



Twin Cities Mobile Market

The First Eight Months of Operations

D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 5

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Summary

The Twin Cities Mobile Market (TCMM) is a grocery store on wheels developed to increase access to healthy, affordable foods in under-resourced neighborhoods. TCMM is a program of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation working to improve community health and well-being. TCMM launched in 2014 and became fully operational in January 2015, stopping regularly at 18 different sites across Saint Paul.

At this early stage of implementation, the program's goals are to raise awareness about TCMM, establish successful stops, and increase TCMM's sales and customer base. Over time, TCMM would like to see its work contributing to long-term healthy changes in food consumption and health outcomes, fostering neighborhood cohesion, and engaging residents in broader efforts to improve health in their neighborhoods.

This summary introduces key metrics that will be used to monitor implementation and success over time, highlights lessons learned through a series of interviews with program staff, site hosts, volunteers, and customers, and describes future evaluation efforts. It also includes results from analyses of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) data, to better understand how lower-income individuals who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits use TCMM.

About Twin Cities Mobile Market

TCMM is a grocery store on wheels that brings healthy, affordable foods to neighborhoods that lack these resources. In Saint Paul, where all TCMM stops are currently located, there is a high need for affordable food options. Overall, 22 percent of Saint Paul residents live in poverty¹ and these rates can be much higher in some neighborhoods in the city. According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), over 98,000 Saint Paul residents are low-income and live in a food desert.² These food desert areas are located primarily in Saint Paul's Dayton's Bluff (East Side) and Payne-Phalen neighborhoods. However, access to grocery stores and food outlets can also be a challenge in neighborhoods with poor public transportation infrastructure and where fewer residents own their own vehicles.

During its first eight months of operation, TCMM stopped at 21 different locations, including low-income apartment buildings, schools, and places of worship. Some site locations and stop times have changed to respond to shifts in demand. Eleven of these sites are located in designated food desert areas, while others were selected because they reach residents who may otherwise have difficulty accessing local grocery stores, such as aging residents or residents with disabilities.

¹ The U.S. Census Bureau's definition of poverty is determined by the household size. A household of four earning less than \$24,250 annually meets the definition of poverty.

² The USDA defines a food desert as areas where at least 20 percent of the population lives in poverty and where at least 500 residents or 33 percent of the urban census tract's population live more than a mile from a supermarket or grocery store.

