

Clackamas County's Healthy Retail Pilot Project: *Outreach and Engagement Findings*



CLACKAMAS
COUNTY

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Summary

Background

Clackamas County Public Health Division (CCPHD) is funded by the Oregon Health Authority to implement a healthy retail pilot project as part of the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program (TPEP). This project seeks to work with one convenience store to support them in shifting their business model from selling tobacco products to offering healthier options, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. The project aims to reduce access to tobacco products, including synthetic nicotine products, which in turn can support current tobacco users in quitting tobacco, discourage youth initiation, and ultimately save lives. The process of eliminating tobacco products from a retailer's inventory may require seeking alternative sources of revenue or developing a new business plan. Incorporating healthier options such as fruits and vegetables could lessen the financial impact of this transition and provide retailers with a unique opportunity to broaden their business and maintain a competitive edge amidst potential changes in tobacco retail legislation.

CCPHD contracted with Upstream Public Health (Upstream) to gather perspectives from stakeholders and gauge customer interest in buying fresh produce. Based in Salem, OR, Upstream has worked on nutrition security as chronic disease prevention since 2003.

Upstream conducted customer surveys at three convenience stores in and around the city of Milwaukie, Oregon and interviewed nine stakeholders from organizations serving Milwaukie residents. CCPHD conducted interviews and visual assessments at seven retailers in and around Milwaukie. This information will be used to develop key messages and evaluate the readiness of implementing a healthy retail pilot program.

Main Findings

Customers want to support small, locally owned stores that serve their community. They expressed appreciation for the relationships built and maintained by the owners and staff at each store, a sentiment that may indicate a good foundation for piloting a healthy retail program. The potential for adding fresh produce to store shelves received positive responses and support from both customers who do and do not use tobacco. Customers indicated that overall produce quality was more important than variety and price, and some were skeptical that a convenience store could reliably offer quality fresh produce. Retailers expressed interest in carrying more fresh produce if customer demand could be demonstrated, although spoilage remained a top concern with doing so. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of including culturally relevant food in a retailer's new business model if they undergo a healthy retail transition.

Conclusion

Customers appear interested in purchasing produce at their local convenience stores, and retailers seem to be open-minded about carrying more produce. (Determining a retailers' willingness to end their tobacco/nicotine sales was not examined during this phase.) Piloting a healthy retail initiative in a local establishment could positively impact community health by reducing access to commercial tobacco and improving access to fresh produce.

Introduction

Clackamas County Public Health Division

CCPHD is funded by Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to implement tobacco prevention and education in the county, including:

- Preventing and reducing tobacco use
- Reducing the influence of tobacco product marketing
- Encouraging tobacco users to quit
- Enforcing the Indoor Clean Air Act (ICAA)

CCPHD proposed a healthy retail pilot project as part of its workplan. The pilot project includes the following supports to assist the retailer in their transition:

- Up to \$20,000 in funding, which could be spent on equipment purchases, product display upgrades, space redevelopment and/or store maintenance
- Ongoing technical assistance, such as business plan development and training on how to stock, manage, display and price fresh produce
- Assistance in getting the retailer authorized to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits from customers
- Connecting the retailer to local programs and resources to support their transition, such as Double-Up Food Bucks and local produce growers
- Promotional materials to showcase new products
- An earned media push to highlight the retailer's new business model and commitment to community health

Tobacco Use and Prevention in Clackamas County and Oregon

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon. It kills more people than the next six leading causes of preventable death combined.¹ In Clackamas County in 2022, more than 20,000 people were diagnosed with a tobacco-related serious illness. In that same year, tobacco caused nearly 700 deaths and \$232.5 million in productivity losses due to premature deaths were calculated.²

Commercial tobacco prevention advocates have worked for decades to reduce the toll of tobacco use on Oregon communities. These efforts include policies to reduce access to tobacco and increase the price of tobacco, among others. And while youth and adults in Oregon have reduced their consumption of cigarettes over the period of 1996 to 2019, OHA data shows youth have increase their use of vape and flavored tobacco products.¹³

In 2022, 12.5% of 11th grade students in Clackamas County reported using e-cigarettes. 81% of those students reported using flavored products.³ In 2018, an assessment of the county's

225 tobacco retailersⁱ revealed that 97% of them sold such products.²

To address this issue, local advocates have turned to passing policies to end the sale of flavored tobacco products. In 2023, House Bill 3090 was introduced and sought to ban the sale of such products statewide. Due to a walkout in the Senate, however, the bill was unable to advance. Tobacco prevention advocates intend to work with lawmakers to reintroduce a similar bill in a subsequent session.

Reducing the number and/or proximity of retailers is another strategy in the tobacco control playbook. Research has shown that tobacco retailer density and proximity are associated with higher rates of tobacco use.⁴ In 2023, Klamath County Commissioners passed an ordinance regulating tobacco retailer density and proximity.

ⁱ As of August 2023, there are 287 tobacco retailers in Clackamas County. See Oregon Department of Revenue's Tobacco Retail Licensing list at <https://www.oregon.gov/dor/programs/businesses/Pages/Statewide-Tobacco-Retail-License.aspx>.

What is Healthy Retail?

Overview

Healthy Retail is a model for bringing fresh and healthy food options to convenience stores. A healthy retail environment is one where it is easy and cost effective to make healthy food purchases. The goal is to encourage customers to purchase and consume fruits, vegetables, water, and other nutritious products by increasing access to healthy food and decreasing access to substances such as tobacco products. As support for policies banning the sale of flavored tobacco products increases, retailers already engaged with healthy retail programs will be a step ahead of potential future changes to tobacco regulation.

What Are the Benefits for the Retailer?

Healthy retail initiatives have successfully promoted nutritious food access in communities across the country. A study of San Francisco's *Healthy Retail SF* revealed benefits to both store owners and community members as whole food sales increased while tobacco product availability decreased.⁵ Many cities in the United States have opted into this intervention, including Washington, D.C, Minneapolis, MN, Providence, RI, and Philadelphia, PA.⁶

A Clackamas County retailer would benefit from CCPHD's healthy retail project by:

- Taking advantage of higher profit margins compared to tobacco products
- Saving money on tobacco licenses and avoiding future tobacco regulation
- Earning free store publicity
- Differentiating their business from others in the community
- Reducing crime associated with tobacco sales
- Demonstrating commitment to community health

Methodology

The project team performed the following outreach and engagement activities:

- Interviewed 9 community stakeholders
- Interviewed 7 convenience store owners or knowledgeable staff and conducted visual store assessments
- Surveyed 76 customers at 3 convenience stores

All interview and survey tools can be found in the Appendix.

Stakeholder Engagement

Overview

Upstream staff reached out to partners of CCPHD and organizations associated with the Clackamas Blueprint 2020 food security work group to conduct stakeholder interviews. Stakeholders included individuals from school-based clinics, food pantries, service centers, houseless service providers, senior service providers, and youth development organizations. The interview questions aimed to gather stakeholder expertise, knowledge about their organization and the community they serve, their perspective on tobacco usage in their community, and potential healthy retail piloting.

Engagement Tools and Methods

Upstream and CCPHD co-developed an interview guide that included questions about specific communities' food access, tobacco usage, and overall barriers to health.

All initial contact was made through email, and interviews were conducted over Zoom. Two Upstream staff conducted each interview and took notes (interviews were recorded for staff reference). Upstream contacted 27 stakeholders and received 12 responses. Of those that responded, 9 agreed to participate. A list of stakeholders can be found in Appendix A.

Themes and Analysis

Availability

During the interviews, several stakeholders mentioned that when it comes to produce, unless the community is made aware of the availability at convenience stores, they will likely not think to look there. Additionally, those living near grocery stores would likely not choose to shop at a convenience store for produce unless the “price and quality was more competitive”.

Affordability

Multiple stakeholders expressed concerns about inflation and the high cost of living. These concerns encompassed the ability to afford fundamental necessities such as housing and food. Stakeholders also questioned the affordability of produce at corner stores compared to the range of options at traditional grocery stores.

A stakeholder with extensive experience working with an aging population has observed that older adults often prefer to visit the grocery store as low prices are prioritized over convenience.

Quality

Produce quality was also a concern among many stakeholders, recognizing that convenience stores might not possess the same efficient distribution network or the necessary appliances and equipment to preserve product quality. In addition to quality, one stakeholder with experience working in food resources expressed concern about the potential of wasted food and spoilage if produce is not purchased.

Transportation

When discussing challenges faced by Milwaukie community members, stakeholders mentioned lack of access to safe sidewalks. One stated, “downtown is pretty good, but if you get out further there are a lot of areas without sidewalks.” Public transportation is present, but stakeholders expressed that it was lacking in accessibility and affordability.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Ensure broad access to culturally appropriate food and information in multiple languages

Multiple stakeholders working in food access highlighted the growing need for resources in various languages. Numerous stakeholders also emphasized the importance of culturally specific food availability. Two stakeholders emphasized the broader significance of food and connection to physical, emotional, and mental health. Therefore, ensuring access to culturally relevant food should be a critical aspect of the project in promoting collective health. This will be a CCPHD priority when working with a retailer to add produce and/or expand their grocery selection.

Consider proximity to grocery stores

Stakeholders emphasized that a location with limited access to grocery stores is more likely to have the “most impact for the people around it” and that these customers would be “most likely to go pick up a forgotten necessity like a loaf of bread at a convenience store rather than have the ability to go back to a grocery store for that item.” CCPHD analyzed grocery store proximity for three stores in this phase and asked customers at those locations where they shopped for fresh produce. See *Customer Engagement*, page 14.

Lessons Learned

A limitation of these conversations was a lack of participation from community leaders and members, such as neighborhood association members, school administrators or nurses, and faith community leaders. Future engagement should prioritize the perspectives and insights that these participants could offer.

Retailer Engagement

Finding an appropriate retail partner is key to implementing a healthy retail pilot project. The retailer that ultimately takes part in the project will need to be thoroughly invested in the process, understanding the benefits to their business, customers, and community. Upstream and CCPHD developed a strategy to meet retailers, learn about their store, customers and experiences as business owners, and ultimately gauge their interest in piloting healthy retail.

