Farmers Markets as a Healthy Food Access Strategy

Assessing Baltimore’s Farmers Markets & Proposing Recommendations to Increase Access

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MPH Capstone Symposium
Capstone Advisor: Roni Neff, PhD, MS
Objectives

- Provide background on Baltimore’s food environment and the Farmers Market Assessment
- Discuss key Assessment findings
- Highlight limitations of farmers market as a food access strategy
- Provide recommendations to increase the use of federal nutrition benefits at farmers markets
Food Deserts are defined as areas where there are more than 1 mile from a major supermarket and 40% or more of the population is classified as food insecure. Source for Food Insecurity: US Department of Agriculture. This map is an approximation and not the actual environment of each block group. Including the street grade, the supermarket.

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Center for a Livable Future

April 2011
Lead Up to Farmers Market Assessment

- Formation of Baltimore’s Food Policy Task Force formation
- Released 10 Recommendations
  - “Promote and expand farmers markets”
Assessment Overview

• Objective #1: Are underserved communities being served?

• Objective #2: Do underserved communities have equal access to farmers markets?

• Objective #3: Are vendors at farmers markets located in or near food deserts profitable?
Federal Nutrition Programs

• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  – $130 FY10 average monthly benefit level in MD

• WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC FMNP)
  – $20 for 2011 season in MD

• Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
  – $30 for season in MD
Assessment Summary: FMNP

- 9 markets accept FMNP
  - 5 in food deserts, 4 in non-food deserts
- SFMNP
  - 88% Redemption Rate in 2010
- WIC FMNP
  - 39% Redemption Rate in 2010
Assessment Summary: SNAP

• 3 markets accept SNAP
  – 2010 Maryland Hunger Solutions Pilot Program
  • Infrastructure and incentive program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Total # EBT transactions</th>
<th>Total EBT Sales</th>
<th>Peak EBT Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlandtown</td>
<td>July 10th – Oct. 9th (14 weeks)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$325</td>
<td>$53 (July 17th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Heights</td>
<td>June 2nd – Nov. 24th (26 weeks)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>$1,099</td>
<td>$185 (Nov. 17th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverly (Summer)</td>
<td>July 3rd – Nov. 20th (21 weeks)</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>$11,622</td>
<td>$1,688 (Nov. 20th)</td>
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</table>
Factors Affecting Farmers Market Access

• Operational limitations
• Cost perceptions
• Demand for produce and healthy eating
• Acceptance of FMNP/SNAP
• Location to public transportation
• Awareness
Recommendations for Increasing SNAP/ FMNP Redemption at Farmers Markets

- Research on adequate funding levels to improve demand
- Federal investment in EBT infrastructure
  - Incentive program funding
- Encourage 100% FMNP Authorization
- Community partnerships
- Awareness campaigns
- Encourage farmers to sell culturally-relevant produce
Conclusion

• Farmers markets have a lot of potential as food access sites
• Increase number of farmers markets participating in federal benefits program
• Increase consumer awareness and demand
• No magic bullet but a community benefit to utilize as an intervention strategy
References

Slide 3: “Map of Baltimore”


Slide 4: “Lead Up”

Slide 7: Federal Nutrition Programs


Slide 8-9: Assessment Overview


References

Slide 10: Factors Affecting Farmers Market Access


Acknowledgements

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Roni Neff
Ethan Prosnit
Sarah Rodman

All of the Baltimore farmer market managers and city and state officials who gave their time during the assessment process
Assessment Summary—FMNP

- 9/14 markets accept FMNP

### FMNP Participation Rates 2010

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coupons</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MD SFMNP</td>
<td>81,825</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore City SFMNP</td>
<td>44,300</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MD WIC FMNP</td>
<td>234,996</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baltimore City WIC FMNP</td>
<td>56,850</td>
<td>24%</td>
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### FMNP Redemption Rates 2010

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coupons</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MD SFMNP</td>
<td>67,097</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore City SFMNP</td>
<td>38,984</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD WIC FMNP</td>
<td>110,448</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore City WIC FMNP</td>
<td>22,172</td>
<td>39%</td>
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