

A row of fresh produce including an apple, pear, cabbage, tomato, asparagus, another apple, and a cucumber. The items are arranged horizontally on a light blue surface against a light green background. The text is overlaid in the center.

Healthy Food Overlay

United Pastors for Social Empowerment

The Fair Housing Center



Roadmap

- Introductions – United Pastors for Social Empowerment, The Fair Housing Center
 - Understanding Food Deserts
 - Historical background and demographic trends
 - The City’s prior study on these issues
 - Addressing immediate concerns in the short term
 - Completing a study to finalize a text amendment to the zoning code.
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UPSE is a collaboration of Pastors, institutions and community members that come together to address the issues that disproportionately affect poor and marginalized populations living in our local post-industrial context. UPSE feels that the most effective way to address these issues is from a faith based-community collaboration and by utilizing a solution-centered approach.



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- The causes of food deserts in communities across the United States stem from one root: economic disinvestment in communities of color. Local issues might change the tune a little, but the song remains the same.
 - Food deserts create serious challenges for people who live in them. Inadequate nutrition is consistent with chronic disease, poor mental health, delayed child development, and reduced academic performance for children and adults.
 - The city's master plan addresses the unequal nature of disinvestment and the need to reverse it. The plan also identifies healthy food as a key component in creating a community that can sustain itself.
 - Lastly, the plan's map envisions neighborhood-scale mixed-use development on many commercial corridors in the city's food deserts.

The Fair Housing Center is a nonprofit civil rights agency that promotes housing choice, the creation of inclusive communities of opportunity, and the protection and expansion of fair housing rights to support strong communities free from housing discrimination.



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- Food deserts are identified in the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, as prepared by The Fair Housing Center.
 - “Residents in many areas of the city are living in food deserts without access to fresh, healthy food. Quality, affordable grocery stores are not located within walking distance and are not easily accessible by bus.”
 - “People living in food deserts seeking healthy food options may have to take multiple buses just to access a grocery store.”





What are food deserts?



Definition

USDA definition:

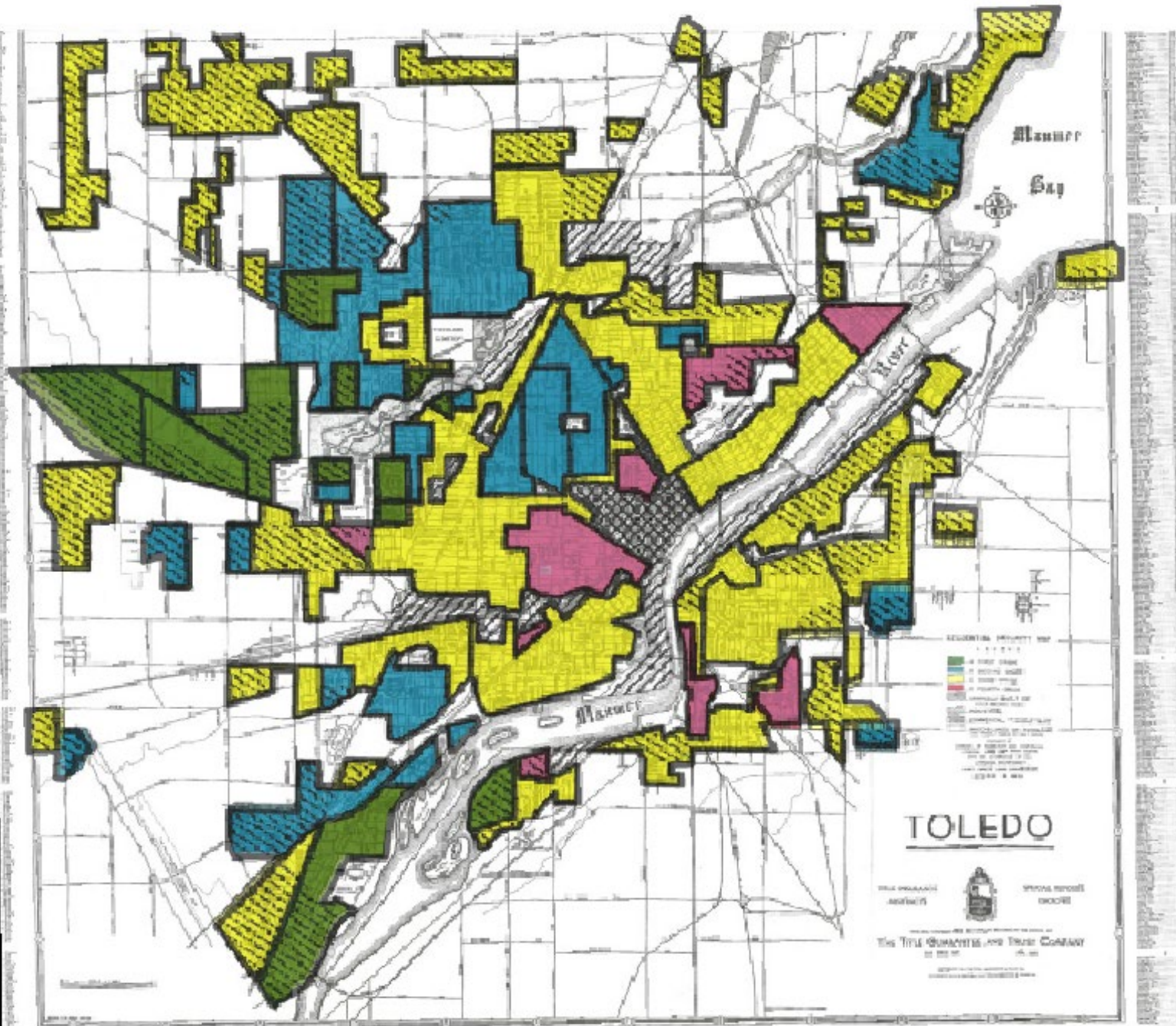
a low-income census tract where a substantial number of residents have limited access to healthy and affordable food

