

April 14, 2014

DRAFT REPORT

The 10-person Food Truck Policy Advisory Work Group was established by the City Manager in August 2013 to review the issues related to food trucks, consider a staff draft proposal as a starting point for discussion, and make suggestions for improvements or develop alternative proposals for Council's consideration. The Advisory Group met twice a month beginning on September 11, 2013 throughout the fall. All meetings were open to the public and included a public discussion period where members of the audience were able to voice their concerns and suggestions. Three of the meetings were devoted to obtaining public comment, respectively on the concept of traffic corridors in Carlyle, Del Ray, and Old Town. The Food Truck Policy Advisory Work Group also conducted a tour of the Washington, D.C. food truck sites to observe on a first hand basis how food trucks operated.

After much discussion and public comments, the Advisory Group reached a consensus on the following:

1. Food trucks will be allowed in public parks within park boundaries at the discretion of the RPCA Director.
2. Food trucks will be allowed at permitted Special Events.
3. Food trucks will be permitted at Farmers' Markets with the permission of the Market Manager of each such Market.
4. Food trucks will be allowed at schools at the discretion of the Superintendent.
5. Food trucks will be allowed on private property, with the consent of the property owner. This includes private parking lots, churches, and private schools. Food trucks will also be allowed in residential areas provided that they are also licensed as a caterer. No vending shall be made to the public in such instances.
6. In all instances, food trucks will be required to make such provisions for disposal of truck waste, customer trash, and recycling as required and regulated through the permitting process. Amplified sound is not permitted. No balloons or windblown signs are permitted. Food trucks shall comply with existing City ordinances regarding signage.
7. All food trucks are to comply with existing parking times and fees, and are to be no larger than what would fit in a legal parking space (8 x 20').

8. All generators must be enclosed so as to reduce noise and fumes, as regulated through the permitting process.

9. Food trucks will not be permitted in residential parking permit zones, unless they are at a private catering event and are duly licensed as a caterer. They should not sell food to the general public on such occasions.

As noted above, there was a consensus by the advisory group as to the recommendations 1 through 9. There was no consensus on the following; however, based on voting by the Advisory Group members, the following actions were approved.

- Food trucks were approved in Carlyle on a vote of 5 to 4. By a vote of 6 to 3 they were allowed on Eisenhower Avenue only. By a 5 to 2 vote, the group voted to not permit food trucks on Delaney or John Carlyle Streets.
- Food trucks were approved in Del Ray on a 6 to 3 vote. The Group voted 2 yes, 5 no, with 2 abstentions to not allow food trucks in front of the DCHS building, but supported food trucks in the Alexandria City parking lot (7 to 2) and unanimously at the Four Mile Run Park parking lot.
- Food trucks in Old Town were approved on a 7 to 2 vote. There were 6 votes in favor of and 2 votes opposed to having designated parking spaces for food trucks at King Street Gardens near the Metro, on the south side of the 1700 block of King Street. The Group voted 5 to 4 to permit food trucks by City Hall on the east side of the 100 block of N. Royal Street. The Group voted 5 no, 2 yes, with 2 abstentions, against food trucks being allowed in front of the Alexandria Courthouse.
- The Group voted 6 to 1, with 3 abstentions, to recommend adding Washington Street as a fourth traffic corridor. However, when the group began to examine the issue of the location of any specific areas to be designated for food trucks, the general consensus was that there was insufficient information available to the group at the meeting concerning parking regulations (times, no parking limits, rush hour parking limits, etc.) to make any informed recommendations on the location of food truck designated parking.

Concerning parking space designations within the traffic corridors, while no vote was taken, there appeared to be a consensus for designating three spaces for food trucks in the following manner: the signage for the designated spaces would state that they are reserved for food trucks only from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Any food trucks at such locations could then vend from 11:00 am to 2:00 p.m., by paying the required parking meter charges. If the designated spaces are not occupied by food trucks by 12:00 noon, such spaces are then available for general public use. Those who remain opposed to food truck vending in the Old and Historic District acknowledge that if allowed, there should be designated spaces with specific times.

There also appeared to be a consensus in the Advisory Group to accept the staff proposal to include two blocks north and south of King Street as part of the King Street traffic corridor. Consideration was given to include more than two blocks north and south of King Street along Washington Street; however, the proposed designation of Washington Street as a traffic corridor renders this issue moot.

There was a suggestion that the Work Group consider changing the King Street traffic corridor's cluster parking location for food trucks from the 100 block of North Royal to the 400 block of King Street (next to the PNC Bank). This suggestion arose from comments by some members of the public that from a historic preservation perspective, some are of the opinion that food trucks should not be on the same block as historic properties. Moving the trucks around the corner would resolve that issue, and make them more visible along the King Street corridor. Based on verbal feedback from Advisory Group members, there was no consensus for such action.

Proponents of food trucks remain of the opinion that roaming should be allowed. They believe that roaming will allow food truck operators to identify new markets and/or underserved areas in the City that would benefit from food trucks. Other members of the Advisory Group believe that open-ended roaming could result in food trucks vending within a residential area.

Given the time constraints the Advisory Group is working under, Yvonne, as the Convener, is recommending that the following be added to the report.

- If the City Manager determines that modifications should be made to the existing traffic corridors and/or determines that additional traffic corridors are warranted, we recommend that the City Manager seek public comment before a final decision is made.
- That the designated parking spaces with the three-hour time limit for the Washington Street traffic corridor be located along North Washington Street as determined by the Director of Transportation and Environmental Services.
- Food trucks should not be allowed to vend within 20 feet of an outdoor dining area.