Finding Food in Chicago and the Suburbs

The Report of the Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security Assessment

Report to the Public

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A joint project of the Chicago State University Frederick Blum Neighborhood Assistance Center and the University of Illinois-Chicago School of Public Health, Division of Community Health Sciences

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Particular areas of poor food access (defined by access to supermarkets) found include: portions of Chicago's South, Southeast, and West Sides; an area of the southern suburbs running from Lynwood, through Lansing and Calumet City to Burnham; northeastern Kane County; central Aurora; Maywood; North Chicago and southern Waukegan, and the Round Lake area.

New areas with low access to full-service chain stores appeared between 2005 and 2007, particularly in the Austin/West Humboldt Park area of Chicago and the southern suburbs from Riverdale through Burnham, Calumet City, Lansing, and Lynwood.

More full-service chain stores, such as Jewel and Dominick's closed than opened during the period 2005 to 2007. Other stores, such as discount chains, including Aldi, and specialty chains such as Whole Foods, have opened many new locations. However, except discount chains, few stores are opening in predominantly African-American neighborhoods.

Consumer and Retailer Interviews:

Inadequate transportation is a barrier to getting to food; many people need to travel by bus, often with transfers. This limits what can be purchased, often to foods that will not spoil, but that may be less healthy.

Consumers felt small stores in their communities were dirty and unkempt, sometimes with rude and disrespectful staff.

Many retail food owners feel they offer healthy foods, but also cited some barriers to doing so.

In several communities, food insecurity was seen as being made worse by increasing gentrification, which reduced the sense of community between residents.

Particularly vulnerable groups included older adults, and unemployed, disabled, and homeless individuals.

Price and Availability Study:

Full-service chain supermarkets carried by far the most grocery items, followed by discount and independent supermarkets.

Discount supermarkets were by far the cheapest of the store types, but often carried few items specific to the dominant ethnic group in a community.

Door-to-door and Food Pantry Recipient Surveys:

With only one exception, everyone surveyed who utilized a food pantry was Food Insecure. Anecdotal accounts of recipients abusing Food Pantries appear from our findings to be grossly inaccurate.

Gardening was an uncommon activity among those surveyed with low incomes. Promotion of gardening in communities could reduce food insecurity among low income households.

I. Introduction

The Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security Assessment:

In fall, 2003, researchers at Chicago State University and UIC were funded by the Chicago Community Trust to perform a region-wide analysis of the Chicago food system. This study, named the Northeastern Illinois Community Food Security Assessment, was designed to both find "gaps" within the current mainstream food system and to compare these gaps to demographic variables such as race, as well as to identify the consequences of varying levels of food access on communities. Through this, the study aims to provide a baseline picture of food access levels in the Chicago metropolitan area.

Study Structure

Food systems are exceedingly complex. For instance, communities vary not only in terms of how many stores they have, but also in terms of what kinds of stores they have, and the quality of the groceries available in these stores. In addition, the relationship between community stores and the community may vary greatly. For this reason, mixed methodologies were used to describe and analyze the food system of the Chicago area. The study was thus designed with four separate but interconnected pieces:

1. *Mapping and analysis of food access sites including supermarkets, fast food restaurants, food pantries, chain drug stores, and chain convenience stores. This portion of the study was designed to describe the "food access landscape" or "foodscape" of the Chicago metropolitan area and the relationship of this landscape to neighborhood demographics. This study thus addresses where there are and are not stores and what kinds of stores are in what kinds of communities. This study was completed for the entire six county Chicago metropolitan area.*

2. *A market basket study, which plots the price and availability of a standard grocery list of foods, by store type and by community for six Chicago case study communities. This study expands our understanding of the food access landscape by giving us more knowledge of the characteristics of and*

4. *A set of randomized door to door hunger and food access surveys. These were fully completed in one Chicago community, and partially completed in two others. Surveys were also completed among food pantry recipients in these communities.*

Geographic Scope

The mapping portion of the study was completed for the six-county Chicago area, including Cook, DuPage, Lake, Kane, McHenry, and Will Counties. This large scope is a particularly important characteristic of the study. Most food access studies, both of Chicago and of other cities have focused on inner-city communities. While these may often be areas of low food access, potential suburban or rural "food deserts" have been overlooked. We found areas of poor food access in a number of suburban communities as well as some surrounding rural areas.

While six counties constitute a large area, it is not the entire metropolitan area. The Chicago area continues to grow and now extends beyond this core area; Kendall County is currently the third fastest growing in the United States, and communities there such as Oswego and Plano are now part of the Chicago metropolitan area. Northwestern Indiana, including Lake and Porter Counties, is an important part of the Chicago metropolitan area but is often studied separately. These areas were not included in this study, but should be sites for future investigation.

Six case study areas were chosen within Chicago itself. These included Englewood, Hegewisch, Lower West Side (Pilsen), Portage Park, Riverdale (Altgeld Gardens), and Uptown. These communities were chosen with a goal of studying a group of Chicago communities that are diverse by race, median age, food access levels, income, levels of chronic disease, and geography. In the end, after studying a large number of variables representing these characteristics, three south side, one west side, and two north side communities were chosen. Two communities are predominantly African-American (Englewood and Riverdale), one is predominantly Latino (Lower West Side), two are predominantly white with growing Hispanic populations (Hegewisch and Portage Park), and one has a racially mixed population (Uptown). The communities are similarly diverse when other variables are viewed.

While six case study areas were chosen, one (Uptown) was not included in the structured group interviews. This was primarily due to the difficulties identifying a community partner in this community. The door-to-door surveys, perhaps the most time-demanding piece of the study, were conducted in three South Side communities, Riverdale, Hegewisch, and Englewood.

Table 1: Basic Demographics of Case Study Areas

Community	Population	% Black	% White	% Hispanic	% Other	Median. Household Income ($)
Englewood	40222	97.8	0.4	0.9	0.2	18955
Hegewisch	9781	1.3	67.0	28.8	0.8	43665
Lower West Side	44031	1.8	8.1	88.9	0.5	27763
Portage Park	65340	0.5	69.5	23.0	4.1	45117
Riverdale	9809	96.6	0.7	1.6	0.3	13178
Uptown	63551	21.1	42.1	19.9	13.7	32328

Source: Census 2000

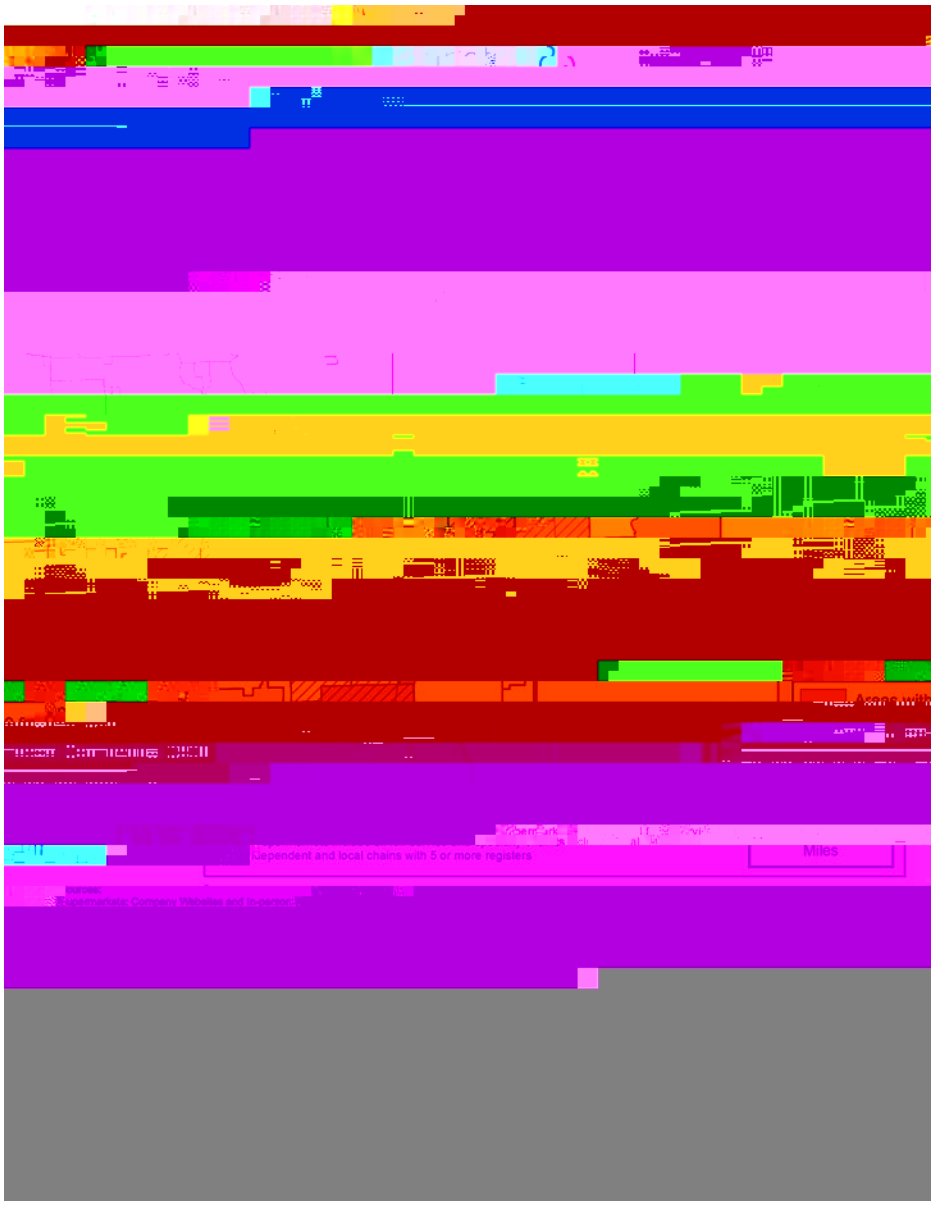
Philosophy of the Assessment: Community-based Participatory Research

