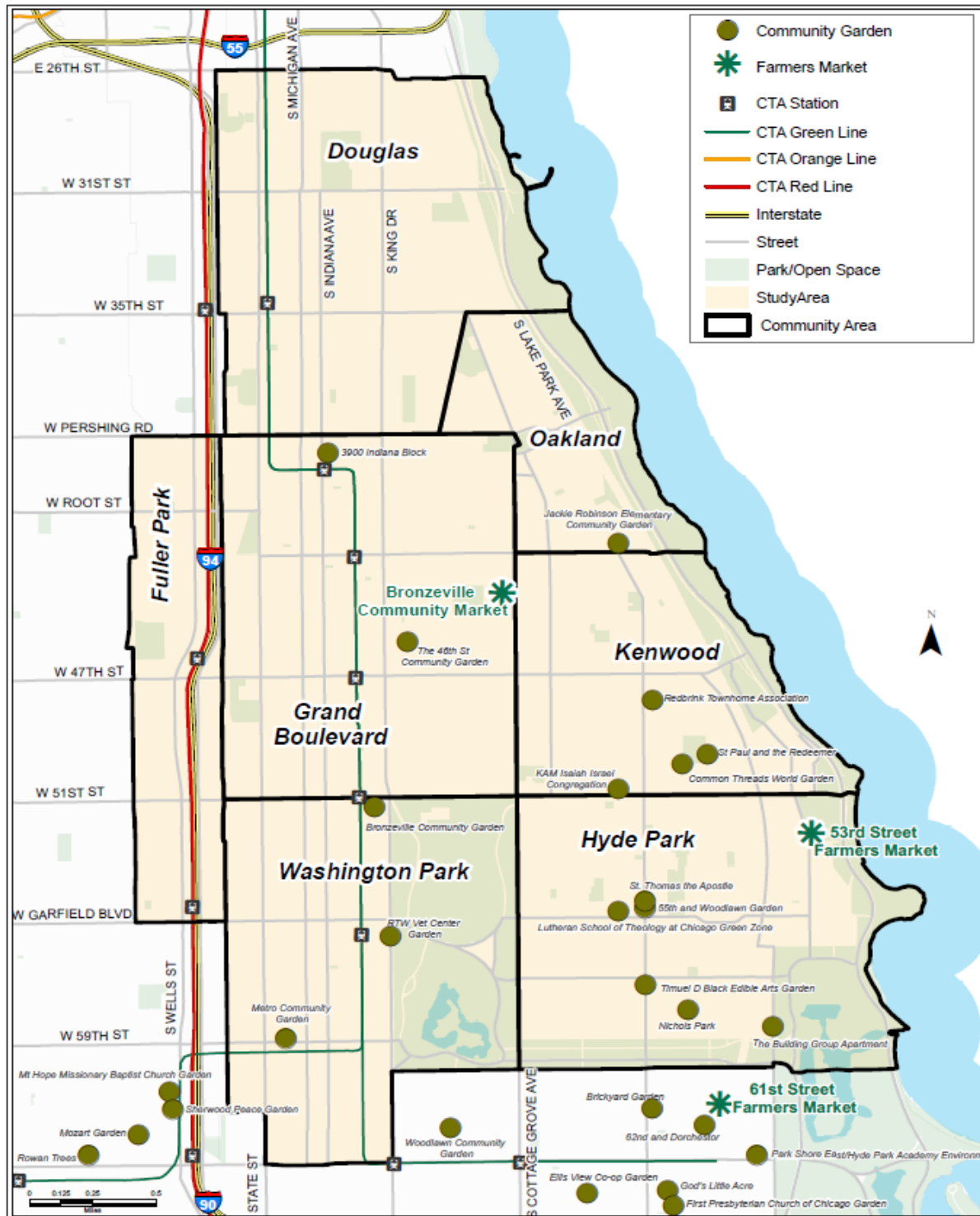
Community gardens and farmers' markets are not commonly used by local residents to obtain food. Only 8 percent of the survey respondents and a few focus group participants indicated that they had obtained food from a community garden in the last year. Seventeen percent of the survey respondents indicated that they regularly shop at the local farmers' markets and only about 14 percent of the respondents indicated that they had bought or received food from a farmers' market in the last year. The low usage of these alternative food outlets by residents is most likely due to lack of awareness about their locations and benefits. For instance, many focus group participants indicated that they do not shop at the *Bronzeville Community Market* due to its inconvenient location and lack of awareness. Those who were familiar with the market indicated that it is not centrally located and they have to use more than one bus to get to the market, which seemed an inconvenience to them.

**Figure 4.2 Fresh Greens from a Community Garden in Bronzeville**



Source: The Field Museum.

Figure 4.3 Community Gardens and Farmers' Markets in Bronzeville



Source: NeighborSpace and City of Chicago.

