

# Food Access for Healthy Communities

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Senate Study Committee Meeting: Improving Access to Healthy Food and  
Ending Food Deserts

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## RESEARCH GRANTS

- **Anne Price** (PI) and Carl Hand (Co-PI). Department of Transportation. Awarded \$15,000 for “An Assessment of Transportation and Community Health in South-Central Georgia.” 2015-2016.
- Valdosta State University, Center for Applied Social Sciences. Awarded \$1,000 for “Economics, Social Stratification, and Health in South-Central Georgia: An Assessment.” 2015.

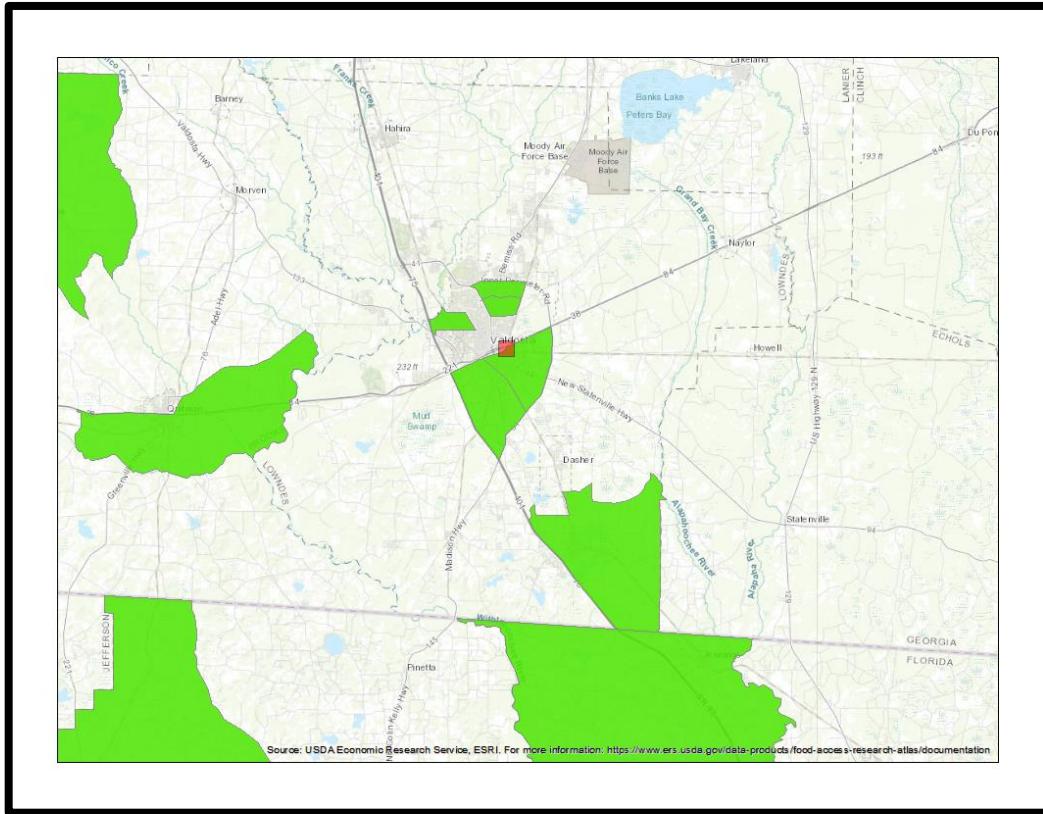
## PUBLICATIONS

- Godwin, Ariel and **Anne M. Price**. 2016. “Bicycling and Walking in the Southeast USA: Why is it Rare and Risky?” *Journal of Transport & Health* (3): 26-37.
- Godwin, Ariel and **Anne M. Price**. 2012. “Mapping Transportation and Health in the United States.” *Planetizen* Feature Article.  
<http://www.planetizen.com/node/53728>.