What is a “food swamp”?

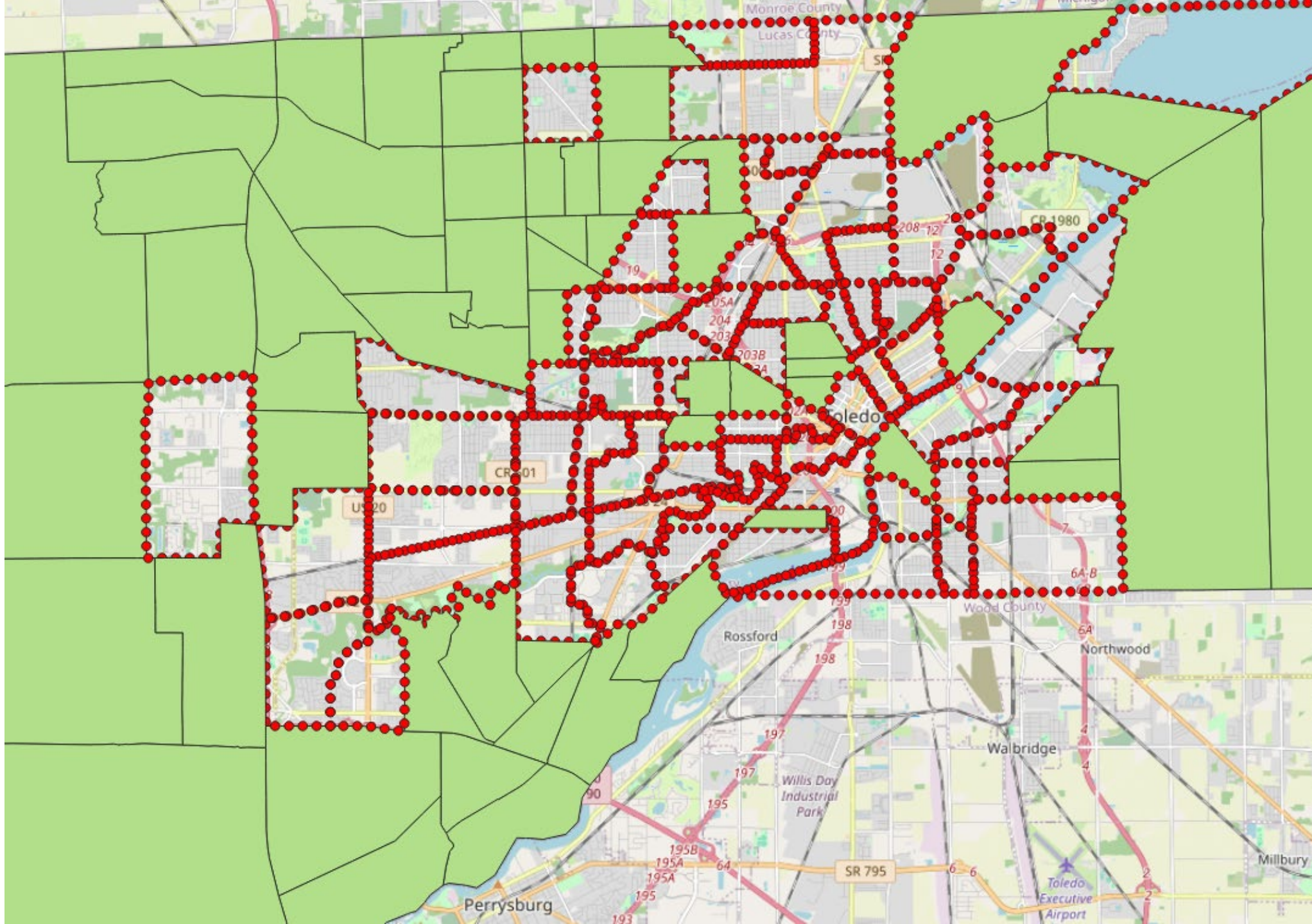
a neighborhood with a high concentration of unhealthy food options