Engagement Tools and Methods

Upstream and CCPHD co-created an engagement tool comprised of a retailer interview and visual assessment of the store. The interview consisted of 19 open-ended and yes/no questions. The visual assessment collected observational data on 13 aspects of the store layout, advertising, and products for sale. The interview was intended to take no more than 15 minutes; it was estimated that the visual assessment would take less than 10. Retailers who participated in the interview and permitted the visual assessment received a \$20 Visa gift card.

Selecting Retailers to Interview

CCPHD acquired a list of businesses with a tobacco retail license (TRL) from the Department of Revenue and categorized businesses as a *bar, convenience store, gas station, liquor store, retail chain, tobacco outlet, or other*.ⁱⁱ A CCPHD epidemiologist used ArcGIS to map businesses, schools, and race/ethnicity by census tract. The tool was then made available to project staff online via ArcGIS Enterprise. CCPHD staff also factored in the health equity index and food insecurity index found at BlueprintClackamas.com to prioritize engagement with businesses. Project staff found that Milwaukie's 97222 Zip Code had the highest rate of food insecurity, 2nd highest number of tobacco retailers in the county, and the 3rd highest rate of households without a vehicle.

ⁱⁱ Two golf courses and a local goods store were categorized as other. A liquor store and a convenience store were erroneously categorized as other; however, they were outside of the eventual project area.

The final list of 13 independently owned businesses were selected based on their proximity to schools and density of tobacco retailers in the nearby area, although three were eventually removed (see next section).

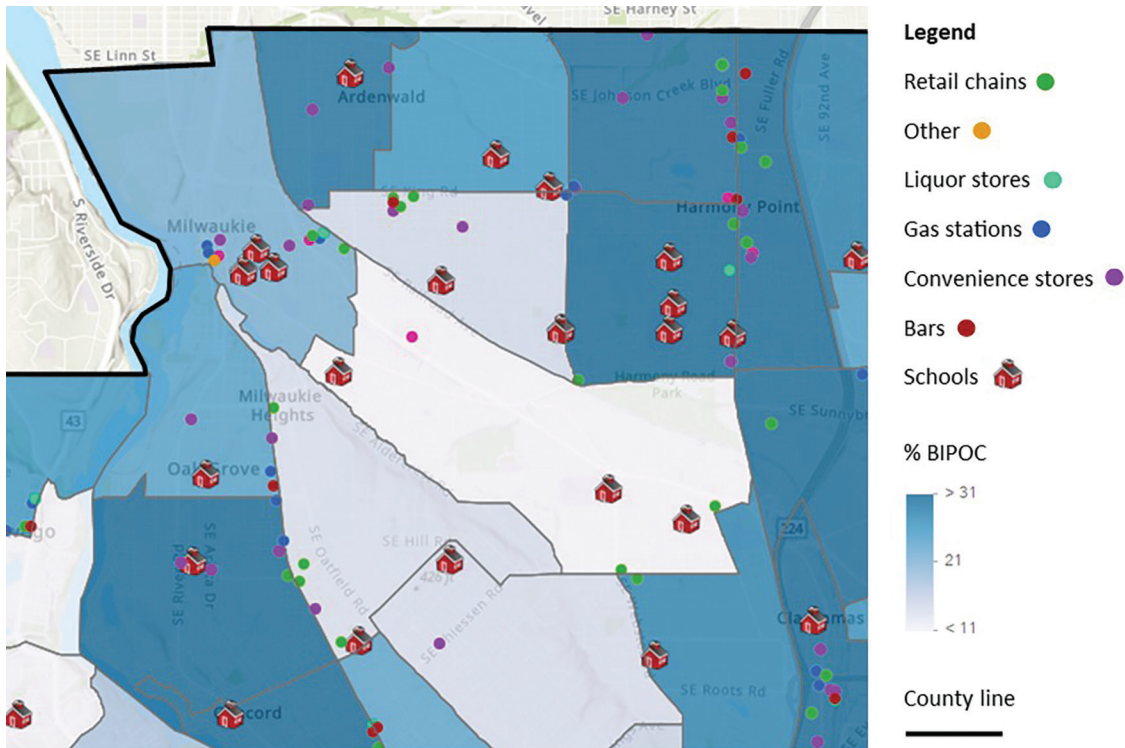


Figure 1. Tobacco retailers and schools by Census tract in and around north Clackamas County, which includes the city of Milwaukie.

Conducting Retailer Engagement

CCPHD staff engaged retailers with the goal of building relationships with the business community. Retailers were invited to participate in the interview and visual assessment through a mix of phone calls and drop-in visits. The engagement tool was recreated as a Google Form so that staff could digitize their notes after completing a store visit and easily compare responses across retailers via an auto-populated spreadsheet.

Interviews and visual assessments were completed at seven locations. Store owners or managers were interviewed at five locations; knowledgeable store clerks were interviewed at two stores. Interviews were not conducted at all 13 retailers for several reasons:

- Two were known to be too physically small to be considered for the project;
- One still held a TRL but was closed indefinitely;
- One was recently purchased by a large, multi-state brand;
- One was located on a busy highway and likely did not suit the needs of the project;
- A clerk at another felt strongly that the owner would not want to participate.

Themes and Analysis

Produce and Healthy Foods

Most retailers interviewed stocked a very small quantity of eggs and dairy options such as milk and cheese. All but one retailer offered fruit for sale, but usually just one type—bananas—in a very limited quantity and of varying quality. (Stores did tend to carry lemons and limes, but this appeared to mostly compliment alcohol sales.) All stores accepted Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, but none participated in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, which provides healthy foods to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5.

Several retailers cited that the short shelf lives associated with fresh produce made it difficult to carry more healthy options. However, the same number of retailers also said they would carry more healthy options if customers showed interest. One respondent stated that customers had been requesting more produce options and the owner was planning to start offering potatoes, onions, and tomatoes. Another respondent liked the idea of selling fresh produce, but wanted to develop a model that would minimize their risk of loss due to spoilage.

Tobacco and Nicotine Products

All retailers visited sold tobacco and nicotine products, however two of them did not sell vaping products, with one respondent stating that they were too expensive to purchase up front. Most retailers reported having contracts with the tobacco industry, which allowed them to purchase tobacco inventory at a discount (Costco was cited several times as the tobacco supplier of choice for retailers). Cigarettes were said to be the most popular tobacco product at retailers' shops. Elf Bar, a disposable vaping device not currently authorized for sale in the US by the Food and Drug Administration, was mentioned twice as being a popular seller.⁷

Tobacco Advertising and Product Placement

Tobacco advertising was observed at five of seven locations. Each location had advertising facing outward or physically outside; only one location had advertising at checkout and/or below three feet.ⁱⁱⁱ Three retailers situated vaping products within twelve inches of toys, candy, gum, slushy/soda machines and/or ice cream. No tobacco/nicotine products were advertised for less than one dollar, and no menthol price promotions were observed.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Explore business opportunities through healthy retail

Asking a retailer to transition their business model from selling tobacco products to selling healthier options, like produce, seems like a bold shift. However, interviews with retailers showed that several are already thinking about new ways to shape their operation. Perhaps a retailer is concerned that business is slow and their routine product offerings are no longer bringing in customers. Healthy retail could be a path forward for the retailer, especially considering the supports offered by the project. If a corner store already offers a substantial grocery selection, healthy retail has the potential to build upon and expand those offerings.

ⁱⁱⁱ Advertisements or products placed at or below this height are easier for children to see and interact with.

CCPHD will share customer feedback with retailers and discuss a small grant opportunity to support investments in healthy retail.

Align healthy retail with Milwaukie’s “Neighborhood Hubs”

The City of Milwaukie is developing “Neighborhood Hubs” across the city where residents can gather in places close to their homes to have easy access to goods and services. The city hired consultants to perform community outreach and design a plan for the project, which included identifying locations for the hubs. During the community engagement phase, neighborhood residents stated that one of the hub elements they would like to see properties used for was an organic grocery store. This feedback, as well as the Neighborhood Hubs project in general, illustrates a significant connection point to CCPHD’s healthy retail initiative. CCPHD will meet with the City of Milwaukie to leverage resources and achieve shared goals.

Anticipate changes to tobacco regulations

The Food and Drug Administration is in the process of banning menthol flavored tobacco products and all flavored cigars (including cigarillos/little cigars).⁹ Similarly, Oregon legislators are interested in banning the sale of all flavored tobacco products in the state and tobacco prevention advocates are working with them to pass a bill to do so. These changes will greatly reduce tobacco retailers’ selection of products. Healthy retail is an opportunity for retailers to shift their business model and diversify their revenue before these changes take effect.

Leverage partners and existing food programs to maximize success

CCPHD staff conducted retailer interviews and store assessments at locations near the border of Multnomah County (see map on page 17). Due to the potential benefits to Multnomah County communities, CCPHD will explore opportunities with the county’s health department to support local healthy retail. Enrolling in programs like SNAP, WIC and Double Up Food Bucks, which provides SNAP customers with credit to purchase produce, can increase customers, drive demand for fresh produce, and mitigate the risk of losing product due to spoilage. Likewise, partnering with local community organizations and trusted messengers to promote the retailer’s new business model will aid in maximizing success. CCPHD will work with the retailer to implement these strategies.

Address and mitigate potential barriers

Tobacco, like alcohol and sweet and salty snacks, is seen as a pillar of the convenience store business model. As such, retailers may balk at the idea of volunteering to end their sale of it. The tobacco industry has convinced small retailers that their products bring in customers who then make additional, non-tobacco purchases. This is despite research showing that, on average, sales including tobacco are no higher than sales not including tobacco.¹⁰ Tobacco also represents a low-maintenance product category for retailers, meaning products such as cigarettes and vaping devices do not have expiration dates and therefore remain sellable for years. What’s more, tobacco companies offer retailers contracts, which provide access to their products at a discounted rate in exchange for price promotions and high visibility placement of products and marketing materials.¹¹ Support offered to the retailer by CCPHD, such as funding,

technical assistance, training, and promotion of the new business model will help mitigate these potential barriers.

