



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 4, 2016

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the Food Truck On-Street Vending Location Map.

ISSUE: What Food Truck On-Street Vending Locations to approve?

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council adopt a Food Truck On-Street Vending Location Map (Attachment 1) approving the following three locations:

- North West Street/Braddock Metro (Location #1)
- Eisenhower Avenue (Location #3)
- King Street Gardens (Location #5)

BACKGROUND: On December 12, 2015, after a two-year long pilot program, the Alexandria City Council adopted regulations that allow Food Truck vending in certain off-street locations, including private property, public property and farmer's markets, with the permission of the property owners. The off-street regulations provide an additional avenue to permit Food Truck vending on public and private off-street property which can also be permitted through a Special Event Permit or a Special Use Permit. On April 16, 2016, City Council adopted amendments to Title 9, Chapter 15 of the City Code to add regulations that allow City Council to adopt locations on public streets for on-street vending to supplement the locations already allowed off street. The locations on-street must meet certain standards and minimum criteria before City Council may approve the location.

Staff has also been working on raising community awareness of the existing opportunities for off-street Food Truck vending. To that end, staff from the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) has been in contact with office buildings around the city (including Canal Center, King Street Station, and the Park Center office buildings) to make them aware of the off-street regulations and the opportunity to invite Food Trucks to vend on their private parking lots. Additionally, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) has obtained a special event permit for food trucks to vend weekly at a location on Ballenger Avenue for nine weeks starting

on

May 3rd and ending on June 28th. On May 3rd at the beginning of food truck service, one truck had a 75-person line waiting. We believe these opportunities, coupled with the additional on-street locations could provide the balance needed for a successful Food Truck program.

DISCUSSION:

Criteria and Minimum Standards:

The recently adopted City Code provides factors for consideration and minimum criteria that the City Council must consider when designating on-street vending locations. Those standards and criteria are as follows:

Sec. 9-15-15 - Designated On-Street Vending Locations. The City Council may establish one or more designated vending locations within parking spaces on the public right of way where a food truck vendor may operate.

A. Factors for Consideration of Location: City Council shall consider the following factors in determining whether a location should be used for vending:

- a. Concentration of people within a quarter (1/4) mile of the location;
- b. Adequacy of parking in the surrounding area;
- c. Adequacy of space on the street for circulation and safety; and
- d. Amount of congestion.

B. Minimum Requirements of Location: At a minimum, the designated vending locations shall:

- a. be on streets that have at least sixty six (66) feet of right-of-way;
- b. include no more than four food truck (4) parking spaces in a row;
- c. not be located in front or within twenty (20) feet from a commercial outdoor dining area measured along the curb line;
- d. not be within ten (10) feet of an intersection, crosswalk, driveway, bus stop, taxi stand, or handicapped parking space;
- e. not be situated in any part of any designated loading zone or fire lane; and
- f. allow for adequate clearance for pedestrian traffic as determined by the director of T&ES based on the context of the specific site.

Proposed Locations

Staff research on potential locations for on-street vending revealed that the greatest demand for on-street vending is in locations that do not have off-street parking lots that can accommodate Food Truck vending. The proposed locations are shown on the Food Truck On-Street Vending Map (**Attachment 1**) with attached details of each location.

On March 16, 2016, staff launched an informal poll on AlexEngage to get feedback from the community on the three potential locations. The poll closed on Sunday, April 3, 2016, with 2,375 responses. The poll was answered mostly by residents or workers in the City, as noted in Figure 1 on **Attachment 2**. Figure 2 on **Attachment 2** shows the responses. While informative to show City Council how those who participated in the poll felt about the three proposed locations, this poll did not use a random sample and thus the results may not

be representative of the community as a whole.

The vendor that maintains the AlexEngage platform notified the City that 504 responses came from the same source, and were all “opposed” or “strongly opposed” to the three potential food truck locations. While it is possible for multiple responses from the same source to be legitimate (e.g. members of the same household, employees at the same workplace, a common computer in a recreation center or building business center), it is unlikely that any one source could have yielded so many users, and that there was no variation in opinion. Depending on the circumstances, these responses may not meet the requirements for civil discourse posted on the site. As a result, the figures in **Attachment 2** are presented both with and without these 504 responses included.

The poll also included an opportunity for input regarding any other suggested locations. Staff received much feedback on other potential locations, many of which are already covered by the current off-street regulations such as the Farmers’ Markets and West End office complexes. We did receive a number of suggestions for locations on King Street including Market Square. However, at this time, staff does not recommend locations in the Old and Historic Alexandria District. Staff did receive two suggested locations, Madison Street (#4) and King Street Gardens (#5), both described further below, that appeared to be feasible options. After researching the additional locations, staff determined that these additional locations meet the criteria and should be included in the potential options for consideration by the Traffic and Parking Board.