Overall, the purpose of the assessment is to create a rich picture of the food system of the Chicago metropolitan area and to define the gaps within it, working closely with community organizations, social service providers, and leaders in government and industry to make sure the information is both relevant and usable. To achieve this, the project adopted a community-based participatory research approach, partnering with community organizations in each case study area to help collect data and identify participants for structured interviews as well as choose particular data to emphasize within their communities. In addition, the project recruited an advisory council with a wide range of interests in food access and food security. Project investigators also remain involved with food security organizations throughout the region. These practitioners are also the part of the "community" for this project. A community-based participatory research approach was chosen because community-based approaches often lead towards more usage of the data collected as well as the collecting of data that more closely identifies community needs.

In community-based research, community members become part of the research team, rather than remaining passive subjects. Their familiarity with and knowledge of their own communities is emphasized. In addition, research is immediately connected back to community groups upon its release (and sometimes even during its gathering), providing greater opportunities for more immediate responses (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2003). Since the goal of this project was both to inspire creative action among food security and community professionals as well as to draw a baseline

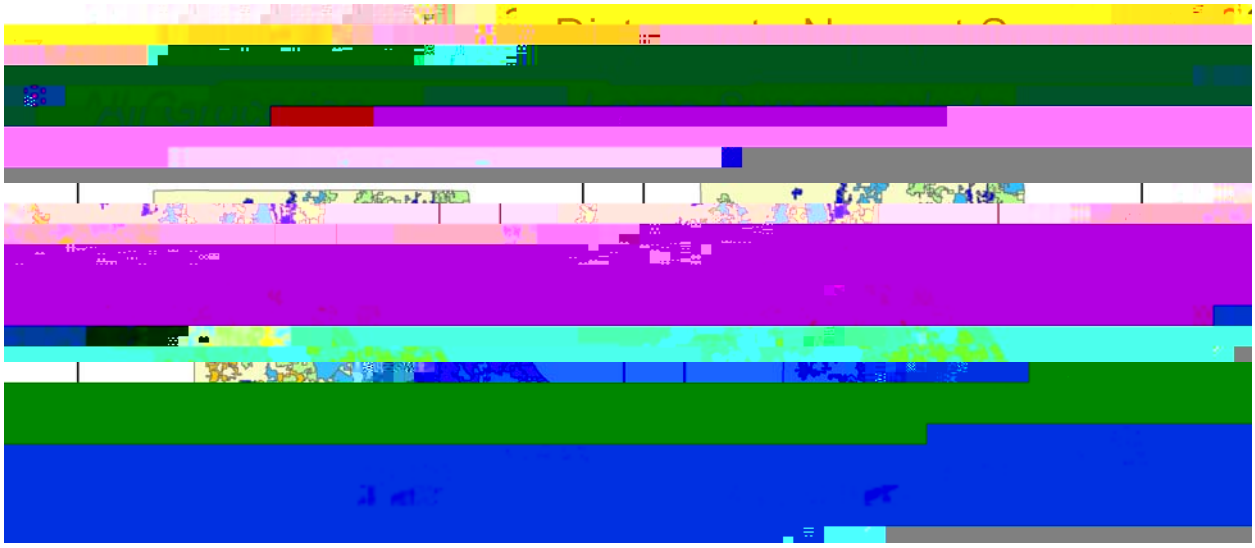
This project used two methodologies. First, counts were made by Chicago community area and

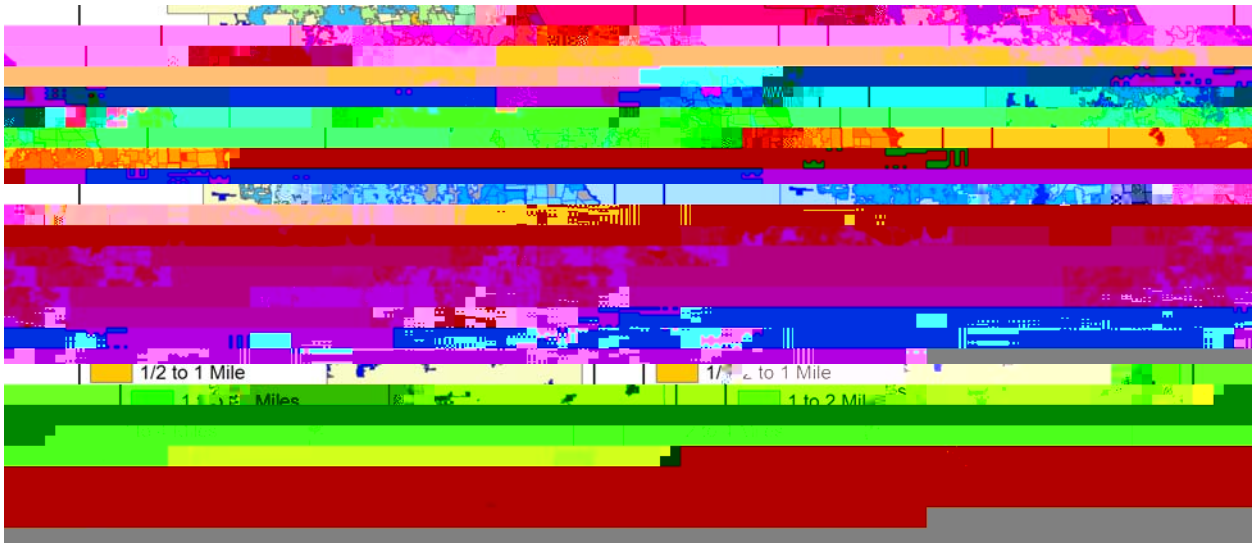
North Side or predominantly Latino neighborhoods such as McKinley Park. This was particularly true if all groceries and supermarkets (rather than just large stores) were counted.



Perhaps the most interesting piece of the store count data is looking at the communities which have no supermarkets at all. In 2007, 22 of the 77 Chicago communities had no large groceries or supermarkets. Of these, 15 were predominantly African-American. Five of the rest were mixed-race South Side communities. The final two were the Loop and the small northwest side community of Hermosa (see Map 1).

For the 2005 chain store data, a specific analysis was completed comparing communities and community areas with no stores to those which had at least one. This analysis showed that the





When just chain full-service (Jewel, Dominick's and Food 4 Less) are viewed, this pattern becomes even more marked. Chicago's north side still has few areas that average more than a mile to the nearest chain supermarket, but there is a general area of low access from the south side into the southern

5. Distances to chain specialty stores vary greatly, generally by income, while distances to supercenters are hugely different between urban and suburban areas. There are no supercenters within Chicago itself.

6. Of any store type, the difference between African-American and other neighborhoods is greatest in chain convenience stores, with both predominantly African-American neighborhood types being over two miles to the nearest chain convenience store. All other neighborhood types except for middle class suburbia are below two miles.