Spoilage emerged as a major concern for retailers. Beyond produce going bad due to lack of sale, additional factors impact spoilage, including receiving damaged product from the distributor, lack of product rotation, storing product at incorrect temperatures, and displaying ethylene producers near ethylene sensitive products.^{iv} CCPHD will provide training and resources for the retailer to reduce spoilage risks and increase customer uptake of produce.

Additional Observations

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

One respondent informed CCPHD staff that sugary drinks, like soda, was their biggest seller. He noted that the mark-up on these items was about 33%^v and that distributors will replace products that don't sell with new inventory at no cost to the retailer. (Distributors also provide beverage coolers to retailers at no charge.) Considering this arrangement, it is easy to see why the sugar-sweetened beverages category is so important to convenience stores. As with tobacco companies offering retailers contracts, it also illustrates the power of incentives in the convenience store sector.

Cannabis Paraphernalia

CCPHD staff observed several retailers selling cannabis paraphernalia such as pipes and other smoking instruments. In some instances, the variety and number of products available was significant. Considering the proximity of these retailers to schools and their location in residential neighborhoods, exposure to these products could lead to increased normalization of cannabis use for youth. CCPHD will explore including a transition away from these sales as part of their contract with a retailer. Staff will also bring this issue to the attention of city officials during their healthy retail project meetings with them.

Lessons Learned

The power of in-person retailer engagement

Retailers were first invited to participate in the interview and visual observation via phone. It proved difficult to reach owners or managers this way due to their unpredictable schedules. This effort, however, yielded two prescheduled in-person interviews.

After the initial set of calls, CCPHD staff made unannounced visits to retailers. This proved more successful, leading to immediate interviews at five retailers. The benefit of engaging face-to-face may have played a role in securing participation. This approach also gave knowledgeable staff an opportunity to participate in interviews when owners were unavailable.

^{iv} Ethylene is a gas produced by some fruits and vegetables that causes produce to ripen faster

^v Mark-up is how much more than the cost of goods sold—or what the retailer paid for the product—the customer is charged. The retailer stated the mark-up on cigarettes was about 12%. The Food Trust's Sell Healthy! Guide recommends a 100% mark-up on fresh produce. See The Food Trust's Sell Healthy! Guide at <https://thefoodtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/sell-healthy-guide-2016.original.pdf>.

Document adulterated products

CCPHD's visual assessment tool did not document the sale of adulterated tobacco products. These are products that have not been authorized for sale by the Food and Drug Administration. Despite this, retailers continue to sell these products, with Elf Bar and Esco Bars being among the most popular brands.¹² Collecting local data on the sale of these products could help inform tobacco prevention strategies at the retail level, including outreach and education.

Customer Engagement

Overview

Directly engaging customers at local convenience stores provided an opportunity to gauge their interest in purchasing produce at a retailer in which they may already regularly shop. It also served as a method to collect data on tobacco purchases and use, most frequently purchased product categories, most frequently visited grocery store, and other areas. CCPHD arranged for engagement to take place at three retailers, and Upstream conducted the surveys.

Engagement Tools and Methods

Upstream and CCPHD created a short customer survey that could be completed in under two minutes. Upstream staff positioned themselves outside of retailers' storefronts during their busiest times, usually on weekdays starting around 3:00 PM. Customers were approached as they entered or exited the business, and surveys were conducted verbally. Team members completed physical versions and later input them into Google Forms to digitize and collate responses. A minimum of two staff or interns were present during each session, and only those age 18 or older were eligible to participate. Customers were offered a \$5 voucher to the store at which they completed the survey; 76 surveys were completed. See Appendix C for details on store visits and staffing.

The survey was first tested at a convenience store outside of the project area to evaluate its readability, flow, and customer acceptability.

Retailers Selected for Customer Engagement

Speaking with retailers and visiting their stores helped inform which businesses would be prioritized for customer engagement. Primary factors included sufficient sales floor space and strong community integration. Other factors, such as limited tobacco sales and considerable grocery offerings, also influenced the selection.

The Little Blue Store

The Little Blue Store is in a residential neighborhood with no other corner stores nearby; the closest retail is an outdoor mall separated by a six-lane highway. The closest grocery store is about a mile away; however, New Seasons Market, an upscale grocer, is opening a nearby location in the fall of 2023. The current owner has operated the business since 2022, but the store has been in the community for decades and is well loved by neighbors and customers. The respondent stated that sales were sluggish, and the owner was trying to figure out how to diversify their business model. They also mentioned that customers had suggested that the store start carrying produce or consider hosting a "kind of like farmers market-type thing." Tobacco sales were reported as being very low, and their selection was limited (they did not



sell e-cigarettes or vaping products). The Little Blue Store is within 1,250 feet of Milwaukie El Puente Elementary.

Roswell Market

Roswell Market also resides in a residential area; the nearest convenience store is a half mile away, and the nearest grocery store is about a mile away. Roswell had the largest selection of grocery items of any store visited, including canned and fresh caught frozen fish, frozen vegetables, beans, and rice. They specifically stock foods preferred by African, Nepalese, and Micronesian communities. The store had a couple of small baskets with apples, bananas, lemons, and limes, but the owner was planning to start carrying potatoes, onions, and tomatoes. It is within 1,250 feet of Ardenwald Elementary.



Vista Grocery

Vista Grocery is in unincorporated Clackamas County, about one mile south of Milwaukie’s city limits, and was one of two retailers visited that weren’t in the city. The nearest grocery store is just over 3/4 of a mile away, separated by a five-lane highway. The retailer stated that 90% of store visitors were regular customers. Vista sits on a large parcel of land owned by a local resident. The retailer reported that the property owner intends to redevelop the site into a multiuse structure with ground level retail as soon as 2024. Vista is a couple hundred feet from New Urban High School, the closest proximity of any retailer on the engagement list.



Analysis

Demographic

Customers at these stores included “regulars”, local residents, workers in the area, and first-time visitors. Regular customers showed a higher level of enthusiasm, mainly because they were eager to support the store and its owners/staff.

Survey participants were asked to select from a series of age ranges that best described them. Half the respondents were between 35-54 years old.

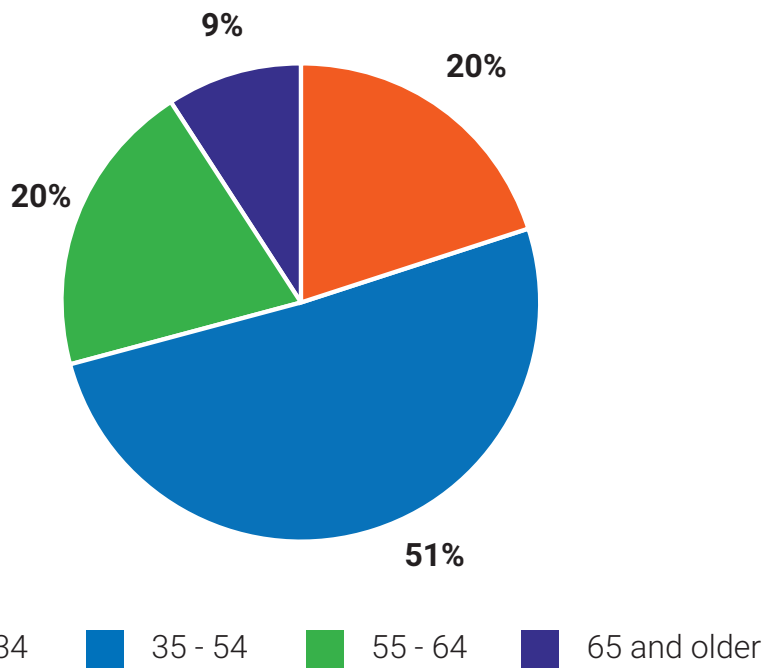


Figure 2. Ages of customers across all locations (n=76).

Socioeconomic

There was a very low percentage of reported SNAP and/or WIC recipients across all stores. Each retail location was SNAP certified, but none were WIC certified.

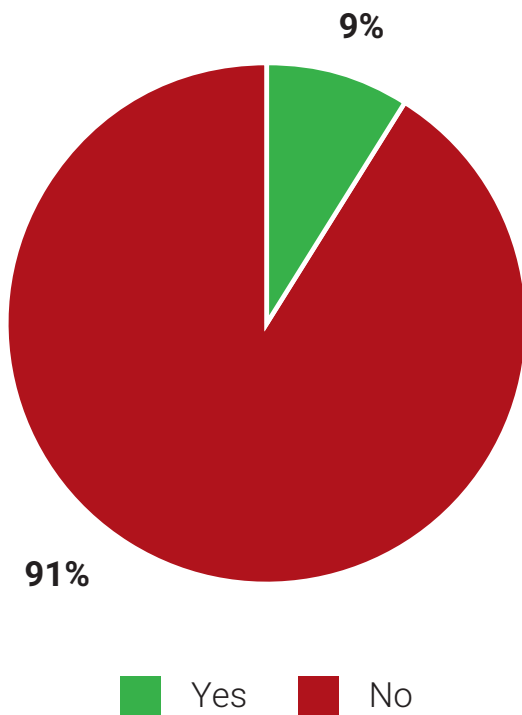


Figure 3. Customer responses across all locations to the question *Do you receive SNAP benefits?* (n=74).

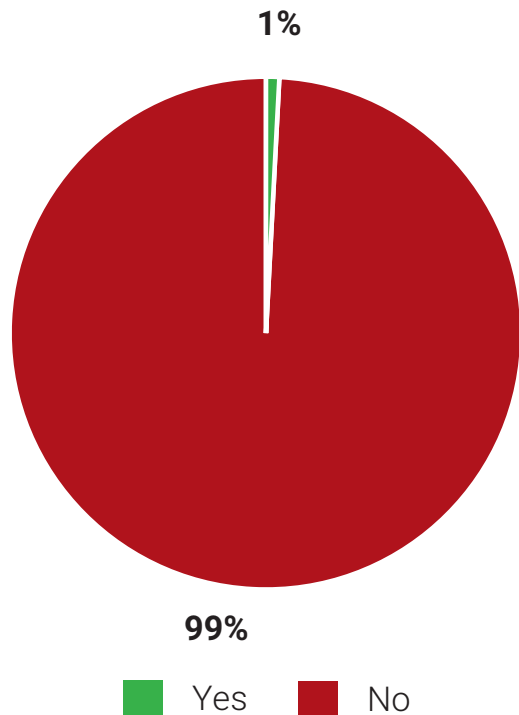


Figure 4. Customer responses across all locations to the question *Do you receive WIC benefits?* (n=71).

