

INCREASING ACCESS TO LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD

Best Practices in Farmers Market Incentive Programs & Recommendations for Local Implementation

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FOOD ACCESS: A SOCIAL & ECONOMIC PRIORITY

- **SFPB Recommendations to Council, April 2012**
 - Increase value of SNAP \$ spent at farmers markets
- ***Imagine Austin***
 - Food access for “complete communities”
- ***The Economic Impact of Austin’s Food Sector (TXP)***
 - \$10 spent yields more than \$8 in additional economic activity
 - Finding #6: Hunger and food access issues remain



NEXUS: LOCAL FOOD & NUTRITION ASSISTANCE



Photo Credit: Sustainable Food Center

Research Goal

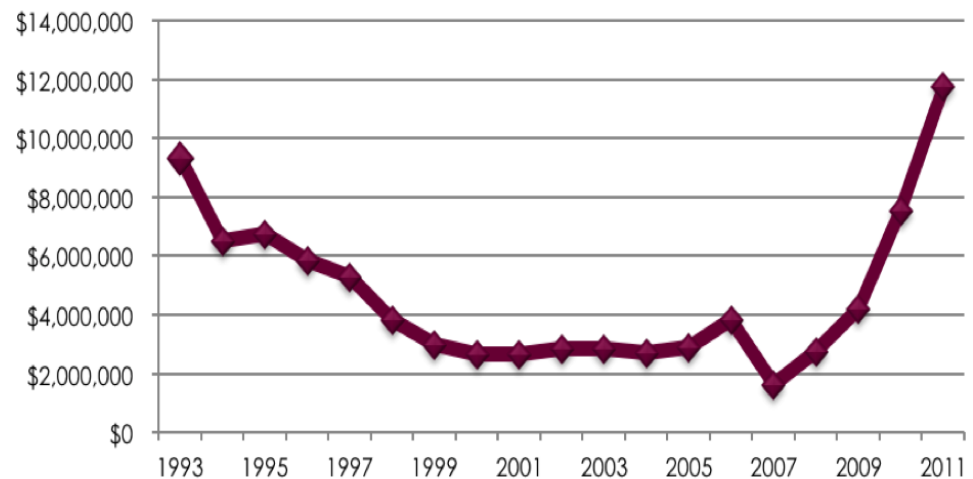
Explore farmers market incentive programs as vehicles for **increasing access** to healthy food for food-insecure consumers while also channeling dollars into the **local food economy**



FARMERS MARKET INCENTIVE PROGRAMS (FMIPs)

- Increase **availability** and **affordability** of healthy, locally-sourced foods for nutrition assistance beneficiaries
- SNAP multiplier effect (\$1.79) benefits the local food economy
- **Survey findings:**
FMIPs increased SNAP redemption, incentive redemption, and SNAP customer visits every year, per-market and per-farmer.

National SNAP Redemption at Farmers Markets & Farm Stands



FARMERS MARKET INCENTIVE PROGRAMS (FMIPs)

Table 8: Growth in SNAP and Incentive Redemption Rates - Michigan DUFB

Michigan Double Up Food Bucks	Average number of SNAP client visits per Market	Average SNAP Redemption per Market (does not include incentives)	Average SNAP Redemption per Farmer (does not include incentives)
2009	299	\$ 5,235	\$ 327
2010	446	\$ 7,448	\$ 1,117
2011	730	\$ 12,518	\$ 1,377
2012	1,192	\$ 13,700	\$ 1,467



LOCALLY: THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD CENTER'S DOUBLE DOLLAR INCENTIVE PROGRAM (DDIP)



