

# MOBILE FOOD MARKET

The Mobile Food Market (MFM) is a 21 week pilot project that brings healthy, affordable, high quality vegetables and fruits to neighborhoods with limited access to food throughout Halifax. The initiative is a collaborative effort involving municipal and provincial government, local not-for-profits, and private business. Each of the project

partners understands that lack of access to healthy food is a large and significant issue, and that we must work together to begin to make progress.

Over the past year, project partners and stakeholders have been working to explore the idea of a mobile food market in Halifax. Extensive stakeholder engagement, including over 50 individual interviews, confirmed that food insecurity is a serious and growing issue in communities throughout the Halifax region, and demonstrated enthusiasm and support for a MFM as part of the solution. Through the leadership and support of the Mayor's Office, Public Health (Nova Scotia Health Authority, Central Zone), the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and Partners for Care (PFC), funding was secured from a variety of sources, including United Way Halifax, to pilot a 21-week MFM in participating pilot communities.

Participating communities were chosen based on community indicators associated with higher levels of food insecurity and also community capacity and interest in supporting the market at a local level. The participating pilot communities are: Spryfield, Fairview, the far north end of Halifax, East Preston, and North Preston. The produce sourced from Superstore and Elmridge Farm, and is selected based on residents' needs and preferences, purchased in bulk and sold at costs that are in line with discount grocery operations. A Halifax Transit bus and driver bring the MFM to participating communities on Saturdays.

Since launching in May, the MFM has become not only a place to buy fresh and affordable fruits and vegetables, but a community gathering place. According to the MFM's customer surveys, 90% agree or strongly agree that the MFM is a fun and welcoming place. Volunteers and customers alike have said that the MFM helps them to feel more connected to their community. This initiative would not have happened without leadership from municipal government, including Mayor Savage, who championed the idea of a mobile food market following an event he hosted, called the *Mayor's Conversation on a Healthy and Liveable Community*.

From the beginning, the goal of the MFM was to provide fresh, healthy affordable fruits and vegetables to those who have limited access. According to MFM survey results, 91% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the location of the MFM makes it easier to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition, many positive comments about the MFM have been received from market goers such as:

"Brings community together!"

“What I like most is the good prices, the healthy green, colourful veggies! Love that it is mobile and comes to us! Partnerships with business, government and community!!”

“Great opportunity to meet other members of the community”

93% of respondents indicate that they would attend a year round market. As such, the MFM Advisory Team is actively discussing what a post-pilot Mobile Food Market could look like.

To learn more about the Mobile Food Market, including to watch a short video, please visit <http://www.mobilefoodmarket.ca/>

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