



## **'Green Carts' Will Increase Access to Healthy Foods, Improving the Health of an Estimated 75,000 New Yorkers**

Proposed Amendment to the  
New York City Administrative Code

Rev. 2.27.08

- To promote access to healthy food, the City proposed an amendment to the New York City Administrative Code to expand the number food carts that only sell fresh fruits and vegetables – 'Green Carts' – exclusively in the New York City neighborhoods that need them most.
- On February 27, 2008, the City Council voted to approve this legislation, Intro 665-A. The Mayor has not yet signed the legislation into law.

## Fruits and Vegetables Are Key to Good Health



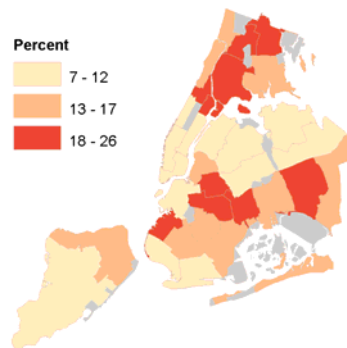
- People who eat fruits and vegetables 3 times or more a day (compared to those who eat them less than once a day) are:
  - 42% less likely to die of stroke
  - 24% less likely to die of heart disease
- Eating 5 servings or more of fruits and vegetables a day significantly lowers the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

- Major causes of illness and death, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and some cancers, are related to poor diet and lack of physical activity. Poor diet is one of the leading causes of obesity in the U.S.
- According to a study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* (Bazzano, et al., 2002), eating fruits and vegetables 3 or more times a day vs. less than 1 time a day is associated with:
  - 27% lower risk of having a stroke
  - 42% lower risk of dying from stroke
  - 24% lower risk of dying from heart disease
  - 15% lower risk of dying from all causes
- According to a study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (Ford and Mokdad, 2001), eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day significantly lowers the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

## New Yorkers Do Not Eat Enough Fruits and Vegetables, Particularly in Some Neighborhoods

- **90%** of New Yorkers eat fewer than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- **14%** eat no fruits and vegetables at all

Percent of New Yorkers Who Did **Not** Eat Fruits or Vegetables on the Previous Day

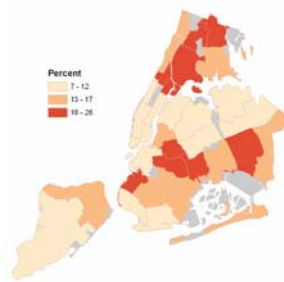


Source: 2004 Community Health Survey

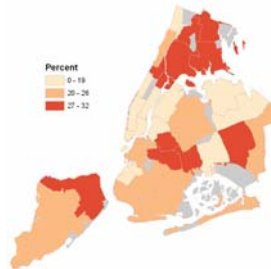
- Data are from the 2004 NYC DOHMH Community Health Survey, which asked respondents how many servings of fruits and vegetables they ate on the previous day.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture recommend that people choose a variety of fruits and vegetables and eat between 5 and 9 servings each day, depending on age, sex, and level of physical activity.
  - Each serving of fruit is a medium size whole fruit or ½ cup.
  - Each serving of vegetables is 1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked vegetables.

## Neighborhoods Where Fruit and Vegetable Consumption is Low Have High Rates of Obesity and Diabetes

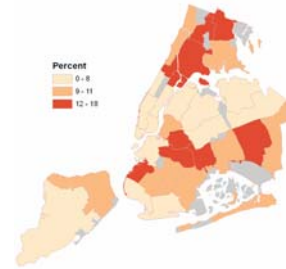
Percent of New Yorkers Who Did **Not** Eat Fruits or Vegetables on the Previous Day



