

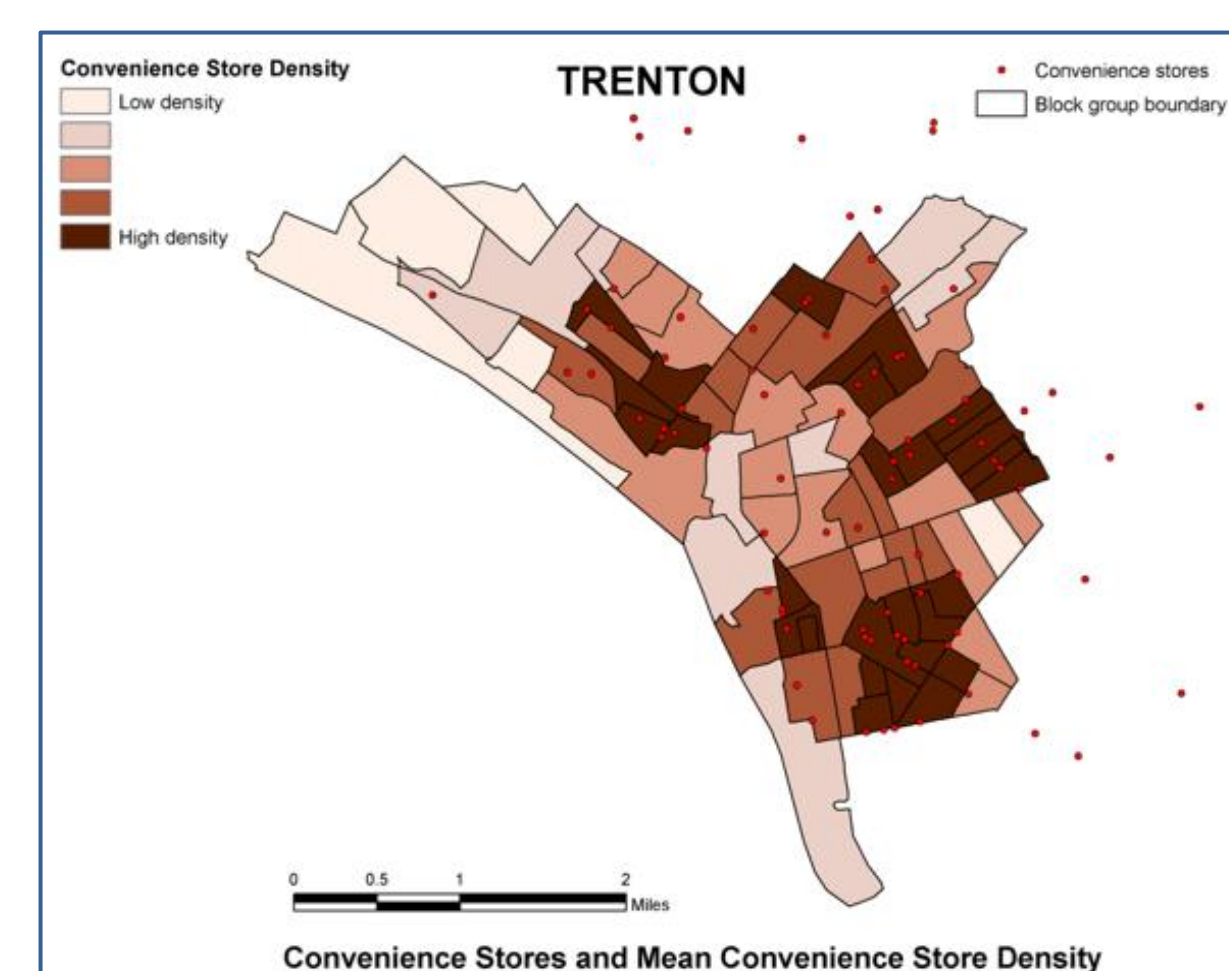
A Community Needs Assessment for the *Healthy Corner Stores Project* in Trenton, NJ