Geographic

Each store experienced the highest volume of customer traffic from the ZIP Code in which it is located. 97222 was the most reported Zip Code for Roswell Market and The Little Blue Store. Vista Grocery exhibited the greatest variety of ZIP Codes; however, its home Zip Code of 97267 was the most frequently reported.



Oregon Metro, Oregon State Parks, State of Oregon GEO, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA

Figure 5. Convenience stores where customers were surveyed (red icons) and area produce vendors (blue icons).

When asked where they preferred to shop for fresh produce, customers seemed to indicate the nearest grocery store in relation to where they were being surveyed.^{vi} At The Little Blue Store, this is the SE King Rd. Safeway (.9 miles away; 23 minutes on foot or 4 minutes by car). Vista Grocery customers appeared to prefer the SE McLoughlin Blvd. Fred Meyer (.8 miles away; 18 minutes on foot or 3 minutes by car). Customers at Roswell Market suggested two preferences: the SE King Rd. Safeway (.9 miles away; 19 minutes on foot or 3 minutes by car) and the SE 82 Ave. Fred Meyer (2.6 miles away; 58 minutes on foot or 8 minutes by car).

^{vi} Customers were not asked which location of grocery store they preferred, only the name of the retailer.

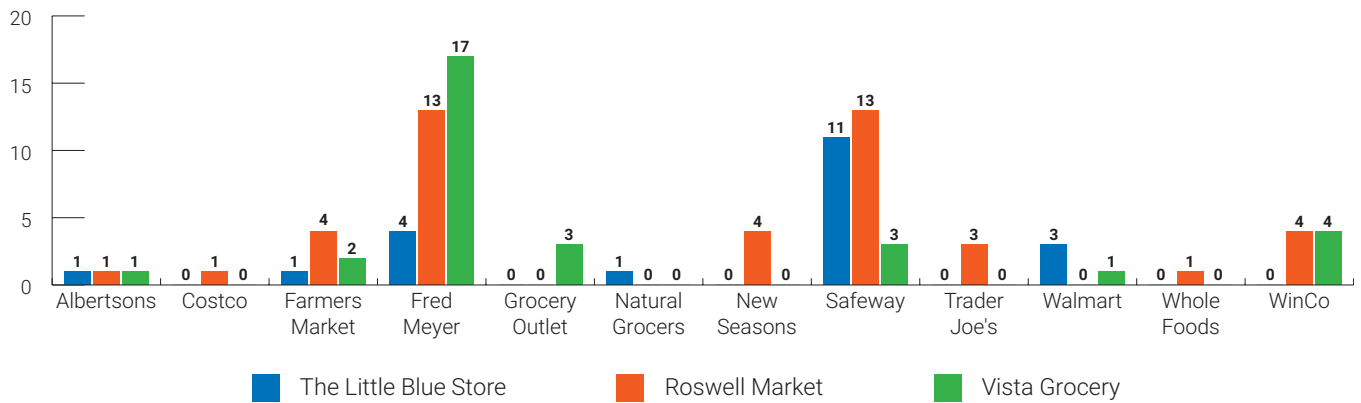


Figure 6. Where customers preferred to buy fresh fruits and vegetables (n=74). Customers could provide multiple responses.

Purchase Trends

Alcohol, sugar-sweetened beverages, and tobacco/nicotine products were the highest reported purchases across all three stores. Alcohol purchases were similar across the stores; however, there was some variation in the other two categories. Sugar-sweetened beverages were mentioned less frequently at Roswell Market, and tobacco/nicotine products were mentioned far less frequently at The Little Blue Store. This may be due to that store’s minimal selection of tobacco/nicotine products and its few advertisements for the product category.

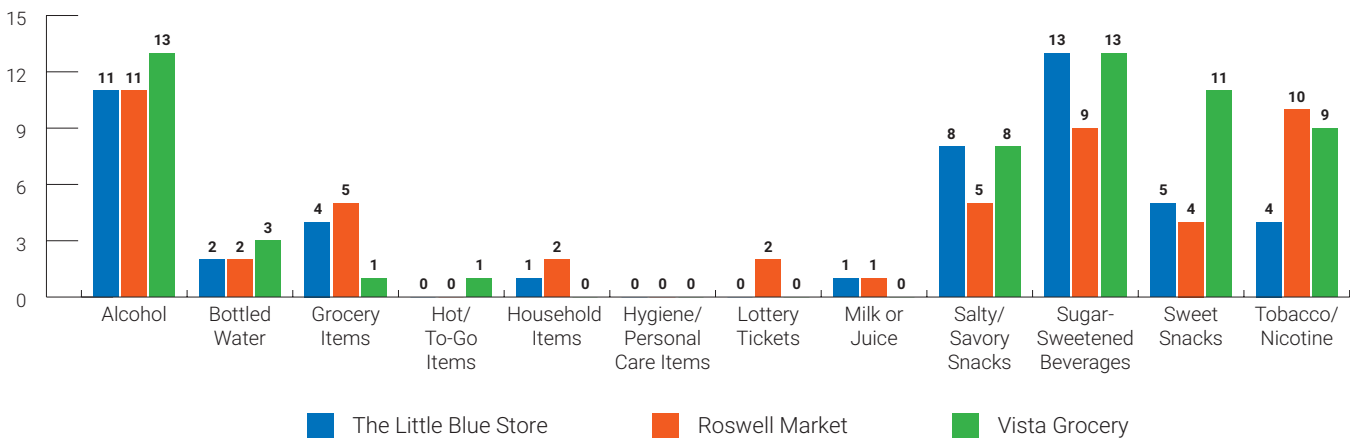


Figure 7. Types of products customers reported frequently buying across all locations (n=76). Customers could provide multiple responses.

Piloting Produce

Most customers stated they would buy fresh produce if it were affordable and available. The Little Blue Store had the greatest support, with 20 of the 25 participants responding “yes”. Support was also strong at Vista Grocery and Roswell Market (n=17 and n=12, respectively).

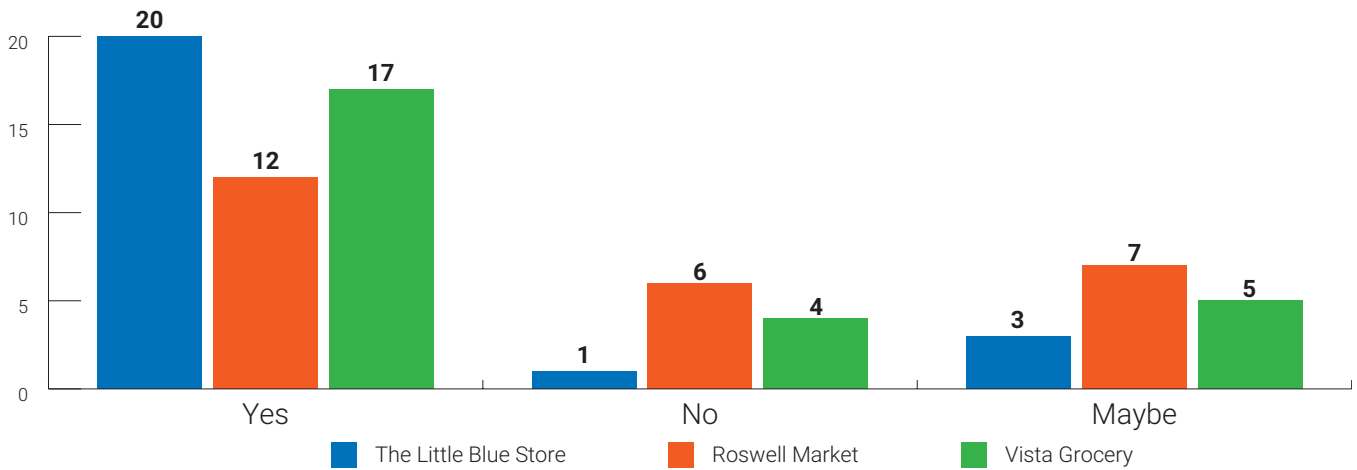


Figure 8. Customer responses to the question *Would you buy fresh fruits and vegetables at this store if they were available and affordable?* (n=75).

Whole produce, such as apples, potatoes, and bananas, was the clear preference over sliced or pre-packaged options like salad kits or fruit salads.

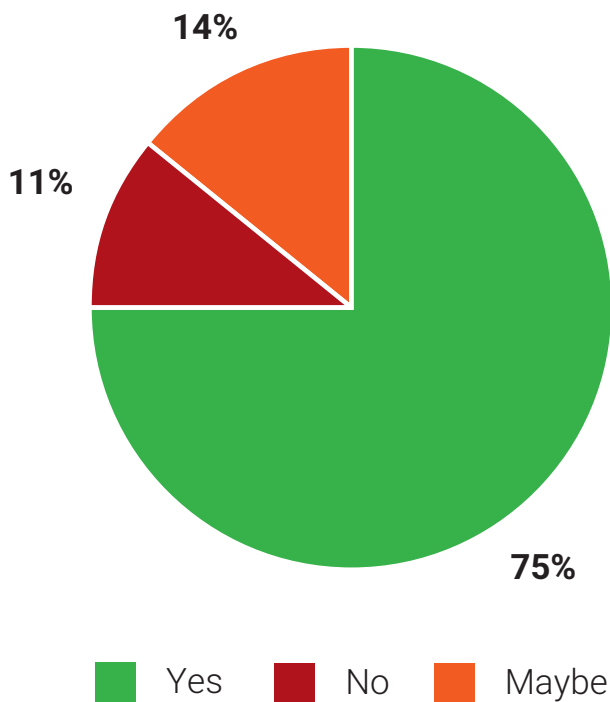


Figure 9. Customer responses across all locations to the question *Would you buy whole produce?* (n=64).

