



Council Agenda Report

From: Piper Smith, Assistant Planner

Subject: Legislative Update and Review Regarding Food Truck Regulations

CEQA Determination: The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c)(2)-(3) and 15378.

Date: August 5, 2025

Facts

1. On October 1, 2024, City Council approved a variety of updates to the Paso Robles Zoning Code, Title 21 of the Paso Robles Municipal Code, including updates to Section 21.69.120, "Food Trucks and Food Truck Courts" (Attachment 1). This section of the Municipal Code establishes the permit requirements and operational standards for food trucks operating within the City limits.
2. All food trucks operating within the City limits are required to: comply with the operational requirements of Section 21.69.120; have a valid City business license; and have an active County of San Luis Obispo Environmental Health Permit.
3. In addition to the above requirements, food trucks operating at one location for more than seven days in a calendar year, but less than one year, are required to obtain a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) and must meet the findings provided in Section 21.20.070 "Findings for Approval and Revocation" (Attachment 2).
4. On May 6, 2025, Councilmember Gregory requested a discussion regarding food truck regulations return to the City Council.
5. As of July 2025, there are approximately 23 active "Mobile Food Truck/Vendor" business licenses and two active Temporary Use Permits issued for food trucks.
6. Community Service Officers have received 36 calls for service from April 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025, regarding mobile vendors (including food trucks and street vendors).
7. The current Paso Robles Municipal Code creates challenges in enforcing the food truck standards and permitting requirements due to its ambiguity and vagueness.
8. Over the past several months, Community Development staff have been working with Community Services Officers, the Wastewater Pretreatment Coordinator, and the Finance Department to analyze the existing food truck requirements and permitting process and initiate a discussion with City Council to determine the most effective path forward for regulating food truck operations with City limits.

Community Outreach

The following list details the outreach effort that has been taken to communicate this item with the public and significant stakeholders.

- Social Media Posts (Nextdoor, Facebook, Instagram, and 'X')
- City Press Release

- Mail notification to Downtown Main Street Association, Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce, Temporary Use Permit holders (active, pending, and expired), and Mobile Food Truck/Vendor Business Licenses holders (active, pending, and expired)

Options

1. Receive and file this report;
2. Direct staff to return to City Council with an amendment to Paso Robles Municipal Code Section 21.69.120, “Food Trucks and Food Truck Courts” requiring, among other things, a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) for all food trucks operating in Paso Robles; or
3. Establish an Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council to facilitate a more focused review and gather additional input on food truck regulations; or
4. Provide alternative feedback or direction for staff.

Analysis and Conclusions

Section 21.69.120 of the Paso Robles Zoning Code outlines the permitting requirements and operational standards for food trucks within City limits. In February 2025, the Community Development Department was made aware of an increasing number of food trucks operating out of compliance. During this time, Community Services Officers experienced a significant increase in calls for service, with 36 mobile vendor-related complaints received in the past three months. Additionally, local officials received concerns from various stakeholders regarding the concentration of food trucks in the downtown and along major corridors such as Spring Street, Creston Road, and Niblick Road.

In response, the Planning Division has coordinated with Community Services Officers, the Finance Division, the Wastewater Division, and the County of San Luis Obispo Environmental Health Department to evaluate and strengthen the food truck permitting process. Departmental priorities include improving interdepartmental communication, accessible record keeping, and clear guidelines.

Food truck operators have also voiced concern about the limited communication regarding the update to the food truck guidelines included in the adoption of the 2024 Zoning Code, a lack of eligible sites that meet all operational requirements, and the need to continue to conduct business during the permit review process. Conversely, local restaurants have expressed concerns about food trucks undercutting their business with lower overhead costs.

To address these concerns, staff is taking the following steps:

- Increasing public outreach to ensure prospective and current operators are fully informed of the permitting requirements;
- Drafting a dedicated Temporary Use Permit application for food trucks that consolidates all applicable department standards;
- Developing a standardized permit template to assist the Community Service Department in verifying compliance during field inspections and enforcement; and
- Translating all materials into Spanish.

Based on the discussion conducted during the City Council meeting, staff will finalize the materials associated with the current food truck permitting process and use City Council recommendations to identify the most effective path forward to ensure all food trucks are in compliance and able to conduct business appropriately.

Staff has one recommendation for an amendment to the food truck regulations in that a Temporary Use Permit be required for all food truck operations. Currently, a Temporary Use Permit is required only when a food truck operates from **a single location** for **7 or more days**. The 7-day allowance creates a loophole where a food truck can continue to change locations, thereby restarting the 7-day clock. This significantly complicates code enforcement efforts.

Prior to making any changes, the City Council may consider forming a two-member ad hoc committee to facilitate a more focused review and gather additional input on food truck regulations. This committee, composed solely of two City Councilmembers, would have the flexibility to meet informally with stakeholders—including food truck operators, brick-and-mortar restaurant owners, and members of the public—to further explore concerns and potential solutions. While the ad hoc committee itself would consist only of the appointed Councilmembers, members of the public would be welcome to attend and participate in the committee's meetings. Any recommendations developed by the committee would be brought back to the full City Council for formal discussion and potential action at a future meeting. This approach would allow for more in-depth dialogue while maintaining public engagement throughout the process.

Fiscal Impact

There is no significant fiscal impact expected as a result of this discussion item.

CEQA

The City finds that this action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15060, subd. (c)(2)-(3) and 15378 because it solely involves discussion and direction on food truck permitting procedures and operational standards, including potential amendments to the Paso Robles Municipal Code, all of which will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

Recommendation (Option 2 or Option 3)

Direct staff to return to City Council with an amendment to Chapter 21.69.120, “Food Trucks and Food Truck Courts” requiring Temporary Use Permits (TUP) for all food trucks operating in Paso Robles;

or

Establish an Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council to facilitate a more focused review and gather additional input on food truck regulations

Attachments

1. Current Paso Robles Municipal Code Chapter 21.69.120, “Food Trucks and Food Truck Courts”
2. Current Paso Robles Municipal Code – Zoning Code Chapter 21.20, “Temporary Use Permits”
3. Updated City of Paso Robles Food Truck Handout