## **2. Bronzeville residents have a general preference for large grocery stores**

Generally, full-service grocery stores (supermarkets) offer more variety of healthy foods compared to convenience stores.<sup>19</sup> Bronzeville residents prefer to shop at full-service grocery stores because they offer a wider variety of products at lower prices than the smaller stores, which ultimately saves them money. An overwhelming majority (92.4 percent) of survey respondents indicated that they had bought or received food from supermarkets in the last 12 months, compared to 60 percent and 18 percent who indicated they had bought food from a mid-size grocery store and corner store, respectively. While mid-sized discount stores like Save-A-Lot and Aldi are often less expensive, they tend to carry a limited selection of items. When asked the best way to make sure there is fresh healthy food in the neighborhood, 38 percent of the survey respondents suggested building a large grocery store, while 29 percent of the respondents suggested adding several small grocery stores in different parts of the neighborhood. While the difference is not very significant, the responses show a general preference for larger grocery stores. Only eleven percent of the respondents selected community gardens and urban farms that sell vegetables on site, while only seven percent selected a corner store as the best way to increase healthy food in the neighborhood.

Proximity and cost are two important factors that influence where residents buy food. When survey respondents were asked where they shop for food, the top four picks were large grocery stores, with the majority (64 percent) selecting Jewel-Osco, most likely due to its close proximity and lower prices. Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents indicated that they buy food at Aldi, a discount grocer that is currently not located in the community. Its popularity with residents can be attributed to the low prices it offers compared to the local convenience stores. Wal-Mart, a chain discount grocer, was picked by 51 percent while Dominick's supermarket was selected by 31 percent of respondents. Some of the stores that were popular with survey respondents are not located in Bronzeville. For instance, Aldi, Dominick's, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods, which were popular with more than 50 percent of those surveyed, are not currently located in Bronzeville.

The focus group participants stated that Bronzeville's only full-service grocery store, Jewel-Osco, does not carry a variety of fresh produce, although a spot check revealed that the store was recently renovated and it offers a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. The neighborhood has a few mid-sized grocery stores including Save-A-Lot and One-Stop. Wal-Mart is planning to open its first store in Bronzeville at 47th Street and Cottage Grove and discussions are underway with the City to open a Wal-Mart Superstore at State Street and Pershing Road. The Milwaukee-based Roundy's Supermarkets Inc. is also planning to open a

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<sup>19</sup>Kameshwari Pothukuchi, "Attracting Supermarkets to Inner-City Neighborhoods: Economic Development outside the Box," *Economic Development Quarterly*, August 2005.

See <http://edq.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/19/3/232>.

Mariano's Fresh Market near 39th Street and Martin Luther King Drive.<sup>20</sup> In addition, a Whole Foods store is under construction in the Hyde Park community, at 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Lake Park. See Figure 4.5.

An interesting finding of the survey was that specialty grocery stores, such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe's, which are often very expensive, were popular with survey respondents. Even though Bronzeville has many low-income residents, with about 73 percent of the respondents reporting someone in their households participating in the SNAP program, about 30 percent of the respondents indicated that they buy food at Whole Foods while 22 percent purchase food at Trader Joe's. While the moderate and high-income households in Bronzeville can likely afford to shop at the specialty stores, some of the survey participants lived in the more affluent neighboring communities of Kenwood and Hyde Park while others were professionals who work in Bronzeville. These groups can afford to buy food at the more expensive specialty grocery stores although the majority of the residents cannot. In addition, some low-income households put food quality at a very high priority and are willing to buy food at the specialty grocery stores. Another interesting finding was that the discount grocers located in the neighborhood were not very popular with the survey respondents or focus group participants. For example, just 40 percent of the respondents indicated that they regularly buy food at Save-A-Lot, a discount grocery store that is centrally located in Bronzeville at 47th Street and Cottage Grove.

### ***3. Transportation to food markets is a challenge for some residents***

Transportation was identified as a barrier to food access, especially for residents that do not have personal cars and have to travel far distances to get to their preferred food outlets. Low-income households and seniors may not always have access to the food they want because of the high cost of food and access-related problems. Those who cannot afford to make shopping trips to full-service grocery stores have to rely on nearby convenience stores, which tend to offer unhealthy foods at higher prices. Even though Bronzeville has good public transportation, with two CTA trains and several bus routes, most survey respondents (83 percent) reported having difficulty getting to places where they purchase or receive food. Focus group discussions revealed that residents who want to shop for affordably priced fruits and vegetables often have to travel far outside the community to find a suitable grocery store. Using public transportation to grocery shop can be difficult for seniors and those with small children.

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Maidenberg, "Mariano's, Wal-Mart push into Bronzeville," Chicago Real Estate Daily, May 29, 2013.

See <http://www.chicagorealestatedaily.com/article/20130529/CREDD03/130529785/marianos-wal-mart-push-into-bronzeville>.

The community has many convenience stores, which could lead to the assumption that many people walk to these stores to take care of their everyday food needs. However, only nine percent of the survey respondents indicated that they walk to places where they buy or receive food. Many households only make small food purchases at the convenience stores. A majority of the households primarily purchase their food from the large grocery stores and supermarkets, many of which are located outside the community. Most of the survey respondents (78 percent) indicated that they use a car to grocery shop; possibly driving their own cars, asking for a ride, or using a car share service or a taxi.