1. Map of Twin Cities Mobile Market stops

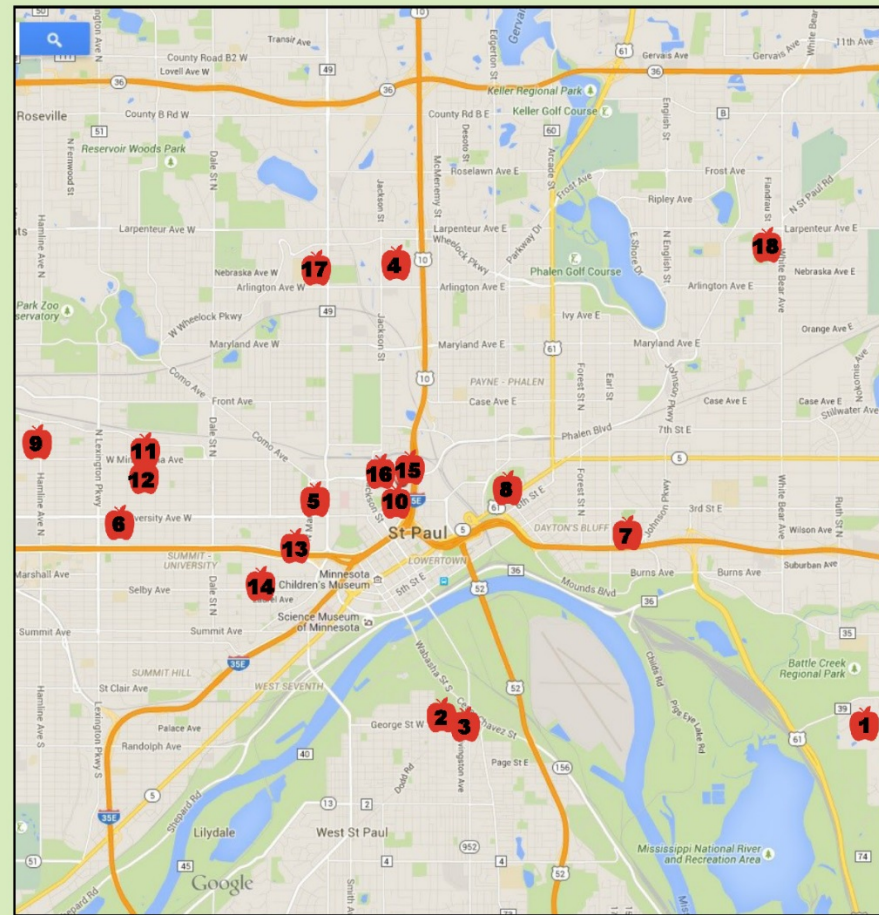
Join us at the

- 1** Afton View: Tuesdays 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
365 Winthrop St., St. Paul
- 2** 508/510 Humboldt: Tuesdays 1:00-1:45 p.m.
508 & 510 Humboldt Ave., St. Paul
- 3** 516 Humboldt: Tuesdays 1:45-2:30 p.m.
516 Humboldt Ave., St. Paul
- 4** McDonough Homes: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 p.m.
1544 Timberlake Rd., St. Paul
- 5** Rivertown Commons: Tuesdays 5:00-6:30 p.m.
175 Charles St., St. Paul (courtyard behind apts.)
- 6** Hubbs Learning Center: Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
1030 University Ave. W, St. Paul
- 7** Parkway Gardens: Wednesdays 2:00-3:00 p.m.
1145 Hudson Rd., St. Paul
- 8** First Lutheran Church: Wednesdays 5:00-6:30 p.m.
463 Maria Ave., St. Paul
- 9** Hamline Hi-Rise: Thursdays 12:00-1:00 p.m.
777 N Hamline Ave., St. Paul
- 10** Valley Hi-Rise: Thursdays 2:00-3:00 p.m.
261 University Ave., St. Paul
- 11** Wilder Square Hi-Rise: Thursdays 3:30-4:30 p.m.
750 N Milton St., St. Paul
- 12** Wilder Child Development Center: Thursdays 5:00-6:00 p.m.
911 Lafond Ave., St. Paul
- 13** Ravoux Hi-Rise: Fridays 12:00-1:00 p.m.
280 Ravoux St., St. Paul
- 14** Hall-Young Plaza: Fridays 1:30-2:30 p.m.
425 Selby Ave., St. Paul
- 15** Mt. Airy Hi-Rise: Fridays 3:30-4:30 p.m.
200 E Arch St., St. Paul
- 16** Mt. Airy Community Center: Fridays 4:30-5:30 p.m.
91 E Arch St., St. Paul
- 17** Lamplighter Village: Saturdays 10:30-11:30 a.m.
1512 Woodbridge St., St. Paul
- 18** Iowa Hi-Rise: Saturdays 12:00-1:00 p.m.
1743 Iowa Ave. E, St. Paul



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A program of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation



Strong relationships with vendors, funders, and community stakeholders have been critical to TCMM's work. TCMM staff have worked to develop strong relationships with food suppliers and vendors, helping them get high quality food at good prices. They have a broad funding base that includes individual donors and other funders that are interested in TCMM's approach for improving health in a new, innovative way. These relationships have also increased the visibility of TCMM and provided a strong volunteer and customer base.

Volunteers play a key role in the success and sustainability of TCMM. Over time, TCMM project staffing has expanded to increase the program's outreach capacity. However, volunteers play important roles in daily operations and in ensuring customers have a positive shopping experience. Volunteers help stock the bus and fold pamphlets, flyers, and other promotional activities. They also play important roles at each stop, restocking shelves, bagging groceries, carrying bags for customers, and taking orders for customers who physically cannot get on the bus. Through July, 55 volunteers have provided 303 hours of time to help support TCMM.

Characteristics of strong TCMM stops

The success of individual TCMM stops has varied. The TCMM program manager assessed the success of each stop in terms of success reaching customers, relationships with site hosts, and overall success (Figure 2). At a handful of very successful stops, there is often a line to get on the bus to shop and the length of the stop needed to be lengthened to accommodate demand. Program staff and volunteers note that these stops are often where site hosts play a more active role to promote TCMM. They felt that building a strong customer base may simply take more time and effort in places where site hosts are less involved or do not have as strong a relationship with residents.

A number of school sites, however, were discontinued because of a lack of customers. School partners confirmed that most students ride the bus home after school; program staff thought that those parents who do pick up their children from school may feel too busy to shop for groceries during that time. Also, because students do not necessarily attend the school closest to where they live, it was difficult to target schools with students who live in neighborhoods with limited food access. Program staff and stakeholders suggested working more directly with school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) groups to share information about TCMM and to determine the best times for stops. It may be more advantageous, for example, to host stops around specific school events, rather than at a weekly school dismissal time. Other stakeholders suggested kid-focused cooking demonstrations or promotions as a way to reach parents and families in the future.

