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Baltimore and the Cherry Hill Urban Garden: Tearing Down and Building Up the Physical and Imaginative Spaces of Post-Industrial Urban Food Systems

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Keywords
food justice, urban political ecology, urban agriculture, post-industrialism, Baltimore

Disciplines
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Physical and Imaginative Spaces of Post-Industrial Urban Food Systems

An Environmental Studies Department Independent Research Project (ES450)
by
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Studies of justice need food, and studies of food need justice

--Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, p. 332

Abstract

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Introduction
Taking a Step Back:
Some Food for Thought about the Industrial Process in the United States

The Industrial Revolution was another one of those extraordinary jumps forward in the story of civilization.
                                                                                    --Stephen Gardiner

Over the past two and a half centuries, a global thrust toward industrialization has transformed the way we live and think about our world. The process of industrialization, which varies according to region and time, is the shifting of an economy's resources from small-scale subsistence activities toward the larger scale and more mechanized manufacturing of finished goods (Kiely, 1998; Rapley, 2007). This process has brought opportunities for economic growth and societal consolidation to regions across the globe. Its proven ability to generate growth and order has made it a blueprint for delivering a product or running a system as efficiently as possible. For this reason, it is no surprise that the production and consumption of food has been one of many systems to undergo a process of industrialization on a global scale. Since every human being is necessarily involved in the food system in one way or another, assessing the outcomes of its industrial transformation provides a critical opportunity to view how the industrial process manifests across different spatial contexts and different members of society.

The United States in particular has experienced and approached industrialization as the "extraordinary jump forward" articulated by British architect and writer, Stephen Gardiner. In the mid to late eighteenth century, industrial transformations were spreading from Great Britain

throughout Europe. The United States, founded in 1776, was born into a climate of burgeoning industrial development. Because of its increasingly vast territory and its large reserves of natural resources, the newly independent nation was perfectly situated to embark upon an extensive industrial project. Throughout the nineteenth century, the United States led the way in industry, saturating its territory with factories, ship ports, railroads, as well as patenting industrial inventions such as the cotton gin, the sewing machine, the steel plow, and the telegraph (Morris, 2012). As a result, economic development and populations boomed across the country. New cities were established around different industrial opportunities; and livelihood activities such as food and clothing production began to take place in factories rather than within households.

By the mid twentieth century, countries across the globe were crafting their own industrialization projects, leading to a global industrial revolution, one that continues to impact the United States in a variety of ways. While in some respects, today's United States economy benefits from the increased availability of factories and labor in industrializing countries with lower wage laws, it also suffers the consequences of domestic unemployment, dependence on outside nations for basic goods, and declining urban areas that once featured industrial jobs (McMichael, 2000; Bardhan & Kroll, 2003; Beauregard, 2003).

Economists and social scientists have come to describe the current socioeconomic experience in the United States as a "post-industrial" period (Bell, 1976; Hall, 1997; Berry, 2011) in which the society relies on "economics of information" rather than "economics of goods" (Bell, 1976, 92). Navigating this post-industrial period demands that we take a moment to realize where our civilization has landed from its monumental "jump forward," so that we can proceed from this place in an informed and reflective way. My goal is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the conditions and the challenges of this post-industrial period in the United States by exploring how the interconnected and concurrent issues of food and race manifest

currently in today's post-industrial Baltimore, which is the state of Maryland's largest city and located an hour northeast of the nation's capital, Washington DC. This exploration takes its point of departure from a larger body of research on food studies, outlined in the following section.

Food Studies Literature Review:
Where Are We in Food Thinking and How Did We Get Here?

In the context of food, global industrialization has resulted in a predominant dependence on an industrialized, corporatized, and globally interconnected food production system for basic food consumption needs (Cockrall-King, 2012). The global, industrial food system was propelled forward in the 1950s and 1960s by the Green Revolution, a movement that sought to technologically transform agriculture through the development of high-yielding crop varieties (Gaud, 1968; Brown, 1970; Randhawa, 1974). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) describes the Green Revolution as when "modern science was put to use to find ways of producing more food" as well as "breakthroughs in the development of agro-chemicals, like pesticides and fertilizers" (FAO, 2013). In 1974, United States Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger vowed that because of the ongoing successes of the Green Revolution, "within a decade, no man, woman or child will go to bed hungry" (UN General Assembly, 1974). Four decades later, this promise remains unfulfilled, as we continue to struggle with the seemingly paradoxical fact that the Green Revolution has produced just as many hungry people as it has liberated (Nzimiro, 1985; Lappé et. al, 1986; FAO, 2013). The single statistic of a percent increase in worldwide hunger, however, does not tell the whole story of the global, industrial food system, and a considerable amount of research has been done to expose and investigate the multiple facets and complex effects of this system.

In the 1970s and 1980s, academics and policy makers began to take a more detailed look into the shortcomings and the consequences of the technological and industrial transformations of agriculture. Tending to focus mainly on issues of inequality on a global scale, this work discussed how corporate actors from the Global North were benefitting from dominating and consolidating the means of agricultural production, while Global South populations were absorbing the costs: hunger, poverty, displacement, livelihood change, environmental degradation, and internal conflict (Cleaver, 1972; Griffin, 1974; Pearse, 1980; Dhanagare, 1987). These studies connected industrialized agriculture to Western imperialism, claiming it undermined subsistence farming livelihoods, and ultimately concluding that the new system's polarizing effects were leading to global scale marginalization of the rural poor and the consolidation of power for Western industrialists.

In the 1990s and into the 2000s, the conversation began to evolve, raising not only issues of inequality between countries and regions of the world, but also emphasizing the inequalities within individual countries, individual regions, and individual cities (Lobao, 1990; Lang, 1999; Gottlieb & Joshi, 2012). Studies of food issues in North America exposed the ways in which the industrial food system has intersected with domestic inequalities to create regional and localized inequalities in terms of food quality and access. This type of work has marked an important shift in food research, food policy, and food activism in the United States because it demanded a look inward at the food system issues occurring in our own towns and neighborhoods as a result of our economic and agricultural policies and systems.

