



Green Cart Implementation: Year One



September 2010

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Executive Summary

Children benefit substantially from good nutrition, which positively affects their growth and development, and their ability to concentrate and learn in school. Conversely, poor nutrition in childhood results in negative, and often lifelong, consequences. As research¹ suggests, lack of access to healthy foods contributes to growing obesity rates, diabetes and other related health problems, all of which disproportionately affect children in low-income communities. As childhood obesity becomes a more prevalent health problem, initiatives that improve child and family access to healthy and affordable foods prove critical to the health and well-being of low-income children.

The NYC Green Cart Initiative, which brings fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables to communities that need them most, was designed to address issues of inadequate access and lack of proximity to quality produce -- two strong factors preventing consumption of fruit and vegetables in New York City's low-income communities. The initiative created City-issued permits for fresh produce carts (Green Carts), the geographic placement of which was targeted to designated neighborhoods based on their lack of access to healthy, affordable produce and their high rates of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. The City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) estimated that Green Carts would increase access to fresh produce in neighborhoods where produce consumption was low, increase consumption of fresh produce by at least 75,000 New Yorkers, and save approximately 100 lives annually over the long term.

Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC) collected data during the first year of Green Cart implementation to determine if the presence of Green Carts had a positive impact on the consumption of fruits and vegetables in targeted communities and whether Green Carts presented a viable, cost effective way to achieve the goal of bringing fresh produce to communities in need.

Our data gathering occurred in the summer through fall of 2009, and involved both community members and street cart vendors. We canvassed community members, and conducted focus groups with adult community residents. We also interviewed Green Cart vendors on the street, held a Green Cart vendor focus group, and assessed the produce range and pricing available from Green Carts.

Highlights of findings from street canvassing and focus groups with constituents suggest the following:

- Fruit and vegetable carts were relied on as a frequent shopping option;
- Knowing about Green Carts increased the likelihood of usage and location played a critical role in consumer usage;
- Once consumers purchased from a Green Cart, they were likely to do so repeatedly; and
- Consumers rated the quality and variety of fruits and vegetables offered on the carts as good to excellent.

¹ Kimberly Morland et al, "Neighborhood Characteristics Associated with the Location of Food Stores and Food Service Places," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 22, 1 (2002): 23-29; Latetia Moore and Ana Diez Roux, "Associate of Neighborhood Characteristics with the Location and Type of Food Stores," *American Journal of Public Health* 96, 2 (2006): 325-331; and Maria Gallagher Research and Consulting Group, "Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Chicago," (Chicago, 2006), among others.

Highlights of findings from street interviews of Green Cart vendors, cart assessments, and a focus group with Green Cart vendors suggest the following:

- Green Cart vendors placed their carts in a wide variety of locations, operated more than five days a week at their chosen locations, and offered a wide range of produce and price points;
- Green Carts reached targeted populations, and vendors expressed interest in efforts to increase Green Cart usage by poor and working poor consumers; and
- Most vendors reported a strong willingness to continue their self-employment via Green Carts.

The next round of Green Cart permitting, scheduled for October 2010, presents the City with an opportunity to strengthen this initiative. CCC's recommendations draw attention to improvements that would ensure that poor and working poor New Yorkers are able to make full use of Green Carts and that Green Cart vendors have the opportunity to serve low-income communities year round while benefiting from relationships with or linkages to public agencies and community-based organizations (CBOs).

Highlights of recommendations that CCC believes the City should pursue include the following:

- Ensure that all Green Carts have access to EBT terminals so they can accept food stamp (SNAP) benefits as well as WIC allotments;
- Facilitate the placement of Green Carts in close proximity to CBOs and allow for CBO cart adoption or sponsorship;
- Encourage the targeted placement of Green Carts on public property, such as NYCHA facilities, Public Hospitals, Child Health Centers;
- Explore the feasibility of allowing Green Carts to locate in sheltered spaces on public property or at CBOs during the winter months;
- Expand public marketing of Green Carts;
- Create a clearly written list of rules governing Green Cart positioning and regulations, to be posted directly on vendors' carts; and
- Enhance technical assistance to Green Cart vendors to improve their capacity to make direct use of the Hunts Point Terminal Market and facilitate their ability to purchase bulk produce for distribution across several carts.

In sum, preliminary data collected on Green Carts usage in the first year of implementation suggests that Green Carts are increasing access to and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in low-income neighborhoods, that the initiative functions as a powerful tool in New York City's efforts to combat obesity and poor nutrition, and that Green Cart vendors have expressed their commitment to self employment via Green Carts. As the City prepares for its next round of Green Cart permit issuance and the number of Green Carts placed in targeted communities increases, we hope that the findings and recommendations put forth in this report can inform efforts to strengthen and expand upon the initiative.