2. Twin Cities Mobile Market stop ratings

	Target population	Target population ^a	Relationship with site ^b	Overall success ^c
Afton View Apartments	Primarily Somali immigrants	E	M	E
First Lutheran Church	Wellness program participants; people experiencing homelessness	M	M	M
Hamline Hi-Rise	Public housing residents; seniors; people with disabilities	E	E	E
Hubbs Learning Center	Adult students pursuing GED; English Language Learners	E	E	E
Humboldt Apartments	Low-income seniors	E	M	E
Iowa Hi-Rise	Public housing residents	M	M	M
Jackson Prep Magnet School	Parents/families of students; neighbors	F	M	F
Jackson Street Village	Building residents; families overcoming long-term homelessness	F	E	F
Johnson A. Johnson Elementary	Parents/families of students; neighbors	F	M	F
Mt. Airy Homes/Hi-Rise	Building residents; community center attendees	E	M	M
Parkway Gardens	Building residents; neighbors	M	M	M
Parkway School	Parents/families of students; neighbors	F	M	F
Rivertown Commons	Building residents; many (~80%) experiencing unemployment	M	F	F
Valley Hi-Rise	Public housing residents	M	M	E
Washington Tech Magnet School/Lamplighter Village	Building residents; families of school students	F	M	M
Wilder Childhood Development	Families of children from childcare; neighbors	M	M	M
Wilder Square	Low-income residents	M	E	E

^a **Target population rating definitions.** Exceeded (E): Reached target population, served more customers than anticipated; Met (M): Reached target population, served about as many customers as expected; Fell below expectations (F): Did not reach target population and/or sales were lower than expected.

^b **Relationship with site rating definitions.** Exceeded (E): Site host engaged with TCMM, conducting outreach beyond expectations; Met (M): Site host is responsive to TCMM, does not go beyond outreach requested by TCMM; Fell below expectations (F): Site host is not responsive to TCMM, has not conducted outreach; high staff turnover.

^c **Overall success rating definitions.** Exceeded (E): Exceeded expectations overall; site is functioning well and could be a model for other sites; Met (M): Met or exceeded expectations overall; site is functioning well; Fell below expectations overall (F): One or more ratings fell below expectations, site should not be a model for other sites, and/or site was discontinued.

TCMM reaches customers who otherwise have difficulty accessing affordable, healthy foods. A number of customers interviewed stated that before shopping at TCMM, it was inconvenient for them to shop at the grocery store and the cost kept them from purchasing healthy food. By being located in neighborhoods without grocery stores, TCMM is improving access to healthy food. Anecdotal stories were shared of residents who purchased food almost exclusively from vending machines or who hadn't purchased fresh produce in years before starting to shop at TCMM. One customer noted that because of his difficulty walking, shopping at a large grocery store is not always possible, but he could manage shopping at TCMM. Program staff and volunteers make extra effort to help customers in a number of ways, such as helping customers carry purchased groceries.

Site hosts have helped TCMM establish successful stops. Outreach is needed to build awareness of TCMM among residents. At apartment buildings, site hosts often hang TCMM posters and flyers on community bulletin boards, distribute flyers to residents, include the TCMM schedule in its newsletter, and remind residents about TCMM during resident council meets and informal interactions. One site host uses the building's public address system to announce TCMM's arrival. One TCMM program staff member noted that some site hosts do not permit TCMM to do more direct outreach with building residents, further demonstrating the importance of partnering with site hosts willing to share information about TCMM with residents.

I think you really got to invest the time and energy and strategic planning for getting people educated about what it is, what it means. Creating buzz and excitement around it. You have to get residents to take the lead and promote it. – Site host

Sales summary

Through July 31, 2015, TCMM has made nearly 8,000 sales with net sales reaching just over \$75,000 (Figure 3). Over 1,800 of these sales, totaling \$24,641, were Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) transactions, a payment mode for lower-income residents who receive food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). While EBT sales do not capture cash transactions by residents who qualify for this food assistance benefit, these sales are being tracked as one way to determine whether TCMM is successfully reaching lower-income residents.

