

DAILY NEWS

Healthy options on way

Tuesday, March 18th 2008, 10:56 PM

Editorials

Fresh produce should soon be for sale in parts of the borough where it is now hard to find, under a law signed last Thursday by Mayor Bloomberg, and it should be very welcome.

As with previous Bloomberg administration efforts to promote better health habits, the new law, which will authorize 1,000 pushcart vendors of fresh fruits and vegetables citywide, met with considerable resistance.

Some opponents said it was unfair to storekeepers, others said it was pointless because fresh produce would already be for sale in the targeted neighborhoods if anybody wanted it. Still others said both.

In its final form, the law carefully limits the carts to specific neighborhoods that had been found to be short on existing sources of fresh produce and, perhaps more important, it strictly limited what the newly-empowered vendors can vend. No doughnuts, no Twinkies, no sandwiches, no coffee, no soft drinks, and no lottery tickets will be sold from the carts.

Happily, the Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund stepped up with a \$1.5 million grant to help make the pushcart program work, and even help aspiring vendors finance their carts.

Eventually, some 350 vendors will be working the streets of Sunset Park, East New York, Flatbush, Crown Heights, Bushwick, Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Prospect Heights and Williamsburg and the new entrepreneurs should be very welcome.