

# Metro Council Creates Scotlandville Food Access Commission (SFAC)

**BATON ROUGE, LA** — The Metro Council created the Scotlandville Food Access Commission during the council meeting held on May 24, 2023. The newly established commission will work collectively on actions to provide healthy food options in Scotlandville, which will improve the economic vitality of the area through job creation, complementary development, and increased home values.

“Providing access to healthy and affordable food continues to be a top priority. This is an incredible initiative for the Scotlandville community. The commission will initially endeavor to support the research documenting the need for grocery stores highlighting the significant difficulties communities face when looking to attract grocery store developments and drawing grocery stores into historically underserved areas of the city,” **said Metro Councilwoman Chauna Banks.**

In 2020, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) found that Black non-Hispanic households were more than two times as likely to experience food insecurity than the national average (21.7% versus 10.5%, respectively). DHHS also found that predominantly Black and Hispanic neighborhoods may have fewer full-service supermarkets than predominantly White and non-Hispanic neighborhoods; that convenience stores may have higher food prices, lower-quality foods, and a smaller variety of foods than supermarkets or grocery stores, and that access to healthy foods is also affected by lack of transportation and long distances between residences and supermarkets or grocery stores.

“Through this commission, we can make a real difference in Scotlandville for our residents who have limited access to healthy foods. My neighbors don’t have options, leaving them to buy food from the neighborhood gas stations and fast-food restaurants,” **said Scotlandville CDC Board Chair, Pat LeDuff.** “A lack of grocery stores makes people eat unhealthy food too often and creates economic disparities.”

The Center for Planning Excellence, CPEX, recently worked with the Scotlandville community to develop a community-driven strategic plan to guide revitalization and enhance quality of life in the area. “A grocery store or access to healthy food was one of the highest needs we heard from community residents during our strategic planning process. Limited access to grocery stores and healthy food options negatively impacts quality of life and overall health outcomes,” **said CPEX Community Planner, Lyneisha Jackson.** “By bridging the food gap in Scotlandville,

we enhance access to health and well-being, while also creating opportunities to foster economic growth and redevelopment in Scotlandville.”

Building on a strong team of diverse community partners, the following organizations are represented on the commission:

- Metropolitan Councilmember for District 2
- The Center for Planning Excellence
- The Baton Rouge Planning Commission
- The Scotlandville Area Foundation
- Southern University System Foundation
- Mayor’s Office Director of Community Revitalization
- The Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation
- Baton Rouge North Economic Development District
- Build Baton Rouge
- Scotlandville Community Development Corporation
- Together Baton Rouge

The Scotlandville Food Access Commission will meet on **Monday, June 12th at 1:00 p.m.**, at the Scotlandville Branch Library, 7373 Scenic Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70807.