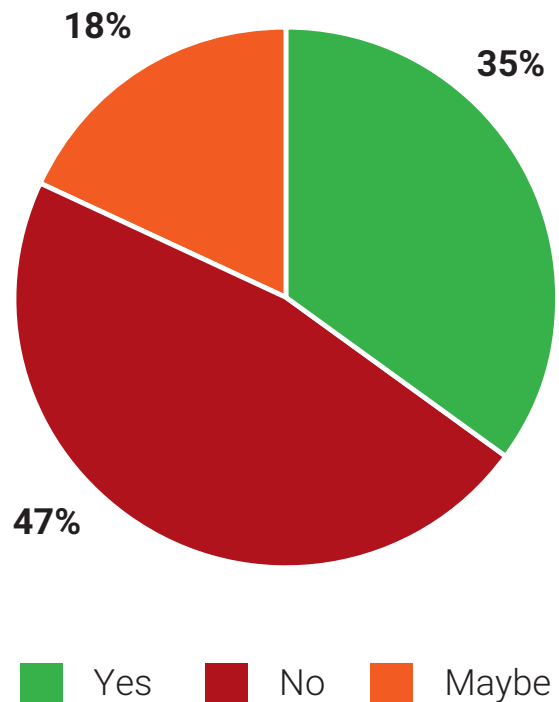


Figure 10. Customer responses across all locations to the question *Would you buy pre-packaged produce?* (n=57).

Tobacco Purchases

Cigarettes emerged as the most frequently mentioned type of tobacco/nicotine purchased across all three stores. This may be because most survey participants were between 35-55 years old; data shows that adults older than 25 use flavored tobacco and vaping products at drastically lower rates than young adults.¹³

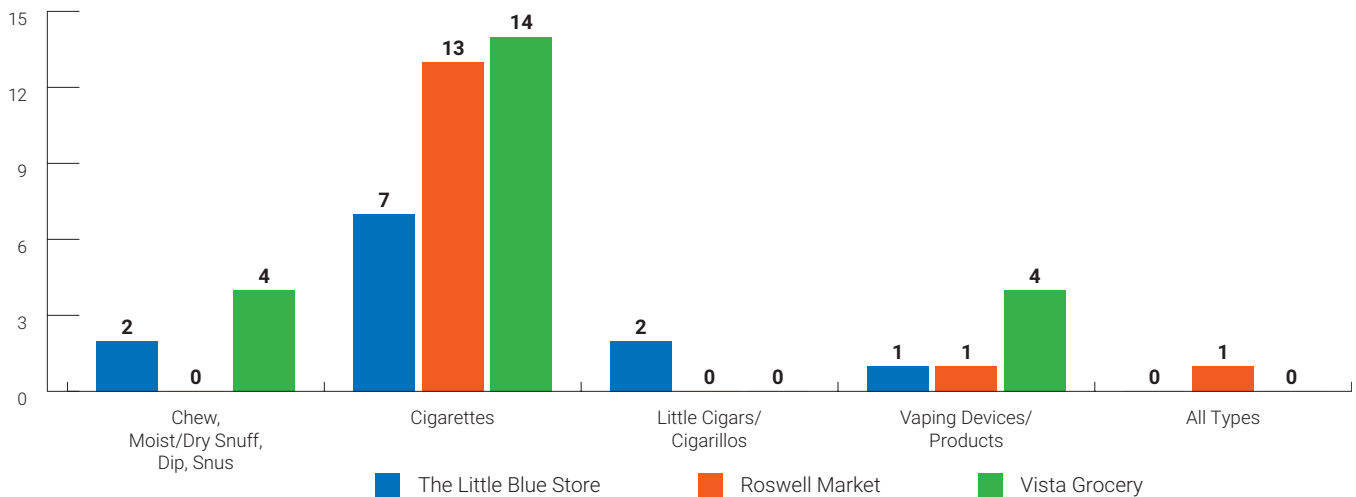


Figure 11. Types of tobacco/nicotine products customers reported buying across all locations (n=45). Customers could provide multiple responses.

Interviewer Observations

- Many customers expressed their concerns that the quality of produce carried at a convenience store would be unsatisfactory.
- Youth were present at each location, likely due to each store’s proximity to a school or schools.
- During interviews at all three locations, customers consistently praised the owners/ workers, which emphasized strong support from the community. Some customers even stated that they would intentionally buy produce at the store to show their support for the owner.
- Some individuals opted to keep their vehicles running while entering the store, indicating their intention to make brief visits and thus illustrating the utility of convenience stores as a quick shopping trip destination.

Vista Grocery

Overview

Vista Grocery sits at the corner of two neighborhood arterials: SE River Rd. and SE Oak Grove Blvd. The latter serves as the unincorporated community’s historic downtown, featuring local businesses, a high school, and a church. The interior of the store is small, as is the building’s overall footprint compared to the property that hosts it. Much of this extra space is dedicated to customer parking.

Upstream staff conducted customer interviews across two days, spanning a period of five hours.

Summary of Data

Vista Grocery emerged as the retail location with the greatest proportion of customers who ever purchased tobacco products. Among the surveyed customers, 88% (23 out of 26 individuals) reported making tobacco purchases.

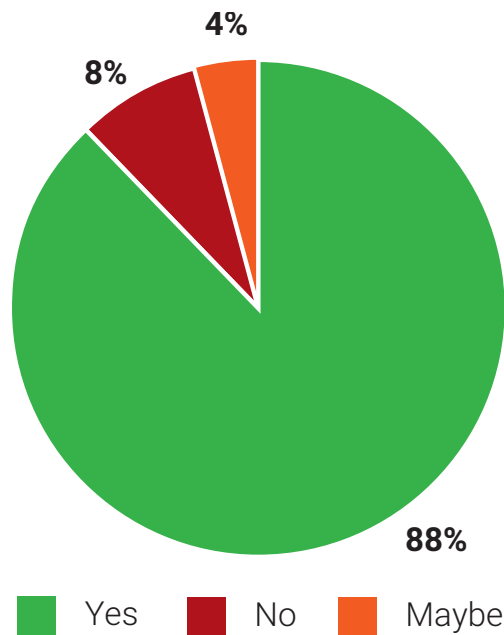


Figure 12. Customer responses at Vista Grocery to the question *Have you ever bought tobacco products here?* (n=26).

A significant proportion of respondents (65.4%) said they would purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from this store if they were both accessible and affordably priced. It was notable that those who responded negatively or with uncertainty often cited concerns about product quality, presuming that convenience stores would offer lower quality produce.

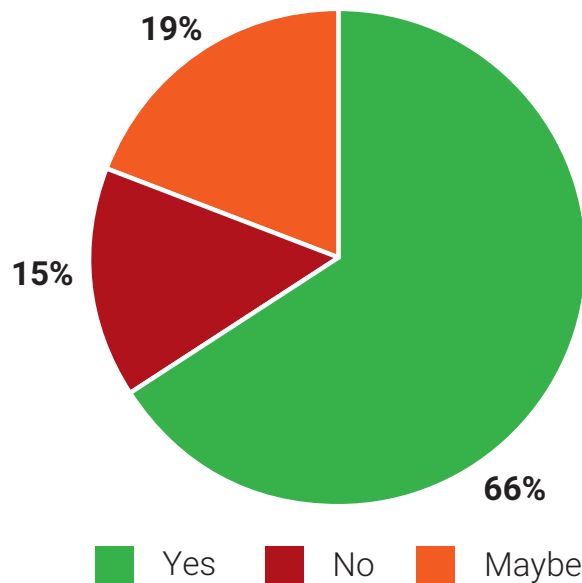


Figure 13. Customer responses at Vista Grocery to the question *Would you buy fresh fruits and vegetables here if they were available and affordable?* (n=26).

Customer Feedback

- During a conversation with one customer, they shared an interesting personal experience. This individual had provided feedback to the owner, expressing their desire for the store to carry a specific brand of port wine. The owner took note of this feedback and

subsequently stocked the requested brand of port for the customer. The customer had this specific brand of port in their possession while participating in the survey (C115).

- During a discussion, an adult customer expressed that they have been a patron of the store since early childhood.
- When customers were prompted to share any final store specific feedback or experiences, the owners were specifically mentioned 12 times with positive and supportive remarks.

Additional Observations

- Given the close proximity of Vista Grocery to the Willamette River and its offering of river- and fishing-related goods such as bait, the store has the opportunity to attract a unique subset of customers not catered to at the other surveyed stores.
- Sidewalks only serve the SE Oak Grove Blvd. frontage. Most visitors came by car and several survey respondents stated they lived or worked nearby.

The Little Blue Store

Overview

The Little Blue Store sits at the intersection of a neighborhood street (SE 30th Ave.) and an arterial (SE Washington St.) that connects Milwaukie's downtown to state highway 224. The ground floor features the property's retail space, and the second floor serves as a residential unit (occupied by the owner during this phase of the project). No onsite parking is provided, however ample on-street parking is available as well as a bus stop directly in front of the store. A side yard and back yard are also featured on the property.

Upstream staff conducted customer interviews across three days, spanning a period of nine hours.

Summary of Data

The Little Blue Store had the lowest number of customers having ever purchased tobacco products. Out of 25 individuals surveyed, 15 respondents (60%) indicated that they had never purchased tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, vaping products, or other forms of nicotine products.