## TEACHING

Lane, Jesse\*, Rosa Miranda\*, Clandra Newson\*, Erin Powell\*, Kimberly Reid\*, and **Anne M. Price**. 2015. *A Report on Key Indicators for Establishing Environmental Justice in Transportation Planning in Lowndes County. Completed for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.*

# Food Deserts & Health, Lowndes County, GA



Left: Low-Income and Low-Access in Lowndes County, GA. Source: USDA Food Access Atlas, accessed 2021

Right: Source: USDA Food & Environment Atlas; Lowndes County, accessed 2021

## Key Food Access & Health Indicators, Lowndes County & GA Averages

- Fast Food Restaurants: +16% (2011-2016)
- Population w/ low access to store: +17% (2010-2015)
- Grocery Stores: -18% (2011-2016)
- Household Food Insecurity three year average 2015-2017: 13%; (state avg is 11.3%)
- Adult obesity rate, 2017: 31.6% (+3% since 2012) & same as GA avg

“Food Deserts:” a useful concept for meaningful change?

- Food insecurity is clearly linked to poor health (Seligman & Berkowitz 2019)
- Is the food desert environment a key contributor to health or correlated with health? Findings are mixed.
  - Individuals living in food deserts have less nutritional diets and poorer health outcomes (Schupp 2019)
  - Living in a “food swamp” is a stronger predictor of obesity rates than living in a “food desert” (Cooksey-Stowers et.al. 2017)
- Critiques of the measure itself
  - USDA food access atlas measure of food deserts may not capture nuance

# Evidence Based Solutions

## Community-based & educational change

### 1) Community-based, bottom-up initiatives

- Have residents submit plans to make their neighborhoods healthier (Vogel 2021)

### 2) Shape tastes and eating habits early

- School health intervention program

### 3) Nutrition and health education

### 4) Spatial solutions for food deserts may fail in their intended effects, but have promising latent effect (Dubowitz et al. 2015)

- Farmer's market; community gardens

# Evidence Based Solutions

## Spatial Change

- 1) Incentivize grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods (Cantor et al. 2020)
- 2) Improve transportation options
- 3) Restrict dollar stores

# Evidence Based Solutions

## Reducing Poverty

- Some evidence affordability of healthy foods has more of an impact on food patterns than does distance to the nearest store (Drewnowski 2012)
- Healthier diets cost more (especially if time or cooking facilities are limited)
- Introducing a supermarket into a neighborhood does little good if residents do not have the money to use it
- Reduce Poverty → allows for future-oriented health decisions

# Works Cited

**Slide 3:** USDA Food Access Research Atlas. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>

USDA Food Environment Atlas. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-environment-atlas/>

## **Slide 4:**

Seligman, H. K., & Berkowitz, S. A. (2019). Aligning programs and policies to support food security and public health goals in the United States. *Annual review of public health, 40*, 319-337.

Cooksey-Stowers, K., Schwartz, M. B., & Brownell, K. D. (2017). Food swamps predict obesity rates better than food deserts in the United States. *International journal of environmental research and public health, 14*(11), 1366.

Schupp, J. (2019). Wish you were here? The prevalence of farmers markets in food deserts: an examination of the United States. *Food, Culture & Society, 22*(1), 111-130.

## **Slide 5:**

Vogel, E. (2021). Enacting community health: Obesity prevention policies as situated caring. *The Sociological Review, 00380261211006327*.

Dubowitz, T., Ghosh-Dastidar, M., Cohen, D. A., Beckman, R., Steiner, E. D., Hunter, G. P., ... & Collins, R. L. (2015). Diet and perceptions change with supermarket introduction in a food desert, but not because of supermarket use. *Health Affairs, 34*(11), 1858-1868.

## **Slide 6:**

Cantor, J., Beckman, R., Collins, R. L., Dastidar, M. G., Richardson, A. S., & Dubowitz, T. (2020). SNAP Participants Improved Food Security And Diet After A Full-Service Supermarket Opened In An Urban Food Desert: Study examines impact grocery store opening had on food security and diet of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants living in an urban food desert. *Health Affairs, 39*(8), 1386-1394.

## **Slide 7:**

Drewnowski, A. (2012). The economics of food choice behavior: why poverty and obesity are linked. In *Obesity treatment and prevention: new directions* (Vol. 73, pp. 95-112). Karger Publishers.