3. Key sales, customer, and communications metrics

	January	February	March ^a	April	May	June	Jan-June	July
Total number of TCMM stops	18	18	18	18	19	19	19	13
Sales								
Number of transactions	1,107	1,023	962	1,013	1,105	1,049	6,629	1,357
Net sales	\$10,935	\$10,494	\$9,279	\$9,861	\$10,994	\$11,18	\$62,745	\$12,579
Number of EBT transactions	225	230	212	240	297	283	1,487	405
EBT transactions, as percentage of total	20.3%	22.5%	22.0%	23.7%	26.9%	27.0%	23.8%	29.8%
Produce sales, as percentage of total	43.6%	44.0%	43.1%	47.2%	49.3%	51.3%	46.5%	52.5%
Customers								
Number of new customers	997	218	96	147	171	129	1,758	194

Community awareness, support

Data available for FY 15 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

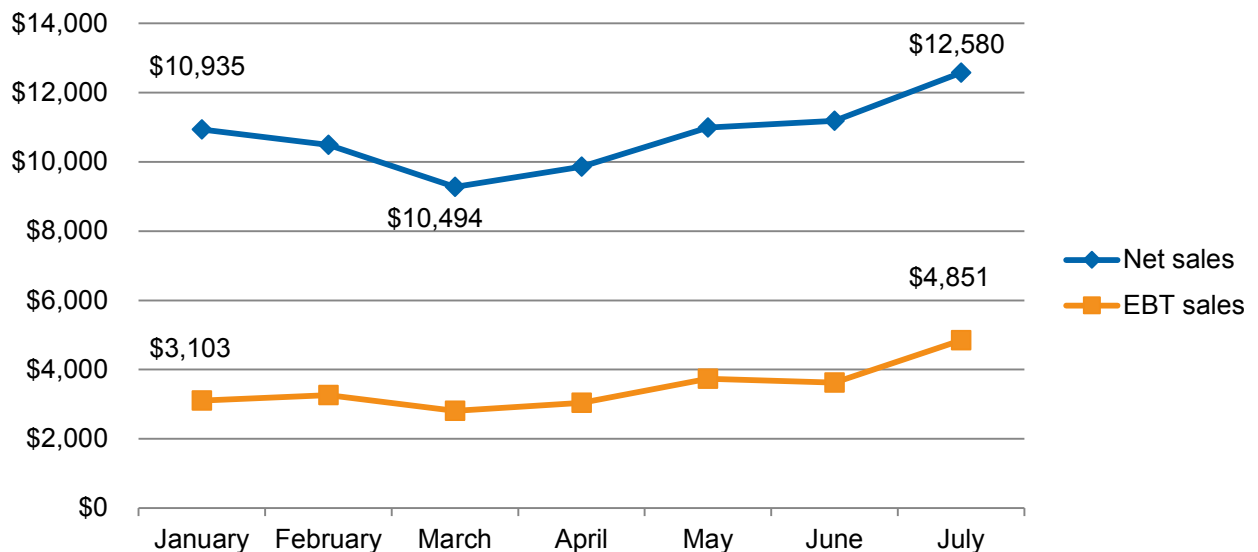
Website views		19,000+	
Number of volunteers		40	15
Number of Facebook followers		1,700	
Number of Twitter followers		450	
Number of media mentions		50	

^a TCMM did not operate for one full week in March, resulting in fewer transactions and lower sales for the month.

NOTE: Reporting of some social media outputs (see shaded areas) is gathered and reported semi-annually, rather than monthly.

Overall sales have exceeded expectations. Both net and EBT sales follow a similar trend, starting high in January, decreasing in February and March, and steadily increasing through June (Figure 4). According to the program manager, TCMM anticipated sales would start at a lower level and gradually increase over time. However, as a result of significant outreach and marketing efforts, the first month of operation was much higher than anticipated. This trend in sales helped the program realize very early on that an important part of their work will be to provide a positive experience for customers and to find ways to regularly re-engage residents in order to develop a consistent customer base.

4. Sales summary, January – July 2015



Note: December sales were excluded because TCMM was not in operation for the full month.

Produce accounts for the largest percentage of total sales. TCMM stocks a wide range of healthy food options, including produce, dairy products, meat, frozen items, and dry grocery items, such as cereal. Each month, produce sales have accounted for the largest percentage of sales, accounting for at least 43 and up to 53 percent of total sales. This metric demonstrate that many TCMM customers are purchasing produce, a food item that may not be readily available in neighborhood convenience stores or other food retail outlets.

TCMM has reached an average of 150 new customers each month. TCMM program staff ask customers if this is their first time shopping at the market when they check out. Based on their records, nearly 1,000 new customers shopped at TCMM during their first six weeks of operations. Since that point, at least 96 and up to 218 new customers have shopped at the market each month.

EBT sales are an important and growing part of the program’s success. In January, EBT sales accounted for 20 percent of the total sales transactions that month. Over time that has increased; in June, EBT sales accounted for 27 percent of total transactions. This trend demonstrates the importance of EBT sales to TCMM’s overall sustainability and suggests that TCMM is becoming increasingly effective at reaching lower-income residents and letting customers know that they accept EBT as a form of payment.

Most EBT transactions were for less than \$20. EBT transactions ranged from \$0.26 to \$192.23; the median transaction amount was \$10.24. Four out of five transactions were for less than \$20 (Figure 5).