On April 25, 2016 the Traffic and Parking Board held a public hearing and considered the five (5) initial locations proposed by staff. (The locations were identified by letter (A-C) in the AlexEngage survey and are shown by number (1-5) on the map; for consistency, all locations are identified by number below.) There were fourteen speakers at the public hearing. All of the speakers, except one, spoke in opposition to the two locations in North Old Town (#2 and #4 below) raising concerns regarding parking and congestion. The Board considered the locations and the testimony received by the public and based on the factors and minimum requirements, unanimously recommended that the three proposed locations at North West Street (#1), 2200 Eisenhower Avenue (#3) and King Street Gardens (#5) be approved by City Council. The Board recommended removing the two North Old Town locations due to traffic and parking concerns. They noted that the Old Town North Small Area Planning process is underway and that may be a good avenue for determining locations in Old Town North where on-street food truck vending could be accommodated. Lastly, the Board asked staff to return in six months to report on how the on-street vending is going and the impact it has on the streets, parking and congestion.

1. North West Street/Braddock Metro (Location A in survey)

Address: North West Street north of Madison Street, near the Braddock Metro Station

Number of Trucks: up to two (2) Food Trucks (requires 3 parking spaces)

Hours: 7 am - 8 pm, no more than 4 hours at a time

Recommendation: Approval

Staff believes that this location at the Braddock Road Metro Station meets the factors for consideration because of the number of people coming and going from this Metrorail Station, capacity on the street for circulation and parking demand. Additionally, there are at least two office buildings and numerous residential buildings within one quarter mile of this location that together provide a concentration of people. TES staff reviewed the location and determined it meets the minimum requirements with respect to all location-specific criteria.

2. North Fairfax Street (Location B in survey)

Address: 900 Block of North Fairfax Street near Montgomery Park

Number of Trucks: up to three (3) Food Trucks (4 parking spaces)

Hours: 7 am - 8 pm, no more than 4 hours at a time

Recommendation: Not recommended at this time

Location 2 is within a ¼ mile of the Canal Center office complex as well as hotels and residential buildings bringing with it a concentration of people. Additionally, the proposed location is adjacent to Montgomery Park which provides a location for patrons of the Food Trucks to sit outside to eat their food. Although TES staff reviewed the location and determined it meets the minimum requirements with respect to all location-specific criteria, the Traffic and Parking Board heard concerns from speakers regarding parking and congestion. The Board ultimately recommended against including this location on the Location Map at this time.

3. Eisenhower Avenue (Location C in survey)

Address: 2200 block of Eisenhower Avenue near Mill Road two blocks from the
Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station

Number of Trucks: up to three (3) Food Trucks (4 parking spaces)

Hours: 7 am - 8 pm, no more than 4 hours at a time

Recommendation: Approval

Location 3 is located between the PTO office building and the future National Science Foundation (NSF) building. AEDP has discussed this potential location with both the NSF and the PTO representatives and have received significant support for the location. The location is also across the street from the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station, which could contribute to additional foot traffic. TES staff reviewed the location and determined it meets the minimum requirements with respect to all location-specific criteria.

4. Madison Street

Address: 300 block of Madison Street between North Royal and North Fairfax Streets
adjacent to the Alexandria House open space

Number of Trucks: up to three (3) Food Trucks (4 parking spaces)

Hours: 7 am - 8 pm, no more than 4 hours at a time

Recommendation: Not recommended at this time

This proposed location was close to the Fairfax Street location. Food Truck operators report that having two locations close together is better for attracting patrons of the Food Trucks. Additionally, staff identified the potential for more foot traffic on Madison Street than the Fairfax Street location. Although TES staff reviewed

the location and determined it meets the minimum requirements with respect to all location-specific criteria, the Traffic and Parking Board heard concerns from speakers regarding parking and congestion. The Board ultimately recommended against including this location on the Location Map at this time.

5. King Street Gardens

Address: 1806 King Street adjacent to the King Street Gardens Park

Number of Trucks: up to three (3) Food Trucks (4 parking spaces)

Hours: 7 am - 8 pm, no more than 4 hours at a time

Recommendation: Approval

This location is close to a number of office buildings as well as hotels and has significant foot traffic from the King Street Metro Station. However, the planned renovations of the King Street Metro parking lot scheduled to break ground within the next 12 to 18 months will place a burden on parking and maintenance of adequate space for all modes of transportation in this area. TES staff reviewed the location and determined it meets the minimum requirements with respect to all location-specific criteria. However, once construction begins, use of this location may need to be suspended for the duration of the work to accommodate anticipated construction impacts. Thus, this location is recommended for inclusion on the Vending Location Map, but only for interim use. The location will need to be revisited post-construction to ensure there are no unforeseen impacts.

FISCAL IMPACT: The fees for the 2016 permit year will be \$100 for the application fee and \$0 for the Food Truck Vendor fee. Staff expects at least 10 to 15 trucks to get permitted which would result in a total of \$1,000 to \$1,500 in fees. The fees will be used to mitigate the costs of administering the program. In the FY 2017 permit year the fees are anticipated to be \$100 for the application fee and \$250 for the Food Truck Vendor Fee. If 10 to 15 trucks are permitted in FY 2017 the total fees generated would be \$3,500 to \$5,250.

Other annual fees required for Food Truck Vending are as follows:

- Health Department City and State Fee: \$90
- Health Department one time Plan Review Fee: \$200
- Propane Tank Fire Safety permit fee: \$186.19
- Business License: \$250

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Draft On-street Vending Map with Aerials Showing Specific Proposed Locations

Attachment 2: Poll Results

Attachment 3: Presentation

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