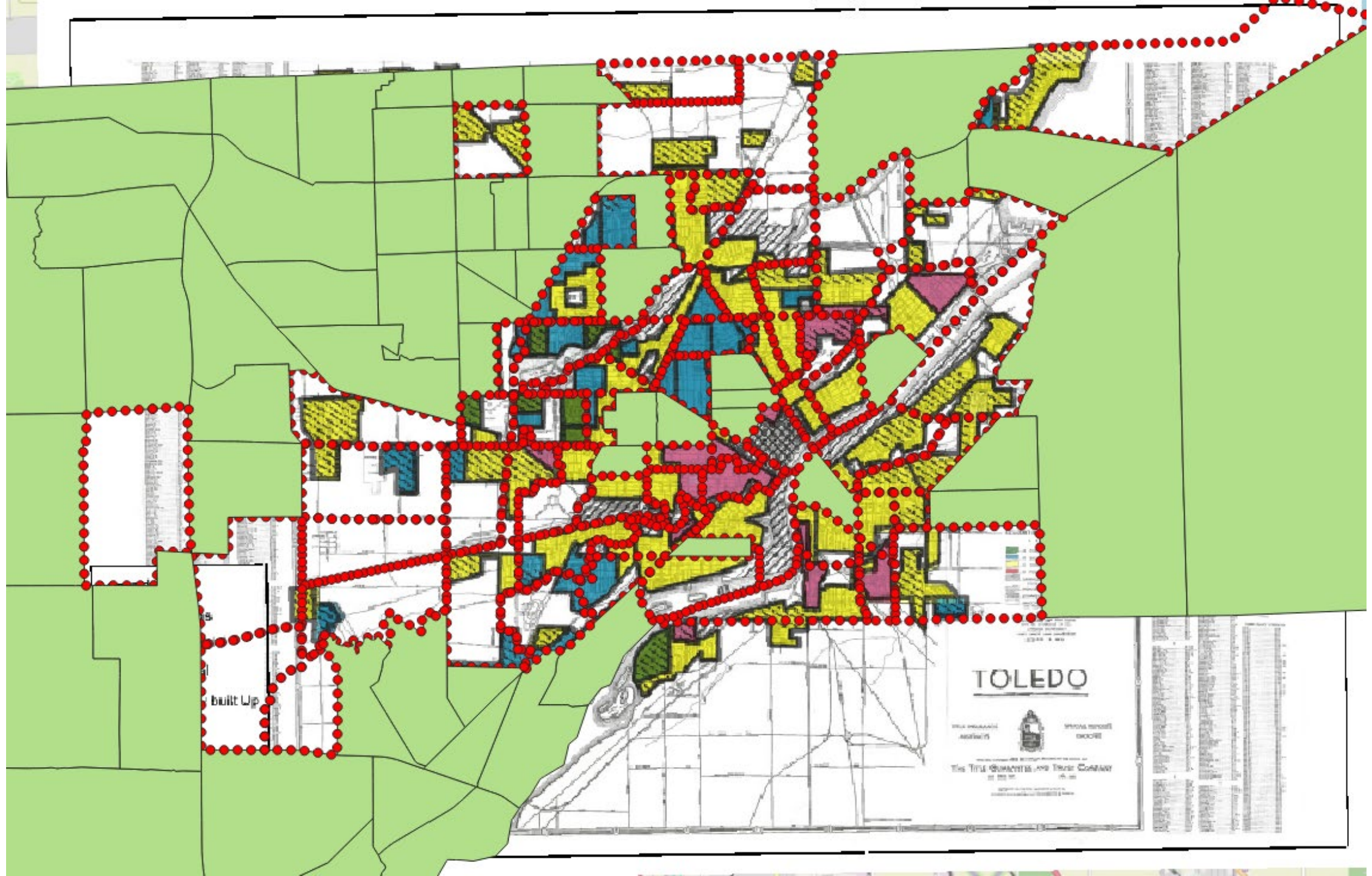


Historical Background and Demographic Trends