Background

Despite New York City's apparent food abundance, many families have extremely limited access to healthy and affordable food in their communities. Known as "food deserts,"² these mostly low-income neighborhoods have a limited supply of fresh food retail options, and do not have grocery stores, farmers' markets, or larger supermarkets within a short walking distance. Such geographic constraints require families to make time-consuming and costly trips to food retailers outside of their immediate neighborhood. It is not surprising then that many low-income households end up relying on fast food restaurants or corner stores, which have a limited inventory of healthy produce and often unreasonably high prices.

Healthy eating is not solely a matter of personal responsibility or individual taste and a better diet is not achieved just by increasing access to emergency food programs or expanding enrollment in government benefits programs. Rather, it is also a matter of making healthy, affordable food accessible and available in all New York City communities. Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC) believes that by promoting healthy eating, increasing the supply of affordable food retail options, expanding local transportation alternatives, and increasing the use of food supports, such as EBT and Health Bucks, in underserved communities, we can improve the health outcomes and quality of life of all New Yorkers and make it possible for children to grow into adulthood in good health, ready to meet the demands of society.

In 2006, to provide a fact-based platform for our advocacy work, CCC produced a fact sheet and report detailing policy options designed to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of food in food deserts across New York City.³ The report reflected a review of the literature, as well as a series of background interviews with stakeholders in the anti-hunger, health, and agriculture and markets fields. Once the draft report was completed, we conducted focus groups in two food deserts (Mott Haven in the South Bronx and Red Hook in Brooklyn) to gain insight into how families in low income communities make food choices, to test policy recommendations, and to measure consumer demand for and interest in healthy, affordable food in the context of what they experienced in their local neighborhoods. We also held a focus group with New York City vendors of fruits and vegetables to acquire a better understanding of existing work arrangements and challenges, and their vending needs. The results of the focus groups with constituents and vendors then informed our advocacy agenda.⁴

This work supported a Health Department proposal to lift the cap on mobile food vending licenses for vendors who were willing to sell fresh fruits and vegetables only and to locate their carts in food barren neighborhoods, which was put forth around the same time. It became a centerpiece of CCC's advocacy agenda. For over a year, we advanced this idea in meetings with local elected and appointed officials, emphasizing produce carts -- or Green Carts -- as a cost-effective method of bringing healthy, affordable produce to city food deserts. We were fortunate in that our work dovetailed with work within the city's Department of Health and Mental

² New York Coalition Against Hunger, "Mapping an End to Hunger," New York, 2006. "A food desert is a large geographic area with no or distant grocery stores. Often, food deserts have an imbalance of food choice, meaning more nearby fringe food such as fast food, convenience stores, and liquor stores. While these communities are without enough mainstream grocers, many do have community assets, disposable income, appropriate sites for sustainable grocery stores, and talented community leaders working to improve healthy food options." According to the National Center for Public Research, <http://www.fooddesertmonth.org/>.

³ CCC Policy Brief: Options to Improve Access to Nutritious, Affordable Food (2006); CCC Securing Every Child's Birthright Campaign (SECB) Fact Sheet: Food Security (2006).

⁴ CCC Focus Group Summary: Consumer Attitudes Towards Food and Nutrition in Low-Income Communities (2007) and CCC's Focus Group Summary Report Fruit and Vegetable Street Vendors in New York City: Work Challenges, Arrangements and Needs (2007).

Hygiene (DOHMH) that sought to identify low-cost and expeditious methods to combat growing obesity rates and related health problems that disproportionately affect poor children and families in New York City. This synergy resulted in the introduction of Green Cart legislation.

In December 2007, the Mayor and the City Council announced sponsorship of Green Cart legislation. Between December 2007 and March 2008, when the legislation was signed into law, CCC's work organizing colleagues from diverse sectors, education and outreach efforts with the media, and close collaboration with the DOHMH, the Mayor's Office and New York City Council all played an essential role in ensuring passage of the Green Cart legislation. Specifically, CCC mobilized over 100 health, anti-hunger, housing, community development, social service and advocacy organizations in support of the legislation. We connected over 4,000 New Yorkers to their local elected officials via electronic advocacy tools, and provided an electronic platform for over 1,500 e-letters of support to be communicated, and we educated the print, radio and TV media with fact sheets on food access issues and its health related impacts in communities across the city. We also weighed in with editorial boards and were asked to submit a guest editorial to the *Daily News*. By the time the Green Cart legislation came to a vote before the New York City Council, our large coalition had effectively fought back against the opposing food retail interests, and we had garnered nearly 30 news stories helping to secure passage of this critical legislation. The sheer number of letters sent to elected officials and news articles written on this small piece of legislation reflects the profound public interest in resolving food access issues that plague so many communities in this city.

