
This thesis contributes to the growing planning effort to address food insecurity in New York City. It examines the potential for bodegas to provide the city’s “food deserts” with greater access to fresh, local produce. Based on interviews of bodega owners, urban agriculture operators, and food policy experts, this thesis identifies the main opportunities and constraints for collaboration between urban farmers and bodega owners. It is determined that many bodegas currently lack the resources and infrastructure needed to stock fresh produce, and that owners often perceive a lack of demand for healthy foods.

Furthermore, while the urban agriculture movement is growing, it is not yet mature nor organized enough to effectively supply bodegas with produce. This thesis concludes that in their efforts to address food insecurity, city agencies should focus on developing formal networks of bodega owners and urban farmers for sharing information, increasing access to funding, and facilitating community outreach.