Percent Obese



Percent with Diabetes

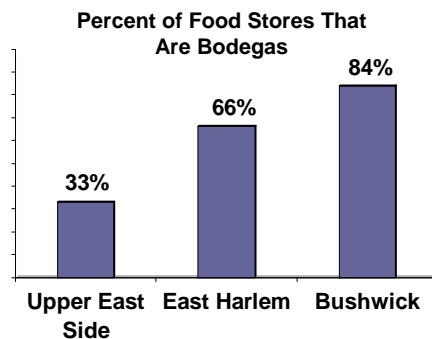


Source: 2004 Community Health Survey

- Poor nutrition, obesity, and diabetes are interconnected.
- In neighborhoods with lowest fruit and vegetable consumption (i.e., highest percentage of residents reporting no fruit or vegetable consumption on the previous day) – East New York, Bushwick, and Bedford-Stuyvesant – as many as 1 in 4 adults report that they did not eat a single fruit or vegetable on the previous day.
- Obesity rates in New York City have increased by more than 70% since 1994. More than 1.1 million New Yorkers are obese and another 2 million are overweight.
- Diabetes prevalence has more than doubled in New York City over the past 10 years. More than 500,000 adult New Yorkers have diabetes and an additional 200,000 have diabetes but do not yet know it.
- Diabetes and diabetes-associated cardiovascular disease are leading causes of death and health disparities in New York City. Adults with the lowest household income are more than twice as likely to report having diabetes as adults with the highest household income.

## Availability of Healthy Foods Varies by Neighborhood

- Bodegas represent a much higher proportion of food stores in low-income neighborhoods
- In East Harlem:
  - Only 25% of bodegas sell apples, oranges and bananas
  - Only 4% of bodegas sell leafy green vegetables

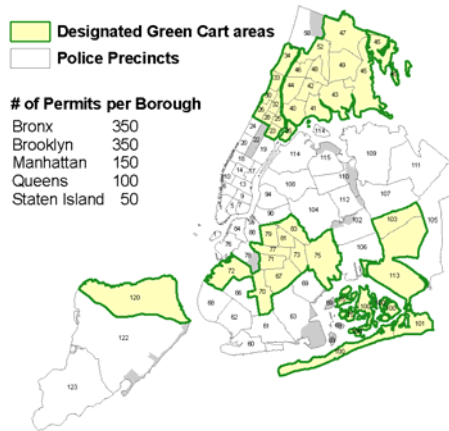


Source: NYC DOHMH DPHO surveys, 2005 and 2007

- Published studies have found that without access to supermarkets, which offer a wide variety of foods at lower prices, poor and minority communities may not have equal access to the variety of healthy food choices available to non-minority and wealthy communities (Moreland, et al., 2002).
- The Health Department conducted neighborhood food access surveys in Upper Manhattan and Central Brooklyn in 2004 and 2005. Surveys showed that bodegas are much more common and supermarkets are much less common in Harlem and Central Brooklyn than they are on the Upper East Side. In Harlem and Central Brooklyn, where residents often rely on bodegas, bodegas rarely stocked the fresh fruit and vegetables that supermarkets do.
- A study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* (Horowitz, et al., 2004) found that only 18% of East Harlem stores stocked foods that the American Diabetes Association recommends to people with diabetes, including fruits and vegetables, compared with 58% of stores in the Upper East Side.

## Proposal to Permit 1,000 Green Carts in Designated Neighborhoods

- Carts that sell only fresh fruits and vegetables
- Exclusively in areas where fruit and vegetable consumption is particularly low



- Green Carts will be able to sell unprocessed, unfrozen, raw fruits and vegetables (e.g. whole carrots, apples, bananas, berries).
- Green Cart areas were chosen to include only neighborhoods with more than 15% of residents surveyed consumed no servings of fruits and vegetables on the previous day, as reported in the 2004 Community Health Survey. In some neighborhoods with lowest fruit and vegetable consumption, that figure was nearly 26%.
- A certain number of permits will be allocated for carts in the Green Cart areas in each borough, based on population in the designated areas:
  - Bronx 350 permits
  - Brooklyn 350 permits
  - Manhattan 150 permits
  - Queens 100 permits
  - Staten Island 50 permits

## Permitting 1,000 Green Carts Will...

- Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in neighborhoods where consumption is particularly low
- Based on our best estimate:
  - Increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by at least 75,000 New Yorkers
  - Save at least 50 lives a year over the long term

- If more fresh fruits and vegetables are readily available in their neighborhoods, New Yorkers will likely purchase and consume more fresh fruits and vegetables than they do currently.
- We estimate that at least 75,000 New Yorkers will eat more fruits and vegetables with this initiative, based on the consumption habits in the Green Cart areas and purchasing patterns at fruit and vegetable carts.
- The positive health impacts of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption occur when consumption remains high for many years, so the positive health impacts of Green Carts will be seen over the long term.