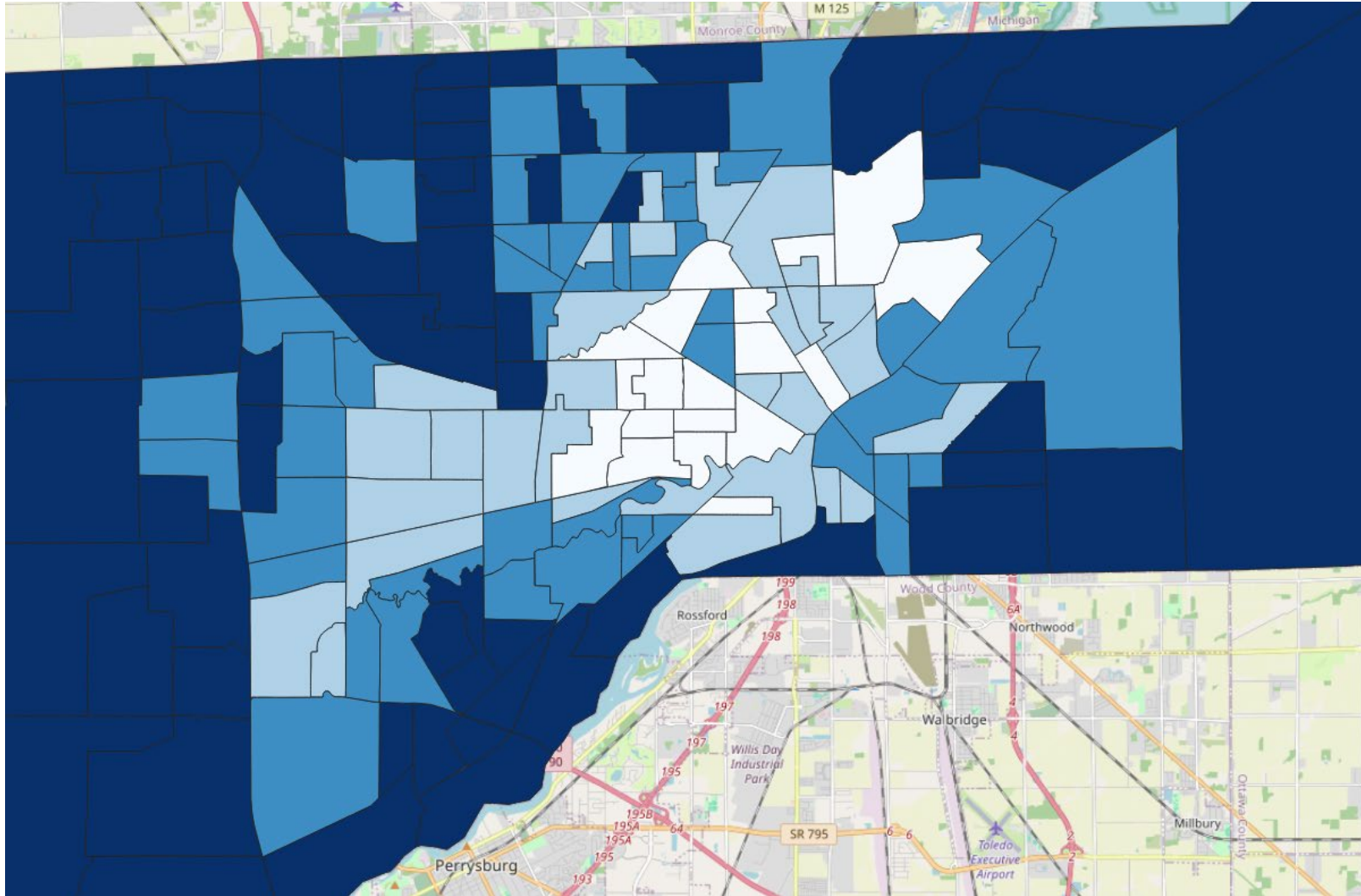


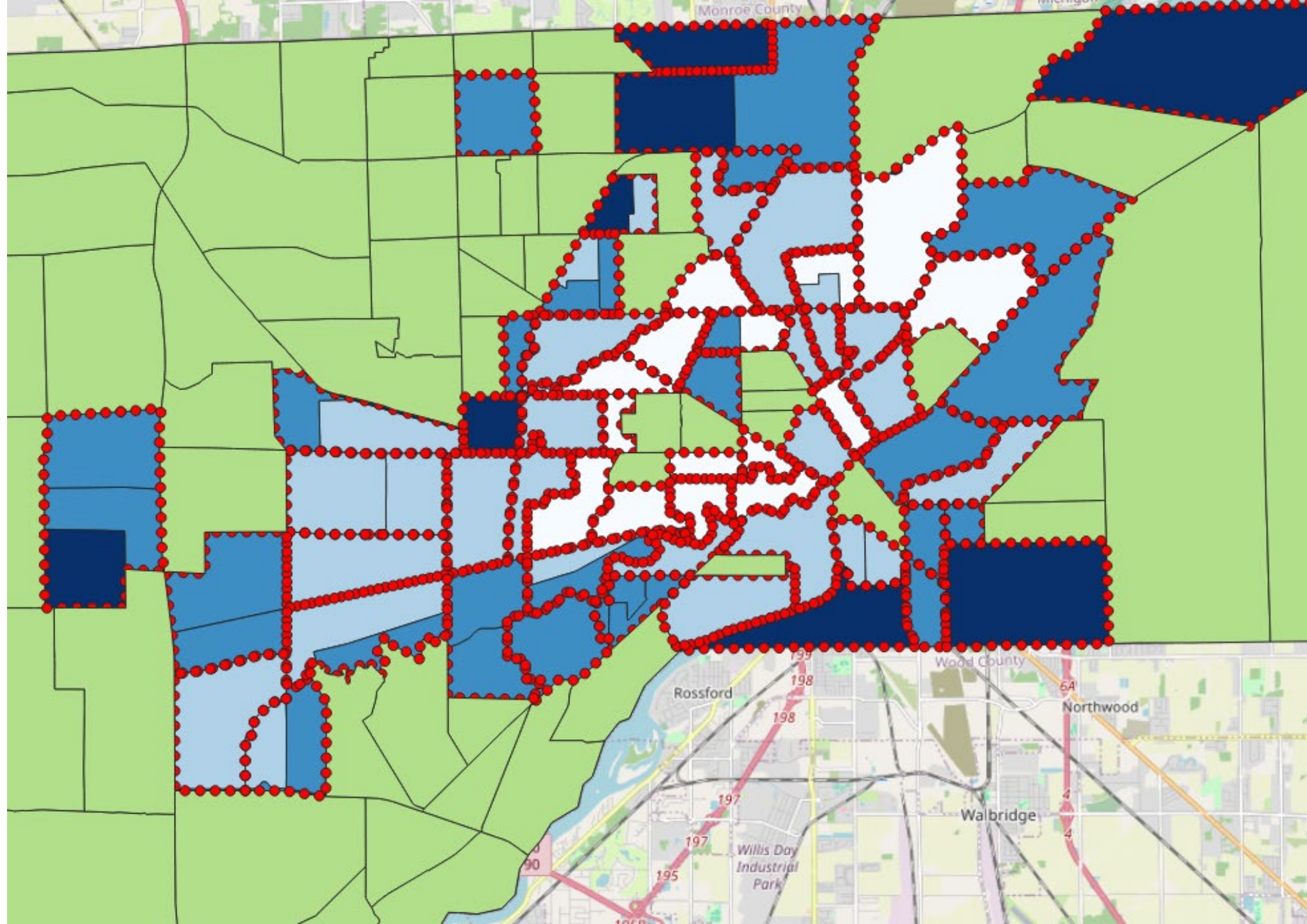
Food deserts and food swamps appear in historically disinvested areas - Redlining map, 1938