**5. Distribution of Twin Cities Mobile Market EBT transaction amounts
(December 2014 – July 2015)**

Amount	Number	Percentage
<\$5.00	328	19%
\$5.00 to \$9.99	531	30%
\$10.00 to \$14.99	329	19%
\$15.00 to \$19.99	188	11%
\$20.00 to \$24.99	136	8%
\$25.00 to \$29.99	92	5%
\$30.00 to \$49.99	115	6%
\$50.00 and higher	36	2%

EBT sales vary considerably by stop. At Afton View Apartments, the stop with the greatest amount of EBT revenue, there were \$3,395 in EBT sales from January through July 2015. An additional nine stops had at least \$1,000 in EBT sales during the same time period (Appendix Figure A1). Although the total number of EBT transactions varied considerably by stop, from 261 transactions at Mt. Airy Hi-Rise to 2 transactions at Parkway School, the median transaction amount at most sites fell between \$8 and \$14. In the future, all sales transaction data will be available by TCMM stop, allowing for more robust analyses of sales, such as the amount of EBT sales as a percentage of all sales by TCMM stop.

Customer characteristics

Preliminary data suggest physical health is a major barrier for TCMM customers to purchase healthy, affordable foods. At this early stage of implementation, key informant interviews have been conducted with frequent customers at key TCMM stops, but feedback from a broader range of customers has not been gathered. However, in March and April 2015, surveys were conducted with 139 TCMM customers at 11 stops as part of a research project conducted by a graduate student from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health.³ Nearly one-quarter (24%) of the survey respondents identified a disability or health program as a major barrier to shopping for food. Other common barriers included a lack of transportation (21%), lack of money (19%), long distances to stores (17%), and lack of time (16%). These data are supported by the observations of site hosts and program staff, who have noted that many TCMM customers are elderly or have mobility issues.

I don't go [to the grocery store] often...the store is so big. When you have a bad hip, it's hard to get around, it's painful. [TCMM] is nice and small, they got a lot in there for the size of the bus. –TCMM customer

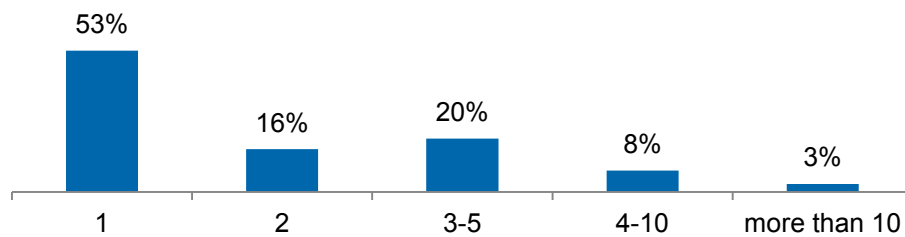
Repeat customers

Nearly half of people who used their SNAP benefits to purchase food were repeat customers. From December 2014 through July 2015, there were 1,755 EBT transactions. Of the 661 customers who used an EBT card while shopping at TCMM, just over half (53%) had one EBT transaction at TCMM, while 47 percent used their EBT card at least two times (Figure 6).⁴ The maximum number of visits for any customer using EBT was 27 visits. These totals may undercount customers who return multiple times, as they would not capture customers who use different forms of payment (e.g., cash, credit card).

³ Schreiber, L.R.N. (2015). Food access, food insecurity, and dietary habits in two desert food communities. Master's Project final paper. University of Minnesota School of Public Health.

⁴ Repeat customers are defined as individuals who used their EBT card at TCMM at least two different days or at two different stops. Customers who had multiple EBT transactions on the same day at the same stop were not counted as repeat customers.

**6. Number of times SNAP recipients used EBT at TCMM (N=661)
(December 2014 – July 2015)**



Some TCMM stops had much higher numbers of repeat customers than others. At all but two TCMM stops, at least one customer used their SNAP benefit to purchase food more than once. The percentage of returning SNAP customers ranged from 17 percent to 68 percent. At nine markets, at least 45 percent of customers using SNAP/EBT returned multiple times (Appendix Figure A2).

Customer experiences

Customers found TCMM to be a welcoming place to shop. All of the customers interviewed reported that the staff helped make TCMM a welcoming place to shop. Customers appreciated that staff assist customers who may not be able to access the bus by taking orders out front, help older adults with mobility limitations get on the bus, and assist with carrying grocery bags. Customers reported that staff were knowledgeable about food, nutrition, and cooking. Another customer noted that staff now know her children by name. These comments were supported by observations of site partners that customers at their sites appreciated the helpfulness of TCMM staff.