**Figure 4.4** Bronzeville is served by good public transit



Source: Emily Cikanek.

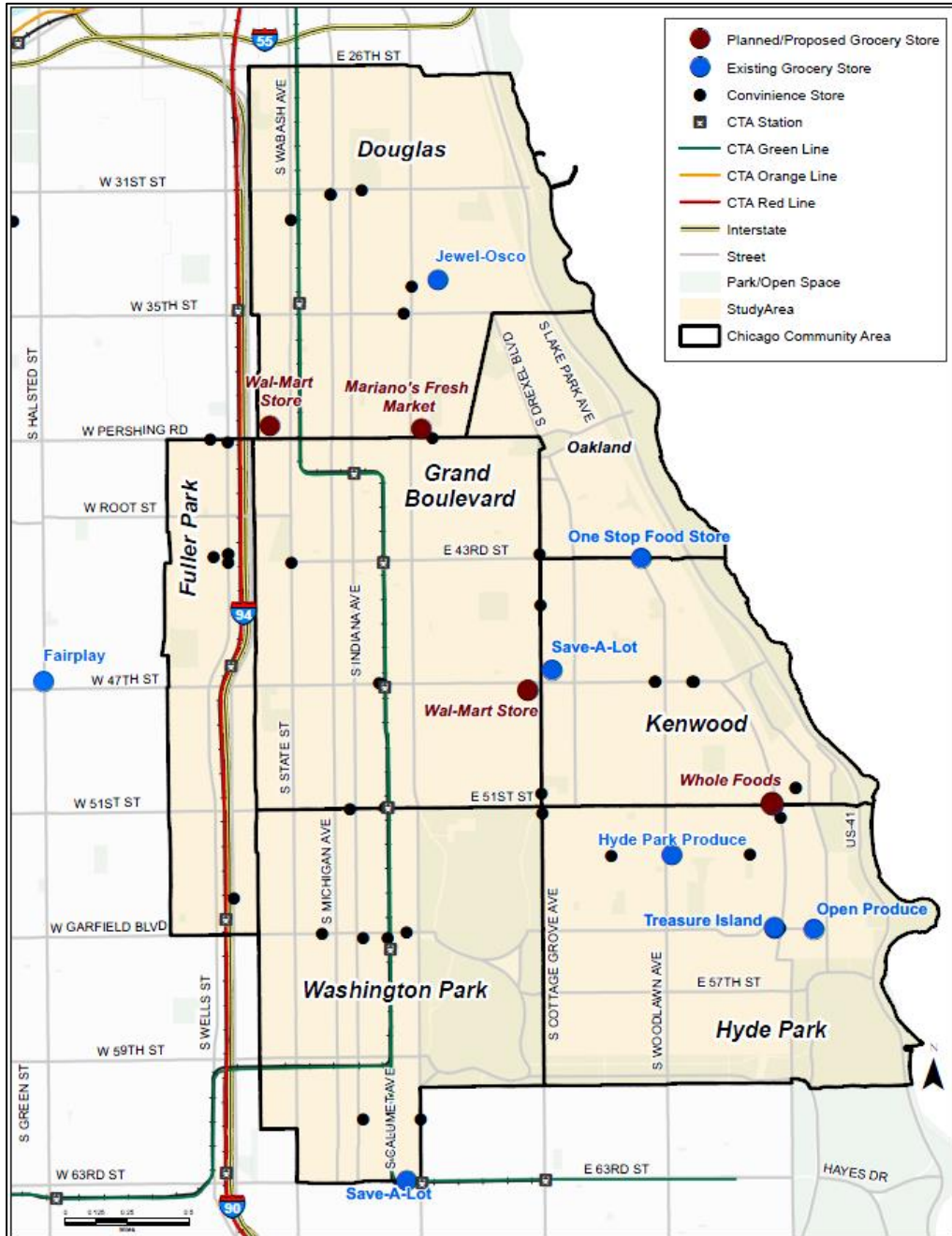
Most families on public assistance are unlikely to afford a car and probably have to rely on neighborhood stores that are close to their homes or use public transportation for everyday shopping needs. However, only 7 percent of the survey respondents indicated that they use the bus and only 1 percent take the train to places where they buy or receive food. Many of the public housing residents and senior focus group participants indicated that although they live far from a large grocery store, they rarely use public transportation to grocery shop. They gave a number of reasons for not using public transportation to grocery shop including the inconvenience of carrying grocery bags on the trains or buses, the infrequency of buses, slow travel speeds of buses along major corridors, and the need to often visit multiple stores that are not in close proximity of each other. The focus group participants mentioned Roosevelt Road in the South Loop and 87<sup>th</sup> Street in Chatham as the favorite places where they go to buy food. They drive between five and eight miles on average to buy groceries and spend between two to three hours per grocery shopping trip. For families without a personal automobile, shopping trips can be longer.