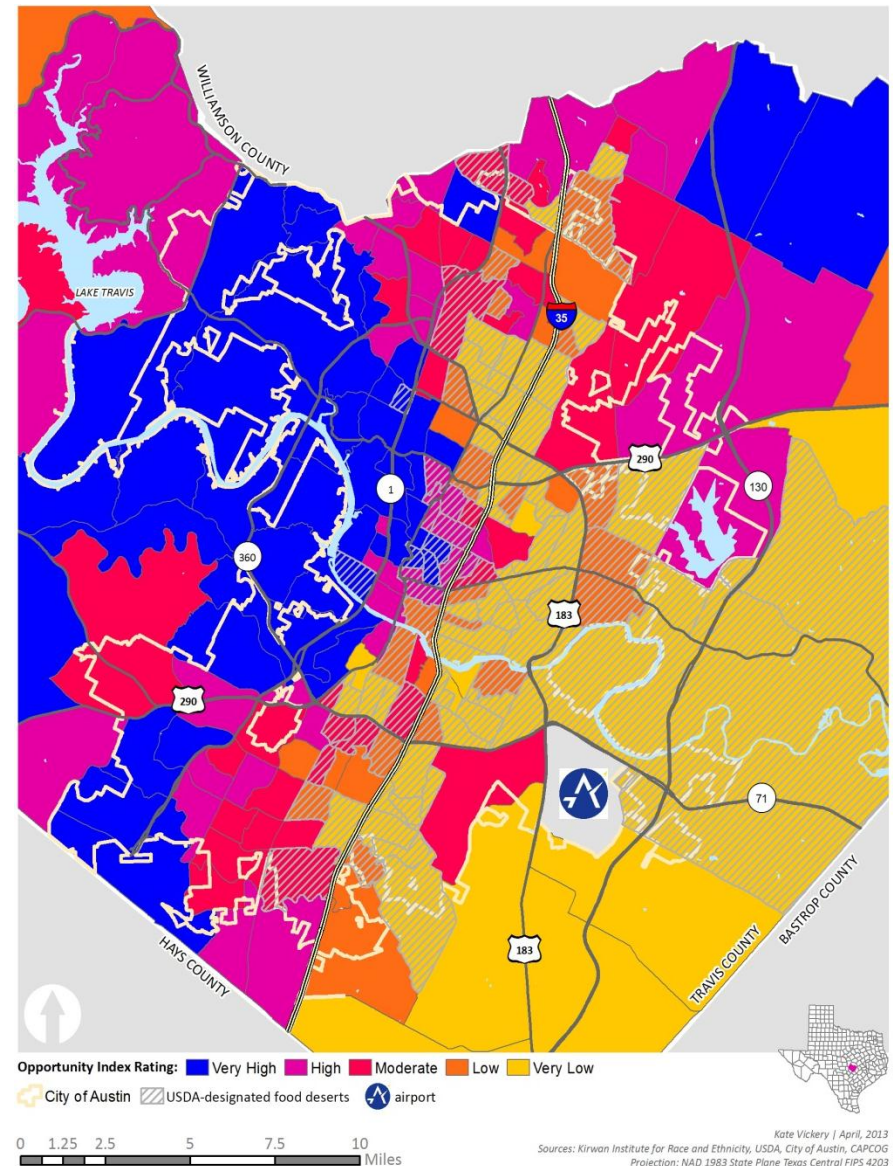
Photo Credit: Jen Reel, *Texas Observer*

- Began in 2012
- Operates at two farmers markets (Sunset Valley and East)
- \$2:\$1 coupon value
- Privately funded through St. David's Foundation and others
- Strong infrastructure, potential to scale up



THE LANDSCAPE OF FOOD ACCESS

- **USDA Food Deserts**
 - East of I-35
 - Areas of low social opportunity
- **Convenience Stores**
 - Concentrated in “low-opportunity” communities
- **Local Food Retailers**
 - Concentrated in “high-opportunity” communities