Out of this shift in food research emerges the food justice (FJ) framework of environmental social scientists Alison Hope Alkon and Julian Agyeman. Their food justice framework challenges food activists, scholars, producers, and consumers alike to contemplate the ways in which "race and class play a central role in organizing the production, distribution, and

consumption of food" (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, p. 4). More specifically, analyzing food through

a FJ framework exposes the ways that industrialized food has intersected with institutionalized

racism to produce outcomes such as food deserts, fast food jungles, supermarket redlining, and

health crises in low-income and predominately people of color (POC) neighborhoods

(Eisenhauer, 2003; Allen, 2008; Larson et. al, 2009; McClintock, 2011). Exposing these racially

and socially problematic components of our current food system enables us to move toward new

ways of thinking about, and producing, food that is not only more environmentally sustainable

than current ones, but also more socially just. In their 2011 book, *Cultivating Food Justice*, Alkon

and Agyeman showcase the stories of several farm projects and food movements occurring across

the United States that are articulating and operationalizing a fight for justice that challenges

current systems of food production and consumption. My research on Baltimore and the city's

Farm Alliance takes its point of departure from this type of food justice scholarship by showcasing

the story of one urban garden in particular. The Cherry Hill Urban Garden, which is located in

the predominantly African-American neighborhood of Cherry Hill, (Figure 1) is rooted in food

justice work. By also drawing on the scholarship of urban political ecology (UPE), this research

not only describes food injustice in Cherry Hill and in Baltimore more broadly, but also seeks to

expose its causes.

Theoretical Framework: Joining Up Food Justice and Urban Political Ecology

Cities are dense networks of interwoven sociospatial processes that are simultaneously local and global, human and physical, cultural and organic.

--Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003, p. 899

To bring the narrative of Baltimore's industrialization and food justice issues into a

dialogue that seeks to expose and analyze the inequalities of the city's food system, I employ a

combination of two conceptual frameworks: Alkon & Agyeman's food justice framework (FJ) and Swyngedouw & Heynen's Marxist urban political ecology framework (UPE). As discussed above, Alkon & Agyeman's FJ framework exposes inequalities and injustices within food systems, while conceptualizing ways of achieving equal access to quality food consumption and to participation in food production. Their FJ framework scrutinizes the larger systems and structures of racial and socioeconomic discrimination that generate these inequalities. In particular, they are critical of capitalist neoliberal models that depend on individual consumer-market exchanges as the solution to food issues and thus, perpetuate economic legacies of privilege versus poverty (Alkon & Agyeman, 2011). Like FJ, the Marxist UPE framework also seeks to expose inequalities and injustices of present-day systems, but takes as its focus urban systems and urban landscapes in particular, making spatial and temporal concerns a crucial investigation. Marxist urban political ecologists Erik Swyngedouw and Nikolas C Heynen express the need for "historical-geographical insights into ever-changing urban configurations" in order to expose urban inequalities and conceptualize future strategies for achieving "a more equitable distribution of social power and a more inclusive mode of environmental production" (2003, p. 898). By combining FJ's focus on the unjust material realities of food systems with UPE's focus on historical-spatial insight into the causes of these realities, the theoretical framework of this paper employs Baltimore's geographical history as the explanatory power for exposing current landscapes of food injustice in the city.

The idea of integrating justice with spatial and temporal scrutiny can be seen in the scholarship of both groups. In a 2003 paper, Swyngedouw & Heynen assert that "an urgent task lies ahead in terms of fusing critical urban theory with critical political ecology" which includes an undertaking of the "question of whose nature is or becomes urbanised," (p. 915). These ideas purport a need for social justice and social equity discourse in the Marxist UPE scholarship. Since the announcement of this task, Heyman has published multiple studies that bring social

justice and food justice into the forefront of Marxist UPE literature (Heynen, 2003; Heynen & Kurtz et. al, 2012; Heynen, 2006), one of which describes a "political ecology of urban hunger" (2006, p. 131). While political ecologists have always concerned themselves with exposing and analyzing the "unequal distribution of environmental costs and benefits" (Bryant & Bailey, 1997, p. 27), Swyngedouw & Heynen seem to be pushing for even greater engagement with the unjust material outcomes and social realities of these inequality-generating processes.

FJ scholar Julian Agyeman officially and explicitly rallies for this conceptual union in his most recent co-authored article with Jesse McEntee, "Moving the Field of Food Justice Forward Through the Lens of Urban Political Ecology" (2014). By proposing that "urban political ecology's historical-geographical materialist approach illuminates the focal concerns of FJ [and] mov[es] analysis to discussions of explanatory potential" (2014, pp. 216-217), the authors identify the potential for UPE's geographic and historical concerns to help FJ scholars elucidate the large-scale forces that create situations of food injustice. Agyeman and McEntee go on to explain that the integration of UPE thinking into FJ thinking not only constitutes an opportunity to deepen academic scholarship, but also, and more urgently, addresses the need to defend the FJ movement from co-optation by the profit-driven neoliberal structures that created issues of food injustice in the first place. In the case of Baltimore, the city's history as manifested through its sociocultural and spatial contours serves to reveal the process by which systemic food injustice is created. The following historical analysis of Baltimore focuses on the critical factors of industrialization and race, with the twofold purpose of: 1) addressing the original research question concerning the causes of the demand for a food justice movement in Baltimore, and 2) contextualizing the particular farm project that this paper showcases, the Cherry Hill Urban Garden.

Baltimore's Historical Context:
Intersections Between Industry, Race, and Oppressive Politics

There are many lenses through which to look at the history of Baltimore. Following a FJ and UPE lens, I focus on industrial development and race relations as the primary determinants of the current spatial and racial conditions of the city. Revealing these conditions and their historical causes ultimately exposes and explains why issues of food injustice afflict the city, as well as why grassroots organizing around food issues have emerged.

In the history that follows, I explore four general periods of Baltimore's development as a city: the colonial period, the abolitionist period, the segregationist period, and the post-World War II period. I focus on the urban history of Baltimore but take on the perspective that the city was created, defined, and shaped by the tobacco production that was occurring in the surrounding area, thus the history of Baltimore is really the history of both urban and rural processes. As environmental historian, William Cronon (1991) reminds us in his work on Chicago's history, one cannot understand the growth of a city without understanding its relationship to the land from which it arose.

The Colonial Period:

In 1632, British colonists established the city of Baltimore, known then as Baltimore Town, at the site where the Piscataway and Susquehannock people then resided (Ferguson & Ferguson, 1960; Ricky, 1999; Wiener & Arnold, 2005). The colonists chose this location because of the presence of a natural harbor, fast-flowing rivers, forests, and fertile land. These ecological features made the area an ideal contribution to the colonial project because of their suitability for agriculture, processing of value-added products, transport, and trade (Sonneborn, 2003; Wiener

& Arnold, 2005; Dilworth, 2011). Over the course of the next hundred years, these ecological features were put to use toward the creation of a major tobacco industry, which accumulated vast amounts of wealth for some (white colonists) and destroyed the lives and the livelihoods of others (Native Americans and African slaves).

