

***Resolution on the Cessation of Food Insecurity, Apartheid and Supermarket Redlining in Chattanooga, Tennessee***

**WHEREAS**, the 2008 Farm Bill defined a food desert as an “area in the United States with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly areas composed of predominantly lower income neighborhoods and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the USDA list some of the defining characteristics for many of these areas as a high proportion of households that live below the poverty threshold, transportation hurdles, and an inadequate  or nonexistent number of food service retailers that provide healthy and affordable  food options; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 23 million people, both urban and rural, live in low-income areas

that are a distance of more than 1 mile from a full service grocery store or supermarket, which provides 90 percent of healthy and affordable food options nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, the USDA study also conveyed that low-income census tracts had half as many supermarkets as wealthy tracts; and

**WHEREAS**, Foodindustry.com estimates that there are nearly 40,000 grocery stores in the nation that generate nearly 700 billion annually; and

**WHEREAS**, PolicyLink and The Food Trust found in their study "The Grocery Gap, Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why it Matters", that low-income zip codes have 30 percent more convenience stores, while more affluent communities have better access to nutritional foods that help produce greater health and wellness outcomes;

and

**WHEREAS**, the study also noted that active stakeholders and directly impacted communities have adopted several strategies for attracting or developing grocery stores and supermarkets, such as: (1) Developing other retail outlets such as farmers’ markets, public markets, cooperatives, farm stands, community supported agriculture programs, and mobile vendors (and ensuring public benefits can be used at these venues); (2) Increasing the stock of fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods at neighborhood corner stores or small groceries;

(3) Growing food locally through backyard and community gardens and larger-scale urban agriculture; and (4) Improving transportation to grocery stores and farmers markets; and

**WHEREAS**, these groceries and supermarkets are also economic and employment drivers within underserved communities that also house pharmacies that provide needed medications and vaccinations; and

**WHEREAS**, Mengyao Zhang and Ghosh Debarchana’s findings in "Spatial Supermarket Redlining and Neighborhood Vulnerability: A Case Study of Hartford, Connecticut" led them to document numerous instances of "Supermarket Redlining", which  they described as a phenomenon that occurs when major chain supermarkets are disinclined to locate their stores in inner cities or low-income neighborhoods and pull their existing stores out and relocate them to suburbs; and

**WHEREAS**, Walmart is the largest grocer with over 4700 stores that generates close to $200 billion annually; and

**WHEREAS**, a 2016 edition of the Washington Post, “Poor, rural areas will be most affected by Walmart closing 154 stores,” and an August 2020 report by CNBC, “Why Grocery Stores Are Avoiding Black Neighborhoods”, stated that over 120 of the more than 150 U.S. Walmart grocery closures as of that time were in low income and minority communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2016 in response to a food access resolution, the City of Austin developed the following recommendations which included: (1) Complete a Food Environment Analysis; (2) Expand Healthy Food Retail Initiatives; (3) Increase Urban Food Production; (4) Pilot a Nutritious Food Incentive Program; (5) Develop a Coordinated Awareness Campaign

About Nutritious Food Resources; (6) Create Safe Routes to Markets; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Minneapolis has included equitable food access and distribution as part of its 2040 plan and has set goals to achieve this which includes: (1) Assess and review the spatial distribution of healthy food sources and identify gaps; (2) Expand areas where grocery stores are allowed; (3) Take proactive steps to attract new grocery stores to locations in low-income communities, including providing financial and technical support for grocery store expansion, remodeling or equipment upgrades; (4) Build constructive relationships with store owners to foster improvements in healthy food offerings, as well as to extend general assistance in business planning and technical support; (5) Explore and implement regulatory changes to allow and promote more innovative practices such as mobile food markets and mobile food pantries or food shelves that can bring food closer to under-resourced customers; (6) Require licensed grocery stores to stock nutritious foods; (7) Explore regulations that discourage unhealthy food outlets; (8) Support the location and growth of culturally diverse food markets throughout the city; and

**WHEREAS**, the Healthy Food Access for All Americans Act (HFAAA) has recently been introduced in the U. S. Congress which would expand access to affordable and nutritious food in areas designated as “food deserts” by the U.S. Department of Agriculture; and

**WHEREAS**, the Atlanta City Planning and Zoning Office noted in a 2019 overview that, "A proliferation of small retail stores are concentrated in economically depressed areas with scarce access to healthy and affordable food options”; and

**WHEREAS**, on an annual basis, the United States food waste is between 30-40 percent of the food supply, and a recent report from Rubicon has found 103 million tons (81.4 billion pounds) of food waste was generated in the United States in 2018, the equivalent of over 450,000 Statue of Liberties; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, we call for an immediate cessation of food insecurity, apartheid and supermarket redlining throughout Chattanooga Hamilton County because of the irreparable harm it is causing to food access, security, and the health and welfare of thousands of black, brown and poor residents in this municipality; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, we call for an Emergency Expansion of the Feed the Community program which will serve as an immediate stop gap measure that may help residents receive healthy and nutritious food with the impending closure of the Walmart Grocery, located at Shallowford Rd.; and

**BE IT RESOLVED**, we call for an urban agricultural zone to be established in the communities that surround the Walmart Shallowford Rd location so that those strategies that might end the food insecurity of these areas might be able to be identified, which includes community gardens, co-ops and mobile food markets; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, we call for the City of Chattanooga to adopt measures closely aligned with the Austin and Minneapolis plans, which includes

a Food Environment Analysis of disadvantaged and marginalized neighborhoods in this city.

**FURTHER**, we call for a youth and juvenile agricultural project to be established so that young people may gain skills that might lead to more future food security, sustainability, and that will introduce them to career paths associated within the growing field of Agriculture;

**FINALLY**, we agree with the United Nations who have outlined four basic rights to food, which are (1) availability; (2) affordability, (3) accessibility, (4)sustainability, and who proclaims, "The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.”

Unity Group of Chattanooga,

Sherman E Matthews Jr., Chairman

Eric Atkins, Corresponding Secretary

Undersigned by:

The Community Haven

Eastdale Village Community UMC

Concerned Citizens for Justice.