Table 2: Chicago metro neighborhood types, miles to nearest store, 2007

	Population, 2000	All Groceries Except Conven-ience	All Super-markets	Indepen-dents & Sm. Chains	Large Indepen-dents	All Chains	Chain Full-Service	Chain Discount	Chain Specialty	Super-centers	Chain Conven-ience
1	613780	0.59	1.00	1.04	1.35	0.83	1.39	1.00	7.24	11.77	2.23
2	580935	0.74	1.21	1.14	1.78	1.23	1.85	1.39	11.31	9.22	2.57
3	1185065	0.75	1.03	1.01	1.54	1.12	1.41	1.77	6.98	7.54	1.19
4	428762	0.42	0.56	0.72	0.98	0.70	0.91	1.92	2.56	12.41	0.76
5	723275	0.37	0.61	0.44	0.76	0.87	1.44	1.02	5.71	9.30	1.13
6	475812	0.37	0.50	0.48	0.72	0.64	0.79	1.28	2.61	13.03	0.54
7	84871	0.37	0.41	0.91	0.99	0.48	0.61	1.78	1.15	14.01	0.28
8	1726541	1.20	1.47	1.73	2.33	2.03	2.24	2.95	10.53	7.16	0.280.96

Distance with Population Density Removed

These patterns become clearer when population density is taken out as a factor. This was done by running a regression of the log of population density against the log of the distance for each store type. Distances to the nearest store were strongly related to population density in all cases. Except for supercenters, the relationship was negative, so as population density of a census tract went up, the distance to the nearest store went down. For supercenters, opposite was true (as population density went up, distance to the nearest store went up). The "residuals" of this regression represent what is not predicted by population density. Positive residuals mean that a census tract is further from the nearest store than predicted by population dens

1. Neighborhood type 1, impoverished African-American neighborhoods, are further than predicted by population to all store types except chain discount. The other predominantly African-American neighborhood type is similar, except for supercenters. In particular, these African-American communities are further than would be predicted for all supermarkets, perhaps the most important category. They are also further than would be predicted to independent supermarkets, either large or small. Distances to chain convenience stores are also much greater than predicted.

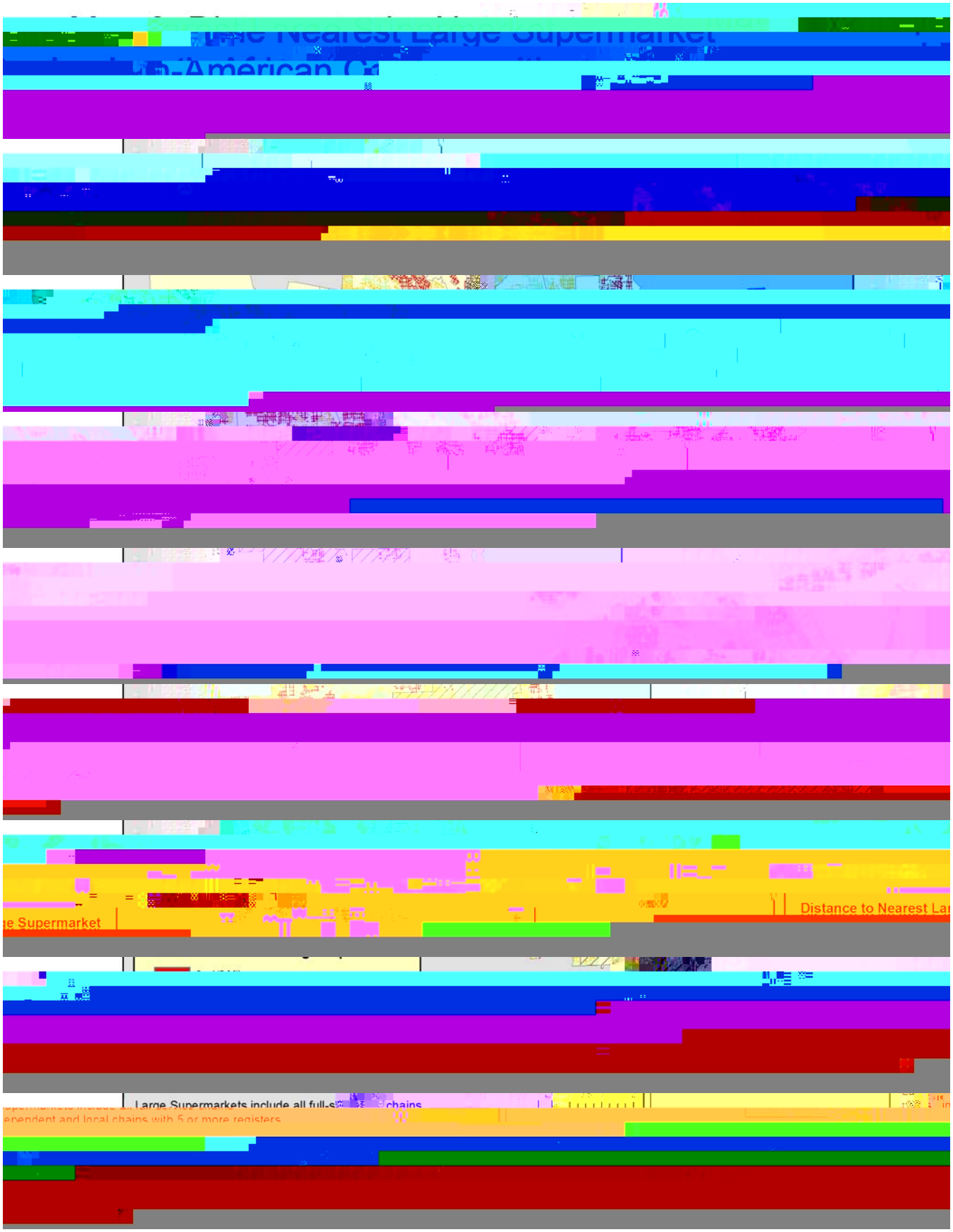
2. Predominately Hispanic communities, neighborhood type 5, are particularly closer than predicted for independent stores. They are also closer to all supermarkets, but further than predicted to chain full-service and specialty stores.

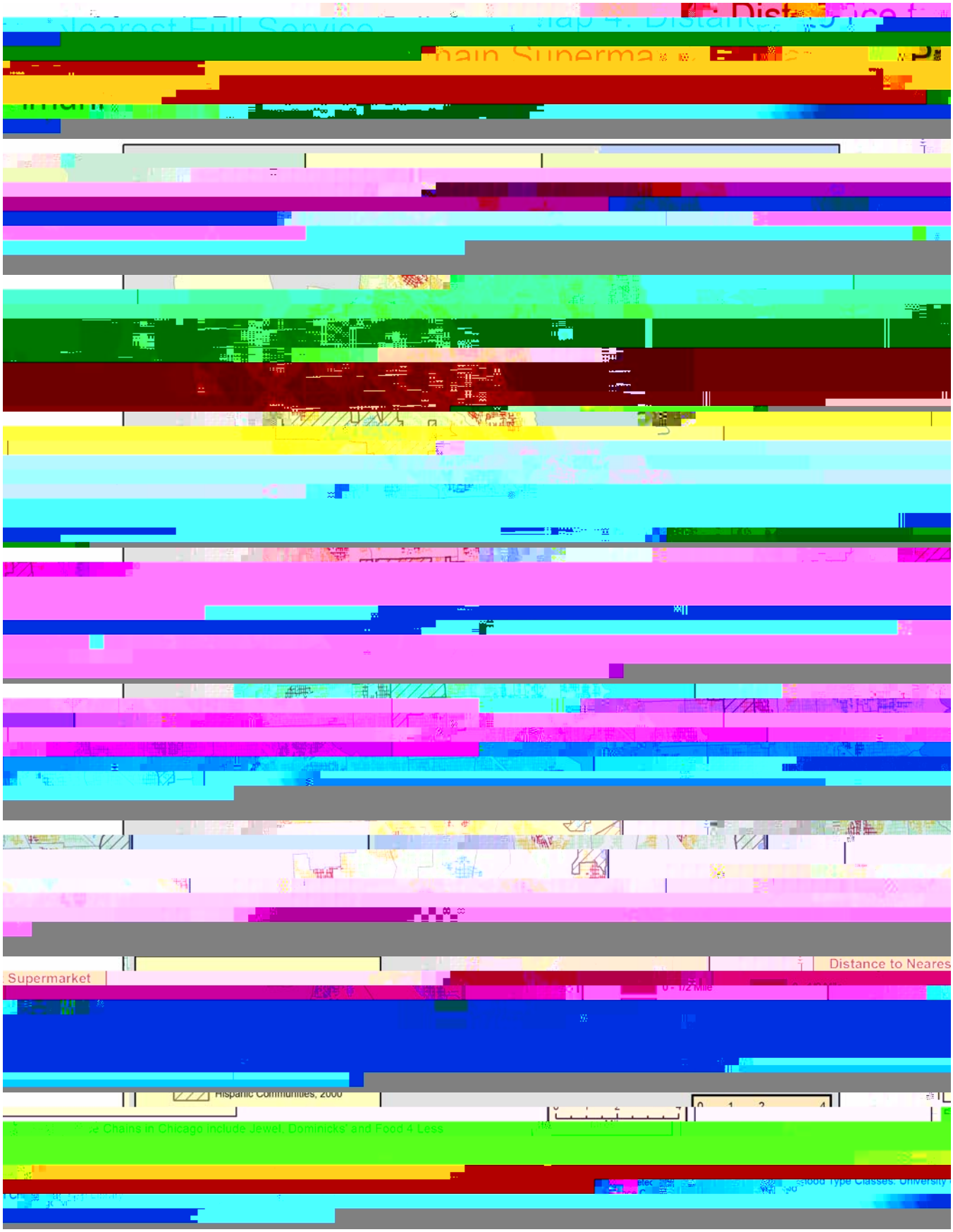
3. Store types 4 and 7, wealthy urban communities, are closer than would be predicted to all supermarkets, and chain full-service, specialty, and convenience stores.