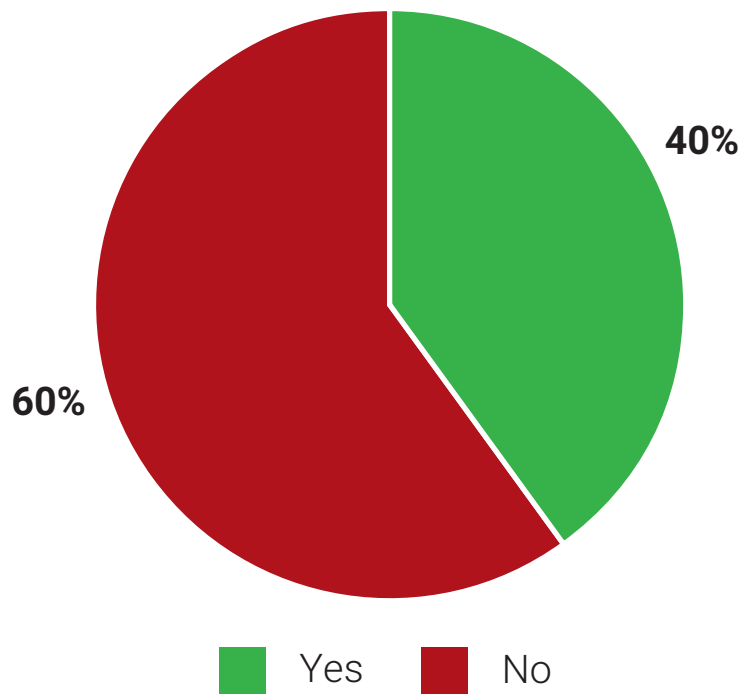


Figure 14. Customer responses at The Little Blue Store to the question *Have you ever bought tobacco products here?* (n=25).

Most (20 of 24) customers said they would purchase fruits and vegetables at The Little Blue Store if they were reasonably priced. This stands out as the highest percentage among the stores included in this phase of the project.

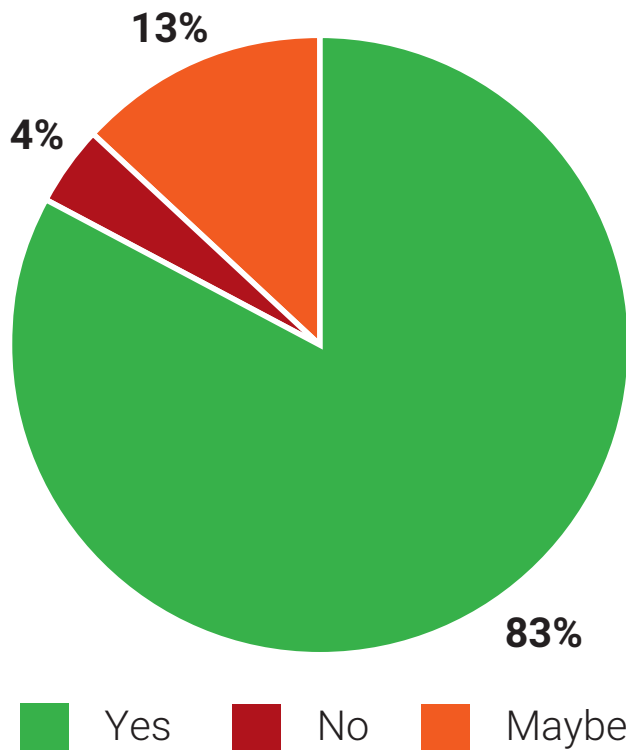


Figure 15. Customer responses at The Little Blue Store to the question *Would you buy fresh fruits and vegetables here if they were available and affordable?* (n=24).

Customer Feedback

- Several customers have expressed the importance of The Little Blue Store to their community. One customer stated that The Little Blue Store was a “community mainstay” (C219).
- When asked for any final feedback or experiences related to the store, customers praised the owners nine different times in a positive and supportive manner.

Additional Observations

- This convenience store, nestled in a closely-knit residential community, has a loyal customer base. Customers have developed personal relationships with the current owner in the short time that they have operated the business.
- There was a noted presence of high school-aged customers at the store, likely due to its proximity to Milwaukie High School. The school is a 9-minute walk or a 2-minute drive from the store.
- The Little Blue Store had the lowest customer and survey engagement of the three sites. It is noted here for replicating future customer surveys at multiple sites. Refer to Appendix C for further details.

Roswell Market

Overview

Roswell Market sits at the corner of SE Roswell St. and SE 42nd Ave. The former is home to Ardenwald Elementary; the latter acts as an arterial leading to two popular east-west routes crossing the city. Roughly half of the property is dedicated to the retail structure and the other half to parking. There are no other retailers in the immediate area.

Roswell Market was the last store at which surveys were conducted. An additional question was included to gauge customers’ values around price, quality, and variety when selecting produce for purchase.

Upstream staff conducted customer interviews across two days, spanning a period of six hours.

Summary of Data

Out of 25 individuals surveyed, 14 respondents (56%) indicated that they had purchased tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, vaping products, or other forms of nicotine products from this store.

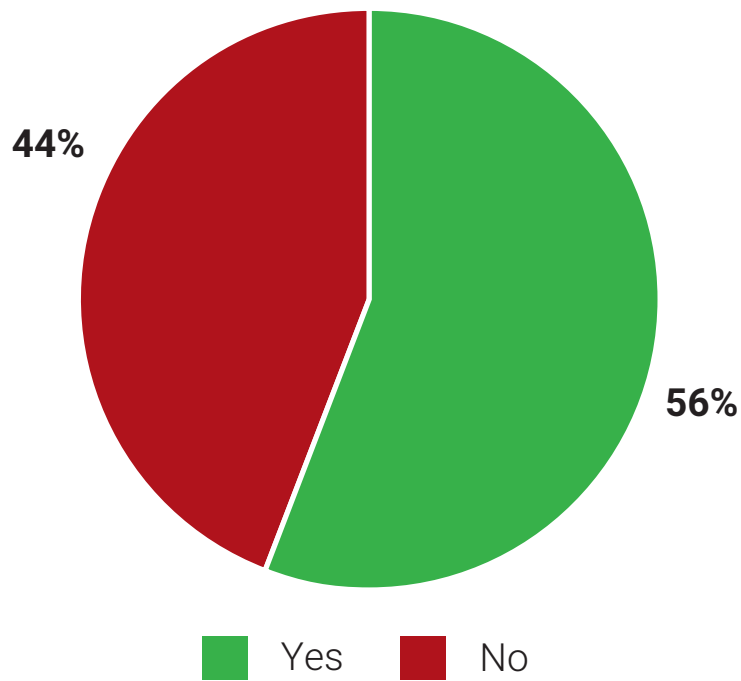


Figure 16. Customer responses at Roswell Market to the question *Have you ever bought tobacco products here?* (n=25).

When asked *Would you buy fresh fruits and vegetables here if they were available and affordable?*, Roswell Market received the fewest supportive responses in comparison to the other two stores. Since customers ranked quality so highly in their decision-making regarding produce purchases (Figure 18), uncertainty around or disinterest in purchasing fruits and vegetables at Roswell Market may reflect this outcome.

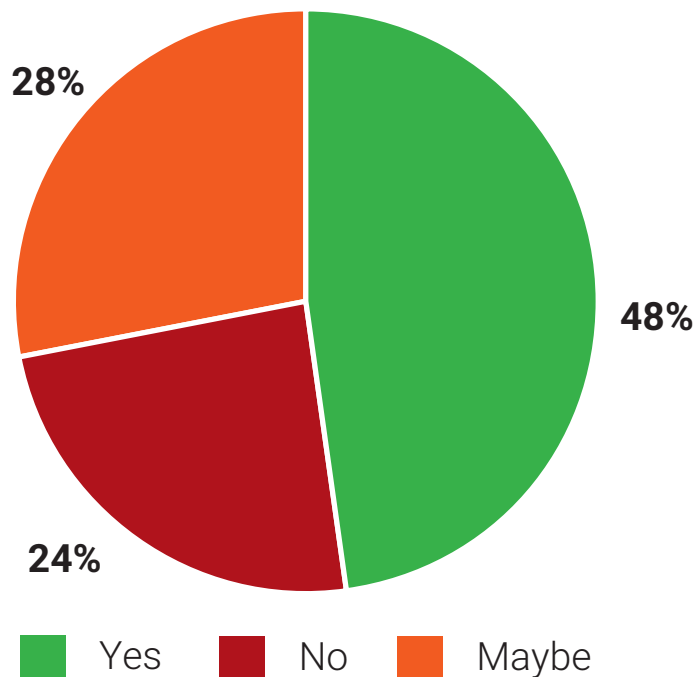


Figure 17. Customer responses at Roswell Market to the question *Would you buy fresh fruits and vegetables here if they were available and affordable?* (n=25).

Participants were asked to prioritize the significance of certain qualities in their decision-making process when purchasing produce. Most customers ranked quality (Q) as their top priority, followed by price (P), then variety (V), forming the order preference QPV. Sixteen respondents specifically emphasized quality as their primary concern when buying produce.

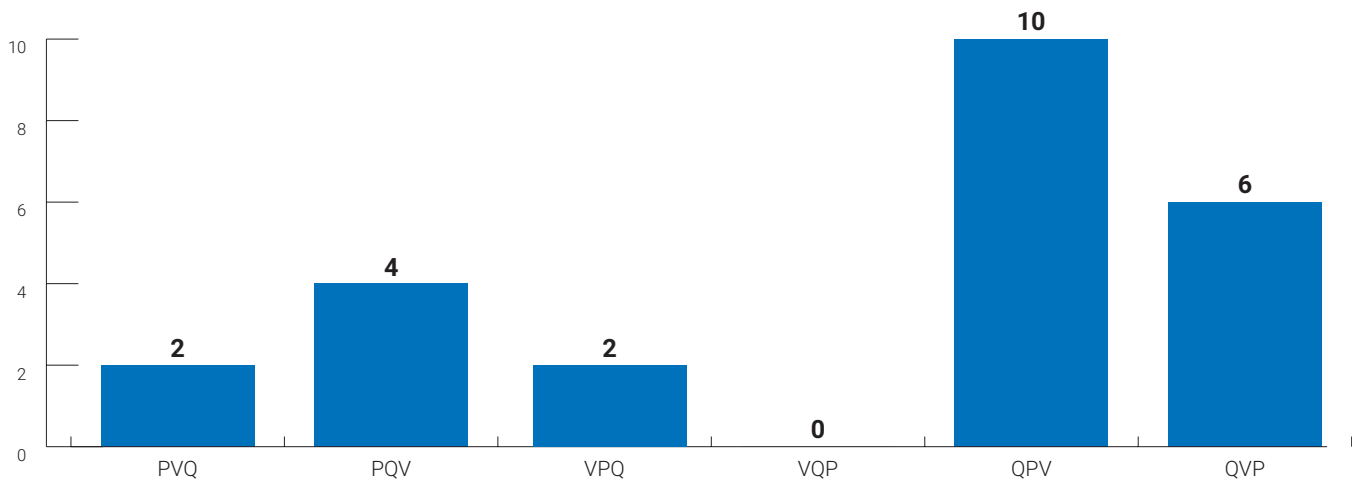


Figure 18. How Roswell Market customers ranked produce qualities in importance from greatest to least (n=24). P stands for price, V for variety, and Q for quality.

