



5/5

4/5

4/5

Western Beef
LONDON BROIL
QUILDED

ATTENTION
SUNDAY
Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday

1906
D

NO TRESPASSING
OR LOITERING
ON THIS PROPERTY

funky fresh

ISCO
SAHOYS
2/4

UP

Who decides where supermarkets go? Does the Bronx have enough supermarkets? Does it matter?

This summer, CUP collaborated with teaching artist Hatuey Ramos-Fermin and a group of Bronx public high school students from CUNY College Now at Hostos Community College to look at who gets supermarkets, who doesn't, and why.

To find answers, the group got out of the classroom and into the frozen food aisles. We visited grocery stores across the boroughs, the Fresh Direct distribution site planned for the Bronx, and the real estate department of a major supermarket. For the scoop on how supermarkets choose sites, we interviewed the CEO of Western Beef, a supermarket site analyst guru, the Department of City Planning, a Bronx Community Board member, organizers, and public health experts. We've designed this booklet to teach others what's funky and what's fresh about Bronx supermarket access.

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement. This project is one of CUP's Urban Investigations—project-based afterschool programs in which high school students explore fundamental questions about how the city works. Students collaborate with CUP and teaching artists to create multimedia teaching tools that reach audiences in the fields of arts and social justice. welcometocup.org

College Now is a free City University of New York program designed to prepare NYC's public high school students for success in college. This project was hosted by College Now at Hostos Community College. collegenow.cuny.edu

This project was made possible by the CUNY College Now program. Additional support was provided by public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

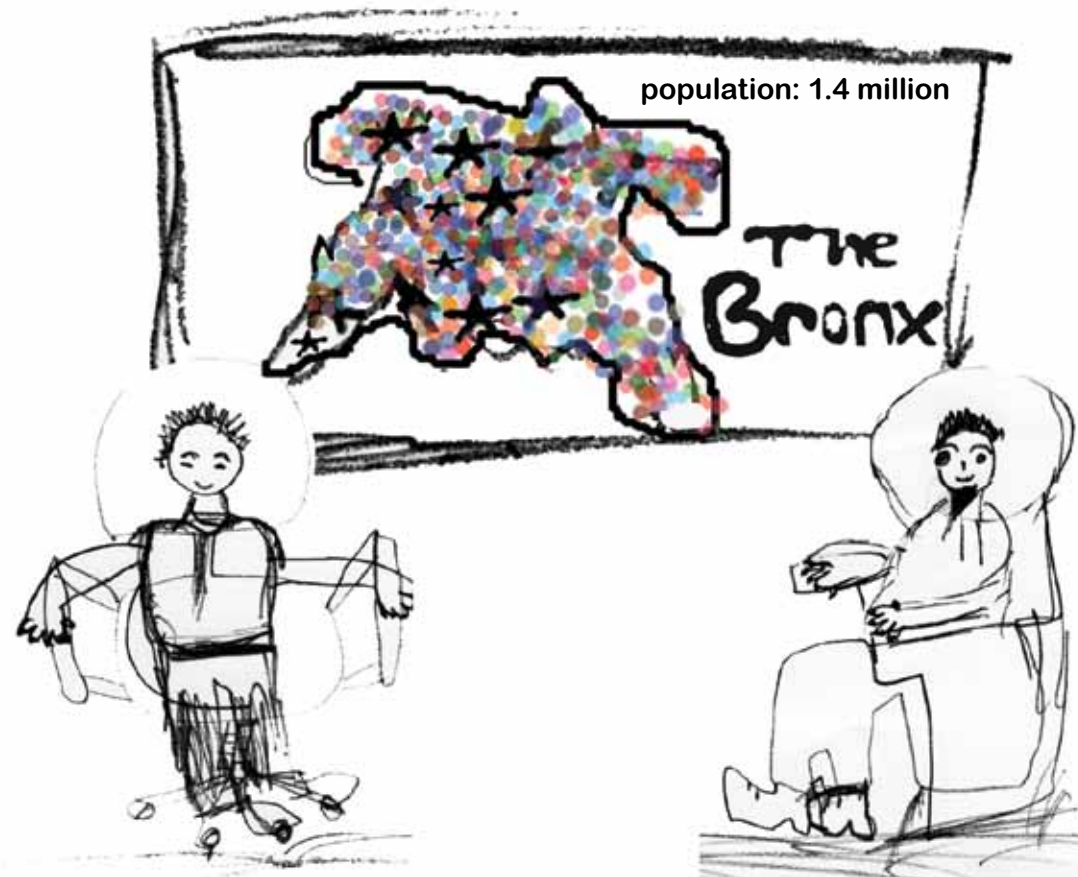
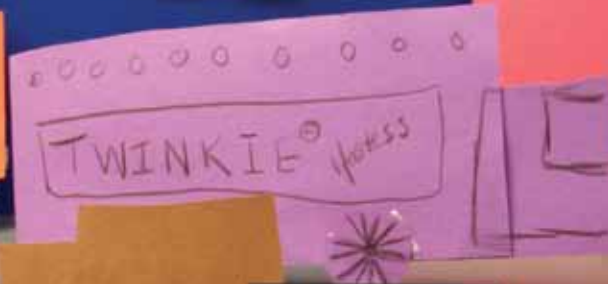
Some rights reserved. 2012