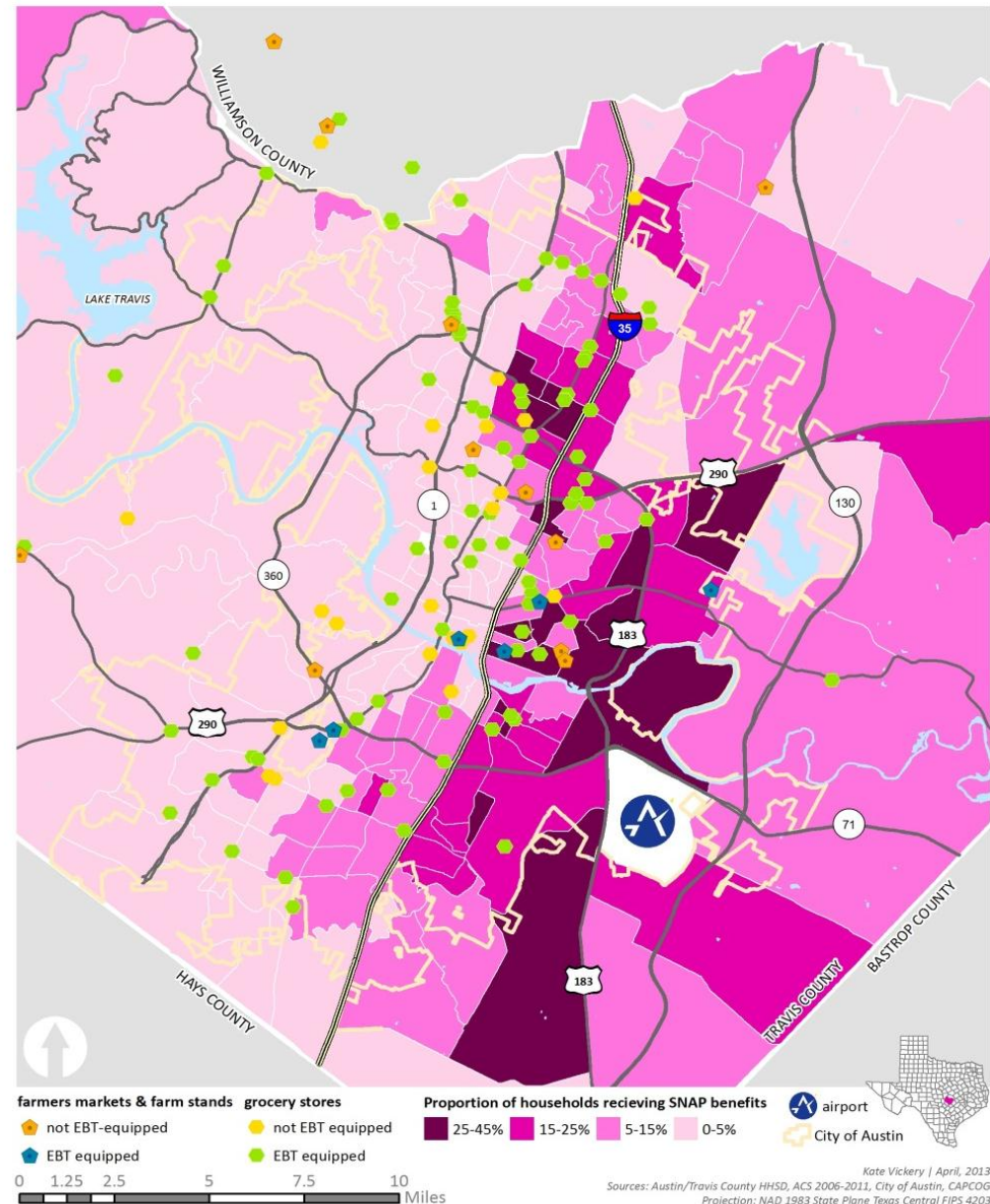
THE LANDSCAPE OF LOCAL FOOD ACCESS

Table 4: Local Food Retail Distribution by Level of Social Opportunity

	Opportunity Index Rating				
	<i>Very low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Very high</i>
<i># Grocery stores selling local, healthy food (%)</i>	1 (6%)	3 (17%)	3 (17%)	9 (50%)	2 (11%)
<i># Farmers markets & stands (%)</i>	3 (20%)	4 (27%)	3 (20%)	1 (7%)	4 (27%)
<i>All "local" retail options, incl. grocery + markets (%)</i>	4 (12%)	7 (21%)	6 (18%)	10 (30%)	6 (18%)
<i># Convenience Stores (%)</i>	209 (36%)	107 (18%)	98 (17%)	81 (14%)	86 (15%)
<i># Grocery Stores (%)</i>	23 (20%)	27 (22%)	20 (16%)	25 (21%)	25 (21%)

THE LANDSCAPE OF SNAP ENROLLMENT AND EBT

- **SNAP Enrollment**
 - Concentrated in East Austin/Travis County
- **Local Food Retailers**
 - More sparse in areas with high SNAP enrollment
- **EBT Capacity**
 - **11 of 17** farmers markets and farm stands are unequipped with EBT
 - **3 of these** are in high SNAP-enrolled areas



RECOMMENDATIONS:

SCALE UP CAPACITY OF EXISTING FMIPs

- **Increase EBT availability** for farmers markets and farm stands.
- **Consider making EBT mandatory** for all farmers markets and farm stands.
- **Expand farmers market incentive programming** to *all* Austin farmers markets and farm stands.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

FMIP COORDINATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

- **Administer** through a single umbrella organization.
- **Establish a single point of contact** at the City or County to provide SNAP administration assistance.
- **Provide EBT training and technical support** to markets.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

STABILIZE AND INCREASE FMIP FUNDING

- **Provide funding** on a multi-year basis from diverse sources, including the City.
- **Provide funding** for both administrative costs as well as the cost of the financial incentive.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

IMPROVE OUTREACH THROUGH KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- **Advertise the FMIP** through other public and private programs that reach SNAP participants.
 - Information about Austin's FMIP should be included in SNAP-related outreach provided by city and state agencies and nonprofit organizations.
 - The umbrella organization and City/County point of contact can help facilitate this collaboration.



NEXT STEPS FOR THE CITY OF AUSTIN

- The City of Austin can be a key source of steady funding and support for Austin's FMIP.
- We recommend that **\$50,000 – \$75,000** be allocated in the FY 2014 budget cycle to support such a program.
- Potential complementary approaches to delivering incentive programs for SNAP recipients:
 - Traditional grocery stores
 - Mobile vending
 - Community-based farm stands

