

THE BOK CHOY PROJECT

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#FEEDTHEWEST JULY 2020

**CHANGE TODAY,
CHANGE
TOMORROW**

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OUR CHALLENGE

Louisville's West End is a food desert. The predominantly Black Russell neighborhood is home to the state's poorest zip code. Despite the mayor's claims of diversity and inclusion, the area has been marked for gentrification and other anti-Black policies. The Blackest zip codes in Louisville, KY tend to live a decade less than more affluent zip codes. In the West End there is about 1 full service grocer per 25,000 residents, compared to a Jefferson County wide ratio of 1 per every 12,500 residents.

According to the Community Foundation of Louisville, more than 120,000 residents struggle with food insecurity.

From 2011-2015, there were 335 infant deaths in Louisville Metro, out of 49,577 total births. Far and away, preterm births, low birth weights and infant mortality disproportionately affect Black babies. This is important because infant outcomes can impact health throughout the rest of one's life. While infant mortality has slowly been falling, the death rate for Black babies from 2011- 2015 was 1.95 times higher than for Louisville Metro; 2.31 times higher than for White babies. (Louisville Metro 2017 Health Equity Report).

Black residents in Louisville are much more likely than white residents to have diabetes and heart disease. Black children are more likely to suffer from health issues, which lead to truancy and incarceration. The Kroger Co. (NYSE: KR), reported fiscal 2019 sales of \$122.3 Billion.

This is why #FeedTheWest focuses on food justice through racial justice.

RESEARCH METHODS

WHY BOK CHOY?

I was born in the West End and raised in Sheppard Square Housing Projects. I never saw or heard of bok choy until I owned a grocery coop in Maryland in my thirties. Growing up in a food desert means we lack access to sustainable nutrition. A child in the West End is much more likely to see a pizza role than a plantain. Bok choy represents the lack of access to fresh, nutritious food for the majority of Black Louisville.

#FeedTheWest enlisted volunteers to support this research. Over a three week period, volunteers were asked to document the produce sections of Kroger locations in different zip codes to find out whether there was a difference in the products offered between predominantly Black neighborhoods vs. predominantly white neighborhoods. These were the specific instructions for volunteers:

1. Take 5-10 photos in each Kroger location (at least 2 with a panoramic or wide shot view, at least 3 close up photos that show the quality of produce)
2. Name each photo with the zip code, date, and photo type (example: "40212-July6-WideView" or "40212-July6-CarrotCloseup"). All 10 location photos must be taken on the same day, in the morning so we have consistency.
3. List store hours for each location
4. Send 1 email to FeedTheWest@change-today.org with all labeled photos from that day.

In addition to documenting the produce section, please note the following:

- Did the store have empty sections?
- Were there expired items?
- Was there a lack of organic options?
- Was bok choy available?

During the Bok Choy Project, volunteers followed COVID-19 guidelines for safety.

**THE BOK
CHOY
PROJECT**
PHOTO ESSAY

PHOTO CREDIT: NICOLE FUNK

40299 - TAYLORSVILLE RD

BLACK POPULATION: 11%



Store Hours: Sun-Sat 6 AM – Midnight
BOK CHOY AVAILABLE

Notes: There was a huge array of produce and lots of space for the produce section; lots of organic options and less common things like parsnips.

40220 - HIKE'S POINT

BLACK POPULATION: 13%



Store Hours: Sun-Sat 6 AM – Midnight
BOK CHOY AVAILABLE

Notes: Lots of options, volunteer was told by an associate that Kroger won't let you take pictures to compare prices online.