## Current Law Caps the Number of Permits

- 4,100 mobile food cart permits in NYC
- As many as 2,500 people are on waiting lists for permits
- Few carts sell fruits and vegetables



- Current law allows for 2,800 full term citywide permits, 200 full term borough specific permits (50 each for the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island), 100 full term citywide disabled permits, and 1,000 seasonal/temporary citywide permits.
- More than half of permitted mobile food carts sell processed foods (i.e., cooked or processed on the cart), such as kabobs, gyros, or tacos, while the remaining permitted carts sell non-processed foods (i.e., not cooked or processed on the cart) such as hot dogs, coffee, pretzels, or fruits and vegetables.
- Our best estimate is that less than 10% of all carts sell fruits and vegetables.

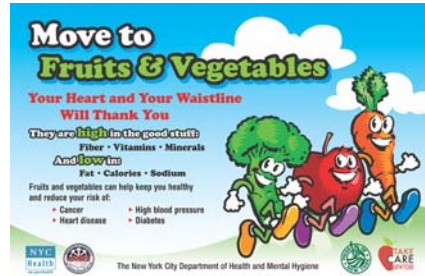
## Implementation

- Green Cart permits will:
  - Be phased in, with 500 permits available in each of the first two years
  - Be authorized for use only in the designated area within one borough
  - Hold carts to the same food safety requirements as current fruit and vegetable carts
- Enforcement will include:
  - DOHMH inspections and monitoring
  - DOHMH, DCA and/or NYPD response to complaints

- Permits will be issued on behalf of DOHMH by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs for a fee of \$75, and will be good for a period of two years.
- Priority will be given to people currently on the mobile food vending waiting list, as well as disabled veterans, disabled persons, and veterans.
- Once all permits are granted, DOHMH will implement a wait list procedure similar to the procedure in place for the current mobile food vending permitting process.
- Green Carts will be held to the same regulatory standards as existing mobile food vendors. Areas where carts are currently restricted will continue to be off-limits and all cart location requirements will remain in effect.
- Violations will be issued to any Green Cart found operating outside of authorized areas. The Health Department, Police Department and the Department of Consumer Affairs will retain enforcement authority and respond promptly to complaints.

## Other Initiatives Are Underway to Improve Healthy Food Access

- More farmers markets
- Coupons and Food Stamp access at farmers markets
- More healthy food options in bodegas
- Food & Fitness Consortia and Coalitions (with FoodChange)



- Farmers markets are great source of fresh produce. DOHMH and the City Council are working to expand farmers market locations throughout the City.
- In collaboration with DOHMH, Council on the Environment of New York City, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the City Council, Food Stamps/EBT can be used in approximately one third of the City's farmers markets.
- The DOHMH Health Bucks program distributes \$2 coupons to purchase fresh produce at participating farmers markets. At farmers markets accepting WIC and Food Stamps, one Health Buck is worth \$5 in food stamps.
- The DOHMH Healthy Bodegas Initiative piloted a "Move to Fruits and Vegetables" campaign, which provided free local produce to bodegas in designated areas around the city. The Healthy Bodegas Initiative is currently working on additional mechanisms to increase the availability of fruits and vegetables in bodegas.
- The Food & Fitness Consortia and Coalitions are led by DOHMH District Public Health Offices in East and Central Harlem, the South Bronx and the Central Brooklyn. Local community groups interested in promoting nutrition and exercise come together to promote a healthier lifestyle in the community.

## Supplemental Information

- Green Carts will be allowed in the following police precincts:
  - Bronx: Police Precincts 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52
  - Brooklyn: Police Precincts 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83
  - Manhattan: Police Precincts 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34
  - Queens: Police Precincts 100, 101, 103, 113
  - Staten Island: Police Precinct 120