#### **4. Households prefer to shop where food prices are lower.**

Eighty-three percent of the survey respondents indicated that affordability is a very important factor when deciding where to buy food. Many families buy food at supermarkets where prices tend to be lower, even if these stores are located far outside the community. When asked why they do not buy food in the neighborhood, 61 percent of those who responded cited the high prices charged by local stores. Only 18 percent of the respondents shop for food at the corner/convenience stores. They ranked affordability higher than other factors like poor customer service (47 percent), lack of variety (32 percent), and safety concerns (7 percent). The

focus group participants also stated that local stores charge higher prices for similar goods than they would pay at supermarkets or large grocery stores.

**Figure 4.5 Supermarkets and Convenience Stores in Bronzeville**



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

# Chapter 5: Recommendations

This chapter outlines four strategies for improving food access and security in Bronzeville. The recommendations in this chapter are intended to focus and guide decision-making and community actions towards improving food access and security, not just in Bronzeville but also across the city as a whole.

## ***Recommendation 1: Encourage existing stores to provide a greater volume and variety of fresh, healthy food.***

One of the most direct and cost-effective way to improve access to fresh, healthy food is to make more of it accessible in stores that are close to residents. Bronzeville has several convenience stores, most of which do not stock fresh, healthy food. Figure 4.3 shows the locations of convenience stores in the study area. Generally, small grocers tend to offer less variety and less produce, but charge higher prices.<sup>21</sup> A survey conducted by the CNH in 2011 found a lack of healthy food offerings at corner stores and neighborhood grocers. Since then, the CNH, community leaders, and the Bronzeville Alliance have been working with the storeowners to explore ways to improve their product offerings and general relationship to the community. They have initiated a major campaign to increase the offerings of healthy foods at the corner stores. These efforts should be encouraged and supported by the City and community residents.

The City of Chicago has initiated a number of programs to encourage grocery stores in underserved communities like Bronzeville to increase their offerings of fresh, healthy food. In addition, the City has supported Walgreens' effort to add produce and healthy foods in their stores located in underserved communities. This effort has resulted in some Walgreens stores, including the one located at 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Cottage Grove Avenue in Bronzeville to stock fresh produce and other healthy food choices.<sup>22</sup> This program should be expanded to other chain convenience stores like CVS and Seven-Eleven, to improve availability of fresh, healthy foods in underserved communities.

The City could consider providing incentives to assist existing stores increase the stock and variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and other perishable products. The incentive could be in the form of grants and loan programs, small business development programs or tax incentives to encourage grocery stores in underserved communities like Bronzeville to provide healthier and a greater variety of fresh, healthy foods. This is not an untested idea—the City of New York, for example, provides financial incentives to grocery stores in underserved

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel Block and JoAnne Kouba, "A comparison of the availability and affordability of a market basket in two communities in the Chicago area," *Public Health Nutrition*. October 2006; 9(7):837-45. See [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/6785061\\_A\\_comparison\\_of\\_the\\_availability\\_and\\_affordability\\_of\\_a\\_market\\_basket\\_in\\_two\\_communities\\_in\\_the\\_Chicago\\_area](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/6785061_A_comparison_of_the_availability_and_affordability_of_a_market_basket_in_two_communities_in_the_Chicago_area).

<sup>22</sup> Walgreens, "Walgreens Launches Expanded Food Selection in 10 Chicago Stores to Address Food Desert Issue," August 11, 2011. See [http://news.walgreens.com/article\\_print.cfm?article\\_id=5328](http://news.walgreens.com/article_print.cfm?article_id=5328).



communities to encourage them to provide a variety of healthy foods. Under the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program, neighborhood stores can qualify for incentives if they dedicate at least 500 square feet of retail space for fresh produce.

***Recommendation 2: Develop and attract additional grocery stores and supermarkets.***

Shortage of supermarkets and large grocery stores is common in low-income communities like Bronzeville. Residents generally prefer full-service grocery stores because they offer more variety at lower prices. Community leaders should continue to work with the City to attract additional supermarkets and large grocery stores to Bronzeville. However, supermarkets and large grocery stores are not the only sources of healthy and affordable food. The community could also benefit from smaller-scale and independent food retailers that can serve those whose needs are currently not being met by large grocers, and to fill the gaps in coverage by the larger stores. In addition, small independent stores may be better suited to offer culturally appropriate or ethnic foods, which are often not stocked at conventional chain grocery stores.

The development of new grocery stores in an economically challenged community requires political leadership, competent public agency participation, and partnerships with neighborhood organizations.<sup>23</sup> The City of Chicago and the Aldermen have been exploring a number of food-related strategies to attract new grocery stores in underserved communities like Bronzeville. The strategies being pursued include marketing the potential of targeted communities to grocery store executives, promoting public-private partnerships, and assisting existing stores to expand or open additional stores. The City also runs a program called “Retail Chicago Program,” an outreach program for retailers, brokers, and developers to introduce them to retail development opportunities in Chicago and expedite their entry into new markets by serving as a “One Stop Shop” to assist them with the site selection process. These strategies should be focused in Bronzeville to encourage new grocery retail investment and prevent existing grocery stores from closing.