The Green Cart initiative, a novel and untested program, was designed to address issues of access and proximity -- two factors strongly influencing consumption -- by bringing fresh, affordable fruits and vegetables to communities that needed them most. New York City's Green Cart legislation created 1,000 permits for fresh produce carts, the placement of which was intended to bring high quality, reasonably priced fruits and vegetables to designated neighborhoods that lacked such access and where rates of obesity, diabetes and heart disease had reached epidemic levels. DOHMH identified and targeted five regions across New York City -- the majority of the Bronx, Northern Manhattan and East/Central Harlem, North/Central Brooklyn, Western Queens and Northern Staten Island -- based on their low household consumption rates of fruit and vegetables.⁵ DOHMH has estimated that Green Carts will: increase access to fresh produce in neighborhoods where consumption is low; increase consumption of fresh produce by at least 75,000 New Yorkers; and save approximately 100 lives annually over the long term.⁶

CCC's Study of the First Year's Impact in 3 Zones

Recognizing that it will take time to document whether the Green Cart initiative produces the desired long-term outcomes projected by DOHMH, CCC sought to document the impact of Green Carts within the first year of implementation. We hoped to determine whether the presence of Green Carts has had a positive impact on the consumption of fruit and vegetables in targeted communities and whether Green Carts were a viable, expeditious and cost-effective method to bring fresh fruits and vegetables into communities in need. Our project was designed to collect and analyze qualitative data in 3 designated zones -- East and Central Harlem, North and Central Brooklyn, and the South Bronx.

⁵ According to the city's 2004 Community Health Survey, nearly 20 to 26% of residents in the targeted areas reported consuming no servings of fruits or vegetables the previous day.

⁶ <http://bit.ly/bUUxaN> (City press release announcing Green Carts; accessed 3/31/10).

Two of these communities (East and Central Harlem and North and Central Brooklyn) were of particular interest because the City's DOHMH collected baseline data on access to healthy food and eating habits in each, and documented the health status of community residents prior to passage of the Green Cart legislation.⁷ The third community, the South Bronx, was selected because it, like the other two, has a DOHMH District Public Health Office (DPHO) located in it. The City intentionally located the DPHOs in high need neighborhoods "to eliminate health disparities."⁸ Of the 1,000 Green Cart permits the City planned to issue during a two year period, North/Central Brooklyn was eligible to receive 175 permitted Green Cart vendors each year, Northern Manhattan and East/Central Harlem were eligible to receive 75 (total), and the Bronx was eligible to receive 175 each year.⁹

CCC's qualitative data collection efforts involved: (a) street canvassing of community residents in the designated zones within each region during a time-limited period; (b) assessment of produce range and pricing on vendor carts in each zone; (c) interviews with vendors on the street in the designated zones about business practices; (d) focus groups with adult residents of each zone; and (e) a focus group with Green Cart vendors. Each qualitative data gathering method was implemented during the summer through fall of 2009¹⁰ and was designed to solicit feedback from community residents and Green Cart vendors about the effectiveness of Green Carts in bringing healthy, affordable food to these communities.

Summary of Data Collection Efforts

There were 34 constituents who participated in the focus groups, 25 of whom had children under 18 years of age. Four constituents in this focus group were employed full time, 11 employed part time and 8 were in school. Four vendors were in the vendor focus group. The street canvassing tools reached 162 constituents and 24 vendors.

Constituent Focus Groups: 34 focus group participants total

- South Bronx: August 3, 2009 at Eastside Settlement House, 9 community residents participated
- North/Central Brooklyn: August 11, 2009 at the Bedford-Stuyvesant WIC Center, 10 community residents participated
- East/Central Harlem: August 12, 2009 at the Union Settlement Association, 15 community residents participated

⁷ In two studies – *Eating In, Eating Out, Eating Well: Access to Healthy Food in North and Central Brooklyn* (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/dpho/dpho-brooklyn-report2006.pdf>) and *Eating Well in Harlem: How Available is Healthy Food* (<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/dpho/dpho-harlem-report2007.pdf>) the DOHMH tested the hypothesis 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 healthy food choices available to non-minority and wealthier communities. The Brooklyn study found that bodegas are more common than supermarkets (82% vs. 6%) and carry a narrower range of healthy food. For example, less than 30% of bodegas carried fruits compared with more than 90% of supermarkets. Leafy green vegetables were available in only 1 in 10 bodegas. At the same time, the study noted storefront advertisements heavily promote sugary juices and energy drinks, as well as alcoholic beverages and tobacco. Similarly, the Harlem study found bodegas far more common than supermarkets. Few bodegas offer reduced fat milk, low fat yogurt or cottage cheese, or fruit and green leafy vegetables. The Harlem study also found a greater number of obese residents (31%) compared to neighboring communities, and a greater risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart disease.

⁸ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/dpho/dpho-brochure.pdf> (accessed 7/6/10).

⁹ Seventy-eight permits were issued in the Bronx the first year, 71 in Brooklyn, 58 in Manhattan, 40 (of 50 eligible) in Queens and 1 (of 25 eligible) in Staten Island. *Report to the New York City Council on Green Carts FY 2008-2009*, submitted by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, September 2009.

¹⁰ At the time of our interviews in August of 2009, 277 Green Carts had been permitted, but as of August 2010 that number has increased to 445.

- The pre-focus group constituent survey instrument is attached.

Vendor Focus Group: 4 focus group participants total

- Held September 9, 2009 at Karp Resources, 4 vendors participated
- The pre-focus group vendor survey is attached.

