



## Community Development Committee STAFF REPORT

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**TO:** Community Development Committee      **DATE:** April 15, 2026

**DEPARTMENT:** Economic Development

**PREPARED BY:** Sarah McCormick, Economic Development Manager

**PRESENTER:** Sarah McCormick, Economic Development Manager

**AGENDA TITLE:** Receive Report and Provide Recommendation to City Council Regarding Proposed Changes to Mobile Vending Ordinance for Consideration

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### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report and provide recommendations to City Council regarding proposed changes to regulations related to mobile vending units, including:

1. Refine ordinance language to clearly identify regulations for Mobile Vending Units versus those for Sidewalk Vending; and/or
2. Revise ordinance to include the following proposed changes to Mobile Vending Units:
  - a) Allowable Locations: *to be determined by the Community Development Committee*
  - b) Operating Standards: *to be determined by the Community Development Committee*

(or)

1. Direct staff to develop a more detailed analysis and bring it back to the Committee, prior to the full City Council. Analysis should include potential sites, operational models, and ordinance amendments to support a designated food truck park and/or revised downtown location standards based on input received.
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### BACKGROUND

On September 28, 2015, the City Council introduced an ordinance amending Fort Bragg Municipal Code (FBMC), Chapter 10 (Vehicles and Traffic), specifically Sections 10.20.150 and 10.20.155, regulating the operation of mobile vending units.

Development of the ordinance included multiple public discussions. The Community Development Committee considered the item on January 27, April 28, and May 26, 2015. The Planning Commission reviewed the proposal and provided input on July 8, 2015. The City Council subsequently considered the item on July 13, August 24, and September 14, 2015, before finalizing the ordinance on September 28, 2015.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3B.

On March 11, 2019, the City Council revisited mobile vending unit regulations following a recommendation from the Community Development Committee to evaluate additional allowable locations. Ordinance No. 945-2019 was then introduced at the March 25, 2019, meeting (Att. 1 – Ordinance 945-2019).

Most recently, on July 22, 2024, the City Council considered further updates to location and operational standards for mobile vending units. This review incorporated prior feedback and continued evaluation of how mobile vending units operate within the community.

## **ISSUE**

Mobile Vehicle Units, commonly known as food trucks, are currently permitted to operate curbside on City streets within the following zoning districts: General Commercial, Office Commercial, Highway Visitor Commercial (except Main Street), as well as at four specific locations within the Central Business District. Mobile Vending Units are also permitted to operate on private property within the zoning districts identified above, in addition to private property within Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial zoning districts.

Unless authorized through a Limited Term Permit, Mobile Vending Units are not permitted to operate within any zoning district designated as Residential, Public Facilities, Parks & Open Space, or Neighborhood Commercial.

Recently, concerns regarding Mobile Vending Unit operations were raised during the Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items portion of City Council meetings. Comments at the podium prompted the mayor to request that this item be brought forward for further discussion.

## **ANALYSIS**

Periodic review and revision of ordinances is a best practice to ensure that local regulations remain relevant, clear, and effective. Over time, laws may become outdated as new issues emerge and community needs change. Additionally, as new regulations are adopted, existing ordinances may overlap, conflict, or become redundant, leading to confusion and inefficiencies.

To streamline City regulations related to mobile vending units and ensure that food truck operations align with current community needs, staff is seeking input from the Community Development Committee. To support this effort, a Community Food Truck Survey was distributed on March 13, 2026, and closed on March 31, 2026. The survey gathered input from local businesses and community members, with targeted outreach to businesses located in the Central Business District. The data collected through the surveys form the basis for this staff report and the associated recommendations (Att. 2 – Survey Results).