Several factors influence where food-retailers will locate, one such factor is adequate demand and purchasing power for their products. Grocery stores also tend to locate near other retailers or where the retail environment is good. The high number of low-income families in Bronzeville, as indicated by the number of survey respondents on public assistance, may explain the previous lack of interest from major chain grocers as well as the limited variety of healthy food offerings in Bronzeville. However, low-income communities have purchasing power to support grocery stores as demonstrated by recent trends by major retailers to locate in areas that were perceived not to have purchasing power. Two major grocers, Wal-Mart and Roundy’s supermarkets—the parent company of Mariano’s Fresh Markets—are planning to open

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<sup>23</sup> Kameshwari Pothukuchi, “Attracting Supermarkets to Inner-City Neighborhoods: Economic Development outside the Box,” *Economic Development Quarterly*, August 2005, 232. See [http://ocean.otr.usm.edu/~w301497/teaching/archives\\_teaching/ghy350\\_spring2010/temp\\_docs/Pothukuchi\\_2005.pdf](http://ocean.otr.usm.edu/~w301497/teaching/archives_teaching/ghy350_spring2010/temp_docs/Pothukuchi_2005.pdf).

stores in Bronzeville. Wal-Mart has signed a 20-year lease to open a store that will anchor a mixed-use development at 47<sup>th</sup> Street and Cottage Grove. Discussions are also underway with the City, CHA and the Alderman to bring a Wal-Mart Super Store to Pershing Road and State Street, and a Mariano's Fresh Market at 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Martin Luther King Drive.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 5.1 A planned grocery store at 47<sup>th</sup> Street and Cottage Grove Avenue**



Source: Mahogany Ventures.

The Community has just completed a plan, [Bronzeville Retail District Land Use Plan](#), which focused on maximizing retail development opportunities on key commercial corridors. The Plan, which was developed with technical assistance from CMAP and in partnership with the City, makes several land use and zoning recommendations to promote retail development. Among them is the City working with the Alderman to identify parcels that can be consolidated to support the development of mid-sized and large grocery stores in the neighborhood. Once the parcels are identified and consolidated, the City could focus its technical assistance and financial incentives on attracting new grocery stores to the sites. This strategy has been implemented in Rochester, New York, where the City created a supermarket initiative for low-income areas. City planners in Rochester worked with neighborhood groups to bring a Tops

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<sup>24</sup>Micah Maidenberg, "Mariano's, Wal-Mart push into Bronzeville," Chicago Real Estate Daily, May 29, 2013. See <http://www.chicagorealestatedaily.com/article/20130529/CRED03/130529785/marianos-wal-mart-push-into-bronzeville>.

Supermarket to the Upper Falls area, where it increased access to a variety of affordable and healthy food choices in a neighborhood that had long gone without a grocery store.<sup>25</sup>

**Recommendation 3: Nurture alternative food outlets including farmers' markets, community gardens and mobile food vendors.**

In communities with limited food retail outlets like Bronzeville, alternative food outlets may be able to fill the gap to improve food access and reduce travel time to distant grocery stores. In the past few years, there has been a growing attention to farmers' markets and urban farming in Bronzeville. The City has prioritized local food production and has been supporting alternative food outlets to provide residents with alternatives to formal grocery stores.

Compared to building new grocery stores, farmers' markets and community gardens can provide cheaper and more convenient ways to improve food access in a community. These alternative food markets should be promoted as viable places to shop for food. Public spaces with high traffic, like community parks, can be ideal sites for farmers' markets. However, because some of the alternative food markets like the farmers' markets have limited hours, a community still needs a stable food retail market to shop for staple food.

**Figure 5.2 Bronzeville residents learn about urban farming at CNH community garden**



Source: The Field Museum.

In 2010, the City amended its zoning ordinance to recognize urban farming and community gardening as defined land uses in the city, thereby giving them greater stability and broader acceptance.<sup>26</sup> The amendment defined community garden and urban farm uses and identified where each use is permitted. Community gardens are now allowed by right in residential (R), business (B), commercial (C), and open space (POS) districts. Urban farms are allowed by right in B3 business districts, C1, C2 and C3 commercial districts, and in M1 and M2 manufacturing districts. Urban farming is also allowed in all planned manufacturing districts