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Introduction

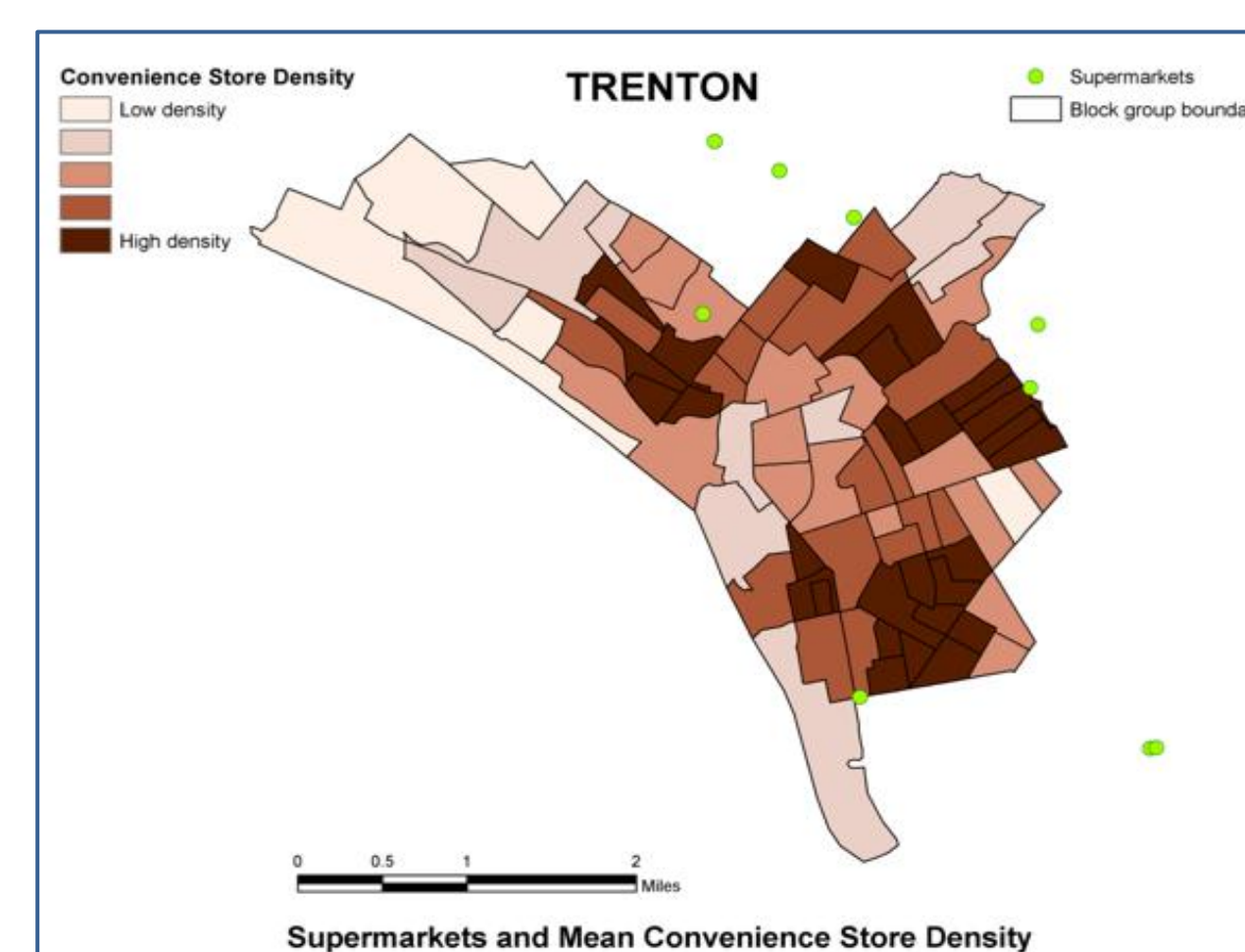
- Childhood obesity in Trenton exceeds national averages
 - U.S. prevalence: 17%
 - Trenton prevalence: 28%
- Trenton's unhealthy "food environment" may contribute to the city's disparate rates of obesity
 - High density of corner stores
 - Few supermarkets within city limits