The tobacco industry in Maryland links to a specific set of race relations between the people living in this region at the time of its development. Specifically, the economic success of Maryland's tobacco industry was made possible at the expense of and through the oppression of two groups of people: the original inhabitants of the land and inhabitants of Africa, who were brought to the Americas through the slave trade. The original inhabitants, the Piscataway and the Susquehannock, were obliterated through colonial diseases and violent conflict, as more Europeans colonized their land and converted it into tobacco fields. Groups of people from the African continent were then forcefully taken from their land to work as slaves on the tobacco plantations (Sonneborn, 2011).

Maryland's tobacco plantations continued to thrive, and consequently, continued to demand free labor. By 1755, forty percent of the colony's population was comprised of black slaves (Harmer, 2001). Baltimore's involvement in the planning of the Revolutionary War that followed the tobacco boom paints an ironic picture of a group of freedom fighters coming from an area in which nearly half the population was not free. Baltimore's early industrial history shows that its initial establishment as a city was deeply entrenched in: 1) a process of industrialization, and 2) the racist and oppressive practices of colonialism.

Maryland's colonial foundations may seem like a distant and unrelated past when considering the city's current situation, but the same colonial-industrial forces that created inequality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have maintained a problematic presence

today in the devaluation of labor, the marginalization of people of color, and the prioritization of capital accumulation.

Abolitionist Period:

In the 1820s, the abolitionist movement began to articulate and promote a fight for freedom of the nation's African slave population. Baltimore's city leaders, as representatives of a state situated at the Mason-Dixon line, responded with politics of separation, exclusion, and oppression. A variety of laws were passed that deemed it illegal for slave owners to free their slaves; more drastically freed blacks would have to leave the state unless the court found them to be of "extraordinarily good conduct and character" (Freehling, 1991, p. 204). In addition to forcing freed African slaves to leave the state, the city of Baltimore, and namely the Maryland State Colonization Society, was involved in founding the Republic of Maryland and Liberia, as new nations in West Africa to which they would "repatriate" free Africans, regardless of what part of Africa they were originally from (Phillips, 1997). The practice of simply sending free blacks away during the abolitionist period, to other states or other continents, proved entirely unfeasible. By the start of the Civil War, Baltimore had the largest free African American community in the nation (Fields, 1985; Rockman, 2009).

Segregationist Period:

Once slavery was officially abolished in the state of Maryland in 1864, Baltimore's policy makers began to enact a series of segregationist policies that endangered the free status of the African American population (Pietila, 2010). Citing the "separate but equal" thinking of the Supreme Court's 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson, the Baltimore City Council consolidated their segregationist efforts by passing a law mandating that "no negro can move into a block in which more than half of the residents are white" and "no white person can move into a block in which

more than half of the residents are colored" (Baltimore City, Ordinance 692, 1910). This legislation represents a systematic race separation that was employed in early twentieth century Baltimore in response to the Great Migration, the influx of free African Americans from the South into northern cities (Power, 1983; Zeiderman, 2006; Tucker, 2012).

Ordinance 692, however, did not endure, for reasons of both impracticality and illegality. Residential segregation was impossible as the population as a whole was growing rapidly. In 1917, the Supreme Court unanimously repealed Baltimore's residential segregation law, a move that was articulated around the right of the homeowner to sell to whomever he wished (Higginbotham, 1996; Pietila, 2010). In the years that followed, the intertwined industrial and racial stories of Baltimore continued to play out in Baltimore's "Progressive Era" thinking, as many, drawing on deep-seated racial ideologies, forwarded a political rhetoric of free African Americans as a societal ill (Pietila, 2010). Through this line of thinking, systematic racism shifted from legislation into real estate, as neighborhood covenants and zoning practices throughout the mid twentieth century continued to stratify white and black residential spaces within Baltimore.

In spite of the spatial exclusion that Baltimore's African American community was facing at this time, the boom in industrial production spurred by World War II brought employment opportunities to the African American community, as "labor shortages forced plants to hire population groups that never had made much money to begin with" (Pietila, 2010, p. 78). Racist attitudes and practices toward black populations in public spaces and labor spaces, however, continued to dominate Baltimore's political discourse through the 1940s, especially as a housing crisis ensued. One representative stated in a public meeting that "if more negroes are brought here, they should be housed in trailers so that they can be easily moved out after the war is over" (Pietila, 2010, 80). Although Baltimore's black industry workers were not actually forced into a practice of living in trailers, the city leadership responded to the housing crisis with conventional

segregation practices. They established planned black neighborhoods away from white neighborhoods, such as McCulloh, Poe, Douglass, Gilmor, Somerset, and Cherry Hill (Housing Authority of Baltimore City, 2002, see Figure 1).

Post-War Period, Rise and Decline of Industry:

As the Second World War came to an end in 1945, black industry workers and black military service veterans took up residency in these planned communities. For residents of Cherry Hill, which was the first planned African American suburban neighborhood in the country, the benefits and comforts of suburban living were overshadowed by the inherent injustice of racial segregation that was at the core of the neighborhood's foundation (Samuels, 2008). Pietila (2010) explains that "for decades to come, politicians would find it easier to concentrate public housing projects in black areas or wastelands than to disperse them throughout the city," resulting in "a public housing program that would aggravate poverty and disease" (p. 86). The continuous practice of racial segregation that permeated Baltimore's urban and industrial development led to a situation of exacerbated inequality, socioeconomic struggle, and political neglect in Baltimore's black spaces, all of which became fodder for the race riots of the 1960s (Elfenbein & Nix, 2011).

The inextricable link between Baltimore's industrial development and its race relations becomes even clearer in the city's more recent history, specifically its post-industrial transformation. Dramatic demographic changes began in the 1960s and 1970s, as industry went overseas, and concurrently, Baltimore's white population left the inner city to live in the suburbs. While the total city population remained constant at this time, the African American population had grown and the white population had shrunk, so that by 1985, Baltimore's population was majority (60%) African American (Fee et al., 1991; Pietila, 2010). Consequently, public spending and private investment in the past three decades has gone mostly into Baltimore County's

suburban developments and into the city's tourist areas, instead of into urban residential spaces, a phenomenon occurring in cities all across the country (Sugrue, 1996; Levine, 2000). Divesting from Baltimore's inner city areas compounds with its declining industrial sector to create problematic outcomes such as high unemployment and urban blight. Today, the decline in industry has left over 30,000 empty lots and a 10.3% unemployment rate in Baltimore, of which the African American population (63.6% of total population) are bearing a disproportionate burden (U.S. Bureau of Labor, 2014; Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2014).

