

Jackson

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lost money in 20 of the 30 years it operated. The company tried several different approaches to bring it back to profitability.

"We believe that ultimately the best way for Kroger to provide even more access to fresh food and healthy food at low prices is by running a sustainable business. That starts with running profitable stores," said Keith Dailey, Kroger's senior director for external affairs. "While it's always a difficult decision to close any store location, when we do it we always try to close a store in a way that respects the community and our associates."

Dailey said many of Kroger's former customers in Walnut Hills now shop at its new Corryville store, which opened when the Walnut Hills store closed. He said not one job was lost because of the closure.

City Councilman Wendell Young said, "Kroger, based in the city of Cincinnati, has decided that profit is more important than people - people who without stores in their neighborhood are reduced to living in food deserts," Young said. "They exacerbate the problems that go with nutrition. Our babies die sooner. Our adults die sooner."

According to the Center for Closing the Health Gap, communities need permanent access to

Food deserts have a dire effect on neighborhoods. Mayor Cranley had visited with Jackson, according to a statement issued by his office, which said, "Last evening the mayor had a phone call and a meeting with Reverend Jackson in Washington, D.C. to discuss his concerns. While respectful of Reverend Jackson's views on Kroger, Mayor Cranley shared his perspective that Kroger is a phenomenal partner to the city of Cincinnati and is actively investing in our urban core. The mayor pointed out that Kroger is a member of the Billion Dollar Roundtable, which means it invests at least a billion dollars annually with minority and women-owned businesses, reflecting Kroger's commitment to economic inclusion." Cincinnati needs 10 additional grocery stores to meet the national average, according to Policy Link, a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity. Living in a food desert means you are more susceptible to diet-related illnesses and to living shorter lives, Health Gap officials said.

In addition, the Rainbow Push Coalition Local Steering Committee invited Jackson to Cincinnati to discuss the impact gentrification is having on the Black community due to a number of economic development projects in Black neighborhoods, including the West End.

They said Jackson heard how the West End community said no to the proposed FC Cincinnati deal to construct a soccer stadium in the West End, and how government and business leaders ignored their wishes and are considering a proposed stadium deal anyway.

Jackson said he has visited the West End a number of times while in Cincinnati, and he supports residents there who oppose the location of the stadium in their community.

Jackson was also here to lend support to the city's African American City Manager Harry Black, who has been asked to resign by Cranley.

"The local steering committee is deeply troubled by the chaos at city hall and the character smear campaign against Harry Black," committee members said.

Also, Jackson talked to the leaders about getting people registered to vote and exercise that right with the Ohio Primary Election in May and the General Election in November.

On Tuesday, Jackson met with local leaders in a closed breakfast meeting at Southern Baptist Church in Avondale, then held a press conference at the former Kroger store in Walnut Hills and visited Dohn Community School in Walnut Hills, before going to Kroger Co.'s headquarters downtown to protest about the store