Figure 1. Corner store density



Source: New Jersey Childhood Obesity Study, 2010

Figure 2. Supermarket density



Source: New Jersey Childhood Obesity Study, 2010

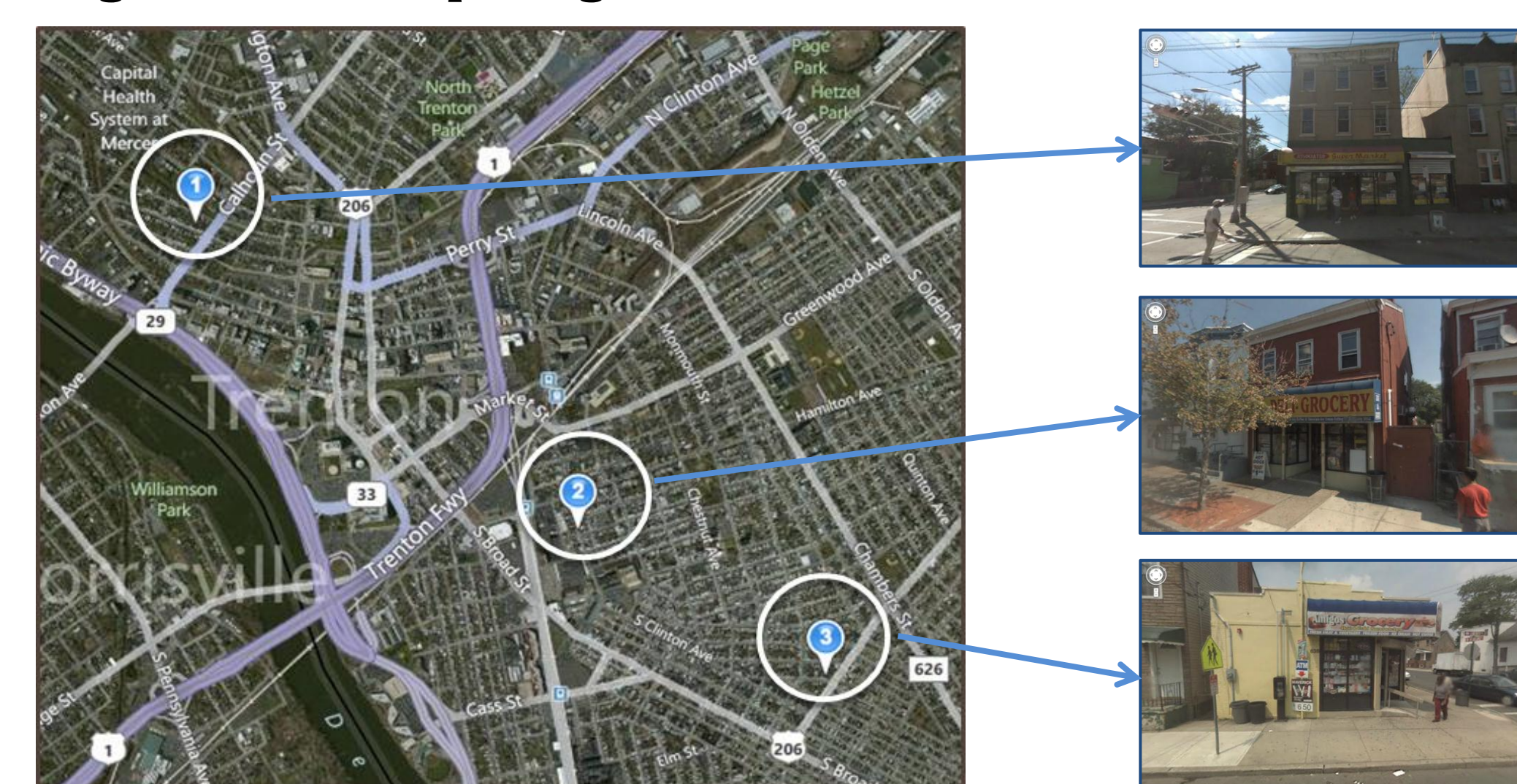
Needs Assessment Goals:

- To determine participating corner stores' **nutritional needs** based on their current inventory
- To describe corner store customers' **purchasing habits**
- To identify **perceived barriers** to buying healthy food within each targeted neighborhood

Methods

- Store baseline assessments
 - Systematically catalogued the varieties of beverages, fruits, vegetables, grains, produce, dairy, snacks, and sweets
 - Classified fresh produce items as "satisfactory" or "needs improvement" based on predetermined definitions of the terms
 - Interviewed store owners about barriers to stocking healthy food
- Customer surveys
 - Interviewed a convenience sample of customers (face-to-face)
 - Determined frequency of corner store shopping, distance traveled from home, and typical purchases
 - Evaluated satisfaction with the availability and affordability of healthy food in each neighborhood

Figure 3. Participating corner store locations



Source: Google Maps

Results

- Store baseline assessments (n=3)
 - As expected, stores offered a **limited selection of healthy food** and beverages, like whole grains, skim milk, and water, and **an abundance of fatty, sugary, and/or calorically-dense items**

