



# The city of Temple plans to fight food desert issue using mobile market

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*Published: Apr. 3, 2023 at 9:44 PM CDT*

TEMPLE, Texas (KWTX) - The city of Temple is looking into a mobile market plan that would help with the food desert issue in the eastern area of town.

Officials said there hasn't been a grocery store franchise in east Temple, causing the majority of residents to walk miles to the nearest one because of lack of transportation, like Bobbi Jo Calamese.

"Most of the time, it's either walking, riding a bike or pulling a wagon behind you. It takes me about 45 minutes to get there," said Calamese.

She said walking in the heat while carrying groceries isn't easy.

"I just want to drop them and say forget it, but I need them so I can't do that," said Calamese

City officials said there isn't a grocery store in east Temple because Hunden Strategic Partners did a market evaluation, which showed it's less likely a grocery store franchise would pick the area at this time.

They said factors include housing, development, and income.

Here are some of the stores listed in the analysis completed by Hunden Strategic Partners:

Costco: requires 200,000 people in a 5-mile trade radius and a median income of \$75,000.

Kroger: requires at least 20,000 grocery customers within the trade area and a median income of \$40,000.

Publix: requires at least 20,000 grocery customers within a 3-mile trade area and a median income of \$58,000.

Whole Foods: requires 250,000 people within a 3-mile trade area radius with a median income of \$87,000.

Trader Joe's: requires a minimum of \$110,000 median household income.

Walmart: does not release customer counts or trade area demographics. However, they prefer low to middle income areas. They also have alternative retail offerings for different markets, such as discount stores, super-centers, and (currently only in the U.S.) neighborhood markets.

Dollar General: They do not own their own stores (rent only) nor do they build new buildings but take over used buildings. They prefer to locate in low-to-middle-income neighborhoods and require very little in the way of a minimum population.

During the preliminary grocery store analysis, Hunden Strategic Partners found that the median household income spanned from around \$27,000 to \$30,000.

However, that didn't stop city manager, Brynn Myers, from looking into other options.

She said she's considering a partnership with a grocery store that would donate fresh food into an 18-wheeler, which meeting people where they are on the street.

"Having the opportunity to meet basic, human needs, like providing healthy choices for meals is so important. It's so important that each and every one of our residents has access," said Myers.

"That would actually be amazing if they did do it. For the ones who don't have transportation back and forth to the store, it would help them a whole lot. Especially for the ones who are disabled," said Calamese.

Myers said the mobile market would be an extension to the franchise grocery store.

She said residents can't pay with cash, but with EBT and credit cards.

Then, the money would go back to the store.

"Nutrition really forms the foundation, in many ways, of your life. How your health outcomes are going to be as you get older. How you do in school. If your stomach is touching your back, then you can't focus on work," said Myers.

"It would 210% tremendously help out for the neighborhood," said Myers.

The city said it's still in the beginning stages of this idea.

Officials said they plan to pitch the plan to different grocery stores in the city soon.

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