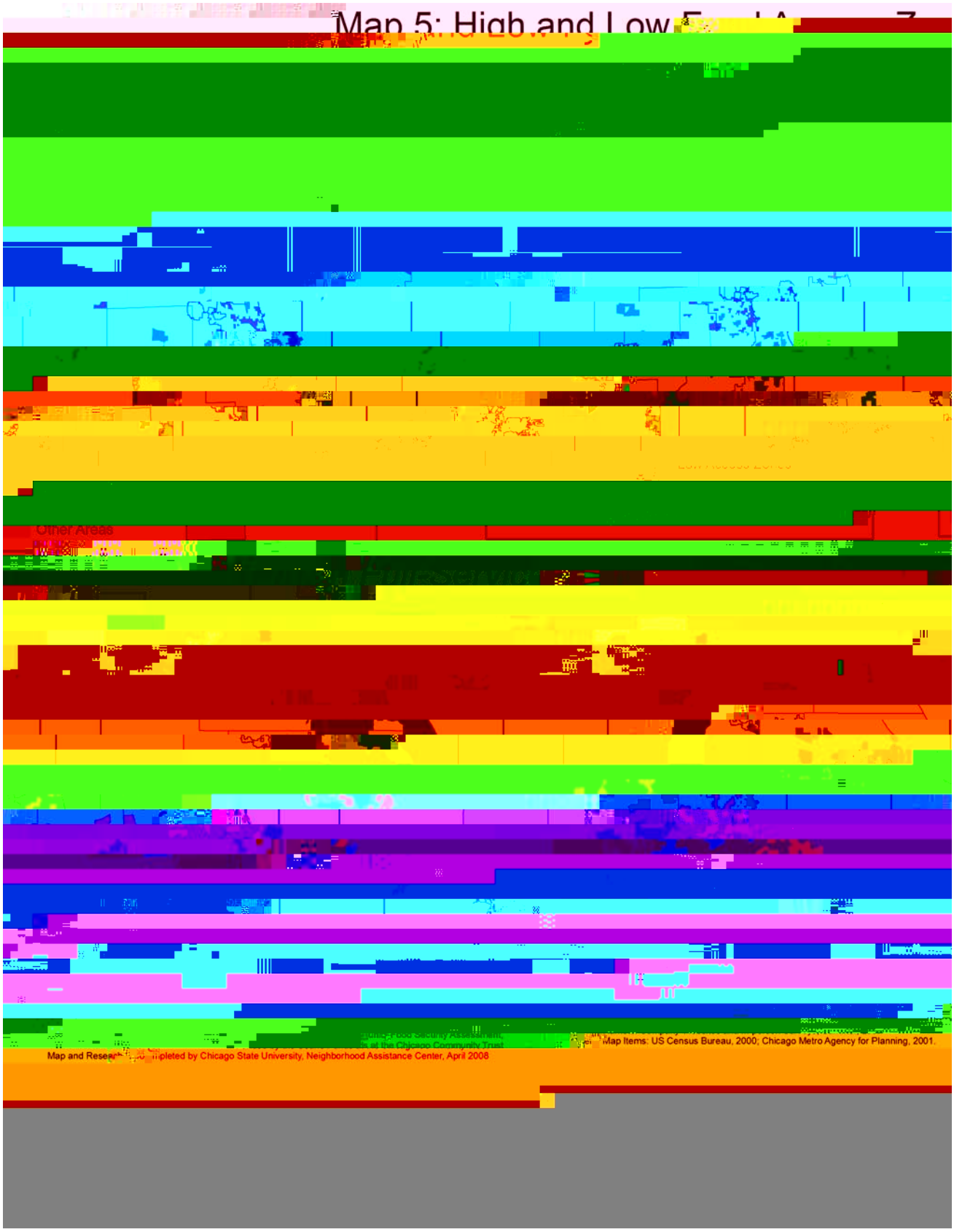
Chicago Distances and Race

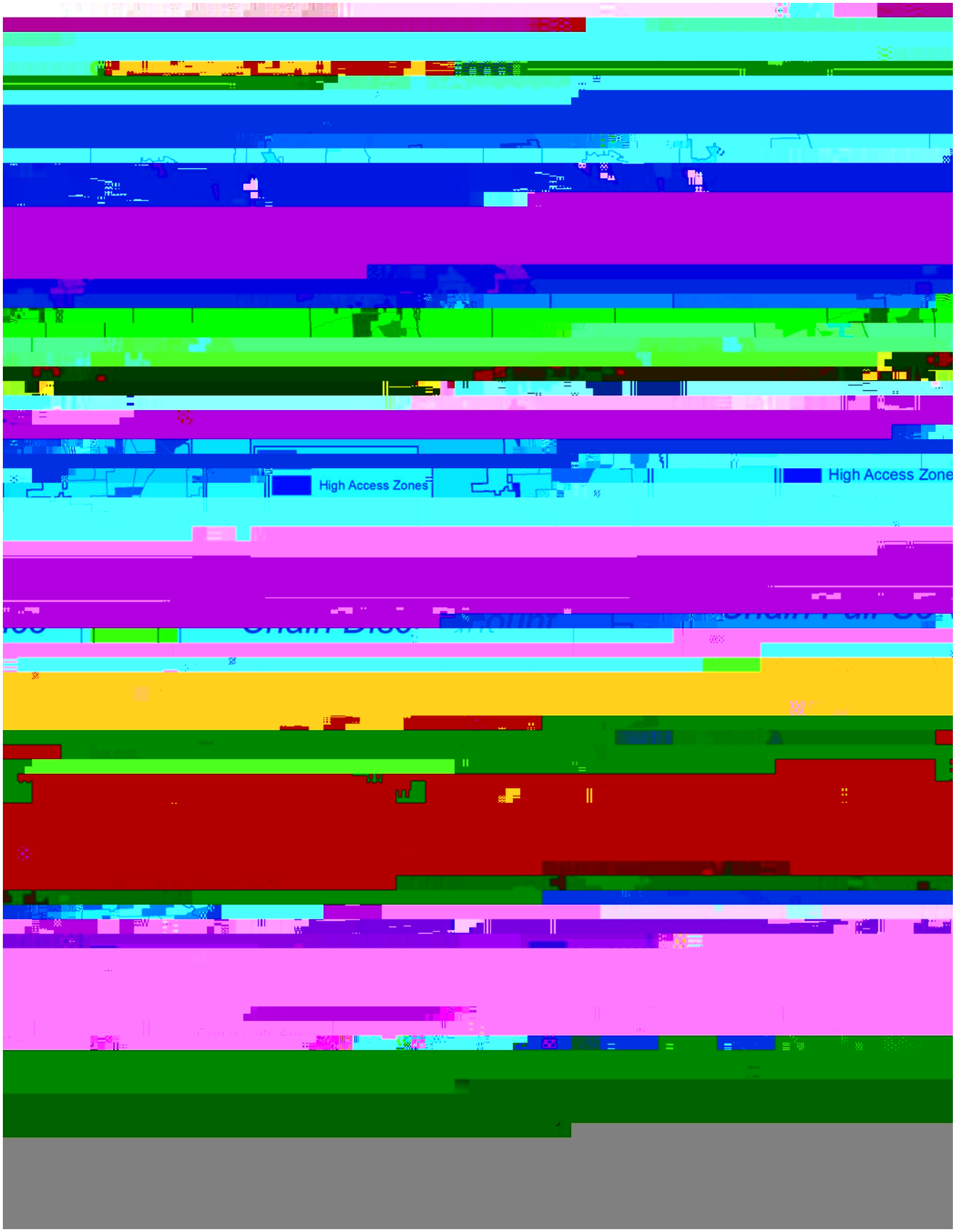
The main points of the Chicago data are summarized on maps 3 and 4 showing distance to the nearest supermarket overlaid with African-American communities (neighborhood types 1 and 2) and distance to chain full-service stores overlain with predominantly Hispanic communities (neighborhood type 5). Summarizing the urban data, from both these maps and map 2:

> Predominantly African-American communities average over a mile to the nearest supermarket. Compared to other urban co


Distance to Nearest La
Large Supermarkets include all full-s chains
ependent and local chains with 5 or more registers


Supermarket
Distance to Neares
0 - 1/2 Mile
Hispanic Communities, 2000
Chains in Chicago include Jewel, Dominicks' and Food 4 Less


Map 5: High and Low
Other Areas
Map Items: US Census Bureau, 2000; Chicago Metro Agency for Planning, 2001.
Map and Research completed by Chicago State University, Neighborhood Assistance Center, April 2008


High Access Zones
High Access Zone

Clusters seen in Chicago (Map 6) include:

1. Chicago's mid-south side, centering around West Washington Park and Greater Grand Crossing
2. Chicago's far south side, centering on Roseland, Pullman, West Pullman, and the Riverdale community area, and the adjoining suburb of Riverdale.
3. Chicago's southeast side, centered on South Chicago and South Deering.
4. Chicago's west side, centered on northwest Austin and the Garfield Park area.

While there are a number of exceptions, the majority of the clusters listed above are predominantly African-American communities. Aside from rural areas, Round Lake, and West Rogers Park, all of the remaining low-access areas are in predominantly or mixed Hispanic communities. The patterns for chain full-service stores are similar. Clusters again appear in North Chicago and south Waukegan, Aurora, and a more extensive area of the southern suburbs. National chains are not present in the rural areas surrounding Chicago, particularly in Will County. An area of low access to chain stores also appears on the east side of Joliet. In the city, large clusters of low access appear on the northwest and mid-south sides. Smaller areas occur on the far south and southeast sides. The discount chains follow an interesting, somewhat opposite pattern, with a few, important exceptions. In general, there is higher access to discount stores than would be predicted throughout much of Chicago and the southern suburbs. Low access occurs primarily on the wealthy north side and the wealthier northern and northwest suburbs. However, an area of low access also exists in the same region of the southern suburbs, including Burnham, Lansing, Calumet City, and Lynwood, as was depicted on the previous maps. This is particularly worrying for this area. In addition, a somewhat surprising area of relatively low access occurs in working class northeast DuPage County, near Bensenville.

Change in Distance to the Nearest Chain Stores, 2005-2007

Chain store locations were mapped in 2005 and in 2007, making possible a study of changes in distance to the nearest store among the chain store types. During this time, the overall numbers of full-service chain supermarkets decreased while numbers of discount and specialty supermarkets as well as supercenters increased. Both Jewel and Dominick's closed a number of locations, while Cub Foods closed all Chicago area locations as a result of parent SuperValu buying Jewel. It should be noted that some of these reopened as local chains, in particular Ultra, which are counted as independent stores and are not considered on this map. On Map 7, the impacts of these changes by census tract are clearly shown. It shows changes in distance between 2005 and 2007 for all chain stores, full-service chains, and chain discount stores are shown by census tract. On these maps red and pink indicate areas of decreasing distance to the nearest store (higher store densities), while blue and light blue indicate

increasing distance to the nearest store (lower store densities). Five issues are worth pointing in particular.

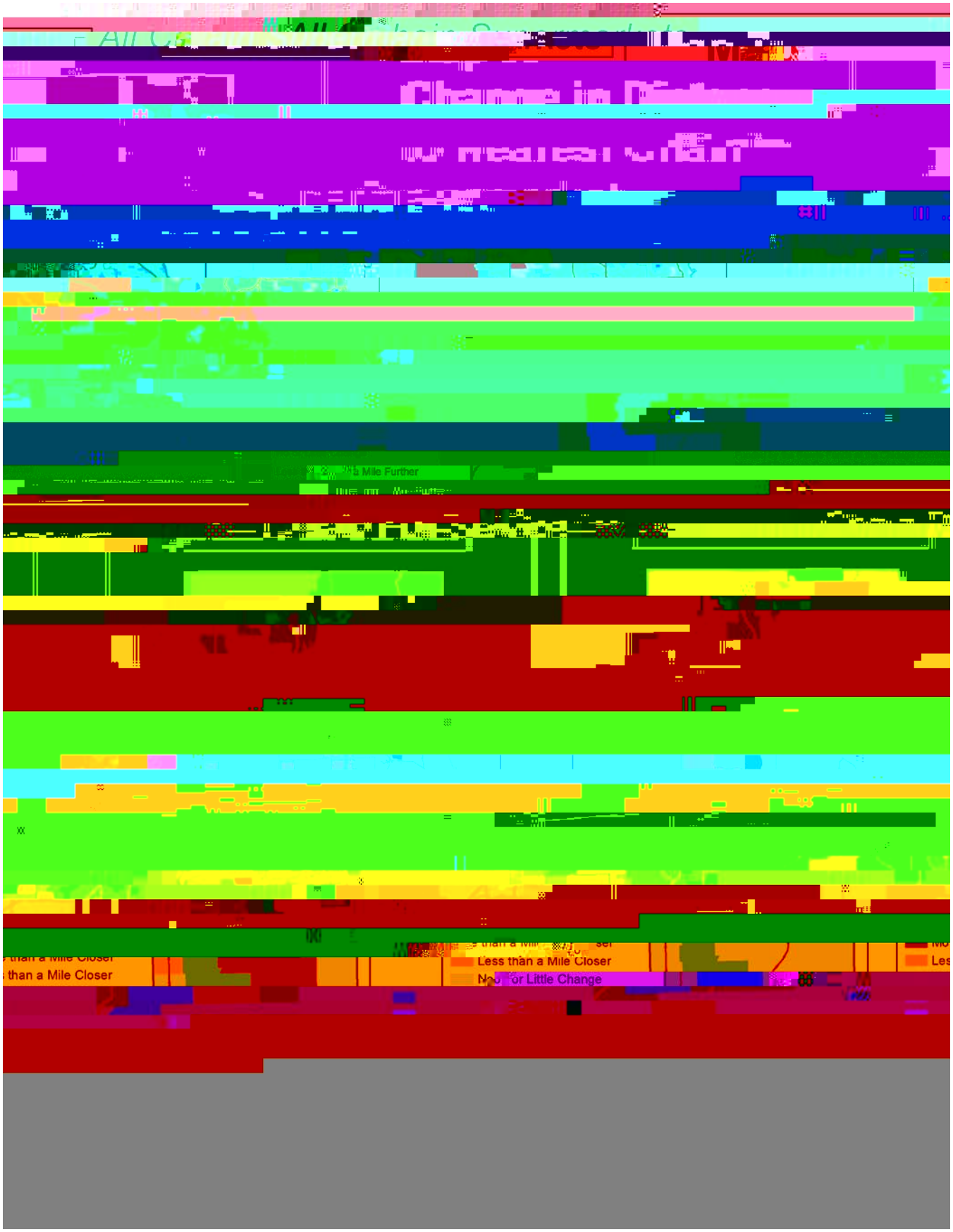
1. Distance to the nearest chain store increased over a large areas of the far south side and southern Cook County, particularly along the Indiana border. This includes the communities of Lansing, Calumet City, Burnham, Dolton, and Riverdale, and the Riverdale community area of Chicago. This area was caused by the closing of a two Dominick's stores (in Calumet City and Lansing) and a Jewel store in Dolton. Note that there is a large Ultra store in this area.

2. Similar increased distances to the nearest store caused by the closing of a concentration of full-service chains were seen in the Oak Lawn area, Chicago's Northwest Side (centered around northwest Austin, Hermosa, and West Humboldt Park), southern Waukegan and North Chicago, Carpentersville and East Dundee, Highland Park, and South Elgin.

3. In general, with the exception of western Kane and McHenry counties, the Orland Park/Homer Glen area, and isolated areas in the city, most of the region was either the same distance or further away from a full-service supermarket in 2007 than in 2005.

4. Discount chains (Aldi and Save-A-Lot) are expanding rapidly, particularly in the suburbs and on Chicago's South Side. There are, however, some areas of decrease. The stores take low levels of investment to open and seem to close or move fairly quickly if they are not profitable. Examples of closed stores were in Joliet, West Chicago, Carol Stream, and Prospect Heights.