Customer Feedback

- When prompted about any final store-specific feedback or experiences they wished to share, respondents provided positive feedback about their interactions with store employees.
- A couple mentioned that they frequented the store quite regularly, averaging four to five visits per day. This was the highest reported frequency among all the customers surveyed across the stores. Roswell staff often anticipated these regular customers' needs, preparing their products ahead of time for a smoother checkout process.
- One customer reported being a customer at the market for 21 years. This customer expressed their appreciation for the current owner's influence on diversifying the product offerings by introducing culturally specific items and frozen foods.

Additional Observations

- Many parents utilized the Roswell parking lot as a designated area for picking up their kids after school, as well as stopping into the store with their kids at the time of pickup.
- Upstream staff interacted primarily with store employees, as the owner did not make an appearance during survey times. Employees were friendly and helpful to Upstream staff.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Establish community buy-in

During the community stakeholder interviews, a participant mentioned an initiative they worked on to address limited nutrition access in high schools and stressed the significance of obtaining support from the community to ensure project success. They effectively obtained

this buy-in by providing school-aged children with samples of nourishing food options and soliciting their input regarding their preferences. This enabled them to identify the most popular food items to offer in the cafeteria. CCPHD will work with the retailer to further engage customers and community members about the types of nutritious products they would be interested in buying.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of a retailer's business model transition, customers should be continually engaged around proposed product changes. They could be invited to express their preferences through quick surveys at the point of sale and offered samples of new products. Involving customers in decision-making around new products would likely lead to a reduction in food waste. Even if customers do not make an immediate purchase, the appealing presence of products such as fresh produce will cultivate awareness and encourage future consideration. As one stakeholder stated, "If I had confidence that I could find a high-quality orange at our convenience store, I would be more inclined to stop there." CCPHD will work with the retailer to arrange in-store events such as product tastings and cooking demonstrations.

Ensure produce quality meets customer expectations

Conversations with customers revealed that the main concern related to produce in a convenience store is the quality and freshness of the product. If strategies are in place to ensure produce quality meets customer expectations, retailers may be able to increase customer uptake of the product category and decrease rates of spoilage. For example, subsidized agreements between a retailer and local farms could be established to allow product to be acquired at more cost-effective rates. This may enable the retailer to provide affordable, high-quality options that would be comparable to a grocery store or farmer's market. Likewise, investing in how produce is displayed and stored is critical to maintaining its freshness, and promoting new products is necessary to raise customer awareness. CCPHD will work with the retailer to explore and execute these strategies.

Promote the business' transition through local channels

Most participants reported getting their community news from Facebook, followed by local TV news and word of mouth. The frequency of mentions of the *Milwaukie Pilot*, an electronic newsletter published by the City of Milwaukie, is notable. If the healthy retail project launches in Milwaukie, CCPHD will work with the city to promote the business in the *Pilot*.

Lessons Learned

Promote the survey at the business

Working with retailers and their staff to promote survey participation at the point of sale led to increased engagement with customers and helped reduce skepticism regarding Upstream's presence. To further enhance customer confidence in surveyors' affiliation with the store, it may be beneficial to post a small flier by the register and/or physical signage where the survey is being conducted.

Employ specific, direct questions

The survey's specific and direct questions yielded more useful answers. Participants were less likely to omit information when responding to inquiries about the types of products they usually purchased or may like to purchase.

Survey incentives benefited all parties and led to further engagement

Incentivizing surveys often increases participation rates, thus benefiting project staff by helping them meet their goals and rewarding those they engage with an appreciation for their time. The project team considered using prepaid gift cards in lieu of cash incentives, but none of the retailers sold gift certificates to their business. Upstream offered to create 25 \$5 gift vouchers for each business and pay the retailer upfront for the total value (\$125). Each retailer agreed to the arrangement, and Upstream designed and printed the vouchers. This solution provided the project team with an opportunity to support small businesses, further build relationships with the business owners, and express gratitude for supporting on-site customer engagement.

Gauge customers' values regarding produce

As described above, a question examining customers' values was belatedly added to the survey and only included during engagement at Roswell Market. This question yielded insightful results and would have ideally been asked at each of the businesses.

Improve survey accessibility

Two customers that were engaged exclusively spoke Spanish and many others stated that English was not their first language. Upstream was able to make a native Spanish speaker available during 3 of the 7 survey sessions, but similar future engagement may benefit from having additional language resources available. Retailers might be able to offer insight on languages their customers speak to better prepare for future customer engagement with on-site interpreters.

Understand retailers' experience with vouchers and optimize their utility

Talk with retailers about their experience redeeming the gift vouchers to improve future incentives. For example, short serial numbers could be assigned to each voucher so that the retailer could track them with a master list to ensure counterfeits were not attempting to be redeemed.

Numerous customers showed a lack of interest in engaging staff, resulting in multiple return trips to reach the survey goal. To increase participation rates and optimize staff time, voucher amounts could be increased to \$10 for customers.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: List of Stakeholders Interviewed

Organization	Service Focus	Contact name	Meeting date
NW Family Services	Youth, Education, Tobacco,	Michelle Bollinger	(3/21/2023)
OSU Extension	Nutrition, Healthy Food Access	Kelly Streit	(3/23/2023)
Milwaukie High School Health & Wellness Center and OUTSIDE IN	Food Pantry, Youth, Health Service Connection	Kendall Arlasky and Max Penneck	(04/17/2023)
Clackamas Service Center	Grocery Program, Food Access	Kate Plymale	(04/24/2023)
Wichita Center	Food Pantry	Kathy Harrison	(04/25/2023)
Milwaukie Service Center	Senior services	Marty Hanley	(06/26/2023)
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Clackamas County (NAMI Clackamas)	Mental Health	Gary Marschke	(07/05/2023)
LoveOne	Houseless Services	Brandi Johnson and Gary Suchanek	(07/06/2023)
Oregon School Based Health Alliance	Youth, Food Access, Health Resources	Patti Zavala	(07/11/2023)

Appendix B: Engagement Tools

Stakeholder Interview

[INTRO]

Will you describe the focus of your role at the *[insert organization name]*?

[Icebreaking, also to get to know what folks do.]

What are some of your organization's strategies to improve health in your community?

[To better understand the focus in which they operate i.e. policy, education, support to locate resources]

Do you consider improving health a top priority for the *people* within the community you serve? [If not, what are a couple of the top priorities?]

[To understand how our priorities may align. As well as to gain insight into understanding the social/cultural environment of the area]

What are some challenges for the population(s) you serve?

[Intended to understand where their needs are and perhaps where we may come across the most challenges in healthy retail implementation]

[SHIFT TO HEALTHY RETAIL FOCUS]

From what you know now about healthy retail (less tobacco, more healthy food) do you think that it can be beneficial to the communities you serve?

OR [What is your experience around healthy retail (less tobacco, more healthy food) with the communities you serve?]

How would you describe the community you serve access to healthy foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat milk and dairy products, and whole grain products?

Aside from healthy food access, what would you say is something in Milwaukee that is a big barrier for health?

What do you know about their use of tobacco and nicotine products?

Going forward, what should we keep in mind as we develop this project and can you think of any challenges we might face working with the community?

[Check-in to see if others working in populations potentially affected by proposed changes due to this project would value this as an effective use of time and resources. Also potential valuable feedback for us to make our further interviews and project more clear]

[CLOSING/CONNECTING]

What other organizations or stakeholders should we engage in this conversation that may have an invested interest in this type of work?

[Mapping stakeholders]

As we continue the development of this project, would you be interested in receiving more information or someone to be added to our discussion?

Retailer Survey

Date:

Interviewer Name:

Name of Store:

Address of Store::

Name of Owner:

Preferred Contact Method:

Community/Customer Overview

1. In general, who are your customers? (i.e., students, culturally specific groups, workers from nearby businesses/job sites, tourists, neighborhood residents)
2. How do you view your store's role in the community?
3. Where do people in this neighborhood mostly shop for groceries?
4. Why do you think your customers choose the products that they do when they come into the store?

[Question seeks to understand customer psychology and how the manger/owner views/observes their customers]

5. Is there any specific reasoning behind where and how you choose to place advertisements around your store?

Understanding the Business

6. How long have you owned and/or managed the store?
7. Do you track detailed sales data? Yes No
 - a. What method do you use to track it?
8. What are your top 3 most popular sales categories/items that are most profitable and/or bring in the most customers? (*Specific categories or item type, i.e., snacks, cigarettes, beer, dairy*)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
9. Do you accept EBT/SNAP? Yes No

10. Are you a WIC-authorized vendor? Yes No

11. *[Continued]* What made you participate or not participate in these programs?

12. How much of your store's revenue is from customers using their SNAP here?

Tobacco

13. Do you have any relationships with the tobacco industry? (I.e., sales contracts, participating in special promotions/offers). If so, what is the nature of your relationship(s)?

14. About what percentage of your weekly or monthly revenue comes from tobacco sales?

15. What is the most popular type of tobacco product you sell? (*Consider all types: combustible, e-cigarettes, synthetic nicotine, etc.*)

Healthy item implementation opinion

16. Are there any healthier items that you are interested in selling? If so, what are they?

a. What makes it hard to carry more healthy foods in your store?

