

Food Imbalance in Birmingham

How to read this map:

Areas shaded in a pink, red, dark red, or red-brown indicate Food Imbalance. A score of 2, for example, means that one must travel from that block twice as far to reach healthy food than unhealthy food. A score of 5 means five times as far!

Birmingham Blocks by Food Balance Scores

- Best Outcome: 0.1 to 1.0
- Middle Outcome: 1 to 2
- Worst Outcome A: 2 to 3
- Worst Outcome B: 3 to 4
- Worst Outcome C: 4 to 5
- Worst Outcome D: 5 and above



Food Deserts and Food Imbalance are serious issues in Birmingham. Please support our efforts to provide good food access for everyone.

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MAIN STREET BIRMINGHAM

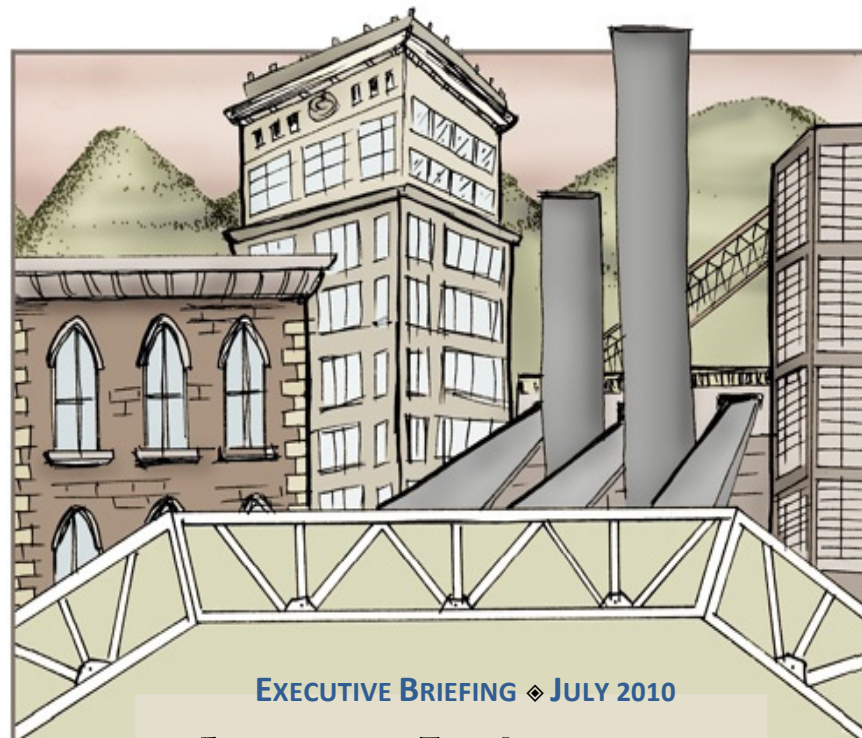
Growing Business Revitalizing Neighborhoods
Empowering Communities



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RESEARCH & CONSULTING GROUP



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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF FOOD DESERTS & FOOD IMBALANCE ON PUBLIC HEALTH IN **Birmingham, Alabama**

MARI GALLAGHER RESEARCH & CONSULTING GROUP

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Thank you **Main Street Birmingham** for sponsoring this study.

For more information on what Main Street Birmingham is doing on this issue, visit <http://theurbanfoodproject.org/>

THANKS ALSO TO:

Jefferson County Department of Health
Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
Wachovia: A Wells Fargo Company
City of Birmingham

EARLY THIS CENTURY, long before the rise of McDonald's golden arches or concern about a national obesity epidemic, an advertisement for premium beef made this seemingly bold claim:

“Ninety percent of the diseases known to man are caused by cheap food stuffs. You are what you eat.”

Today, this is accepted as fact, but how does what we eat and thus our health depend on where we live and the types of food we have access to in the marketplace? Since January of this year, Mari Gallagher Research & Consulting Group and Main Street Birmingham have studied this question. Here is what we found:

- ◆ In Birmingham, **over 88,000 people live on blocks where mainstream grocers are distant** (we call these areas **Food Deserts**) **or where grocers are distant and unhealthy food is readily available** (we call this condition **Food Imbalance**). In these areas, it is generally difficult to buy a first-rate apple, tomato, or green bean. Many venues instead specialize in candy, soda, chips, and fried food.
- ◆ In total, these problem Food Desert and Food Imbalance conditions in Birmingham comprise over **43 square miles**. Of those affected, over **23,000 are children**.

- ◆ **Next steps** towards improving Birmingham's food landscape include: new food related businesses owned and operated by local residents, a public market system to serve local neighborhoods, and mobile markets and transportation solutions for seniors and disabled residents. Other Health Action partners are working to create community gardens, “walkable” communities, educational programs and other collaborative programs that serve the public health and economic needs of the communities.
- ◆ There is no single cause of Food Deserts or Food Imbalance and no single solution. This is actually good news, because it means that **everyone can do something to improve good food access and health in Birmingham**. We're talking about **you!**
- ◆ **Main Street Birmingham** and the **City of Birmingham** will continue **working with its many partners on this issue**. Now that the study is complete, we are focused on solutions. We need your help and invite your participation.
- ◆ Join the **Health Action partnership**. Visit **www.theurbanfoodproject.org** for more information.