5. Other chain groceries, including supercenters and specialty stores such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe's expanded area-wide, with the exception of Super Kmart stores. Note that there are no supercenters within Chicago itself.


a Mile Further
than a Mile Closer
than a Mile Closer
Less than a Mile Closer

Change in Distance to Chain Supermarkets by Neighborhood Type

Table 4 shows changes in distance to the nearest store, calculated by neighborhood type. In this method, population based averages were calculated of all census tracts in the region within a particular neighborhood type. The following conclusions may be drawn from this data:

1. With the slight exception of well-off suburban communities, distances to the nearest chain supermarkets remained about the same or increased very slightly.
2. Distances to the nearest full-service chain have increased in all neighborhood types except well-off suburban communities.
3. Distances to the nearest discount chain dropped in all but the wealthy urban and mixed race neighborhood types. Decreases were particularly large in suburban areas.
4. Distances to the nearest specialty chain and supercenter dropped across the board.

It should be noted that just because the distance to the nearest store declines, it does not mean that an area has good food access. Inner-city African American communities, for instance, were slightly closer to a Whole Foods in 2007 than in 2005, but most were still very far away. These numbers are more interesting overall, showing the decrease in full-service markets in many areas. This change is particularly important, because in many inner-city areas, particularly in African-American communities, there are few alternatives.

Table 4: Change in Distance to Nearest Store by Neighborhood Type

Neighborhood Type	All Stores	Full Service	Discount	Specialty	Supercenters
1	*-0.02*	0.05	*-0.04*	*-0.07*	*-7.37*
2	0.10	0.30	*-0.09*	*-0.07*	*-4.75*
3	0.05	0.12	*-0.26*	*-0.56*	*-4.37*
4	0.01	0.04	*-0.14*	*-0.03*	*-8.29*
5	0.07	0.18	*-0.06*	*-0.15*	*-9.04*
6	0.05	0.07	0.08	*-0.14*	

Distance to other Food Access Sources: Chain Drug Stores, Chain Fast-Food Outlets, Food Pantries, and Farmers' Markets

Although this project concentrated on supermarkets, consumers utilize a wide variety of other places to access their food. Chain drug stores, such as Walgreen's and CVS, are carrying a larger and larger amount of groceries. In addition, like groceries, pharmacies are a necessary community service. Chain fast-food outlets are important both because Americans are eating increasing numbers of meals away from their homes. In addition, both chain drug stores and chain fast food outlets offer possibly contrasting patterns to supermarket locations. It should be noted that in both cases, there are independent and small chain locations which were not

the nearest chain drug store. The data is similar for chain fast-food outlets, only all neighborhoods are closer, with all but the working class, primarily white neighborhood type 3 averaging less than a half a mile to the nearest location. Even suburban neighborhoods average just over a mile to the nearest chain fast-food outlet. Looking at the residuals, the wealthy urban neighborhood types 4 and 7 average somewhat closer to the nearest drug store than other communities, and the impoverished African-American community type 1 is somewhat further than predicted. Patterns for chain fast-food outlets are similar, the urban wealthier communities are closer than predicted by population density while impoverished African-American and Hispanic communities are further than predicted. These patterns parallel the patterns for much of the supermarket data, but the overall distances are much less, indicating primarily that chain drugstores and fast-food outlets are in most communities in the Chicago area.

Table 5: Chicago metro neighborhood types, miles to nearest store: Chain Drug Stores, Fast-Food Outlets, Food Pantries, and Farmers' Markets
Marketsarkets

Food pantry data is interesting. Food pantries show a great difference between suburban and urban areas. It might be predicted that these distances would vary by income. Within the urban areas, residents of impoverished African-American communities average much closer to the nearest pantry than predicted from their population density. Surprisingly, impoverished Hispanic communities do not. In addition, middle class neighborhood types 3 and 8 are somewhat further away from the nearest pantry than would be predicted by population density. This pattern needs more study to see if pantries may be needed in these areas. Farmers' market patterns in 2005 generally followed patterns for specialty stores, with the highest income neighborhoods being closest to the nearest markets. Impoverished African-American neighborhoods are, somewhat surprisingly, not further away from farmers' markets than would be predicted by their density, while impoverished Hispanic neighborhoods are.

Table 6: Chicago metro neighborhood types, standardized residuals after linear regression of log of mean distance with log of pop per sq mile

Neigh. Type[1]	Chain Drug Stores, 2006	Chain Fast-Food Outlets, 2003	Food Pantries, 2003	Farmers' Markets, 2005
1	0.40	0.43	-0.70	0.08
2	0.10	0.56	-0.47	0.39
3	0.04	0.07	0.49	0.26
4	-0.42	-0.60	0.10	-1.10
5	0.24	0.68	0.09	0.58
6	0.04	-0.32	0.03	0.07
7	-0.79	-0.80	0.08	-1.22
8	0.11	0.09	0.30	0.27
9	0.16	-0.16	0.62	-0.11
10	0.12	-0.18	0.57	-0.49

Sources: University of Chicago, CSU Neighborhood Assistance Center, Company Web Sites, Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago Anti-Hunger Federation, Northern Illinois Food Bank, InfoUSA

.5 S.D. or more closer than predicted

Summarizing these data sets:

Data for the three months were averaged and analyzed. Analysis described is for the entire Chicago metropolitan area. This is important since many ZIP codes just outside the city limits have high levels of "influx" of Link dollars. When just demographic variables were studied, four appeared to be significant in predicting what areas had **higher amounts of money "flowing out" (much higher amounts of Link money allocated to area households than redeemed at area stores).** These included:

1. **Higher** percentages of African-Americans
2. **Higher** percentages of Hispanics
3. **Higher** average LINK food stamp allocations per household
4. **Lower** total numbers of chain supermarkets

with Supercenters (such as Meijer's) probably because all are found in suburban locations with relatively low Link allocations in the surrounding area. The presence of a specialty store (such as Whole Foods) also did not make a difference.

High Hispanic concentrations are strangely associated with both high levels of influx and outflow. This is probably because while there are many Hispanic neighborhoods that have generally high levels of Link money spent elsewhere, including Little Village, many others, in particular Cicero, have very high levels of money spent at stores within them. This remains to be studied further.

Limitations of Mapping Study

The limitations of the mapping portion of the study revolve around two issues. First, while the six county Chicago area is large, it does not include the entire region and there are some stores just outside the area, particularly just across the Indiana line and in northeastern Kendall County just south of Aurora, that serve the study area but are not included. Unfortunately, we did not have full data in these areas, so were not able to include them. This means that that areas of poor access in these regions may be somewhat exaggerated. Second, it was occasionally difficult to classify a store. A particular case was Ultra Foods. The industry standard boundary between a large and small chain is ten stores. Ultra Foods is a locally owned small chain which is quickly increasing in numbers and now has thirteen stores but had less than ten at the beginning of the study. It was classified as a large independent or local chain store here but may be a national chain in our next study. Other difficulties arose with some ethnic chains with just one or two locations locally but others across the country. Because most of these still had low numbers nationally, they were also classified as small chains.

Conclusions of the Food Access Mapping Research

It is hard to summarize so many maps in a few sentences, and readers are encouraged to study the maps and combine this data with their own knowledge of their communities. Grocery stores are constantly opening and closing, so the patterns constantly change. In addition, since consumers utilize many different kinds of stores and since stores within a particular store type differ greatly, maps showing access to one particular type of store may overlook a concentration of other store types. This is why, in general, this report does not use the phrase "food desert." However, the following generalizations can be made:

> Lower-income African-American neighborhoods, both in the city and in the suburbs, have relatively low access to supermarkets, whether chain or independent. In general, they do have

good access to discount chain stores such as Aldi, but low access to other stores except corner stores.

Hispanic neighborhoods have similarly low access to chain full-service supermarkets, but have many independent and small chain supermarkets, as well as discount and corner stores.

Particular areas of poor food access (defined by access to supermarkets) found include: portions of Chicago's South, Southeast, and West Sides; an area of the southern suburbs running from Lynwood, through Lansing and Calumet City to Burnham; central Aurora; Maywood; North Chicago and southern Waukegan, and the Round Lake area.

More full-service chain stores, such as Jewel and Dominicks' closed than opened during the period 2005 to 2007. Distance to the nearest full-service store thus increased over much of the area, particularly in the northwest side of Chicago and the southern suburbs from Riverdale through Burnham, Calumet City, Lansing, and Lynwood.