## Key Survey Findings

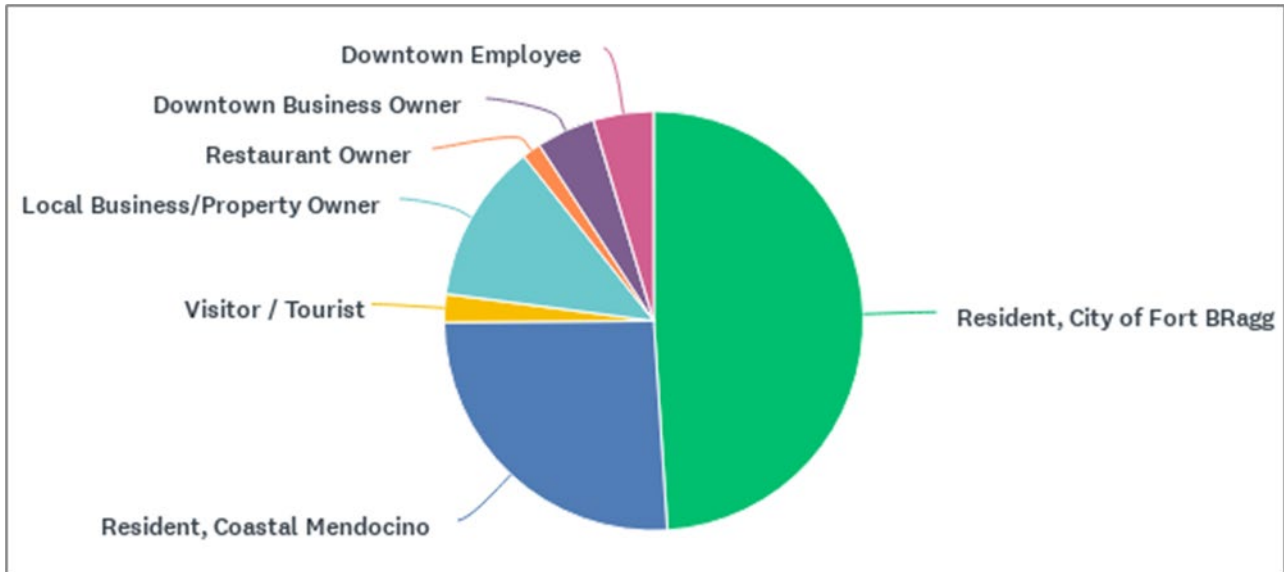


Table 1: Survey Respondent Groups

A total of 819 responses were received between March 13 and March 31, 2026. Survey results indicate there is strong support for food trucks and that mobile vending units are a regularly utilized amenity within the community.

Approximately 43% of respondents reported purchasing food from mobile vending units on a monthly basis, with an additional 23% indicating weekly patronage. Another 23% stated they rarely visit food trucks, while only 7% reported never having visited a mobile vending business.

When asked about desired amenities, respondents most frequently identified seating as a top priority. This was followed by lighting and restroom access. Additional amenities receiving notable support were heat lamps and music, suggesting a preference for comfortable, social, and event-oriented environments.

### **Key Takeaways**

Overall, survey results indicate that respondents perceive significantly more benefits than concerns related to mobile vending units. A majority selected positive impacts, while half reported “no concerns”.

The most common benefits include:

- Increased variety of dining options
- Convenience and accessibility
- Support for local entrepreneurs

The primary concerns identified were:

- Parking impacts
- Potential competition with brick-and-mortar businesses

When specifically asked about the impacts on brick-and-mortar restaurants, responses were largely neutral. Approximately one in five respondents perceived a negative impact, while a similar portion viewed the impact as positive.

There is strong community support for expanded food truck programming. A total of 88% of respondents expressed support for regular food truck events, including weekly or monthly gatherings, as well as a special event series. Additionally, respondents showed strong support for allowing mobile vending units in a wider range of public and central locations, particularly in downtown areas and special events. These findings suggest the community is generally supportive of integrating mobile vending units more fully into the city's commercial and public spaces, provided that impacts such as parking and business compatibility are thoughtfully managed.

Currently, the City permits mobile vending units to operate across most zoning districts, with the exception of those zoning districts designated as Residential, Public Facilities, Parks & Open Space, and Neighborhood Commercial.

Mobile Vending Units operating with Industrial Zoning Districts are restricted to private property. Within the Central Business District, operations are similarly limited to private property, with the exception of four designated curbside locations identified as having minimal impact on surrounding businesses due to their proximity to vacant parcels and parking areas:

- E. Alder / N. Franklin
- E. Redwood / N. Franklin
- E. Laurel / N. Franklin
- Midblock location on the 400-block N Franklin

Survey results and public comments indicate that the most significant concerns related to mobile vending units are tied to allowable locations, particularly within the Central Business District. As such, staff recommends that any policy discussion begin with this issue area.