These same areas are also more likely to be predominantly non-white.





Background – Incentivizing businesses that provide healthy food.

There is a need for strategies that can open the market to allow for healthy food options in food swamp areas.

The City has previously studied these issues.

Key findings from the City's prior study

“Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no access to food, or are only served by fast food restaurants, convenience stores, and small box discount stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. The lack of access to fresh, healthy food contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.”

Key findings from the City's study

The lack of businesses that provide healthy foods, and the current food swamps:

- 1) Provide unhealthy, prepackaged food with little or no fresh food options,
- 2) saturate the market, making it difficult for grocery stores and other sources of fresh food to stay in business, and
- 3) discourage new businesses and sources of fresh food from opening

Immediate concerns

Rite Aid stores are closing and could be replaced with Small-Box Stores.

Need to prevent potential rush to take advantage of “grandfathering.”



We can overcome this challenge

Wrap up and next steps to eliminate food deserts

Wrap up

- **The urgent need to address food deserts in Toledo**
- Largely caused by economic disinvestment in communities of color. Food deserts result in inadequate nutrition, which is linked to chronic health issues, poor mental health, delayed child development, and reduced academic performance. Toledo's Master Plan, "Forward Toledo," addresses these disparities and proposes mixed-use development in food desert areas to reverse disinvestment and improve access to nutritious food.
- **An overlay zoning district as a tool to attract investment in healthy food sources and discourage businesses that hinder local economic growth, and instead create an opening in the market for healthy food providers.**
- Food swamps drive out local grocery options, restrict economic development, and harm community health. The proposed overlay district would incentivize grocery stores to offer fresh produce, modify regulations to make healthy food access easier, and align with mixed-use, walkable urban developments seen in successful projects like Dallas' cultural markets.
- **Vision and next steps: Create economically vibrant, culturally rich neighborhoods with local businesses providing healthy food and other businesses.**
- UPSE advocates for a study of the issue, engaging experts to develop a comprehensive overlay plan. We urge city leaders to collaborate on establishing this food desert overlay zone to reinvigorate under-resourced neighborhoods without displacing current residents.

Other cities have made progress; we can, too!

- In 2016, Kansas – Created a healthier market opening by limiting Small-Box Discount Stores.
- In 2018, Tulsa, Oklahoma healthy food overlay.
- In 2018, the city of Mesquite, Texas Created a healthier market opening by limiting Small-Box Discount Stores. .
- In 2019, New Orleans created a healthier market opening by limiting Small-Box Discount Stores.
- In 2019, Birmingham, Alabama established a "Healthy Food Overlay District."



Next step:
complete the
process of the
study and
zoning text
amendment.

- This matter should be studied again to complete the process for a zoning text amendment.
- This should be easier now because the City already completed a study previously on this matter.
- With this study, we suggest an evaluation of options to incentivize healthy food providers, such as grocery stores, and other more progressive steps.
- Tulsa, Oklahoma may be one good example of a “healthy food” overlay.
- We ask that the study review the potential for a similar healthy food overlay.

Conclusion

- We have provided potential ordinance language for the suggested study.
- We look forward to working with Council and the Plan Commission as this proposal proceeds.

Thank you!

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the
FAIR HOUSING
center