40217 - GOSS AVE

BLACK POPULATION: 5%



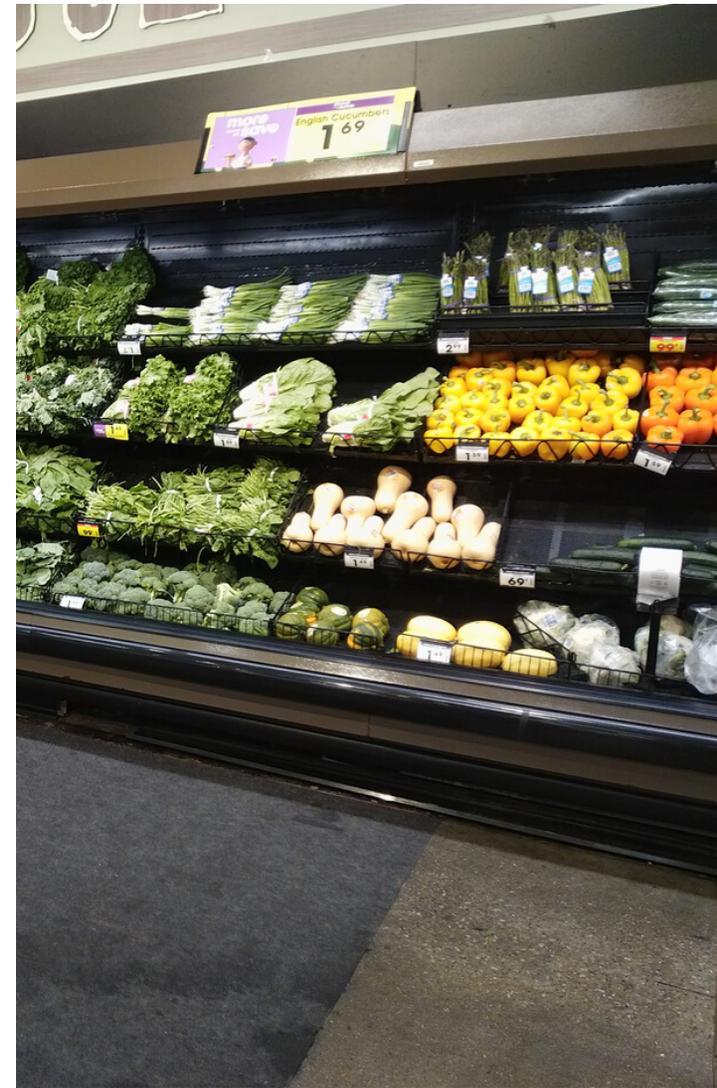
Store Hours: Sun-Sat 6 AM – 10 PM

BOK CHOY AVAILABLE

Notes: Big selection, very similar to Taylorsville and Hikes, but a little smaller. The only thing that didn't look great quality was some Swiss Chard.

40211 - WEST BROADWAY

BLACK POPULATION: 92%

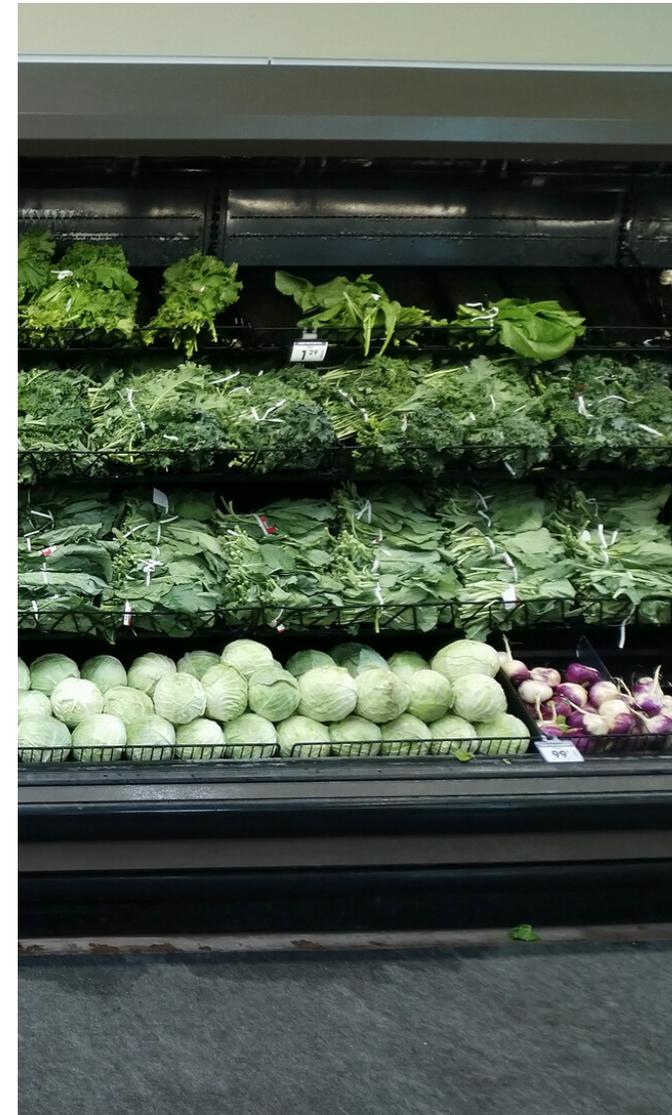


Store Hours: Sun-Sat 7 AM – 9 PM
NO BOK CHOY

Very small produce section. Didn't look like there were many, (if any), organic options. Tropical/Latin American produce section more limited (no plantains, dragonfruit). Less of most things, especially peaches & avocados. There was a police car stationed out front.

40212 - N. 35TH STREET

BLACK POPULATION: 59%



Store Hours: Sun-Sat 8 AM - 9 PM
NO BOK CHOY

Pretty small produce section, similar size to West Broadway. Not many organic options, several empty sections. uniformed officer inside near entrance.

	40299	40220	40217	40211	40212
BOK CHOY AVAILABLE?	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
ORGANIC OPTIONS	11	9	8	3	2
POLICE OFFICERS?	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
BLACK POPULATION	11%	13%	5%	92%	59%

Population data based on 2018 U.S. Census tract



THE FUTURE OF #FEEDTHEWEST

#FeedTheWest will continue to offer free groceries to West End residents until we have a sustainable Black-run grocery store in the West. Starting in August, we will host 2 All-Black Farmers' market events.

CALL TO ACTION:

Call/email/tweet this report to Kroger CEO Rodney McMullen. Ask him why he gave himself a raise instead of giving Black people healthy food. *According to Louisville Business Journal, Kroger Co. boosted the compensation of CEO Rodney McMullen by 21% last year, driven by a boost in stock awards tied to performance incentives. Demand that he donate \$5 million to #FeedTheWest.*

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BLACK LIVES MATTER LOUISVILLE



RESOURCES

- 2006 Why it's Easier to Get a Burger than Broccoli on West Broadway: The geography of food insecurity in Louisville, with a focus on the West End and East Downtown (Samuel Raskin, KY Farm Alliance)
- 2017 Louisville Metro Health Equity Report
- 2018 U.S. Census ZCTA5 Race and Ethnicity
- Black Lives Matter Louisville
- 2020 Ending Food Insecurity: It Will Take Us All (Community Foundation of Louisville)