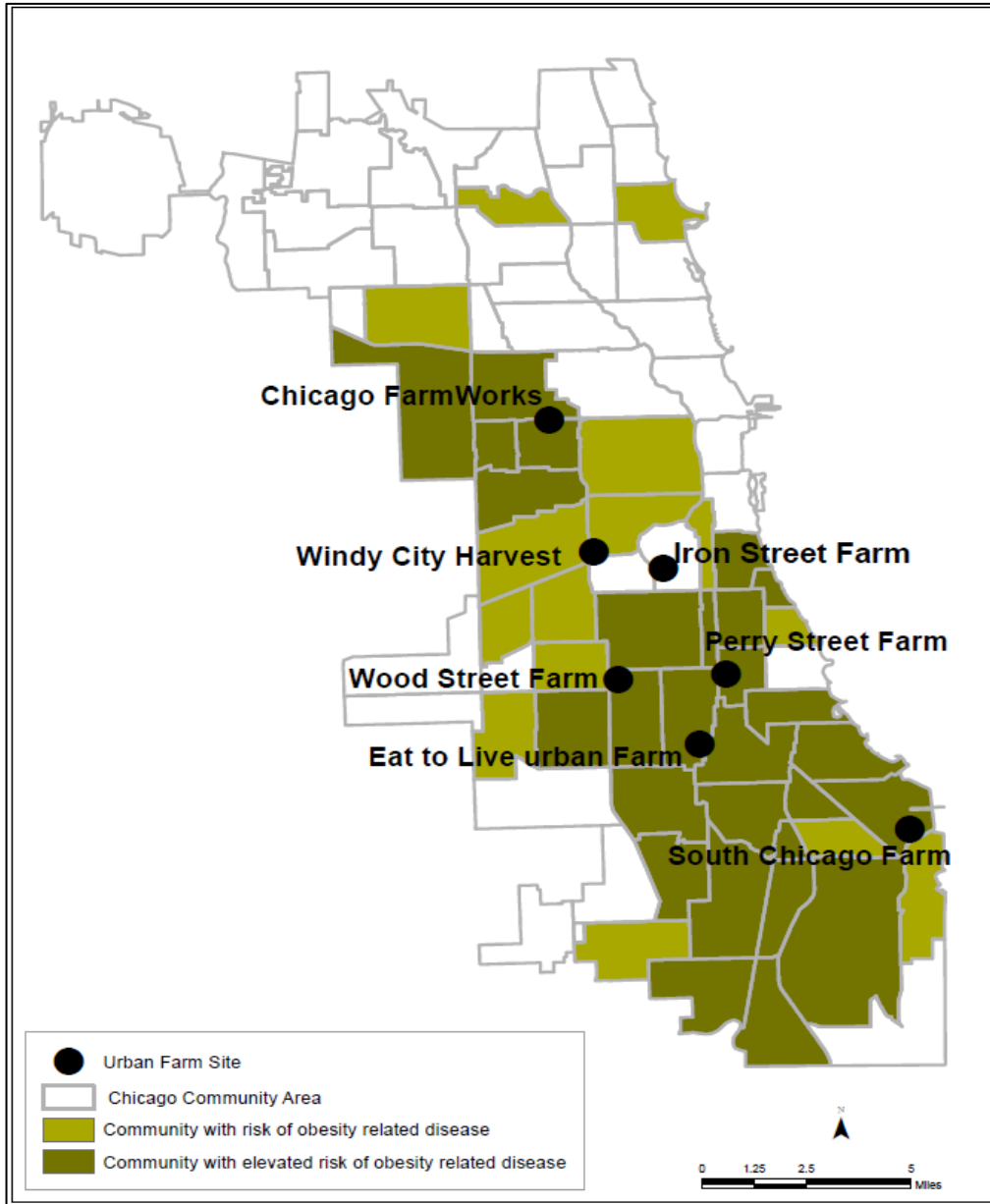
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<sup>25</sup> Hank Herrera, "Supermarket Increases Access to Healthy Food," *Designing Healthy Communities*, September 2012. See <http://designinghealthycommunities.org/supermarket-increases-access-healthy-food/>.

<sup>26</sup> City of Chicago, Zoning Ordinance 17-2-0207. See [http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Sustainable\\_Development/Publications/Urban\\_Ag\\_Ordinance\\_9-1-11.pdf](http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Sustainable_Development/Publications/Urban_Ag_Ordinance_9-1-11.pdf).

(PMDs), if it is an indoor operation. Outdoor operation is only allowed in PMD 9 (Northwest), PMD 10 (West Pullman) and PMD 13 (Greater Southwest).<sup>27</sup>

**Figure 5.3 Selected Urban Farm Sites in Chicago**



Source: City of Chicago.

<sup>27</sup>Chicago Advocates for Urban Agriculture, "Urban Agriculture Zoning in Chicago: Navigating the Rules," AUA. Updated January 2011. See <https://sites.google.com/site/auachicago/code>.

The City currently operates a number of farmers' markets in different neighborhoods, from Wicker Park to South Shore and Hyde Park. However, the Bronzeville Community Market is not operated by the City. Figure 4.3 shows the location of community gardens and farmers' markets in the study area. Figure 5.3 shows the location of urban farm sites in the city. Urban Juncture, a local development organization, is working on a plan to redevelop the former Forum building, located next to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street Green Line station, into a public market that would operate throughout the year.