Constituent Street Canvassing: 162 constituents interviewed total

- Conducted on 9 days between September 17, 2009 and October 22, 2009
 - South Bronx: 50 constituents interviewed between September 21, 2009 and October 19, 2009
 - North/Central Brooklyn: 54 constituents interviewed between September 28, 2009 and October 22, 2009
 - East/Central Harlem: 58 constituents interviewed between September 17, 2009 and October 1, 2009
- The constituent street canvassing tool is attached.

Vendor Street Interviews: 24 vendor interviews total

- Conducted on 5 different days between September 17, 2009 and October 6, 2009
 - South Bronx: 7 vendors interviewed on September 21, 2009
 - North/Central Brooklyn: 8 vendors interviewed between September 17, 2009 and October 6, 2009
 - East/Central Harlem: 9 vendors interviewed on September 17 and September 21, 2009
- The vendor street interview tool is attached.

Cart Assessment: 24 cart assessments total

- Conducted on 5 different days between September 17, 2009 and October 6, 2009
 - South Bronx: 7 carts assessed on September 21, 2009
 - North/Central Brooklyn: 8 carts assessed between September 17, 2009 and October 6, 2009
 - East/Central Harlem: 9 carts assessed on September 17 and September 21, 2009 (2 days)
- The Green Cart assessment tool is attached.

Findings

Constituent findings reflect the information gathered via focus groups (including the pre-focus group survey instrument and focus group discussion) and data collected via street canvassing. Vendor findings are based on data collected via a focus group (including pre-focus group survey and focus group discussion) and a street administered survey of vendors. We also included findings based on CCC's vendor cart assessments of the variety, quality and price points of the produce offered on Green Carts.

Green Cart – Specific Findings - Constituents:

Finding #1: While focus group participants continued to rely most heavily on supermarkets for produce purchases, fruit and vegetable carts were relied on as the second or third most frequent shopping option.¹¹

When constituents were surveyed, both as part of the focus group and on the street, the predominant place identified for the purchase of produce was the supermarket. That said, fruit and vegetable carts were consistently relied upon as well.

- The 162 constituents surveyed on the street were asked to name the top 2 places they shopped and the responses were first, supermarkets (76%) and second, carts on the street (16%).
- The 34 focus group participants, who unlike the constituents surveyed were not limited to 2 choices, stated that they shopped most frequently for fresh produce at the supermarket (94%); a large discount store (74%) and then a fruit and vegetable cart (65%).

Finding #2: Knowing about Green Carts increased the likelihood of usage.

Constituents who saw or heard advertising were more likely to purchase from a Green Cart than those who had not seen or heard such an advertisement.

- 40% of the constituents surveyed on the street answered “yes” to the question, “Have you ever seen or heard advertising for this new type of street vendor called a Green Cart?”
- Of the 64 constituents who had heard an advertisement for Green Carts, 34 of them, or 57%, then purchased from a cart, whereas only 36% of the 86 constituents who had not heard any advertisement purchased from the Green Carts.

Finding #3: For those who used Green Carts, the location played a critical role in consumer usage.

Among Green Cart users:

- 67% of constituents responded that the primary reason for shopping at a Green Cart was the convenient location of the cart.
- Yet, convenience was not everything: For 35% of constituents, Green Cart usage was tied to the price of produce, and 30% of constituents decided to purchase from a Green Cart based on the quality of fruit and vegetables offered.

Finding #4: Once consumers purchased from a Green Cart, they were likely to do so repeatedly. Of the 68 constituents from the street survey who purchased fruits or vegetables from a Green Cart, more than half purchased either daily or weekly.

¹¹ Note that number of constituents may vary by number who responded to a particular question.

Finding 5: Green Cart users rated the quality and variety of fruits and vegetables offered on the carts as good to excellent.

Of the 68 constituents from the street survey who purchased fruits or vegetables from a Green Cart:

- 85% rated the *quality* of fruits and vegetables as good or excellent.
- 81% rated the *variety* of the fruits and vegetables as good or excellent.
- The majority of Green Cart users also rated the *prices* as good or excellent (78%).

Finding # 6: Limited access to high quality, affordable meats, fish and produce continued to be a concern among focus group participants. During the constituent focus groups, many participants voiced concerns that:

- Meat and fish offered in local stores was not fresh.
- Expired products sat on the shelves at the supermarkets.
- Fruits and vegetables were of inferior quality at their local retail outlets (small stores and bodegas) as compared to the quality in other neighborhoods.