Many customers continued to buy groceries at other locations but used TCMM between visits or to supplement their purchases. Site coordinators noted that the customers comment on the reasonable prices and good quality of items on the bus. Some of the customers noted that they continue to shop at these stores, but they use TCMM to purchase fresh produce, or to buy food between visits to other stores.

I do my normal grocery shopping on weekends usually. TCMM is great because...we're able to pick up other kinds of fresh fruits and veggies if we need more to supplement what we already have for the rest of the week. So it's convenient and saves a trip that is hard to make. –TCMM customer

Customers also report benefits to their social well-being, in addition to the greater access to affordable high quality food. Site partners indicated that TCMM gives residents something to look forward to each week and provides an opportunity for

residents to meet and talk with their neighbors. Site partners also observed customers telling friends and neighbors about TCMM, and that advertising the market through word of mouth has helped neighbors get to know each other better.

TCMM provides new opportunities for families to shop for food together and relate to food in different ways. One site partner also observed that TCMM made it easier for parents to shop with their children, because the market does not offer the temptations of unhealthy foods. A customer also observed that TCMM provided opportunities to shop together as a family.

I will say a big change that it's made is that it allows my kids to help and participate in the actual grocery shopping process and they can participate in a way that is different than in a regular grocery store...They can reach things or they can carry it up to the register or things like that. It's really helping me interact with them in a different way regarding food choices and that's pretty cool. – TCMM customer

Individual and system-level changes

A growing number of residents are aware of, and involved with, TCMM. Volunteers and individual donors are also important to the success of TCMM. Volunteers help stock the bus, conduct in-person outreach (e.g., door knocking, handing out flyers), and support other administrative support functions. Through June 2015, TCMM has engaged 40 volunteers in its work. TCMM has a Facebook following of nearly 1,700. One program staff person noted that there could be a number of benefits to increasing volunteerism among community residents living at or near stops.

More information will be needed to understand whether TCMM is contributing to behavior change. The survey of TCMM customers conducted by a graduate student showed that a majority of customers (68%) reported their consumption of fruits and vegetables increased since they were able to start shopping at TCMM. In the key informant interviews, four out of six customers interviewed felt like they have made changes to what they eat as a result of shopping at TCMM. They indicated buying better quality food, eating more fruits and vegetables, and liking the taste of fresh food more. One customer also stated that she has started to eat a salad every day, and her family is eating more fruits and vegetables. Some of the other TCMM stakeholders interviewed also noted that customers might experience less stress in their lives knowing that they can easily purchase healthy, affordable food.

That one week the bus was gone, I had my friend get TV dinner that week. It tasted like cardboard after eating all the fresh food. It used to taste good...but fresh food is a lot better. – TCMM customer

I would say positive change is residents having less stress in their life about getting good food to feed their family, that their sense of well-being is improved knowing that they live in public housing that strive to provide resources that help them. And I would hope they would feel better by not being hungry. – Site host

These results are promising, and more information will be needed in the future to better understand how TCMM is contributing to changes in the local food environment and supporting the healthy behaviors of residents.

A few host sites have implemented other practices or policies to support the health of residents. TCMM program staff were aware of two site hosts that had made changes to serve healthier food at building events after becoming involved with TCMM. In addition, TCMM has worked with Hamline Hi-Rise to advocate for a bus stop at the building.

TCMM may be contributing to greater social connectedness among residents.

According to TCMM program staff, volunteers, and site hosts, TCMM is playing a role in supporting interaction between residents. Program staff noted that they see residents interacting with one another in line and on the bus and making connections about ways in which increased access to healthy food is improving their health in other areas. There were also anecdotal observations of residents sharing information with one another about food (e.g., recipes) or other community resources that promote health.

Lots of residents don't have many things going on in their life so weekly stops by the bus is a good thing, it gives them something to look forward to. – TCMM site host

People are connecting access to healthy food to improvement in their personal lives through weight loss, management of diabetes, and other things. – TCMM program staff

TCMM is also playing a role in advocating for policy changes that will increase residents' access to healthy, affordable foods. In 2015, TCMM program staff and partners advocated for the Healthy Eating Here at Home legislation in Minnesota, which resulted in a sustainable program to incentivize SNAP recipients to purchase food from farmers markets. TCMM is also involved with the Metro Food Access Network, which is considering how residents can be more involved in the development of key plans and decisions that impact food access. The TCMM program manager is serving on the Minnesota Food Code Advisory Council, to help shift rules for mobile operations so that there are fewer barriers for TCMM expansion and greater opportunities for other types of mobile operations that help residents access key resources and services.