The primary purpose of this historical discussion is to consider reasons behind current stratified spatial patterns in the city of Baltimore, in order to then explain why inequality in food quality and access exists. At this point it is important to mention that throughout their history, Baltimore's black communities have enacted a variety of community organizing and social mobilization efforts in response to their city's racially unjust practices. To name a few: grassroots organizing efforts to create schools, in response to the exclusion of black children from the public school system until 1867; the 1955 Read's Drug Store sit-in by black college students, which was one of the first sit-ins in the nation; and the 1968 riots in protest of social and racial inequality in the city (McDougall, 1993; Elfenbein & Nix, 2011; Gunts, 2011).

Books have been devoted to black Baltimoreans' resistance and organization against racism and forces of inequality, as well as the efforts and support from other sectors of the population (see Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community; Baltimore '68: Riots and Rebirth in an American City, among others). Although this paper does not focus in-depth on the history of community organizing in Baltimore, that history has the potential to further contextualize the food justice movement that is occurring today by showing a continuum of grassroots action around racial and social justice.

What Baltimore's History Means for its Food System
Racial Injustice in Spatial Patterns-->Racial Injustice in the Food System

There is likely no other resource required for human survival that is as culturally bound yet so dependent upon material realities of the natural environment.

--Agyeman & McEntee, 2014, p. 217

In terms of the food system, as various studies reveal, racial stratification becomes particularly problematic when it manifests in an economic system that deems food as a commodity, and thus dependent on and dictated by market forces (Turque, 1992; Eisenhauer, 2001; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011, Agyeman & McEntree, 2013). Under this system, food retail chains seek out spaces where they can maximize profit, not where they can contribute to more equitable food access. The prioritization of profit-maximization engenders a phenomenon known as "supermarket redlining," within the supermarket industry, in which chains avoid operating in poor, underserved neighborhoods, thereby excluding the groups that live there from access to the variety of food options that only supermarkets offer (Turque, 1992; Eisenhauer, 2001; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011). In 1993, the Business Enterprise Trust revealed the internal logic of the industry, explaining, "it makes no sense to serve distressed areas when profits in the serene suburbs come so easily" (Business Enterprise Awards, 1993).

Since food access in today's industrialized society is deeply dependent on the supermarket industry, the dearth of supermarkets in low-income, predominantly People of Color (POC) neighborhoods creates food 'deserts' in these areas, while wealthier, whiter neighborhoods enjoy higher levels of food access and quality (Smoyer-Tomic et. al, 2006; Beaulac et. al, 2009; Alkon & Agyeman, 2011). In addition to the public health concerns about supermarket redlining and food deserts, there are also symbolic and cultural implications, because "the loss of a supermarket tugs especially hard at the fabric of a neighborhood. More than an economic anchor, supermarkets

are a symbol of a community's livability" (Turque, 1992, 36). An understanding of this interplay

between racially stratified spatial patterns and supermarket redlining reveals that today's food

deserts are not a random phenomenon, but a direct consequence of urban histories and the

mechanisms of an under-regulated capitalist economic system that ignores particular

neighborhoods.

Approximately 125,000 people in Baltimore live in a food desert (see Figure 3). Currently,

26% of Baltimore's African American population lives in a food desert[1], which exceeds the 7% of

the city's white population, the 13-18% of the city's other minorities, and the overall national

average of 2.2% (Baltimore Food Policy Initiative, 2012). Combining this abundance of food

deserts with the city's 30,000 vacant lots and a 10.3% unemployment rate (17.5% for Baltimore

residents living in a food desert) presents a socioeconomic and food crisis in Baltimore, which has

systemic causes and demands immediate attention from the city's policy makers.

(Re)Imagining Vacant Lots: The Urban Farm Alliance of Baltimore City

Certain groups of city residents, however, are refusing to rely entirely on the Baltimore

City government to respond to the food crisis, and are acting on a grassroots level to confront

Baltimore's food issues. One of these groups is the Farm Alliance of Baltimore City, which began

in 2011 as "a vibrant network of urban farms" (Farm Alliance Website). The Alliance is literally

re-imagining the city's post-industrial material realities by helping city residents transform vacant

lots into urban farms. As more and more urban farm projects emerge across the city, the Alliance

is working to further bolster their efforts by providing communal farm tools, a cooperative stand

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[1] Many definitions of food desert exist. The Baltimore Food Policy Initiative defines a food desert as: "An area where the distance to a supermarket is more than ¼ mile, the median household income is at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, over 40% of households have no vehicle available, and the average Healthy Food Availability Index score for supermarkets, convenience and corner stores is low."

at the city's farmers markets, training workshops, and marketing opportunities. The Alliance is grounded in a food justice mission, articulated as "improv[ing] access to urban grown foods" and employing "practices and principles that are socially, economically, and environmentally just" (Farm Alliance Website).

Currently, the Alliance is made up of eleven urban farms (see Figure 4), which include an array of innovative urban growing initiatives such as aquaponics operations, agricultural education activities, urban biosolids processing, and a host of additional community outreach efforts. The Farm Alliance of Baltimore City and all of its member farms are utilizing Baltimore's post-industrial transformation and its food justice issues as opportunities for creating new spaces for change, both physically and imaginatively. Physically, they are transforming the city's vacant lots into spaces for growing food, and symbolically, they are re-imagining the concept of an urban food system.

Case Study: The Cherry Hill Neighborhood and the Cherry Hill Urban Garden

Among the eleven member farms that comprise the Urban Farm Alliance, one project in particular provides a unique case study for urban food justice analysis. The Cherry Hill Urban Garden is located in the Cherry Hill neighborhood (see Figure 1 for a map of Baltimore's neighborhoods), in the 900 block of Cherry Hill Road, which is within a food desert (see Figure 6). Whereas most of the Baltimore's urban farms I visited were started and run by younger white individuals, the Cherry Hill Urban Garden's founder, Ms. Juanita Ewell, is a 72 year old African American woman who grew up in the Cherry Hill neighborhood and started the garden project during her retirement. Having lived through the history of a racially segregated Baltimore and being an African American woman from the predominately African American neighborhood in which her farm is located gives Ms. Juanita a certain embodied knowledge and expertise in food

justice work that cannot come from any sort of academic experience or technical training. In addition to the uniqueness of the garden's founder, the garden's location, the Cherry Hill neighborhood, also has a unique history in that it was "the nation's first, largest (and likely the only) planned suburban-style community for African Americans" (Samuels, 2008). The establishment of the Cherry Hill neighborhood is situated in Baltimore's history of racial and spatial stratification, and thus serves as a relevant case study for analyzing the food access outcomes of this particular history.