Finding # 7: Focus group participants expressed the desire for a wide range of solutions to improve access to healthy affordable foods. When asked about options for increasing access to fresh and affordable food, constituents emphasized a strong desire to access high quality fresh produce, as well as meats and fish. Interestingly, the top five potential solutions that focus group participants selected as solutions in their communities emphasized increased access to produce outside of traditional supermarket settings:

1. Farmers' Markets that take food stamps and WIC (97%)
2. (tie) Large Discount Store, Farmers' Markets, and Food Co-ops (88%)
3. Mercado (85%)
4. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) (82 %)
5. (tie) More fruit and vegetable carts, bodegas with fresh produce (79%)

Green Cart – Specific Findings – Vendors (street canvassing of 24 vendors; focus group with four vendors):

Finding #1: Vendors placed their carts at a wide range of locations.¹²

CCC Street canvassing identified a wide range of cart placement options near shopping malls, subway and bus stops, hospitals, and schools. (63% of carts surveyed were located near other shopping options and 58% were located near a subway.)

- 76% of vendors on the street reported that they did not move their carts to different locations during the day.
- 24% of vendors reported moving their carts, at least sometimes.

Finding #2: Most vendors remained at the location they selected.

The Green Cart initiative brings fruit and vegetable vendors to previously underserved neighborhoods. To generate community interest in purchasing from the carts, the carts need to be reliably present. This requires commitment from the vendors to both the location and to the start-up process. CCC was pleased to find that such commitment existed one year into this initiative.

When the vendors on the street were asked how long they had been selling in a particular location, 68% reported being at the location more than 5 months.

- More than one year: 3
- One year: 2

¹² Note that number of vendors may vary by number who responded to a particular question.

- 5-11 months: 8
- 1-4 months: 6

Finding #3: Most vendors operated more than five days a week.

Sixty-two percent of Green Cart vendors sell fruits and vegetables more than 5 days a week and 33% sell 5 days a week. One vendor reported selling only 4 days a week.

Finding #4: Green Carts offered a wide range of produce and price points.

Fruits were much more prevalent than vegetables on the carts. Although most of the carts sold apples, bananas and oranges, there were some variations and occasionally unique offerings.

- The following fruits were carried in 50% or more of the carts: apples, bananas, pears, nectarines, tomatoes, peaches, plums, grapes, and oranges.
- The following vegetables were carried in 80% or more of the carts: avocados and peppers.
- Other: broccoli, pears, lettuce, watermelons, cucumbers, mangoes, potatoes, cantaloupes, kiwi, papayas, onions, blueberries, strawberries, plantains, squash, quenapas, butternut squash, eggplant, cauliflower, celery.
- Not found in any cart: cherries or carrots.

Price points were similar. Some of the highest priced items were avocados (\$2) and blueberries (\$2.50 to \$2.99). Some of the lowest priced items were oranges and clementines (2 for \$1 and 5 for \$1, respectively).

Finding #5: Green Carts were reaching targeted populations.

- When vendors were asked on the street, “Who purchases from you the most?” nearly 60% of those who responded said “children and families.”
- In addition, nearly 25% of the people who purchased were defined by the vendors as seniors, persons typically identified as ones who are less able to shop a greater distance from their homes.

Finding #6: Vendors were interested in efforts to increase usage of Green Carts by poor and working poor consumers. Vendors who participated in focus groups indicated that they need the ability to accept Electronic Benefit Transfer cards (EBT)¹³ if they are to be profitable in high poverty districts. Similarly, vendors canvassed on the street indicated the need to accept EBT cards. Notably, vendors in both groups underscored their own need for financial assistance during the slow winter months.

Finding #7: Vendors articulated the need for advertising to bolster Green Cart visibility and sales. Twelve out of 24 vendors, split evenly across the boroughs in which canvassing was performed, expressed the need for increased advertising.

Finding #8: Vendors needed assistance with cart storage and cart transportation.

During the focus group, the vendors indicated that cart storage was an issue because it is costly to store carts and because the transportation of carts requires that they purchase or rent a van with a commercial license plate. In addition, they explained that those commercial vehicles cannot be parked at their homes, so vendors assume an additional cost of parking the vans elsewhere. Five of the vendors interviewed on the street also expressed interest in assistance with transporting their carts to the vending locations.

¹³ TANF Cash Assistance, Food Stamps (SNAP), and HEAP program benefits are provided to recipients via the EBT card in New York State.

Finding #9: Vendors needed assistance in purchasing affordable, high quality fruits & vegetables. Vendor participants in the focus groups stated that the cost of fruit varied widely according to the “middleman” they used. Greater help was needed to negotiate both the wholesale market and make appropriate choices with respect to use of middlemen. Some of the vendors on the street concurred with this need. Twenty-five percent said that help purchasing from wholesale would make it easier to be a vendor and 21% said finding the fruits and vegetables to sell would make it easier.

Finding #10: Most vendors reported a willingness to continue their Green Cart businesses, despite start-up concerns.

Over 80% of the vendors surveyed on the street who responded to the question, “Do you plan to have a Green Cart again next year” said “yes.”

- Green Carts were mostly seen as seasonal work, as only 15% of vendors said they would operate in the winter.
- 50% said they would not operate in the winter.
- 20% said they were not sure if they would operate during the winter.

