TRANSPORTATION & FOOD ACCESS

In Seattle, WA, Maggieh Rathbun, a 55-year-old diabetic who has no car, takes an hour-long bus ride to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. She cannot haul more than a few small bags at a time so she shops frequently—if she feels well enough. “It depends on what kind of day I’m having with my diabetes to decide whether I’m going to make do with a bowl of cereal or try to go get something better,” she told the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

WHAT IS A FOOD DESERT?

A food desert is “an area in the U.S. with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly such an area composed of predominantly lower-income neighborhoods and communities,” as defined by the 2008 Farm Bill.

FOOD DESERTS IN MINNESOTA

206

MN CHILDREN WITH LOW ACCESS TO FOOD

+90K

AMERICANS WHO LIVE MORE THAN ONE MILE AWAY FROM A SUPERMARKET AND DO NOT OWN A CAR

2.3 MILLION

HOW DOES THIS CONNECT TO TRANSPORTATION?

“Distance is compounded by the fact that for many people in these areas, a trip to the supermarket is costly and time consuming. . . . Low-income people are often less mobile than higher-income people.” —economist Robert King, director of the University of Minnesota’s Food Industry Center

“The barriers to healthy food are not just about price. . . . A common theme is transportation. Since healthy, affordable food is not commonly available in every community, people need to travel outside of their neighborhood just to get basic food to feed their family. For many, this means two buses and a taxi ride back with groceries. Just getting to the food people want is costly in terms of time and money.” —Carla Kaiser, senior manager of Community Partnerships at the hunger organization City Harvest

Food Deserts of Minnesota

Food deserts are found in 63 of Minnesota’s counties. In fact, nearly 54% of Minnesota’s food deserts are rural.

* Based on 2010 USDA guidelines regarding food access and 2012 census data

Areas of limited food access*