Bronzeville is home to several urban gardens including community, backyard and school gardens; most of which are located on former vacant lots. For instance, Urban Juncture, a local development organization, runs a community garden on a former vacant lot at 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Calumet Avenue; the CNH runs a community garden at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Calumet Avenue; and the Alderman has established school gardens at Phillip Wendell High School and Dewey Elementary School. Community leaders and neighborhood organizations should continue supporting local food production efforts already underway in Bronzeville and help identify additional venues in which food can be grown.

**Figure 5.4 Backyard garden in Bronzeville**



Source: The Field Museum.

To promote the viability of community gardening, the City should continue to form partnerships with neighborhood organizations for garden related programs and educate residents about their benefits. Bronzeville has significant amounts of vacant land that can be used for community gardening or urban farming. In addition, the community has a vibrant urban agriculture movement that can make productive use of vacant lots. The City should work with the Aldermen and neighborhood organizations to identify sites in the community where community gardens or urban farms could be installed and market the sites to interested individuals. The City could also require developers of larger public residential projects in the neighborhood to dedicate space within their development for a community garden, as part of its incentive package to developers of large multifamily housing projects.

To promote farmers' markets, the Aldermen should work with community organizations to identify appropriate sites for an additional farmers' market or two in Bronzeville. This strategy has been implemented in San Francisco, where the City created an ordinance requiring the Commissioner of Agriculture to work with the Recreation and Park Department to identify

suitable sites for farmers' markets and community gardens on city parkland.<sup>28</sup> In addition, large institutions in Bronzeville like the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), or the large churches like Liberty Baptist, Olivet Baptist and Pilgrim Baptist could be approached to sponsor farmers' markets. This is already happening in neighborhoods like Lincoln Park where farmers' markets currently operate in Lincoln Park High School and Blaine Elementary School.

Neighborhood organizations should explore collaboration with online food shopping and delivery service like 'Peapod', to promote the delivery of fresh produce to parts of Bronzeville with limited access to fresh, healthy food. They should also work with the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) to promote the 'Family Nutrition Program' in Bronzeville. The program provides fresh produce to low income families through a mobile pantry. In addition, community groups should explore establishing a mobile produce vendors cart program by engaging organizations like Neighborhood Capital, a privately funded non-profit that sells fresh produce in under-resourced communities, to assist the community groups to start a non-motorized produce vendors cart program. The community should also explore innovative programs such as the "Virtual Supermarket Project" and the "Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program". The Virtual Supermarket Project is a program in Baltimore, Maryland, where residents can order their groceries on-line and pick them up from a local library. Residents who do not have internet access at home can use the internet at the public library.<sup>29</sup> The Fruit and Veggie Prescription Program (FVRx) is an initiative of Wholesome Wave that provides underserved communities with fresh fruits and vegetables by allowing residents to exchange healthcare provider-generated "prescriptions" for fresh produce at participating local farmers' markets.<sup>30</sup>

#### ***Recommendation 4: Explore ways to improve transportation to grocery stores and farmers' markets.***

Since building new grocery stores can be expensive, transportation intervention can be an alternative way to improve access to food. Research has shown that increasing access to supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods through improved transportation service results in improved access to healthier foods.<sup>31</sup> The survey and focus groups revealed that some

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<sup>28</sup> City of San Francisco Park Code § 9A.3, amended in January 2007.

See <http://www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances07/o0029-07.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> City of Baltimore, "Baltimarket: The Virtual Supermarket Project," Baltimore City Health Department, updated September 2013. See <http://baltimorehealth.org/virtualsupermarket.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Wholesome wave, "Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program™ (FVRx™)," updated February 2013. See <http://wholesomewave.org/fvr/x/>.

<sup>31</sup> Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), "Making the Case to Stakeholders; Linking Policy and Environmental Strategies to Health Outcomes," October 2011, 49.

See <http://ymca.net/sites/default/files/healthier-communities-guide/complete-guide.pdf>.

Bronzeville residents are constrained in their ability to access affordable, healthy food because they live far from grocery stores that fit their budget and needs. The community should therefore explore ways to improve transportation options to grocery stores and alternative food outlets. Intervention strategies could include car sharing programs, transportation subsidies and food delivery services.

Across the nation, communities have implemented various programs to improve access to food markets. In Knoxville, Tennessee, the area transit agency created a “Shop & Ride” program in partnership with local grocery stores. The program offers free return bus tickets for customers making a minimum \$10 purchase. The transit agency then bills participating stores each month for fare reimbursement.<sup>32</sup> In Wisconsin, the City of Madison initiated a program that offers monthly bus passes at a discounted rate to people that are eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).<sup>33</sup> In Hartford, Connecticut, the City designed the “L-Tower Avenue” bus route as part of the “Jobs Access” program to link people with jobs, shopping and medical service. Ridership on the bus route doubled with 33 percent of riders citing grocery shopping as the primary reason why they used the route.<sup>34</sup> Community leaders and neighborhood organizations could work with the City, and the transit agencies, to explore some of these innovative strategies, and pilot them in Bronzeville.