Figure 4. Beverages available

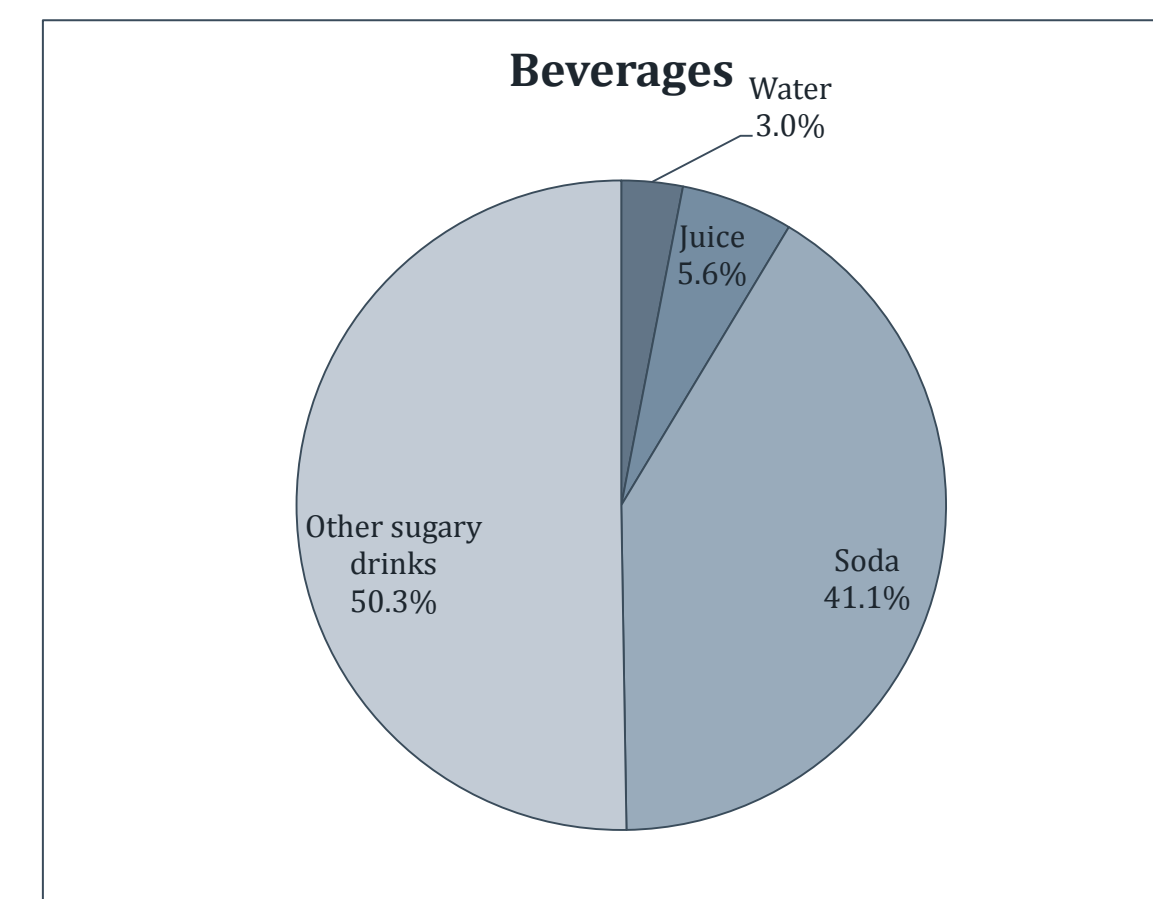


Figure 5. Grains