My fieldwork research on the Cherry Hill Urban Garden consisted of five visits to the garden, during which I conducted one formal interview with Ms. Juanita, and then worked alongside her on farm tasks. For most of these visits, only Ms. Juanita and myself were present at the garden, which provided the opportunity for one-on-one interaction.

The Cherry Hill neighborhood is connected to the history of racial segregation in Baltimore, in that its creation in 1944 was for the specific purpose of providing separate suburban housing for African American WWII GI's (Samuels, 2008). The racial homogeneity has remained, and as of 2010, 95.7% of the population is African American, compared to Baltimore's 63.6% (U.S. Census Data, 2010). The current racial, socioeconomic, and food situation (45.1% poverty rate and food desert status) represents the outcome of the systematic racism and planned racial segregation embedded in Baltimore City's history, and the impact that those historical elements have on Baltimore's historically African American neighborhoods' food systems.

Ms. Juanita has lived through this neighborhood history. She moved to Cherry Hill at the age of 4 in 1946, when her father returned from WWII and obtained housing for himself and his family as part of the GI bill. Ms. Juanita explains her move to and upbringing in Chestnut Hill positively:

> Coming from the inner city, which was all concrete, man, we thought we lived in Acapulco or something. Because this whole area was wild and wilderness and it had orchards and fruit trees and I loved to go fishing and crabbing and I loved turning back flips in the grass, cause you could never do that in the city. And I guess that's why I'm still so excited, I've loved it ever since.

In addition to the presence of open green space, Ms. Juanita also recalls the presence of an A&P supermarket in the neighborhood's shopping center, which provided her with her first (informal) job cleaning the store and its surroundings. Adolescent-aged Ms. Juanita growing up in 1950s Cherry Hill had everything she needed from her neighborhood, up until the point that she had to venture into the city for high school. This move exposed her to her neighborhood's relative poverty, and ultimately motivated her move to the city and then further out into the county to obtain employment and raise a family.

By the 1980s, however, Ms. Juanita returned to Cherry Hill to live and returned to a deep appreciation of the value of her original community, explaining that she "fell in love all over again" when she was welcomed by the warmth, the friendliness, and the sense of community that characterizes the neighborhood. Upon her return, however, significant changes had occurred since the time of her upbringing. The site where the A&P once was currently houses a Family Dollar (see Figure 6), and no other grocery stores have moved into the neighborhood, because as Ms. Juanita explains, "the economics of the community do not support a big chain major grocery store." The lack of access to fresh, nutritious food in Cherry Hill as well as its connection to poor health and educational performance concerned Ms. Juanita, as she explains:

> Cherry Hill has one of the worst health statuses as a community on the city register. Seven of the major diseases are nutritionally related. We live in an area where there is no food. These women are feeding these children from sub shops and processed foods. Then they say that the educational level of the community is down, I guess so! Because when the brain is hungry, it doesn't work. Your eating habits are directly attributed to your learning ability.

She articulated her concerns about Cherry Hill's food, health, and education issues throughout her active involvement in the Cherry Hill Development Corporation, calling for programs and projects to alleviate these issues.

In the year 2011, Ms. Juanita took the food issues of her community into her own hands and obtained a lease for an acre and a half of land through the Housing Authority of Baltimore City. She describes the site as being a "debilitated property covered with weeds and trash and debris of twelve years, surrounded by a chain link fence, topped with barbed wire." After gathering people from the entire community, "school kids, everybody, 8-80, blind, crippled, and crazy," they were able to collectively remove approximately a ton of trash from the spot and prepare the ground for planting vegetables. Ms. Juanita and the other Cherry Hill residents took a rundown, vacant space of Baltimore City and converted it into a space for growing vegetables for people who lack access to healthy, fresh food, and motivating a sense of community around healthy and environmentally sustainable food.

The Cherry Hill Urban Garden is now in its fourth year of operation and has expanded this season to include a market stand, a handicapped-accessible gardening area, and a community park/garden which is open to the entire community, as a venue for either planned events or simply a momentary visit. Ms. Juanita identifies the shortcomings and obstacles of her urban garden project, namely a lack of broad community involvement, which has impelled her to focus mostly on engaging the neighborhood's youth, work she has come to see great value in for the future of the community. In spite of these obstacles, however, she is generally proud of the garden's accomplishments:

> This is what I want to say to the city- we did this! I mean, this is our idea and it's been accessed, ya know? To me it's a sense of pride that goes into that and we didn't use a whole bunch of city money. We took what we had and worked with it. This is a testament to what can be done if you work together, if you put your minds together, and this is for us, all we gotta do is work at it and eat the food from it.

Through the Cherry Hill Urban Garden, Ms. Juanita is reconstructing a vacant lot into an urban

growing space, and thus re-imagining a more just food system in her Baltimore neighborhood.

Conclusion: Lessons from the Cherry Hill Urban Garden

The member farms of the Farm Alliance of Baltimore City are emerging to mitigate

issues of food access and food quality that afflict the city. By articulating a mission that is "united

by practices and principles that are socially, economically, and environmentally just," the

Alliance is at the forefront of a movement that is responding to the unjust material outcomes of

an industrial urban history that has stratified the city's population across racial lines and

prioritized the basic needs of whiter strata. The impact of this historical legacy on Baltimore's

urban food system, a lack of fresh and nutritious options in low income and predominately

African American neighborhoods, has prompted these urban food growers to organize

themselves at a grassroots level to produce and distribute fresh food for and with the residents of

such neighborhoods. Since the formation of the Alliance in 2011, urban food production efforts

are growing and expanding, and the city government is now providing financial and legislative

support for them. The growth in a number of Baltimore farms and in popularity among

politicians and the public indicates a strengthening of Baltimore's urban farming movement.

However, sheer quantitative growth does not mean food justice has been achieved. As food

scholars and activists continue to work toward a more just urban food system in Baltimore, we

must proceed with thought and care toward the details and the complexities of food justice work.