Other chains, including discount chains such as Aldi, specialty chains such as Whole Foods, and supercenters such as Meijer, have opened many new locations. However, except discount chains, few stores are opening in predominantly African-American neighborhoods.

A general conclusion is: *food access is particularly bad in n*

also met the Dietary Guidelines. We conducted market basket surveys in each of the community areas, but to better reflect the different community ethnicities, we developed additional ethnic modules (African American, Mexican, Asian) that had foods specific to those cultures. These were used in addition to the Thrifty Food Plan list.

Methodology

Using the methodology suggested by USDA, we used their shopping list as the basis for the survey. We programmed the survey into pocket PCs for data collection, including similarly formatted lists for the ethnic modules. Prior to visiting a store, letters of introduction describing the survey and our visit were mailed to each store. Surveys were usually conducted by two research staff members, one person located the items in the store, and the second person recorded the information. The data were checked for completeness at the end of the visit. Af2 -19.66 -1on descri, Tw 0 -2.(re checkeoion, ed, -1oy checkdownloahe ihe s

2. Independent groceries carried an average of 54 of the 88 Thrifty Food Plan items, and generally fewer items in each food group. Independent supermarket had 85 of the 88 Thrifty Food Plan items, but convenience stores had only 1/3 of items

3. Fewer Mexican module items were carried across the stores, with both independent groceries and supermarket carrying about half the items

Englewood

Thrifty Food Plan and African-American Modules used

1. The Discount Supermarket carried more of the Thrifty Food Plan items, followed by Independent Groceries; other store types carried about 25% of the items

2. For the African American Module, none of the store types carried more than one-third of the items, with some just a few items. There were no frozen fruits & vegetables and very low dairy coverage

3. The Discount Supermarket weekly market basket cost was less than at the other Englewood store types

4. Prices were higher in every food category for the other store types compared to the Discount Supermarket

5. There was very poor organic food ava

3. For the African American Module, the Independent Supermarket carried nearly all of the items.

4. Prices were higher in every food category except canned fruits & vegetables for the Independent Groceries compared to the Independent Supermarket.

5. There was no organic food availability in the surveyed stores.

Portage Park

Thrifty Food Plan and Mexican Modules used

1. Portage Park has a large variety of store types

2. Chain supermarkets tended to carry more of the Thrifty Food Plan market basket items – other store types only had about 1/3 of the items

3. Both chain supermarkets and independent groceries carried about 80% of the Mexican Module items

4. Weekly Thrifty Food Plan Market Basket costs were similar between chain supermarkets and independent groceries

Uptown

Thrifty Food Plan, Mexican, African-American, and Asian Modules used

1. The chain supermarket carried more Thrifty Food Plan market basket items, with the discount market carrying about 75% of the items. Other store types carried far fewer items.

2. Only two store types, chain supermarkets and independent groceries, carried any African-American module items, although neither store type carried all of the items.

3. Only 3 independent groceries carried Asian module items, although most were present across the stores.

4. All of the surveyed stores except chain convenience stores and gas stations carried items from the Mexican module, although none carried them all.

5. The discount store had the lowest prices for the Thrifty Food Plan market basket, followed by the chain supermarket; other store types were nearly $20 higher than the chain supermarket for the Thrifty Food Plan market basket.

Cross-Community Conclusions

The following conclusions come from comparing the results between communities. Note that in many cases the number of stores surveyed within a particular category was quite small:

1. Overall, supermarkets, whether chain or independent carried a far greater percentage of the surveyed items than independent groceries (corner stores) or other store types.

2. Discount supermarkets carried a somewhat smaller percentage of the items than independent and chain supermarkets, but still a far larger percentage of the items than the corner stores and other categories. In general, they carried lower percentages of the meat items than other item classes.

3. Independent groceries (corner stores) and independent supermarkets, in general, tended to carry a greater percentage of the ethnic module items than discount or chain full-service supermarkets.

4. Prices at the surveyed discount supermarkets were much lower than all other store classes.

5. Prices at independent and chain supermarkets averaged about $40 higher for the entire market basket than at the discount supermarket. However, this was still lower than most other store classes.

Table 7. Independent Groceries – Thrifty Food Plan Food Item Availability by Food Category

Food Categories	Total Number of Items	Englewood	Hegewisch	Pilsen	Portage Park	Riverdale	Uptown
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables	12	2.6	12	7.1	4.9	11	5.1
Canned&V 5e .g 9e t a b l e s							

Table 8. Independent Groceries – Thrifty Food Plan Food Prices in Dollars by Food Category

Food Categories	Englewood	Hegewisch	Pilsen	Portage Park	Riverdale	Uptown
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables	$18.40	$21.00	$20.96	$23.62	$18.5	$25.00

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Table 10. Chain Supermarkets – Thrifty Food Plan Food Prices in Dollars by Food Category

* shaded columns indicate no stores of this type in community

Food Categories	Englewood	Hegewisch	Pilsen	Portage Park	Riverdale	Uptown
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables	*	*	*	$30.12	*	$21.52
Canned Fruits & Vegetables				$5.11		$4.81
Frozen Fruits & Vegetables				$12.70		$14.81
Breads, Grains, & Cereals				$14.24		$15.29
Dairy Products				$11.58		$11.17
Meats & Alternatives				$35.84		$41.49
Fats & Oils				$1.83		$2.09
Spices & Condiments				$7.81		$7.12

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interview guides and code books were developed for each food sectors, including Community Members, Community Gardeners, Emergency Food Programs, Restaurants, Retail Food Outlets, Restaurant Owners/Managers and Community Based Organizations. Human Subjects approval was received from the UIC Institutional Review Board. Local organization staff members were trained to facilitate the groups, assisted by project research staff. Interviews were audio-reco

volunteers take food before residents get it, and both the staff and the recipients taking more food than they are allowed.

*Getting Involved**:*** There was some interest in a community wide food security effort, although there was concern by some with the local politics. The retail food outlet insisted there needs to be an organized

Perceptions of Emergency Food Programs: Both the quality of the food and the attitudes and intentions of pantry staff at Englewood food pantries were discussed. The food was considered to be left-over and of poor quality, and there was skepticism of the intent of workers in that it was perceived that they wanted to take the *good stuff* for themselves. Another concern is that the quality of food at the community food pantries operated by churches is poor because they have no standards.

Potential Solutions, Advantages and Challenges:

inflation of preferred ethnic food items and during peak shopping hours. A general sense of deception on the part of food retailers was expressed by interview participants suggesting that expiration dates are changed and meat doctored to look more appealing in order to make a profit. Lastly, genuine frustration was expressed with respect to the state of cleanliness of stores. This as well as the rudeness of cashiers was defined as an act of disrespect to consumers.

Another influence to community-level food security may be general threatened "sense of community" due to a high rate of gentrification, and thus community change and instability compromising ability of the community to join together.

Barriers to Food Security at the Individual-Level: A great deal of discussion across the food sector groups suggested that Pilsen community residents may largely have access to healthy foods but lack the resources to buy and prepare the healthiest foods. These issues include limited income of community residents in light of inflated area food prices. The cheapest foods, simply, are generally not the healthiest. If a person has limited income, it was argued they were going to buy the cheapest foods available, chips, processed and canned foods. Interview participants largely agreed that knowledge of healthy foods was poor among community residents making them vulnerable to pop culture advertising of low quality and often expensive fast foods. The food shopping, preparation and cooking skills needed in preparing healthy meals of, particularly younger residents, emerged as an important barrier to family food security as younger parents were less prepared to play the important role of securing healthy food for their families. A direct result of these inferior skills is the reliance on fast foods resulting in what one interview participant called the "*McDonald's mentality"*

that alternative community gardening spaces such as rooftops have become reserved for children to keep them off the streets and safe from neighborhood violence.

Strategies Used to Access Food in Pilsen: A number of examples were given by interview participants to describe means of accessing food when someone experiences food insecurity. These include: shoplifting, especially by children taking chips and candy bars; acquiring food by begging for a handout at restaurants and even private homes; and selling miscellaneous items on the street for food money. Interview participants also affirmed the evidence of 'dumpster diving', prostitution or exchanging sex for food or other services, going on dates to get food, as queried by the interviewer.

Community-based Organizations Approaches to Food Insecurity: According to the interview participants, some innovative strategies are in place to improve access to healthy foods. The community-based organization (whose agency runs a Kid's Café program) representative interviewed reports a relationship with local retail food owners in which plates of food are given to retail owners and cashiers in exchange for not selling chips to kids in between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. when dinner is being served at the CBO. This is done to increase the chances of the child participants in the CBO's food program eating the healthy meal provided to them.

