

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

November 17, 2020

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**SUBJECT: FOOD TRUCK OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 DISASTER DECLARATION****Executive Summary:**

The primary purpose of this Informal Report is to outline the operations of mobile vending units (food trucks) in residential zoning districts during the statewide disaster declaration for COVID-19. On March 13, 2020 the Governor issued a statewide Declaration of Disaster to implement measures to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and stop its spread. As public health agencies, communities and industry have adjusted to life under this and subsequent declarations, we have all worked together in making modifications to our daily lives. This includes the operation and regulation of food trucks.

Just as food trucks are now integrated into bar operations, effectively making them a restaurant, they also serve other community needs. In this case, they are providing safe, low density, outdoor meals in public spaces and residential neighborhoods which had been more heavily regulated prior to the pandemic. In the interest of public and community health, staff believe that these regulations should be suspended to the degree necessary to provide safe and healthy food options until such time that health mitigation strategies are no longer warranted.

Food Service during COVID-19:

Governor Abbott has issued Executive Orders that have allowed limited indoor restaurant occupancy. Some residents, however, do not feel comfortable eating indoors during the pandemic. The City of Fort Worth has worked diligently to sensibly accommodate outdoor dining by temporarily reducing parking requirements for restaurants. In addition, the City created a six-month pilot program to allow parklets which is the conversion of curbside parking spaces to areas for people to sit and eat outdoors.

Operation of Food Trucks in Residential Areas during COVID-19:

During the last eight months of the COVID-19 disaster, food trucks have been invited to residential areas by the community for neighborhood events. At these neighborhood events small groups of people gather outdoors to interact with each other and enjoy dinner. A distinct advantage of food truck service is that it allows people to avoid gathering indoors.

**Food Truck at neighborhood event**

Food trucks are allowed to operate in "E" Neighborhood Commercial and more intensive commercial and industrial zoning districts, provided they are located on private property and meeting supplemental standards in the Zoning Ordinance and applicable City Code regulations. Food Trucks are not allowed to operate in residential and non-commercial districts. Staff is recommending that food trucks be allowed to operate in residential zoning districts during the COVID-19 disaster declaration period if the following conditions are met:

- The food truck must have a current health permit and vendor certificate of occupancy.
- The food truck should be, where possible, parked on HOA owned or operated property or on private property.

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- Food trucks parked on the public right of way will also be allowed, subject to the following guidelines:
 - Such vehicle shall not park within 35 feet of any other vehicle that may be parked on the street; and
 - Customers shall be served only from the curb side of such vehicle, and at no time shall a customer be served who is not standing on the curb or otherwise off the street or thoroughfare, or to a driver who remains in his or her driver's seat.
 - A food truck participating in or serving a large public event that requires approval of the Mayor or City may be subject to additional guidelines as set forth in an approved public event document. An event permit shall not be required for typical food service even if people gather while waiting for food to be dispensed (social distancing rules would apply)
 - Food trucks cannot create a litter, noise or other public nuisance. Food truck operators shall be responsible for cleaning up the service area prior to leaving.

Staff acknowledges that from time to time, Neighborhood Associations may also want to utilize parking areas in area parks. To reserve a space, contact Kimberly Muriel, Park Reservationist. She can be reach via email, Kimberly.Muriel@fortworthtexas.gov, and at 817.392.5718.

For any questions on this report, please contact Brandon Bennett – Code Compliance Director, at 817-392-6322 or D.J. Harrell – Development services Director, at 817-392-8032.

David Cooke
City Manager