First, we must remember and continue to expose the ways in which Baltimore's food

issues are systemic, rather than isolated phenomena. As the city's history reveals, Baltimore's

politicians and the real estate industry systematically segregated African Americans and deprived

them of city resources. Additionally, the capitalist economic system as it currently operates, under which food is a commodity, dis-incentivizes supermarkets from operating in neighborhoods where they cannot maximize profit and thus excludes low income neighborhoods. Similarly, the economic rhetoric of official support for farmers' markets often constrains where these are located (farmers' will often frequent richer areas where their profit margins are higher). By revealing larger systemic forces of industrial and post-industrial inequities in Baltimore , food activists and scholars have an opportunity to be inclusive while also defending against the threat of co-optation and manipulation of the movement by market forces and corporate actors.

Second, food activists and scholars must also proceed thoughtfully and cautiously around the race and class work that necessarily play a major role in Baltimore's urban food movement. To date, the majority of Baltimore's urban food growers are white individuals, while many of the farms are located in predominately African American neighborhoods. While white farmers operating in black neighborhoods may have the best intentions of contributing to food justice efforts, the meanings and ethical implications of these spatial-racial dynamics must be examined. To shed light on this situation, Hoover (2013) presents the idea of analyzing urban agriculture from a critical race theory perspective, aptly describing that "urban agriculture generally creates white spaces in otherwise black or Latino places" (Hoover, 2013). Academics, activists, and food growers dedicated to cultivating food justice must bring race and class issues and interactions to the forefront if they hope for their movement to be inclusive and successful.

These essential components of Baltimore's food justice movement underscore the importance of the case study chosen for this paper, the Cherry Hill Urban Garden. In addition to working toward the vital goal of providing fresh fruits and vegetables to her community, Ms. Juanita's garden project also has the potential to initiate a broader conversation about the role of Baltimore's racial stratification in the current material realities of its food system. We as food

scholars have the opportunity to advance this conversation and contribute to the fight for food justice by bringing critical racial and spatial analysis into the forefront of food studies research. Therefore, the work of projects like this one, that have conjoined FJ and UPE scholarship, should be ongoing.

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Figures

Figure 1. "Neighborhoods of Baltimore." 2013. Baltimore Corporate Housing. The case study neighborhood, Cherry Hill, is circled in red.
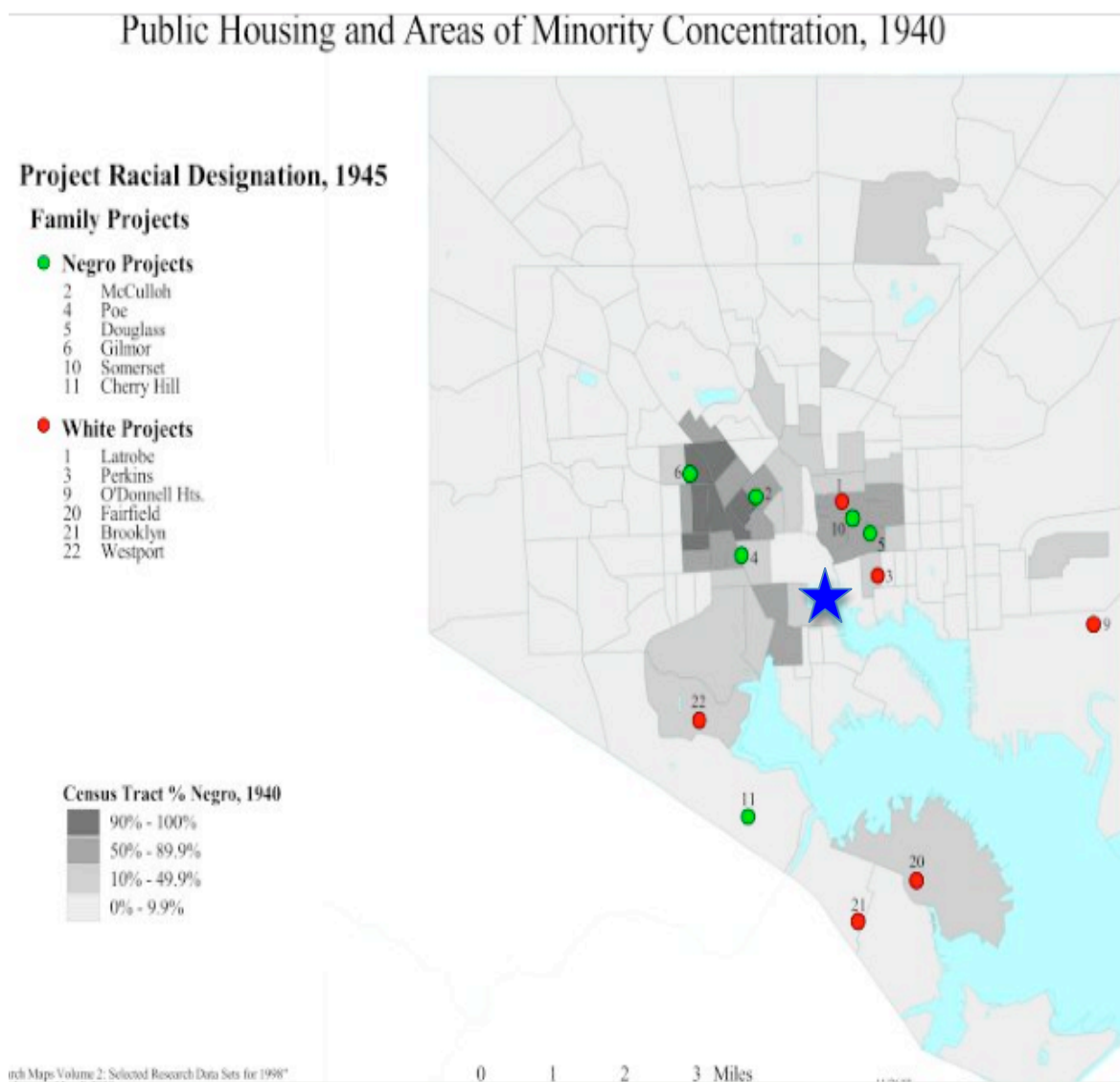
Public Housing and Areas of Minority Concentration, 1940

Project Racial Designation, 1945

Family Projects

● **Negro Projects**
2   McCulloh
4   Poe
5   Douglass
6   Gilmor
10   Somerset
11   Cherry Hill