available

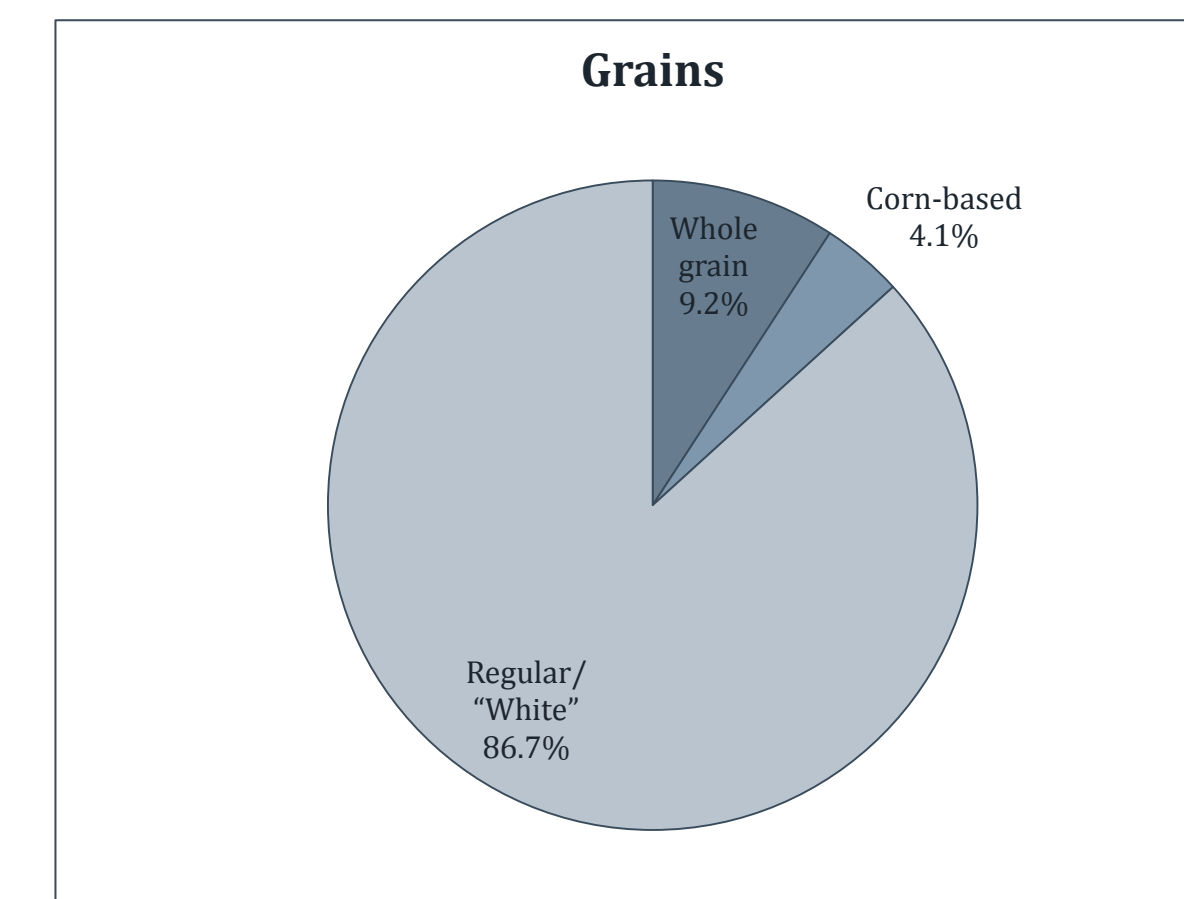


Figure 6. Milk varieties available