In a lot of ways, the Bronx is the heart of NYC's food system. The Bronx Terminal Produce Market supplies fruits and vegetables to supermarkets and restaurants all over the city, and there are plans to bring a Fresh Direct distribution center to the South Bronx. Every day, these distribution centers send food to the rest of the city on diesel trucks.

“Fresh Direct, they talk about how they have fresher foods, but when you weigh that they’ll also bring diesel fumes, you may be eating healthier, but you’re killing. We have eight times the national average of asthma-related illnesses, because they’ve been dumping industry on the Bronx for decades.”

— Mychal Johnson,
Bronx Community Board 1



Are there enough supermarkets in the Bronx?

A lot of the city’s food infrastructure is in the Bronx, what about access to food within the Bronx? According to the New York City Department of City Planning, there should be 30,000 square feet of grocery stores for every 10,000 people in a neighborhood. There isn’t a single part of the Bronx where that’s the case.

Why aren't there enough supermarkets in the Bronx?

"Land is at a premium in New York. You don't have a lot of space. Less and less supermarkets operate in the five boroughs because of prices of real estate. If you don't buy a piece of property at a low price, your supermarket will not survive."

— Santino Montalbano, *Western Beef*



"It's difficult because there are a lot of independent decision-makers in that process. There's the question of whether the store is going to be profitable, and that's a question that is not assessed by us. Those are private decisions."

— Barry Dinerstein, *Department of City Planning*

"The banks aren't as quick to lend money as they used to be. And there are certain parts of the Bronx where there is a lot of crime. Supermarkets might be scared to go into those neighborhoods."

— Matthew Casey, *Supermarket Location Analyst*




A man in a light blue button-down shirt is shown from the chest up, pointing his right hand towards a speech bubble. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green plants and a brick building.

Who decides where supermarkets go?


“You’re not going to put an upscale supermarket in a low-income neighborhood. And you’re not going to put a Save-a-Lot in an upscale neighborhood. To find out what kind of neighborhood it is, I drive around to see what kinds of cars people are driving. Then I evaluate the competition. I kind of spy on them. Then I put all the information I collected into a big mixing bowl and come up with my conclusions. What I do is very important... and I’m the guy that decides.”

— Matthew Casey, Supermarket Location Analyst

A woman with long blonde hair is sitting in a field of large green bananas. She is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is filled with more green bananas.

“When it comes to individual decisions of a developer to open a store, we don’t really come into play too much. We tell you what you can build, where you can build it, and how much parking needs to be provided.” — Jodi Bryon, Department of City Planning

“We wish it was ‘We just want to open up a store.’ But are there enough people to support that store? So, its demographics, profit and loss income, sales numbers of what we think we’re going to make. If it’s still profitable, then we move forward on negotiating a contract.” — Pat Delorio, Western Beef

Two men are sitting in a field of large green bananas. They are looking towards the camera. The background is filled with more green bananas.

Are all supermarkets created equal?



BRONX SUPERMARKETS

“The truth is, in my neighborhood I shop at the stores I don’t particularly like, as well as the stores I do like, only because that is what’s there.”

— Jodi Bryon, Department of City Planning

“It’s not only about the number of supermarkets, it’s about the quality of the foods in the supermarkets. Getting healthy food in the Bronx is challenging because sometimes the higher quality food costs more and the stores don’t sell it if they don’t think people are going to buy it.” — Kelly Moltzen, Bronx Health Reach



MANHATTAN SUPERMARKETS

GOOD THINGS

BAD THINGS

Why does it matter?

