City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2025

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER

FROM: EMILY BAKER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER AND INTERIM DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

DOCKET TITLE:
Public Hearing, Second Reading and Final Passage of an Ordinance to amend and reordain Section 9-15-15 (DESIGNATED ON-STREET VENDING LOCATIONS) of Chapter 15 (FOOD TRUCK VENDORS) of Title 9 (LICENSING AND REGULATION) and Section 10-4-47 (PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THIS CHAPTER) of Chapter 4 (STOPPING, STANDING AND PARKING) of Title 10 (MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC) and add and ordain Section 10-4-48 (PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THIS CHAPTER) of Chapter 4 (STOPPING, STANDING AND PARKING) of Title 10 (MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC) of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1981, as amended.

ISSUE: Consideration of proposed amendments to Chapters 9-15 and 10-4 of the City Code.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

1. Introduce and pass on first reading Wednesday, November 12, 2025, the ordinance (Attachment 2) amending the City Code to modify the process for designating new food truck locations and authorizing the Police Department to issue citations to food trucks; and

2. Set the ordinance for public hearing and final passage on Saturday, November 15, 2025.

BACKGROUND: Chapter 9-15 of the City Code was adopted in 2015 to regulate food trucks operating within the city and to provide a process for designating on-street vending in the public right-of-way. Since 2015, there have only been three total designated vending locations for food trucks on public right-of-way established: on the 800 block of North West Street, on the 1700 block of King Street, and on the 2200 block of Eisenhower

Avenue.

Several City Departments are involved in reviewing and enforcing food trucks and many receive complaints from businesses and residents about food truck operators parking or vending outside of the three designated vending locations on public right-of-way. However, enforcing food trucks on public streets can be difficult, because the City Code does not explicitly address enforcement of food trucks on public right-of-way in the parking enforcement section of the Code (Chapter 10-4). Rather, enforcement is stipulated by Chapter 9-15, which is entirely administered and enforced by the City Manager with fines capped at $40.

In addition to enforcement-related shortcomings, the lack of on-street vending locations for food trucks around the city also contributes to operators' desire to vend beyond those three zones. Section 9-15-15 requires that the City Council review and vote on adding or removing the designated vending locations on public right-of-way. This is perceived as a longer and more complex process and, since 2015, no food truck operators have requested new spaces.

DISCUSSION: Although City staff regularly receive complaints about food trucks operating in the public right -of-way, Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) currently lack explicit authority under City Code 10-4 to issue citations for vending outside of designated on-street locations. The Code only authorizes enforcement against non-food trucks parked in those three zones. While Section 9-15-3 of the City Code stipulates that the City Manager's Office can direct PEOs to cite specific food trucks, this approach is inefficient and often ineffective given the mobile nature of food truck operations. Furthermore, PEOs focus enforcement efforts on violations that are clearly defined within the enforcement section of the City Code to ensure consistency with legal requirements and to minimize the likelihood of citations being dismissed in court. Adding enforcement language from City Code Chapter 9-15 to Chapter 10-4 will enable PEOs to enforce food truck and ice cream truck parking regulations in the public right-of-way outside of designated vending areas. This change will support the City's broader efforts to better manage curb space, ensure safe and efficient use of the right-of-way, and respond to ongoing concerns and complaints along the waterfront and throughout the city.

Currently, any changes to designated food truck vending locations require a City Council vote, making the process lengthy and limiting the City's ability to adapt curb space to meet changing demand. As a result, the three existing locations have remained unchanged since Chapter 9-15 was adopted in 2015. The Traffic and Parking Board, which oversees on-street parking regulations, is the appropriate body to review and recommend adjustments to vending locations. Transferring designation authority from City Council to the Director of T&ES, with a recommendation from the Board, would align with existing processes, streamline administration, and allow for more responsive management of curb space.

Staff coordinated closely with relevant City departments and agencies to ensure alignment on the proposed updates to food truck policies. No concerns were raised during internal review. In addition, staff conducted outreach to business associations and food truck operators to inform them of the proposed changes, gather feedback throughout the process, and alert them of public hearing opportunities.

The City staff have recommended an increase in the fines for food truck parking violations to start at $100 for the initial violation and to escalate with subsequent violations. The Traffic and Parking Board did not support the recommended increase at this time. The Board wanted to first increase the enforcement authority for PEOs and have them enforce at the current level ($40) to assess whether this is a sufficient deterrent.

The Traffic and Parking Board reviewed this request during a public hearing at their meeting on September 15, 2025, and unanimously recommended that the Council approve this request. No speakers attended the meeting

to provide their perspective on the proposal.

FISCAL IMPACT: Adoption of this ordinance may reduce Meals Tax revenue in the short term if some food truck and ice cream truck operators choose not to vend in Alexandria. Citation revenue associated with enforcement may offset a portion of this loss. Over time, streamlining the designation process for on-street vending locations could support additional permitted vending activity and help stabilize or increase Meals Tax revenue.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Ordinance Cover
2. Ordinance
3. Presentation

STAFF:
Cheran Ivery, City Attorney, CAO
Christina Zechman Brown, Deputy City Attorney, CAO
Tarrick McGuire, Police Chief, APD
Paul Stoddard, Director, Planning and Zoning
Jerry Newcomb, Captain, APD
Hillary Orr, Deputy Director of Transportation, T&ES
Alicia Wright, Assistant Director, Administrative Services, T&ES
Katye North, Division Chief, T&ES, Mobility Services
Sheila McGraw, Principal Planner, T&ES, Mobility Services
Max Devilliers, Urban Planner, T&ES, Mobility Services

powered by Legistar™