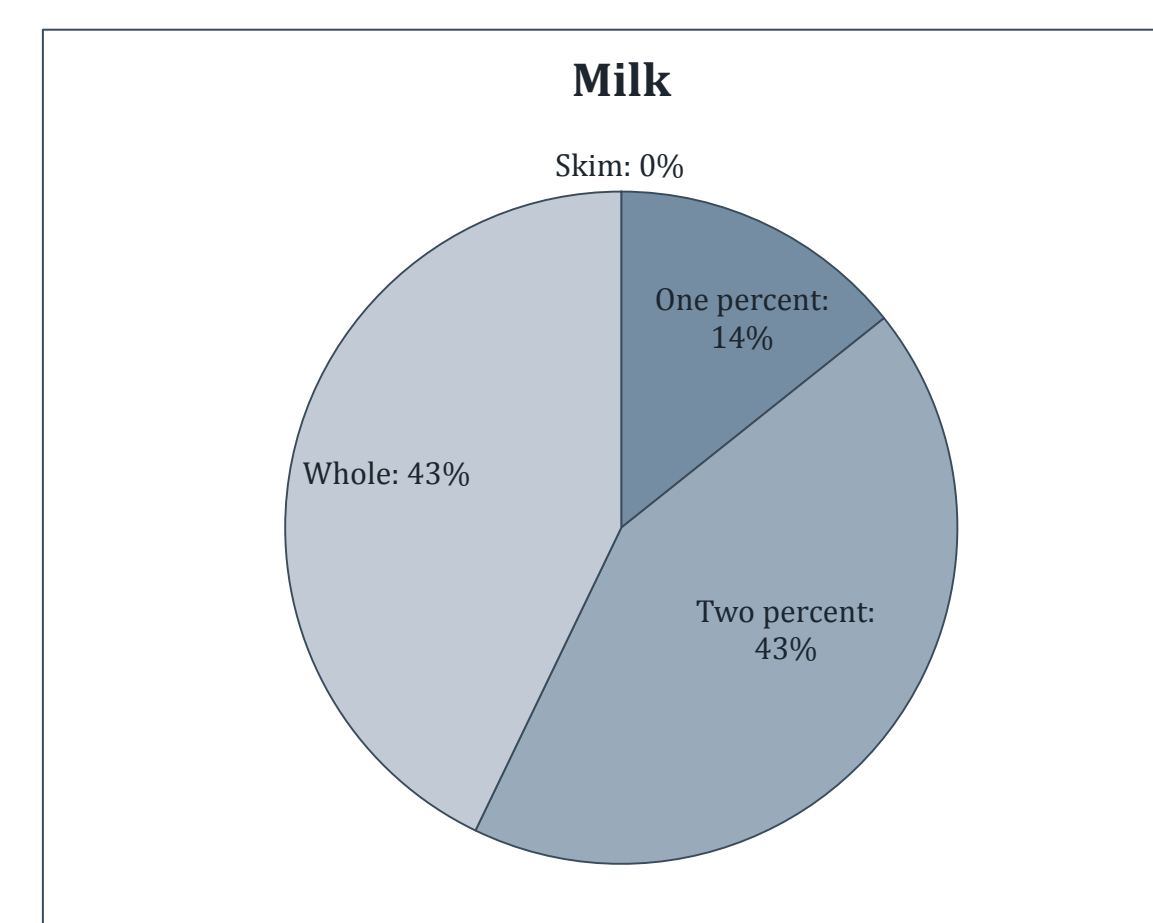
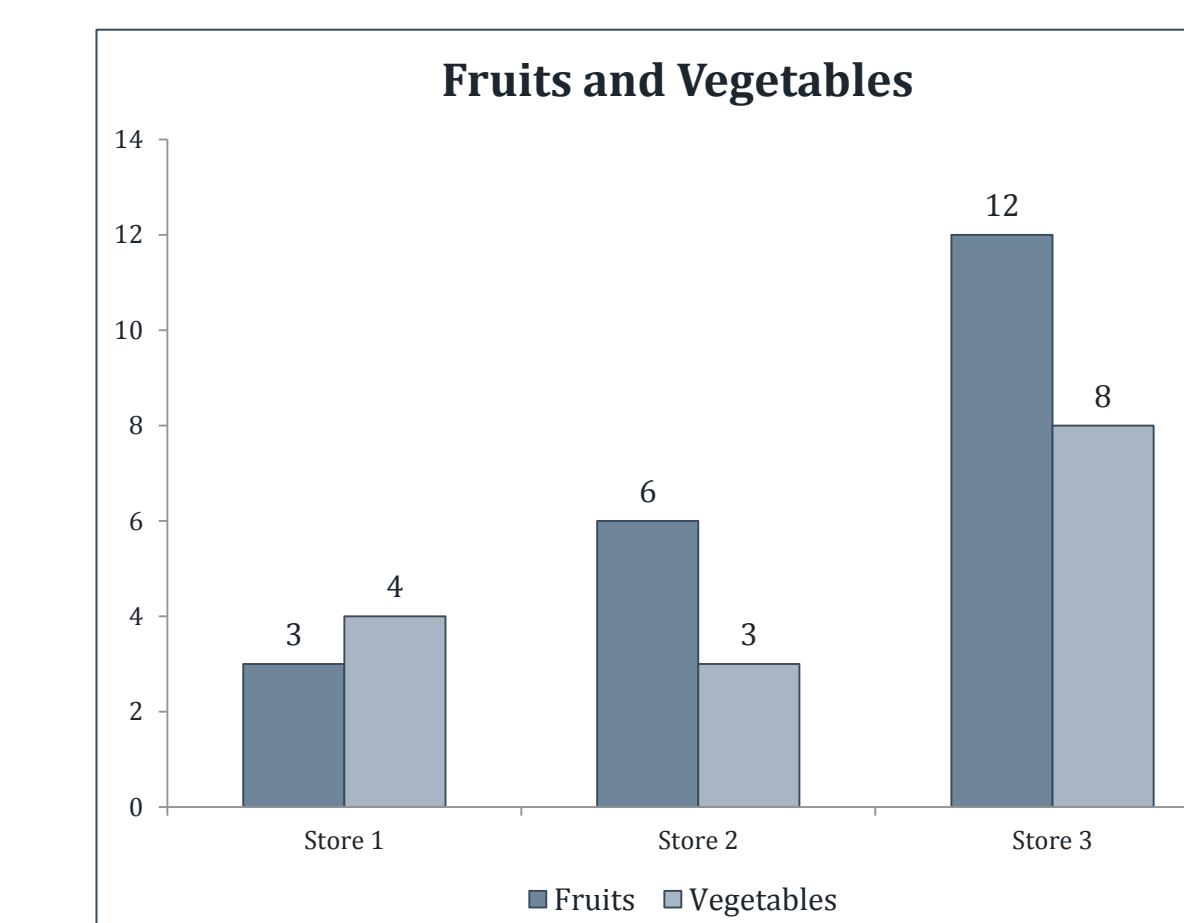