● **White Projects**
1   Latrobe
3   Perkins
9   O'Donnell Hts.
20   Fairfield
21   Brooklyn
22   Westport

Census Tract % Negro, 1940
90% - 100%
50% - 89.9%
10% - 49.9%
0% - 9.9%

rch Maps Volume 2: Selected Research Data Sets for 1998"

0   1   2   3 Miles

Figure 2. "Public Housing and Areas of Minority Concentration, 1940." 2008. Maryland State Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities. The figure provides a map of the entire city of Baltimore in 1940. The inner harbor is marked with a blue star for reference.
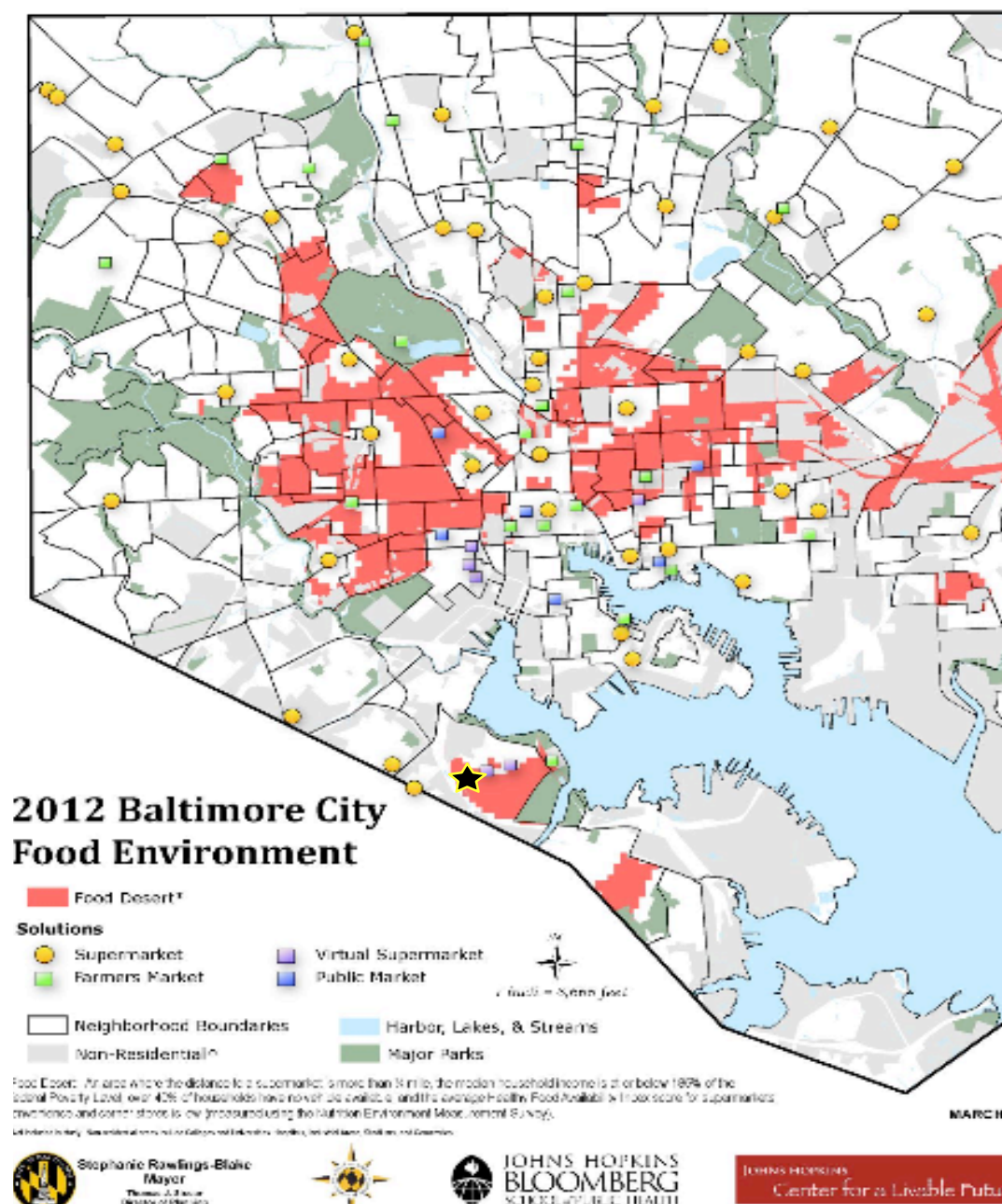
Figure 3. "Baltimore City Food Desert Map." 2012. Baltimore Food Policy Initiative. Black star indicates Cherry Hill, the case study neighborhood.
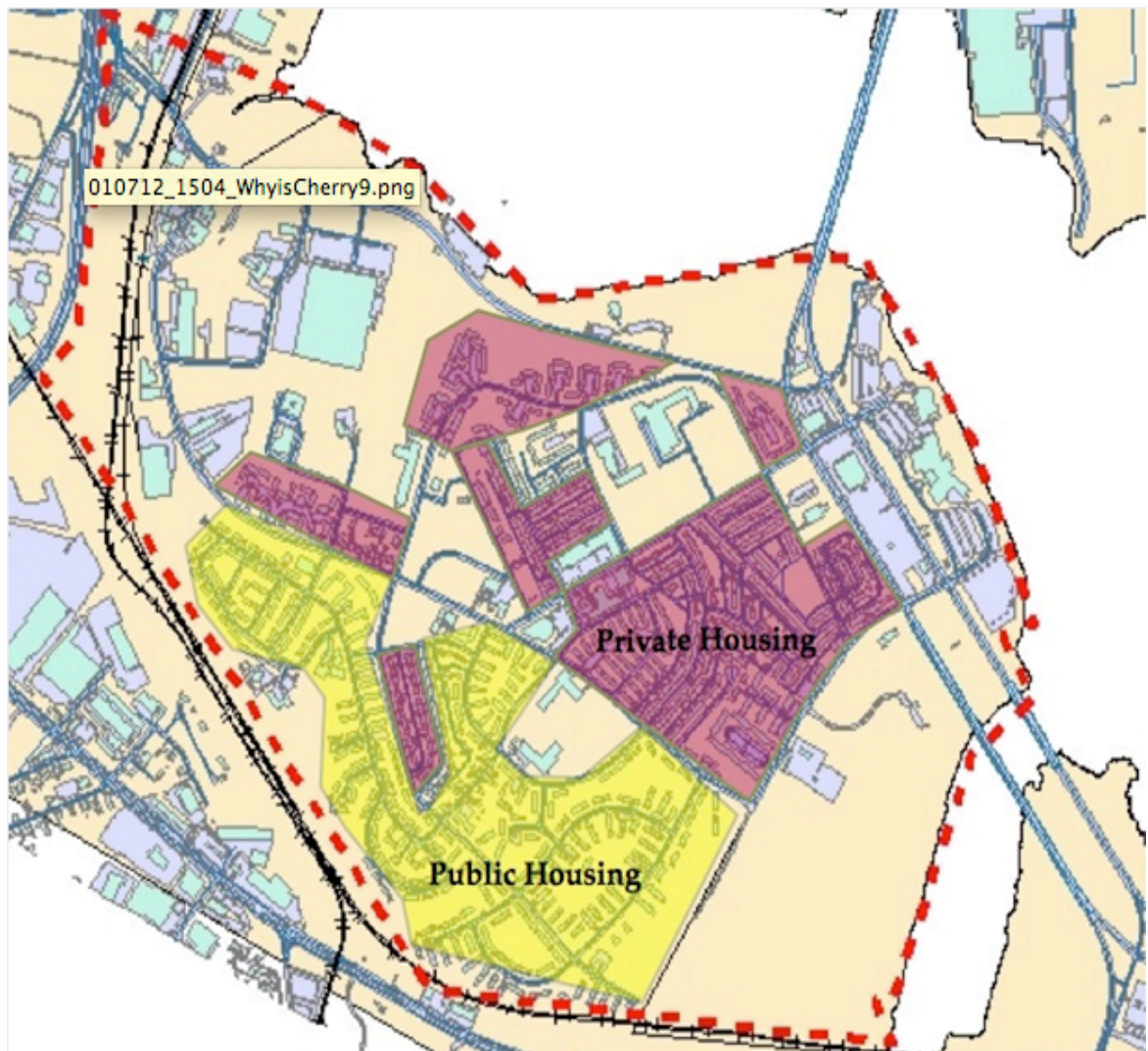
Figure 4. Locations of the eleven member farms of the Farm Alliance of Baltimore City. Generated from Google Mapmaker.