CHICKEN N' RIB
BBQ SAUCE
3.99
EFFECTIVE 12/17/2014

FRENCH'S
CLASSIC
YELLOW MUSTARD
2/3
EFFECTIVE 12/17/2014

“A lot of people are low-income in the Bronx. They can only afford the really cheap stuff, which is unhealthy junk food. One in four adults in the Bronx is obese. That’s the highest obesity rate in the city.”

— Kelly Moltzen, Bronx Health Reach

“We think having supermarkets nearby will increase the likelihood of people purchasing and preparing healthy food. If you don’t have access, or you don’t have fresh produce that you can afford to buy close to home, chances are you aren’t going to buy it.” — Jodi Bryon, Department of City Planning

“What we try to do with the FRESH Initiative is to make opening a store or expanding a store as simple as possible in areas where grocery stores are needed the most. We permit developers to build bigger if they provide a ground-floor grocery store, so they can get more residential units. And we also reduce the parking lot requirements, and that reduces the cost.”

— Jodi Bryon, Department of City Planning

“The more that we buy from farmers markets and community supported agriculture and grow our own food in community gardens, the more say that we have in the food that we’re eating, the less say that the corporations have.”

— Kelly Moltzen, Bronx Health Reach

What should change?

“The government will do whatever it takes to financially bribe you to go into the inner city, and I don’t mean that in a negative way. Because there are hundreds of thousands of people that need a good alternative.”

— Matthew Casey, Supermarket Location Analyst





What role can we have in deciding where supermarkets go?

“You can write to a supermarket and say ‘I live in such and such neighborhood, and I really don’t have a decent supermarket. Would you consider looking in our neighborhood?’ Or you can send that same letter to the government. You’re probably best off with the City Planning Department because odds are they agree with you.”


— Matthew Casey, *Supermarket Location Analyst*

“Supermarkets just want to make a profit. If there’s enough of a demand for healthy food, then they should start selling it.”

— Kelly Moltzen, *Bronx Health Reach*

What role can we have in what they sell?

COMMUNITY BOARD



“If you don’t speak out, a closed mouth don’t get fed right. Residents can have a voice, not within city government, but directly to city government. The Community Board is supposed to work as the liaison for the community to the city. You can join at any age. You can also go to land use planning sub-committees.”

— Mychal Johnson, *Bronx Community Board 1*

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP)

Teaching artist Hatuey Ramos-Fermín

Project lead Valeria Mogilevich

Teaching artist assistant: Amauris Hernandez

Project support: Clara Amenyo, Christine Gaspar, Sam Holleran

CUNY College Now at Hostos Community College

Students Marberd Bernard, Brando Campos, Shanty Castillo, Misael Castro, Lissette De Jesus, Richard Heard, Isiah Jaime, Brandon Khirodhar, Inés Loja, Marimar Mantuano, Gregory Feliz Moquete, Xavier Pérez, Claudia Ramirez, Shimu Siddika, Chavonne Stokes, Katherine Taveras, Nicole Ureña

Project support Elizabeth Wilson, Samantha Sinclair, Christine Coronado, Lawrence Anderson

Book design Megan Bullock (MESH Design)

Thanks to our interviewees

Matthew Casey (Matthew P Casey and Associates); Mychal Johnson (Bronx Community Board 1); Jodi Bryon and Barry Dinerstein (Department of City Planning, FRESH Initiative); Kelly Moltzen and Bernice McFarline (Bronx Health Reach); Pat Delorio, Santino Montalbano, and Jose Lopez (Western Beef Supermarket); Philip Winn (Green Beans Not Walgreens)

More special thanks Murad Awawdeh, Lila Barrett, Hilary Baum, Sabine Bernards, Marino Corniel, Brian Gonzalez, Elizabeth Hamby, Matthew Hoffman, Matt Klein, Dory Kornfeld, David J. Livingston, Sandi Lohan, Sam Marks, Nontsikelelo Mutiti, Lara Nahas, Evan O'Donnell, Francesca Perry, Rocio Rayo, David Stein, Juell Stewart, Brindalyn Webster Chen, Stephanie Yee, and all the supermarkets near Hostos