Challenges

TCMM must be able to meet the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse customer base. TCMM works to offer foods that are culturally appropriate and to meet the linguistic needs of customers. In addition to having promotional materials available in multiple languages, TCMM staff must be able to answer questions from customers who speak a number of different languages. This challenge can be addressed, in part, through the hiring of new TCMM staff, engaging a culturally diverse group of volunteers, and building relationships with site hosts and other community organizations who are well-connected to specific neighborhoods and key cultural communities.

The ability [of TCMM] to remain consistent in their service, quality, frequency, time, and respond to the residents [is important]. The immigrant community changes in public housing fairly often. There's often a different influx or concentration. [Organizations providing support and services] need to be flexible...asking survey questions on a regular basis is important to get feedback. – Site host

Offering high quality foods at low prices can be difficult for some items. TCMM does regular price checks to help ensure that its prices are near or below those at local grocery stores. However, it is difficult for them to price all items lower than grocery stores and maintain even a modest profit margin. This issue will likely become less difficult over time; as TCMM has more customers and higher sales, it can negotiate better prices with suppliers and vendors.

TCMM has needed to thoughtfully consider numerous opportunities for partnership and expansion. Because TCMM is using a new approach to address issues around healthy eating and food insecurity, it has been approached by a number of organizations interested in partnering with TCMM to provide education and other resources. A number of other organizations have also asked TCMM to display promotional materials about a health-promotion program or community resource. While TCMM does want to expand its work to provide customers with a broader range of resources that support health, program staff are also aware that TCMM cannot accommodate all requests. Similarly, TCMM cannot establish stops at all locations that have been suggested.

TCMM is looking for ways to pursue opportunities that maximize staff time. TCMM has recently hired four new staff to increase its capacity to provide strong customer service on the bus and to do more community outreach and engagement. This increase in capacity was needed to help TCMM continue to provide high quality services while pursuing new opportunities and partnerships. There was also interest among TCMM staff in using staff meetings to allow staff to reflect on their work, identify opportunities for greater collaboration, and develop strategies to address changes or improve overall operations and community outreach activities.

Recommendations and next steps

Identify strong site hosts when expanding to new sites. A successful crowd-funding campaign was used to gather funds for a second bus that will expand TCMM's reach into Minneapolis in 2016. As TCMM considers potential stop locations and site host partners, identifying site hosts who are committed to helping TCMM with ongoing community outreach and promotion will be important. Additional work also needs to be done to develop and expand relationships with community organizations who can more broadly promote TCMM to neighborhood residents.

Explore ways to further encourage customers to return to and shop regularly at TCMM. The EBT transaction data analyzed in this report show that nearly half of customers used their SNAP benefit multiple times during the first eight months of operations. However, because customers use multiple forms of payment, this may significantly underestimate the number of TCMM repeat customers. The customers interviewed for this summary all reported very positive experiences shopping at TCMM, highlighting how accommodating staff are to help when needed. A few observations were also made about things that could encourage or discourage customers to return. Program staff noted that some customers were disappointed by the cost or selection of food at TCMM. Multiple program staff and volunteers said that despite signs and promotional materials, some residents were not sure if they could shop at TCMM, thinking that it may be there only for building residents. A few program staff and site hosts felt that some residents may hesitate to shop at TCMM because they are not comfortable preparing foods from scratch. They suggested offering classes, educational materials, and easy-to-follow recipes to help residents feel more comfortable preparing foods at home.

Continue to expand outreach and community engagement efforts. TCMM has learned that ongoing community outreach and engagement is critical to its success and plans to allocate more staff resources to those efforts in the future. The preliminary sales data demonstrate that ongoing outreach and promotion is needed to build and maintain a strong customer base. Multiple stakeholders noted the importance of extending personal invitations to customers. This may include both increased time working with site hosts on promotional efforts and in building relationships with community residents. One site host suggested creating a cookbook that includes healthy recipes that can be prepared at a low cost as one way of generating interest and excitement for TCMM, particularly among families. Other stakeholders suggested forming stronger relationships with resident councils, parent organizations, or neighborhood associations as a way to build on current communication and marketing efforts.

Look for opportunities to engage residents more actively in discussions and decisions around health. Although increasing access to healthy, affordable food is an important way to support the health of community residents, it is only one of many steps needed to make lower-income Saint Paul neighborhoods healthier places to live. Part of TCMM's program model focuses on helping residents to be more knowledgeable about the food system and building the capacity of community residents to be involved in discussions and decisions that influence community health. TCMM plans to move forward with this work in the next year. However, TCMM will need to continue to balance these opportunities for growth with the time and staff resources needed to maintain existing relationships, build a stronger customer base, and maintain effective operations.