Figure 5. "Public-Private Housing in Cherry Hill." 2012. Created by Josephine Selvakamur.
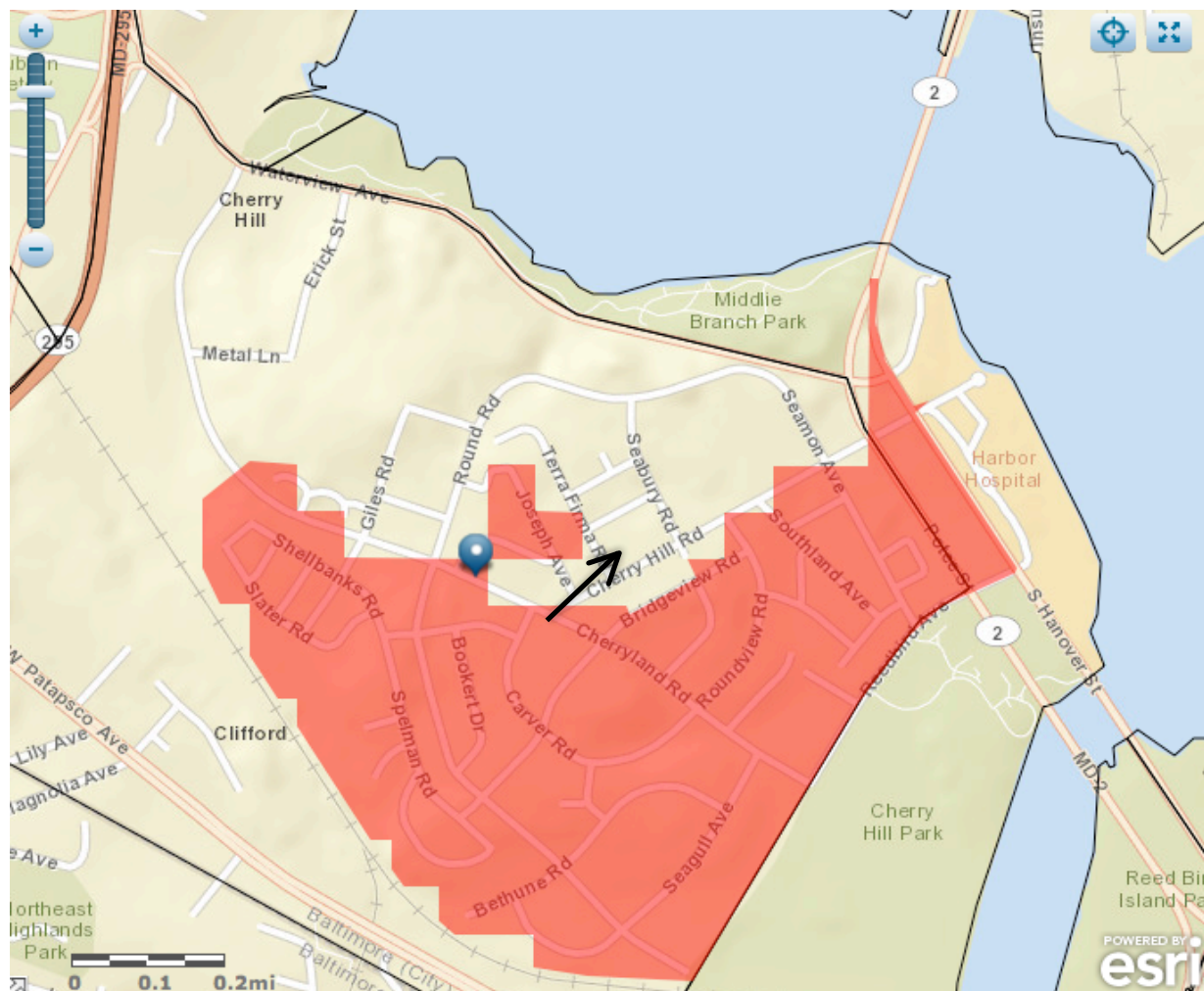
Figure 6. "Baltimore City Interactive Food Desert Map." 2012. Baltimore Food Policy Initiative. Zoomed into Cherry Hill, with the blue marker indicating the location of the Cherry Hill Urban Garden, which is within the food desert area of the neighborhood. The black arrow indicates the location of the Family Dollar, which used to be an A&P supermarket.