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<sup>32</sup>Eva Ringstrom and Branden Born, “Food Access Policy and Planning Guide,” University of Washington, Northwest Center for Livable Communities, December 2011, 36. See <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/downloads/pdf/ActiveDesignWebinar/King%20County%20Food%20Access%20Guide.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, “Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences,” June 2009, 109. See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ap-administrative-publication/ap-036.aspx>.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid 26, p. 37.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Access to healthy and nutritious food is a critical component of improving people's quality of life. Food access challenges are often multifaceted and some of them require policy solutions. Understanding the conditions that limit access to food is critical to the development of appropriate policies and intervention strategies. Across the country, communities are taking a comprehensive approach to the problem by engaging policymakers, food retailers, neighborhood organizations and community residents to work together to improve food access while also understanding that communities are competing with each other for new grocery stores and other food retail markets.

In Chicago, the City has made food access a critical component of its development agenda and has been leveraging local efforts to explore the factors that limit food access in underserved communities like Bronzeville. As demonstrated in this study, the City has initiated a number of projects and programs to ensure that healthy food choices are available to all residents, especially in underserved neighborhoods like Bronzeville. Many of these projects and programs are showing promising results and all communities should collaboratively work with the City to promote equitable and sustainable food systems throughout Chicago.

While the scope of this study is not sufficient to conclusively determine whether the whole or just parts of Bronzeville suffer from limited food access, it is obvious from the study that some residents lack access to affordable, nutritious, and healthy food. This study provides a "road map" for improving access to healthy food in Bronzeville and recommends viable and long-term strategies to make healthy, nutritious, and affordable food accessible to all residents. It recommends intervention strategies to increase offerings of healthy foods in local stores, attract additional grocery stores and supermarkets, nurture alternative food outlets like farmers' markets and urban gardens, and explore better ways to connect residents to food outlets. Successful implementation of these strategies will require the involvement of many stakeholders including neighborhood organizations, community leaders, the City, private investors and community residents.

Although food access in schools was not addressed by the research, surveys, or focus groups for this project, it would be a disservice to ignore the impact that food provided by schools has on the health of children. Children from low-income households often rely on a free or reduced-price meals provided at schools under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for one or more of their daily meals, making these a critical source of food access. Unfortunately, poor nutrition in school lunches has been identified as a major contributor of childhood obesity in the nation.<sup>35</sup> The USDA recently revised its nutritional standards for the school lunch menu to

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<sup>35</sup> Daniel L. Millet, Rusty T. Chernis and Muna Husain, "School Nutrition programs and the incidence of Childhood Obesity," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 14297, September 2008. See [http://www.nber.org/papers/w14297.pdf?new\\_window=1](http://www.nber.org/papers/w14297.pdf?new_window=1).



reduce portion sizes and increase the servings of produce. Building on the revamped nutritional standards, many communities are advocating policies to promote healthy eating in schools including limiting fast foods and unhealthy vending machine options, supporting access to locally and regionally produced food, and working with food service providers to increase healthy food options by replacing junk food with more fruits, vegetables and meals prepared with nutritious ingredients.<sup>36</sup>

Promoting healthy food options in schools is an idea that has been tested in Chicago. In 2011, Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC), a non-profit dedicated to promoting healthy school environment worked with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Chartwells-Thompson, the largest food service provider for CPS to introduce antibiotic free chicken in public schools. As a result, Chartwells-Thompson now provides over a million pounds of antibiotic free chicken each year to over 450 schools in Chicago.<sup>37</sup> This is one step towards better food access in schools, and there are many more that are needed. Additional research and action on this topic should be a continuing priority of neighborhood groups, the City of Chicago, and CPS.

Additionally, educating children and adults about healthy food is critical to making a difference. Providing healthy food options without educating them about the importance of eating healthy as well as how to prepare fresh foods would not have the same impact as access coupled with an educational campaign.

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<sup>36</sup>Healthy Schools Campaign, "Improving school food for student health," December 2013. See <http://healthyschoolscampaign.org/policy/food/>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid 36.

# List of Acronyms

CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CDPH	Chicago Department of Public Health
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
CHA	Chicago Housing Authority
CLOCC	Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
CDOT	Chicago Department of Transportation
CEED	Center for Excellence in Eliminating Disparities
CPS	Chicago Public Schools
CNH	Centers for New Horizons
CSFP	Community Supplemental Food Program
CTA	Chicago Transit Authority
DFSS	Department Family Support Services
DHED	City of Chicago Department of Housing and Economic Development
HSC	Healthy Schools Campaign
LTA	Local Technical Assistance
MPC	Metropolitan Planning Council
NDIC	National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
PI	Principal Investigator
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
QCDC	Quad Communities Development Corporation
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TEFAP	The Emergency Food Assistance Program
TRC	The Renaissance Collaborative
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children





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The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality of life issues. See [www.cmap.illinois.gov](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov) for more information.