Recommendations

CCC’s Policy Recommendations underscore the opportunity to the strengthen the Green Cart initiative as the City undertakes the next round of permitting, as well as the City’s need to continue to pursue diverse and innovative initiatives to improve access to healthy and affordable foods, and to support related job creation opportunities for New Yorkers.

Green Cart Recommendations: Constituent Focused:

We encourage the City to:

- Ensure that all Green Carts have access to Electronic Benefit Terminals (EBTs)¹⁴ and can accept SNAP benefits, as well as WIC allotments, so that poor and working poor community members can make full use of Green Carts.
- Facilitate the placement of Green Carts in close proximity to community-based organizations (CBOs). Vendors should be informed of the location of CBOs when they receive their permits for designated zones and consideration should be given to allowing CBOs to adopt or sponsor a Green Cart.¹⁵
- Expand public marketing of Green Carts to include, but not be limited to: provision of Green Cart marketing materials to local social service providers, hospitals and schools; exploration of the effectiveness of the Esperanza del Barrio-launched website, www.locarto.org; and encouragement of New Yorkers’ postings about Green Cart locations on the New York City Green Cart Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/NYCGreenCart>.

¹⁴ The New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and the Farmer’s Market Federation (Federation) launched a wireless EBT Pilot Project (under a federal waiver) for use in food deserts statewide. The pilot provides Green Cart vendors with hand-held swipe card devices that permit them to conduct EBT card transactions. State and federal funds are currently supporting the \$900 cost of each wireless terminal. Vendors are reimbursed for the monthly service cost of the terminal (\$35) and the transaction fee (3.5 cents) out of a grant from the State (OTDA and Department of Agriculture & Markets). The New York City Green Carts, which were included in the project, were allocated 17 (out of 40 available) wireless terminals.

¹⁵ For example, Montefiore Medical Center has an entire program built around adopting the Green Carts in its area. <http://www.montefiore.org/whoware/stories/greencarts/> (accessed 3/30/10).

Green Cart Recommendations: Vendor Focused:

We encourage the City to:

- Enhance targeted technical assistance to vendors on appropriate cart placement options by engaging community based organizations (CBOs) and the vendors in joint workshops and permitting CBOs to adopt or sponsor a Green Cart.
- Expand the Green Cart initiative to targeted sites on public property within designated zones including, but not limited to, public hospitals, NYCHA facilities, and Child Health Centers.
- Explore the feasibility of allowing Green Carts to locate in sheltered spaces on public property or at CBOs during the winter months in order to improve Green Cart profitability and constituent access to fresh produce year round.
- Increase Green Cart visibility through targeted public advertising campaigns in designated zones.
- Work with the State to expand the number of wireless EBT terminals available at Green Carts.
- Require posting of Green Cart positioning rules to be posted directly on the carts to assist the police with enforcement of cart regulations.
- Develop a guide to Green Carts positioning rules and regulations enforcement, embossed with the Mayoral seal, which builds upon the initial Green Cart training activities¹⁶ that the DOHMH Office of Community Sanitation offered to the Police Department. Distribute this guide to the captain and community affairs units in each police precinct. In addition, the Office of Community Sanitation should offer regular refresher trainings to incoming community police officers.
- Explore the feasibility of creating centralized cart storage in each borough.
- Enhance targeted technical assistance to vendors to improve their capacity to make direct use of the Hunts Point Terminal Market and facilitate their ability to purchase bulk produce to be distributed across several carts.

General Food Retail and Food Access Focused Recommendations:

We encourage the City to:

- Prioritize the use of FRESH financing funds so existing supermarkets can improve refrigeration and provide a wider array of high quality affordable produce, as well as fish and meats.
- Prioritize the use of FRESH financing mechanisms to allow for the development of co-operative supermarkets that offer high quality produce at subsidized prices because members provide volunteer labor.
- Expand the Healthy Bodega initiative to ensure that a greater number of small retailers increase their capacity to offer a limited range of fruits and vegetables.
- Establish educational forums for community members to facilitate the creation of Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) in Green Cart communities.
- Continue to expand the use of EBT, WIC and Health Bucks at Farmers' Markets.

The NYC Green Cart initiative is an innovative strategy to help address the alarming public health issues, such as the growing obesity rate, that stem from poor consumption

¹⁶ At the time the Green Carts were originally rolled out, a formal training was provided to police precincts on Green Cart regulations and positions rules. Subsequent refreshers have been provided to police captains via telephone call.

of fruits and vegetables and lack of access to nutritious, affordable food in far too many communities. Findings from *Green Cart Implementation: Year One*, demonstrate that Green Carts are reaching intended communities and providing them with a powerful tool against obesity and poor nutrition. Low-income community residents rely upon Green Carts as a frequent shopping option and rate as “good” or “excellent” the quality and variety of fruits and vegetables that Green Carts offer. Furthermore, Green Cart vendors, who operate at a minimum of five days a week, have expressed a commitment to continuing self-employment via Green Carts, and seek to increase cart usage by community members. CCC urges New York City to strengthen this initiative by ensuring that all Green Carts are equipped to conduct EBT transactions and by expanding upon the technical assistance offered to Green Cart vendors so that they can establish linkages with public agencies and community based organizations, as well as other vendors, and increase their capacity to serve communities in need year-round.