17. *[If retailer does not sell produce]* Have you considered selling fresh produce? Why or why not?

a. If you have sold produce before, how did it go?

b. What made you decide to start and/or stop?

c. What makes it hard to sell fruits and vegetables in your store?

18. Does your refrigeration capacity or cold storage affect what you purchase/have in stock?

[Intended to understand the physical needs of the business and its impact in their current ability to stock varying types of products]

19. *[If retailer sells produce]* What supplier or vendor do you use for your produce?

a. Have you faced any challenges with selling produce?

b. Why did you decide to sell produce?

20. Would you consider working with local producers to source and stock food?

[Intended to gauge interest, knowledge, capacity of/to work with local producers versus other larger wholesale/retailers]

21. Can you tell me about how you purchase and stock foods and drinks in your store?
 - a. Do customers ever request that you stock specific products? If so, what are they?
 - b. Are there any products you tried to start selling but then had to stop because they weren't selling well?

22. Are there any healthier items that you are interested in selling? If so, what are they?
 - a. What makes it hard to carry more healthy foods in your store?

Conclusion

Is there anything else you want us to know about how stores like yours could make changes to help people in your community access healthy foods and lead healthier lives?

[Closing statement] Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. Would it be okay with you if I walked around for a visual assessment?

Visual Assessment

Assessment done by:

Store name and address:

1. What categories of products are offered? (*Specific categories or item type, i.e., snacks, cigarettes, beer, dairy, household/personal items*)

2. What types are featured? (End Caps, displays, etc.)

3. What types stand out? (i.e., prominent snack food or beer selection compared to other products)

Fresh Produce

4. Is fresh produce available? [*Yes/No*]
 - Fruits / How many different types: __
 - Vegetables / How many different types: __

Quality of Fruits/Vegetables [Circle number that accurately describe produce on display]

Rate the quality	Poor Quality (Bruised, brown, overripe)	Somewhat good quality (More are poor, than good)	Mostly good quality (More good, than poor)	Good quality (NO rotting, softspots, browning and all fresh and colorful)
Fruits	1	2	3	4
Vegetables	1	2	3	4

Other Questions:

5. Hot and ready meals (i.e., breakfast burritos, hot dogs): Yes No
Notes:

6. Meal type items to make at home (i.e., ramen, pasta, soup): Yes No
Notes:

7. Frozen Fruits or Vegetables: Yes No
Notes:

8. Culturally specific items: Yes No

Notes:

Advertisements: [Choose all that apply]

Favored disposable vape (i.e., Juul, Puff Bar, Vuse, Elf Bar) ANY flavored tobacco (vaping products, lozenges, menthol products)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'
Cigarettes	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'
Cigarillos/little cigars	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'
<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'
Sugary drinks (soda, slushy, flavored milk, sports/energy drink)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'
<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'
WIC and/or SNAP (i.e., food stamps EBT) accepted here?	<input type="checkbox"/> Inside <input type="checkbox"/> Outward facing or physically outside <input type="checkbox"/> At checkout <input type="checkbox"/> Placed below 3'
Notes (include any other relevant observations)	

Tobacco Check

9. Does the retailer have a small, medium, or large selection of tobacco products?

Tobacco Products	Cigarettes	Vaping devices/products	Little Cigars/Cigarillos	Chew, moist/dry, Snuff, dip, Snus	Other (lozenges, pouches, etc.) - Specify below
Sold here?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Flavored Products? (Menthol for cigarettes)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Product within 12 inches of	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

toys, candy, gum, slushy/soda machines, or ice cream?					
Any price promotions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any MENTHOL price promotions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Advertised for less than \$1?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

10. What types of products are sold at the check-out area?
11. What is the overall condition of the store? How inviting does it feel? Customer Service?
12. Does the space seem large enough to include a produce display and refrigeration unit?

Customer Survey

Store name:

Interviewer's name:

Date & Time:

1. How old are you? 18-34
 35-54 55-64 65 or older

If under 18, do not continue with the interview. Inform individual that participants must be 18 or older to take part in the interview.

2. On average, how many times per week do you shop at this store? < 1
 1 2 3 4 5 or more

3. What types of items do you usually buy at this store? *(Check all that apply.)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> Milk or juice
<input type="checkbox"/> Bottled water	<input type="checkbox"/> Salty/savory snacks
<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery items	<input type="checkbox"/> Sugar-sweetened beverages
<input type="checkbox"/> Hot/to-go products	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweet snacks
<input type="checkbox"/> Household items	<input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco/nicotine
<input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene/personal care items	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (write-in):
<input type="checkbox"/> Lottery tickets	

4. Where do you usually buy fresh fruits and vegetables? *(Check all that apply.)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Albertsons	<input type="checkbox"/> Trader Joe's
<input type="checkbox"/> Costco	<input type="checkbox"/> Wal-Mart
<input type="checkbox"/> Farmer's market	<input type="checkbox"/> Whole Foods
<input type="checkbox"/> Fred Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> WinCo
<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Outlet	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (write-in):
<input type="checkbox"/> New Seasons	
<input type="checkbox"/> Safeway	

5. Would you buy fresh fruits and vegetables at this store if they were available and affordable?
- Yes – *Continue to part a.*
 - No – *Explain:*
 - Maybe – *Explain:*
- a. Would you buy:
- Whole produce items (i.e., potatoes, bananas, apples, onions)
 - Yes No Maybe

- Pre-packaged produce (i.e., diced melons, prepared salads, packaged apple slices)
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe

6. What other healthy products would you like to be able to purchase here? Or What would you like to see available at this store that isn't right now?

ADDED QUESTION #7 ONLY ASKED AT ROSWELL MARKET

7. When you go to buy produce, how would you rank (from most important to least important) the value of these following qualities in your decision?

__price/affordability __quality __variety

8. Have you ever bought tobacco products here, including e-cigarettes, vaping products or other types of nicotine products?

- Yes – Continue to part a.
- No – Continue to #9.

a. If yes, what types of products? (Check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Chew, moist/dry snuff, dip, Snus	<input type="checkbox"/> Vaping devices/products
<input type="checkbox"/> Cigarettes	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (write-in):
<input type="checkbox"/> Little cigars/cigarillos	

9. Do you receive any of the following benefits?

- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Yes No
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Yes No

10. How many people are in your household?

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- 8 9 10 or more

11. What is your home ZIP code?

12. Where do you get information about what's happening in your community or neighborhood? (Check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood association/group
<input type="checkbox"/> Local/community newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/> Next Door
<input type="checkbox"/> Local government	<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter
<input type="checkbox"/> Local non-profit/community organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram
<input type="checkbox"/> Local radio station	<input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth/Friends/Family/ Co-workers

<input type="checkbox"/> Local TV news	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (write-in):
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13. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us about your shopping experience at this store?

Appendix C: Customer Surveys Schedule

Store name	Date	Time	Staff
Vista Grocery			
	Wednesday, 05/24/2023	3:30pm-6:00pm	Skye, Allie, Yesenia
	Thursday, 06/01/2023	3:00pm-5:30pm	Skye, Jacki
Total time at location		5 hrs	
The Little Blue Store			
	Thursday, 05/25/2023	3:30pm-6:00pm	Skye, Jacki, Allie,
	Wednesday, 06/07/2023	3:30-6:30pm	Skye, Allie
	Thursday, 06/08/2023	3:30-7:00 pm	Skye, Jacki, Allie
Total time at location		9 hrs	
Roswell Market			
	Wednesday, 06/14/2023	12:45pm-4:45pm	Skye, Allie, Yesenia
	Wednesday, 06/21/2023	3:00pm-5:00pm	Skye, Allie, Yesenia
Total time at location		6 hrs	

Appendix D: Additional Graphs

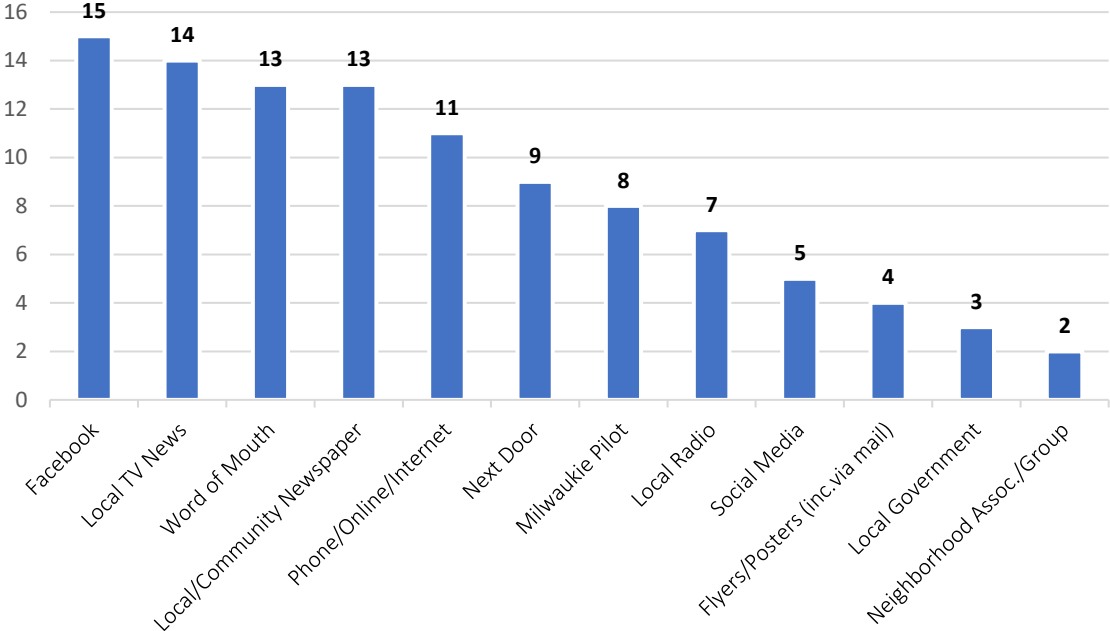


Figure D-1. Where customers reported getting information about community news and updates.