Potential Strategies to Improve Food Security: It was suggested that the food security situation is getting better. People are generally more informed. However, recommendations include that information should be delivered via Spanish-language radio programs and though children. Word of mouth was suggested as a more effective route than radio or print advertising. Children are most effective in informing parents about services or other issues especially in immigrant families, and when English is a second language. Also, providing food preparation and cooking education directed at younger families was reiterated as a necessary strategy.

Needs and Interests of Food Sector Groups in Overall Community Food Insecurity: Pilsen food sector interviewees expressed a need for more grant money, space both organizational and food storage, and volunteers. There is an interest in collaboration on a community wide effort to improve food security. However, nearly all interviewees reported that they would have very little if any time they could invest in such an effort.

Some of the food sector stakeholders seemed to have a hard time seeing how their actions contribute to larger community food insecurity. This was especially evident in the restaurant and retail store interviews. One of the restaurant representatives expressed a disinterest in donating old or excess food to

Problems Experienced by Local Food Sector Representatives: The Food Pantry representative cited lack of storage, limited funding and an increasing demand for services as major problems. Also lack of awareness of the Chicago Food Depository emerged as a major problem to community food retailers and restaurant participants.

Unique Role of Restaurants: Restaurants as partners on community food insecurity issues often are limited by corporate policies including those that contribute to a great deal of food waste.

Proposed Solutions: Solutions proposed by interview participants include developing a food co-operative, providing budgeting classes for low income residents and improving inspection of existing food pantries to improve food quality and selection.

Summary of Findings Across the Community Areas and Food Sectors

While each community was unique, there were generally far more similarities than differences across the different communities and food sectors.

Commonalities:

1. Inadequate transportation is a barrier to getting to food; many travel by bus, often with transfers, but this limits what can be purchased.
2. Needing to travel far for healthy foods leads to purchase of foods that don't spoil, but these foods are often less healthy; cheap foods are not usually the healthiest.
3. There is generally a high demand for food from pantries and other emergency food sources.
4. People are often embarrassed to get food from pantry, but staff try to make more the participants comfortable and treat them with dignity.
5. Both pantry staff and recipients are often unhappy with food quality/type from the Greater Chicago Food Depository.
6. People often have to travel outside of their neighborhood to get healthy food.
7. Many retail food owners feel they offer healthy foods, but also cited some barriers to doing so; community members usually disagreed with this view.

8. Participants were familiar with and had observed food insecure and hungry people ‘dumpster diving’, stealing, offering to do odd jobs for food, shoplifting, and going on dates to get food.

9. Knowing how to budget one’s money, and how to shop for and prepare foods were seen as common problems across the communities; this was considered a problem particularly among young people.

10. Interactions with federal and state assistance programs were generally negative, with concerns about poor treatment, having to wait, and needing to make multiple trips.

11. Small stores were often seen as being dirty and unkempt, sometimes with rude and disrespectful staff.

12. In several communities, food insecurity was made worse by the increasing gentrification; this tended to reduce the sense of community seen as important by the residents.

13. Vulnerable groups across the interviews were older adults, the unemployed, disabled and homeless.

14. Home and community gardens were seen as a possible solution to improve healthy food access, although there were concerns with soil quality/contamination.

Differences:

1. A sense of exclusion and discrimination were reported in some communities, but not others.

2. Some groups reported food pantry staff taking food for themselves before giving participants access.

3. Men were identified as a vulnerable group for food insecurity in only one community.

4. Instances of fraud among participants of food assistance programs were reported by a few participants.

C. The Quantitative Survey

The Quantitative Survey that is part of the Northeast Illinois Food Security Assessment carried out surveys in three communities: Hegewisch, Riverdale and Englewood/West Englewood. The instrument we developed included the USDA Food Security Module (2000) and questions developed based on the input of the Advisory Council. The questions were designed to form the independent variables so as to offer insight into individual household and community characteristics that influence household food security and from that, community food security.

The characteristics that were thought to possibly influence food security included:

1. The length of time the household has lived in the community
2. The race and ethnicity of the household
3. The employment status of adults within the household
4. The education of household members
5. Household income

maintained phone contact with one another to insure safety.

In Hegewisch we worked with community partners thro4ƁD/TTaintained phone cCrtners t-1.725ro4Riverdale ind E

Findings

Using the Food Security Scale developed by the USDA, food security is measured as: Food Secure = 0; Food Insecure Without Hunger = 1; Food Insecure With Hunger, Moderate = 2; and Food Insecure With Hunger, Severe = 3. In each neighborhood were found households at every level of Food Security. While in theory it is possible to realize that th

high as might be expected, only .32, hardly higher than driving for grocery shopping. It is also significant (P = .000). The relatively low correlation may relate to the fact that cash income alone does not make up the entire resource set for the procurement of food. This is, in part, where individual neighborhood factors come into play.

For example, Riverdale, where the Altgeld-Murray Homes (Altgeld Gardens) are located, has a lower percentage of household participation in school breakfast and lunch programs than does nearby Hegewisch, but Riverdale has a much higher rate of participation in summer feeding programs than does Hegewisch simply because Hegewisch has no summer feeding programs. This demonstrates a major gap in the food security safety net for the Hegewisch Community. The total lack of a summer feeding program in Hegewisch is a serious detriment to th

relatively high correlation between income and gardening (.40). This suggests that those with more resources are more likely to have gardens. Overall, gardening is a fairly rare activity, in all three neighborhoods only 26 of the 267 households surveyed had gardens. Only six people knew of a community garden in their neighborhood and of those, only three had actually done any gardening in the community garden. Given the potential gardens, both community gardens and personal gardens, have for lowering food insecurity, it would seem that gardening is possibly a resource that is underutilized. There may well be reasons that those with higher incomes are more likely to garden. Their housing may provide the opportunity through higher home ownership and the space for a garden, they may have the resources to buy tools for gardening and they may have the knowledge, experience and leisure time for gardening. Nonetheless, gardening in common settings or gardening across socio-economic lines may improve food security for those who lack not only food, but the knowledge to create fresh produce through small scale gardening.

IV. Final Thoughts and Recommendations

Food access has been in the news much over the last few years. The fact that people in certain communities have a great deal of difficulty accessing quality, culturally acceptable food at competitive prices combined with discussions and studies of health disparities between rich and poor and ongoing attention to obesity has led to a focus on low food access (or 'food deserts') as a possible cause of these disparities. This study is about patterns of food access, not health disparities, but from other studies and even our own preliminary data collection, it is clear that low food access often correlates with much higher than average rates of many diet related diseases, in particular diabetes.

A key question, of course, is why this is. While this study does not fully answer this question, by using multiple methodologies and collaborating with communities, it is clear that lacking adequate food access does lead to hardships for community residents. However, these hardships are part of a long list of inadequacies in many communities, which most likely work together to make living a healthy lifestyle more difficult. Solving food access issues is but a part of solving general issues of inequality in our

the case study areas, in particular Englewood, focused particularly on whether store owners were from the community and whether particular stores hired community residents, as well as the lack of respect they felt they received from store owners. Such feelings do not make for pleasant shopping experiences or random meetings with other community residents at a neighborhood store.

Given these thoughts, we offer the following recommendations:

1. *Plans for new stores and programs should be developed as part of a general community health and retail access plan and should be community led or involve a large amount of community input.*
2. *When desired locations are set, incentives should be made to chain and independent supermarkets to open in areas of low food access.*
3. *African American oriented independent supermarkets should be encouraged to develop. Compared to other minority and ethnic neighborhoods, African American communities are greatly lacking in such stores.*
4. *Existing stores in underserved communities could be a resource through which increased healthy food access could occur. However, in many communities relationships between these stores and the community must be improved for this to work.*
5. *In the most isolated communities such as Riverdale, transportation is a great barrier. Developing bus lines that serve groceries directly or sponsoring alternative transportation to local stores would help these communities even if new stores are difficult to develop. Such options are also needed for the elderly and other vulnerable groups.*
6. *More attention should be paid to suburban areas of low food access, in particular in the southern suburbs, North Chicago, and central Aurora.*
7. *Alterative food access strategies such as community gardens, food co ops, urban agriculture, and farmers' markets, should be actively pursued. These both improve access and build stronger communities.*
8. *Work with pantries to improve food quality and quantity from the Food Depository.*
9. *Residents pointed out budgeting, cooking, and food buying as skills that younger residents often lacked. Innovative techniques need to be developed to help teach these skills.*

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The investigators were assisted by community groups including Imagine Englewood If…, the Hegewisch Community Committee, People for Community Recovery, Alivio Health Center, the Six