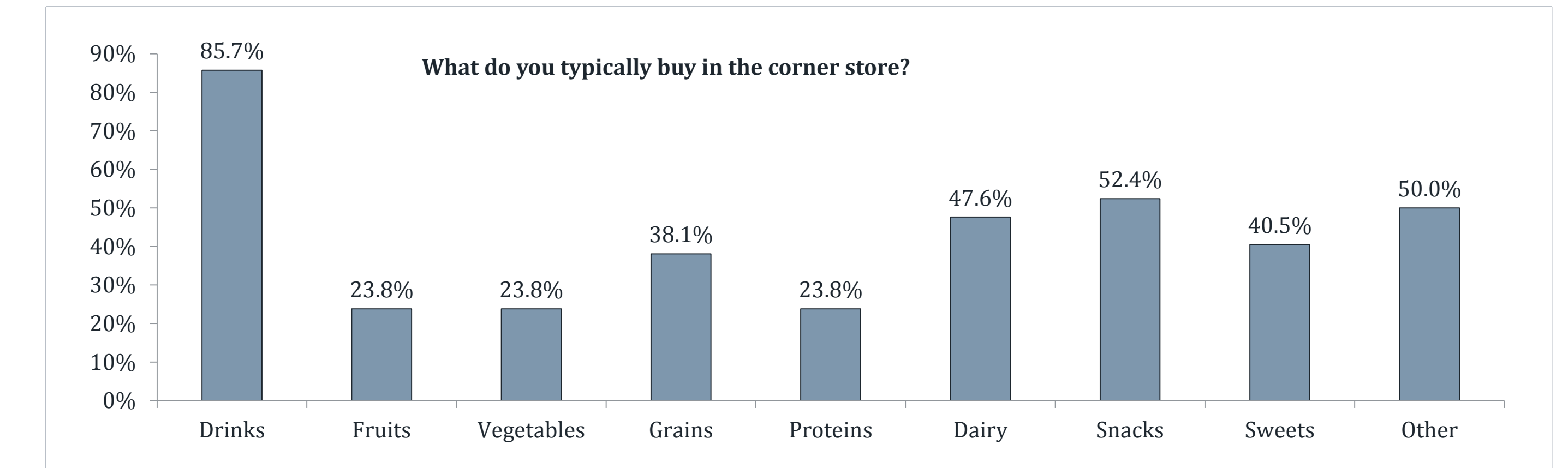
Figure 7. Number of fruit and vegetable varieties