Appendices

- a) Pre-focus Group Constituent Survey
- b) Pre-focus Group Vendor Survey
- c) Green Cart Assessment Tool
- d) Vendor Street Interview Tool
- e) Constituent Street Canvassing Tool

a) Pre-Focus Group Constituent Survey

Participant's Initials _____ Age _____ Sex: F / M

1. Do you have children Y / N 1a) What are their ages _____
2. Do you work (*circle one*): full-time part-time unemployed
3. Are you in school (*circle one*): full-time part time not in school
4. Do you or your children receive any of the following? (*Circle all that apply*)
 Food Stamps WIC School Breakfast/Lunch
 Snack/Meals in child care/Head Start & After-School Programs
5. Have you ever used Health Bucks? (*Circle one*) Y/N
6. Do you own a car or have access to one (*circle one*): Y / N
7. Please identify all the places you do food shopping, how often you shop there, and how you get there (*complete all and circle all that apply*)

	How Frequent Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never (<i>Circle</i>)	Distance From home (<i>Circle</i>)	Transportation used to get there (<i>Circle</i>)
Supermarket	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private Car
Bodega	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private Car
Farmers' Market	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private Car
Fruit/vegetable Cart	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private car
Food Co-Op	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private car
Large Discount Store	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private car
CSA	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private car
Other	Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Never	Near/Far	Walk Bus Subway Car Service Private Car

8. Approximately how much do you spend on groceries per month? \$_____
9. How often do you cook at home? (*Check one*)
 Every day Almost every day Sometimes Never
10. What do usually cook for dinner?

11. How often do you eat out or order take-out? (*Check one*)
- Every day Almost every day Sometimes Never
12. If you order take out and/or go out to eat, what are the two (2) places you go most frequently?
13. What types of food do you order/eat out?
14. Did you eat any fruits or vegetables today? Y N
15. Are you satisfied with the selections of foods in your neighborhood? Y N
- a. Fruits Y N
- b. Vegetables Y N
- c. Meats Y N
- d. Fish Y N
16. Are you satisfied with the price of foods in your neighborhood? Y N
- a. Fruits Y N
- b. Vegetables Y N
- c. Meats Y N
- d. Fish Y N
17. Is there a food item or items that you would purchase more of if it were available and affordable? Y N If yes, what are they?
18. If you use a supermarket, how long does it take to get there?
19. Do you spend money to get to and from the supermarket? Y N
- a. If yes, how much do you spend per trip?
20. Do you think that lack of access to healthy food is a contributor to bad health? Y N
21. Here are some ideas that people have mentioned as possible solutions to improve access to affordable, healthy foods. Do you like these ideas for your community? You can say, "Yes" to as many as you like.
- a. Establishing a year round market (a 'mercado') in available public space Y N
- b. Creating a farmers' market in your neighborhood Y N
- c. Opening more supermarkets in your neighborhood. Y N

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| d. Providing you and your groceries free transportation to and from the supermarket | Y | N |
| e. Getting a big supermarket to deliver to your home | Y | N |
| f. Allowing more food cart vendors to sell fresh fruits and vegetables | Y | N |
| g. Having the bodegas carry more fresh produce | Y | N |
| h. Having bodegas carry frozen vegetables and fruit in addition to what they sell now | Y | N |
| i. Creating a food coop where you volunteer and are able to purchase discounted foods | Y | N |
| j. Joining a CSA program where families receive weekly produce from a regional farmer at a discounted rate | Y | N |
| k. Farmers' markets that accept food stamps and WIC | Y | N |
| l. Large discount store | Y | N |

Facilitator initials _____

b) Pre-Focus Group Vendor Survey

1. What Borough Do you Live in?

Bronx Brooklyn Manhattan Queens Staten Island Other

2. Where do you sell fruits and vegetables from your Green Cart?

Bronx Brooklyn Manhattan Queens Staten Island

Cross streets: _____

3. Did purchase your Green Cart? Yes No

a. If yes, how much did you have to pay for it? _____

4. Did you receive financial help to purchase your Green Cart? Yes No

a. If yes, from whom (*check as many as apply*)

Accion Karp Friend Relative Other vendor

I'd rather not say

5. Did you receive help finding a location to vend with your Green Cart? Yes No

If yes, from whom?

6. Are you able to make a decent living selling fresh fruits and vegetables in your current Green Cart location? Yes No

a. Do you think there is help that could be offered so you could improve income earned from the Green Cart? Yes No

b. If yes, what help would you be interested in?

7. What fruits and/or vegetables do you currently sell at your Green Cart? (check all that apply)

Apples Pears Bananas Watermelon Mangos Grapes
 Avocados Cherries Nectarines Peaches Plums Peppers
 Broccoli Lettuce Tomatoes Cucumbers Other:
 Other: Other:

8. Which fruits and/or vegetables are your best sellers?

9. (*optional*) What is your country of origin?