Appendix

A1. Twin Cities Mobile Market EBT transaction data (December 2014 – July 2015)

	Total value of EBT transactions	Total number of EBT transactions	Minimum transaction amount	Maximum transaction amount	Median transaction amount
Total	\$24,641.25	1,755	\$0.26	\$192.23	\$10.24
Afton View Apartments	\$3,394.94	205	\$0.38	\$83.12	\$13.34
508/510 Humboldt	\$692.46	58	\$1.13	\$32.53	\$9.34
516 Humboldt	\$1,792.30	97	\$1.23	\$61.07	\$14.57
John A. Johnson Elementary ^a	\$251.19	12	\$4.54	\$59.67	\$11.72
Jackson Prep. Elementary ^a	\$191.96	14	\$3.07	\$36.62	\$11.78
Hubbs Learning Center	\$2,943.83	254	\$0.54	\$86.75	\$9.77
Parkway School	\$28.40	2	\$7.53	\$20.87	\$14.20
Wilder Child Development Center	\$1,028.42	67	\$1.87	\$43.66	\$13.76
St. Paul City School	\$43.00	5	\$2.69	\$16.09	\$5.42
Valley Hi-Rise	\$1,553.53	135	\$0.65	\$40.38	\$9.63
Wilder Square Hi-Rise	\$1,926.48	147	\$1.00	\$84.29	\$9.96
First Lutheran Church	\$744.73	66	\$0.56	\$55.60	\$6.66
Jackson Street Village	\$1,098.03	33	\$1.99	\$192.23	\$23.75
Parkway Gardens	\$1,647.15	114	\$1.79	\$53.40	\$11.75
Mt. Airy Hi-Rise	\$3,269.87	261	\$0.26	\$87.16	\$9.44
Mt. Airy Community Center	\$926.70	37	\$1.53	\$108.55	\$19.22
Washington Tech School	\$801.82	62	\$0.99	\$88.54	\$9.33
Iowa Hi-Rise	\$438.08	37	\$1.55	\$45.94	\$8.38
Hamline Hi-Rise ^b	\$1,025.24	89	\$0.49	\$82.39	\$8.90
Rivertown Commons ^c	\$575.60	34	\$0.26	\$88.26	\$9.02
McDonough Homes	\$160.55	11	\$3.94	\$29.10	\$12.27

^a School stops ended on June 9th, 2015

^b Hamline Hi-Rise was added as a site May 14, 2015

^c Rivertown Commons was added as a site June 16, 2015

A2. SNAP participants' repeat use of EBT at the Twin Cities Mobile Market

Mobile Market stop	Total EBT transaction value	Number of transactions	Number of unique customers	Customers with 2+ visits		Customers with 3+ visits		Maximum number of visits for any one card
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total	\$24,641	1,755	661	310	47%	206	31%	27
Afton View Apartments	\$3,394.94	205	71	37	52%	23	32%	12
508/510 Humboldt	\$692.46	58	13	6	46%	6	46%	18
516 Humboldt	\$1,792.30	97	22	15	68%	12	55%	15
John A. Johnson Elementary ^a	\$251.19	12	10	2	20%	0	0%	2
Jackson Prep. Elementary ^a	\$191.96	14	12	2	17%	0	0%	2
Hubbs Learning Center	\$2,943.83	254	120	49	41%	29	24%	21
Parkway School	\$28.40	2	2	0	0%	0	0%	1
Wilder Child Development Center	\$1,028.42	67	32	12	38%	7	22%	7
St. Paul City School	\$43.00	5	5	0	0%	0	0%	1
Valley Hi-Rise	\$1,553.53	135	43	21	49%	18	42%	16
Wilder Square Hi-Rise	\$1,926.48	147	51	27	53%	21	41%	12
First Lutheran Church	\$744.73	66	38	15	39%	6	16%	7
Jackson Street Village	\$1,098.03	33	17	5	29%	5	29%	5
Parkway Gardens	\$1,647.15	114	26	14	54%	12	46%	20
Mt. Airy Hi-Rise	\$3,269.87	261	74	46	62%	36	49%	25
Mt. Airy Community Center	\$926.70	37	21	7	33%	4	19%	7
Washington Tech School	\$801.82	62	38	14	37%	4	11%	7
Iowa Hi-Rise	\$438.08	37	22	10	45%	3	14%	5
Hamline Hi-Rise ^b	\$1,025.24	89	34	19	56%	12	35%	12
Rivertown Commons ^c	\$575.60	34	23	9	39%	2	9%	3
McDonough Homes	\$160.55	11	11	0	0%	0	0%	1

^a School stops ended on June 9th, 2015

^b Hamline Hi-Rise was added as a site May 14, 2015

^c Rivertown Commons was added as a site June 16, 2015