Results

- Customers buy items like **beverages, snacks, and dairy products** most frequently
 - Specifically, the most popular items were **soda and chips**

Figure 9. Typical corner store purchases



- Despite easy access to the corner store, 71.4% feel that it is "somewhat difficult" or "very difficult" to find healthy food in their neighborhood
- As a result, most (92.9%) of the respondents travel to **faraway supermarkets** to buy items like fruits, vegetables, and meats.

Figure 10. Access to healthy food

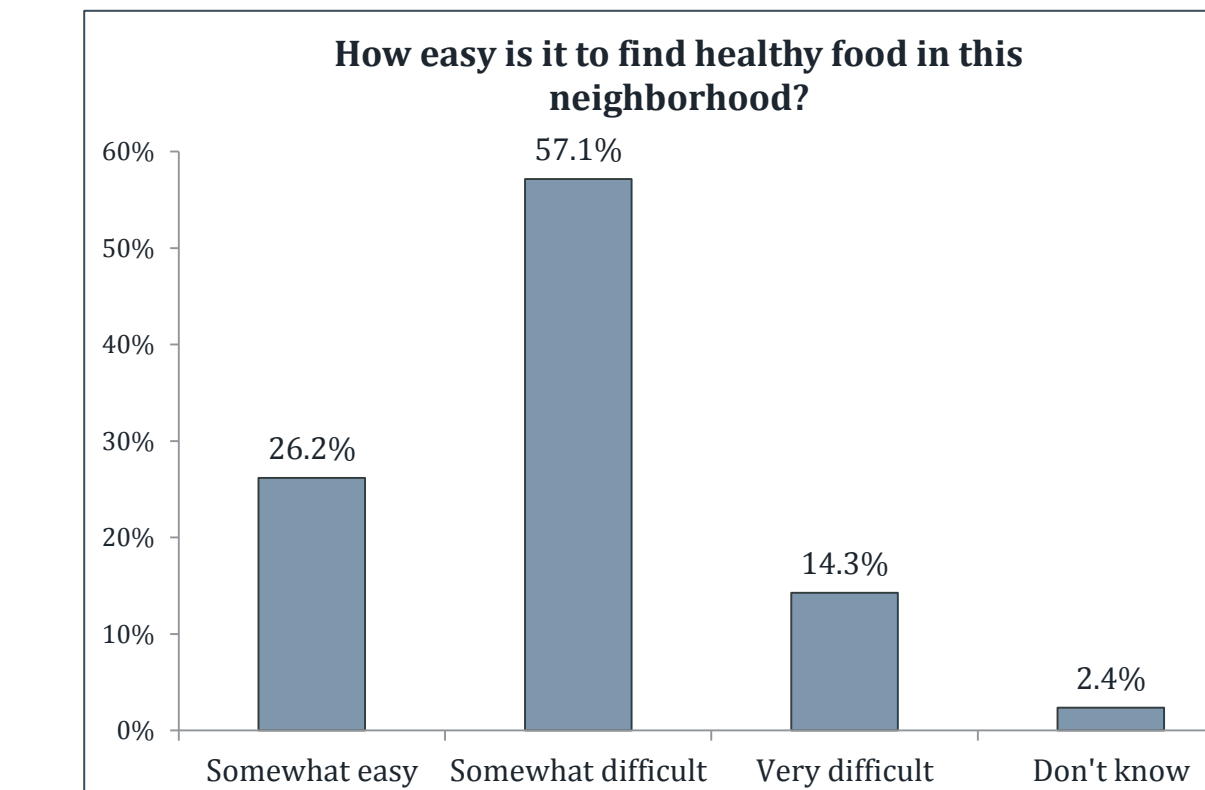
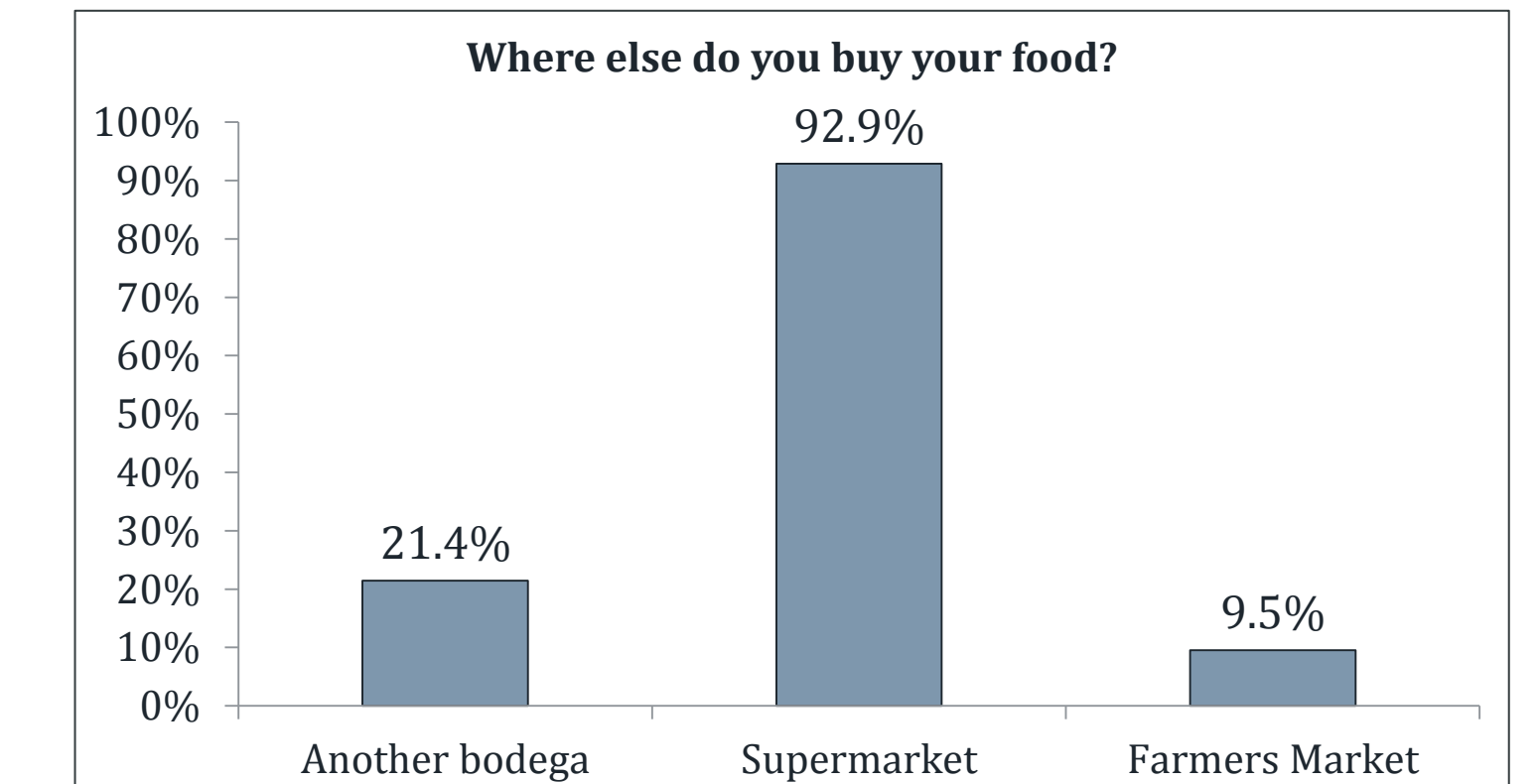


Figure 11. Other food outlets



- Customer surveys (n=42)
 - Most customers (62.0%) were between the ages of 18-34
 - Hispanic customers made up the majority of respondents (57.1%), followed closely by non-Hispanic, Black customers (31.0%)

Table 1. Demographic summary

Gender	
Male	50.0%
Female	50.0%
Age	
18-24	31.0%
25-34	31.0%
35-44	11.9%
45-54	11.9%
55-64	11.9%
65+	2.4%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	11.9%
Black	31.0%
Hispanic	57.1%

- Customers live very close to the corner stores and visit quite frequently
 - 66.7% live within five blocks
 - 35.7% shop in the corner store **every day**

Figure 8. Frequency of corner store shopping



Discussion

- A large percentage of individuals shop in corner stores **every day**
 - Introducing healthy food into the stores increases the "convenience" of purchasing these items and might lead to increased consumption
- Most customers leave their neighborhood to buy certain food products
 - Presents a **barrier** for residents with no transportation
 - Bringing these items to the corner stores can potentially **increase revenue** for corner store owners
- Introducing healthy food is just one piece of the puzzle
 - Health education, fair pricing, and attractive presentation** are essential for program success and sustainability



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