Facilitator Initials: _____

c) **Green Cart Assessment Tool**

Borough _____
 Cross Streets _____

Date: _____ Time of day: _____ Volunteer's initials: _____

While the vendor is being asked questions, please complete these check-offs (no need to ask the vendor these questions):

1) What is visible from the cart (check all that apply and explain):

- Hospital: _____ School: _____
- Business: _____ Shopping: _____
- Subway stop: _____ Bus stop: _____
- Main road: _____ Fruit/veg cart: _____
- Supermarket/Bodega: _____
- Other _____

2) Types of Fruit and Vegetables (check all being sold):

- Apples Pears Bananas Watermelon Mangos Grapes
- Avocado Cherries Nectarines Peaches Plums Peppers
- Broccoli Lettuce Tomatoes Cucumbers Potatoes Oranges
- Other fruit Other Vegetable: _____
- Other: _____

3) Price Range:

Highest price (Item and price): _____

Lowest price (Item and price): _____

4) Are customers purchasing from the Cart?

- Yes No

5) How would you rate the quality of the produce?

- Good Fair Poor

6) Other notes: write-in

d) Vendor Street Interview Tool

Borough _____

Cross Streets: _____

Date: _____

Time of day: ____

Volunteer's initials:

- 1) How many days each week do you sell fruits and vegetables here?
- 2) What days of the week are you here?
- 3) How long have you been selling fruits and vegetables on this block/corner? (Add prompt if necessary – weeks / months)
- 4) Do you move your cart to sell somewhere else during the day?
 - Yes No Sometimes
- 5) Is business good here?
 - Yes No Sometimes
- 6) What is your busiest time of the day?
- 7) Who buys from you the most?
 - Children/Families Youth Adults Senior Citizens
- 8) Will you still be selling fruits and vegetables here in the winter time?
 - Yes No Not sure yet
- 9) Do you plan to have a GreenCart again next year?
- 10) Would any of these things make it easier for you to operate a GreenCart?
 - Getting your cart to this spot
 - Storing your cart at night
 - Purchasing the fruits and vegetables from the wholesale market or intermediary
 - Finding fruits and vegetables to sell
 - Getting the fruits and vegetables to this spot to sell them
 - Advertising about Green Carts
 - Access to fruits and vegetables from local farmers
 - Ability to let customers know where your cart will be each day
 - Ability to accept food stamps
 - Better relationship with the community
 - Other

What is the hardest thing about being a GreenCart Vendor?

e) **Constituent Street Canvassing Tool**

Borough _____

Cross Streets: _____

Date: _____

Time of day: ____

Volunteer's initials:

Hello, I'm a volunteer from a children's organization. I am conducting a short survey about fruits and vegetables. Do you have a few minutes to help us out?

1) Do you live in this neighborhood? Yes No2) Do you work in this neighborhood? Yes No

3) What are the 2 places you shop most frequently for fruits and/or vegetables?

(do not prompt -check all mentioned)

 Farmer's Market Cart on street Supermarket Bodega Food Co-op Large Discount store (e.g. Walmart) CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Other (specify): _____If response is I don't buy produce – survey ends

4) Are these places walking distance from your home?

 Yes No One is and one is not

5) For those that are not walking distance, how do you get there? (check all that apply)

 Bus Subway Car Service Personal Car Shuttle service

6) NYC has recently increased the number of street vendors selling fruits and vegetables.

These new carts have a special umbrella that says "NYC Green Cart".

Let me show you a picture. (Point to umbrella.)

Have you ever seen or heard advertising for this new type of street vendor, the NYC Green Cart? (*Show NY metro wrapper*) Yes No

Have you ever bought fruits or vegetables from a Green Cart?

 Yes No Skip to Question 15 on back

7) How often do you purchase fruits or vegetables from a Green Cart?

 Daily Weekly Monthly One time Other:

8) Why did you buy fruits or vegetables from a Green Cart? (Mark all mentioned)

- Convenient location Prices Cleanliness Quality
 Variety Other(specify): _____

9) How was the quality of the fruits and vegetables?

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

10) How would you rate the variety of fruits and vegetables?

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

11) How would you rate the prices?

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

12) How convenient was the Green Cart the last time you went?

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

13) Where do you prefer to buy fruits and vegetables?

- Green Cart Somewhere else (Example)

14) Are you happy about the new GreenCarts?

- Yes No Undecided

Questions for those who answered NO to # 6B

15) Why have you not shopped at a Green Cart? (do not prompt -check all mentioned)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I had never heard about it before | <input type="checkbox"/> Not conveniently located |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hours of operation inconvenient | <input type="checkbox"/> Not clean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fruits/vegetables not fresh (poor quality) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of variety of produce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I cannot depend on the cart always being there | <input type="checkbox"/> Prices are not affordable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not good customer service | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not accept Food Stamps or WIC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer other stores | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify below): | |

14) Are you happy about the new Green Carts?

- Yes No Undecided