



The reproduction of MG analysis into community storyboards was made possible by these kind sponsors. Thank you! We also thank and acknowledge the former LaSalle Bank for funding the original study: *Examining the Impact of Food Deserts on Public Health in Detroit.* Last but not least, thank you to the Detroit residents themselves, for their can-do spirit to improve their local food environment.

**Storyboard #7 of 10**

**Why healthy neighborhood markets matter:** MG describes the clustering of retail outlets as the “**Snowball Effect.**” Retail attracts more retail, and like attracts like, in either a positive or negative direction. A successful shopping corridor attracts additional retailers at that same level of quality to locate (or to at least desire locating) in that same corridor, or as close to it as possible. Conversely, where there is no existing retail, or no quality retail, it is sometimes hard for communities to attract that *first* quality retailer, even when there is an obvious nearby consumer base. Neighborhood markets outside of the “Balanced Retail Zone” shown below can suffer from either one extreme or the other: an all-or-nothing state of retail. In the “Too Little Retail” zone, for example, the corridor might have a scattering of vacant storefronts, non-traditional uses such as a storefront church or daycare center, or a few fringe services, such a currency exchange, tax preparation service, nail salon, dollar store, and fast food restaurant. None of these uses is inherently bad; some are in fact desirable additions to consumer choice and convenience. Healthy markets do indeed have and want some level of these types of fringe services. However, if they dominate, they set the commercial tone in the district at that low fringe level and repel other types of higher toned, mainstream retail, such as mainstream grocery stores.



**What communities can do:** Community leaders and local community development corporations can work with market actors and local city officials to help attract a quality cluster of retail to their commercial district. One first step is a neutral market analysis which identifies, in business language, the types of stores that are viable. From that listing, residents can strategize on the best mix of retailers, how to prioritize decision-making, and how to launch an effective retail recruitment strategy. Helping local entrepreneurs open and stay in business is also an important activity that can improve the commercial climate, job opportunities, the recycling of local dollars and the offering of needed products and services.

**Maybe someone you know is ready, able, and willing to start their own “lemonade stand” or some other type of family business in a Detroit community.** What types of businesses do you think are needed? What types of entrepreneurial skills will make these new businesses successful? And how can our local success stories be identified and supported? What are *your* ideas of a healthy neighborhood market?