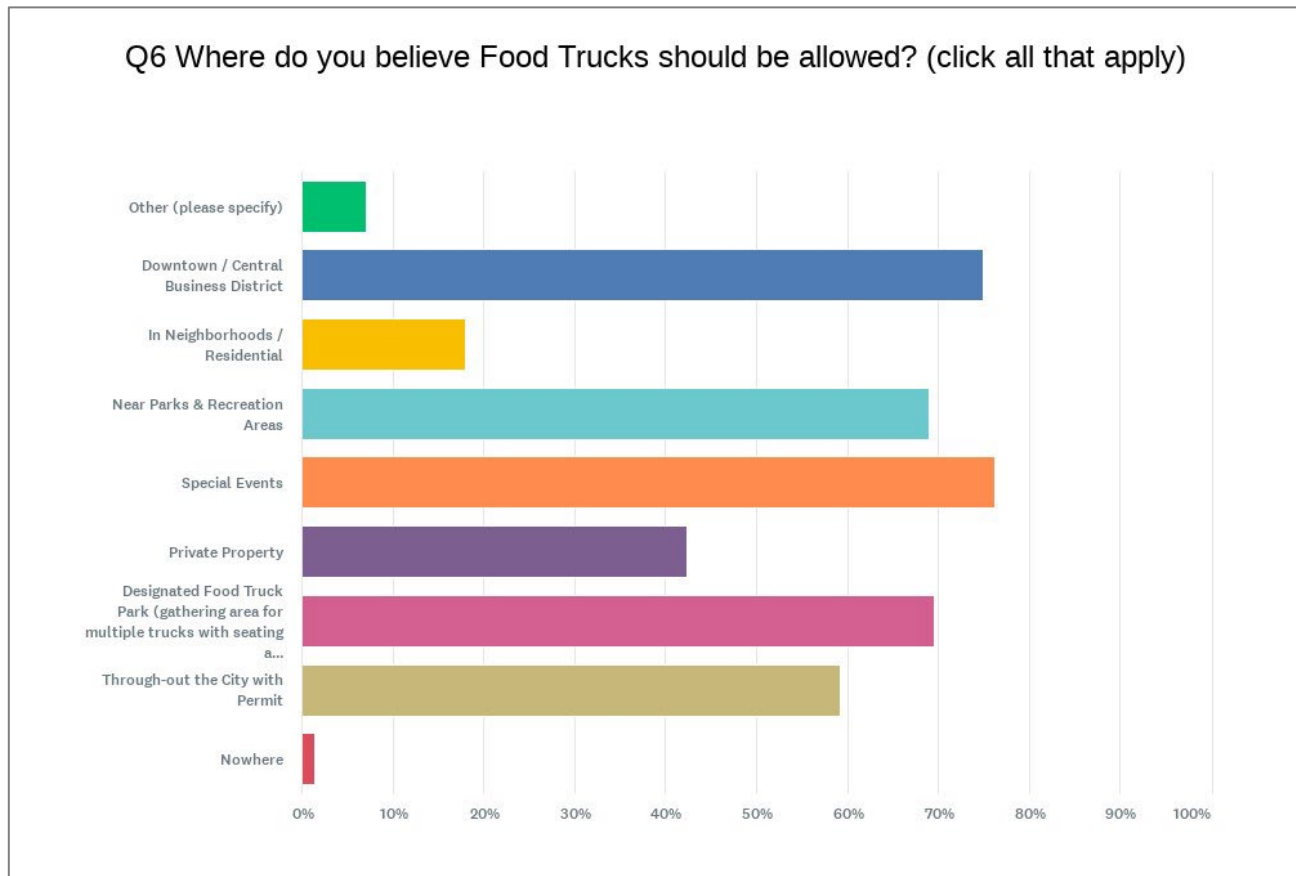


Table 2: Locations for Consideration

While perspectives differ among varying groups, the overall sentiment expressed is illustrated in the chart above.

A designated food truck park ranked highly within all respondent groups, second only to downtown placement and special events. As a result, the most straightforward and focused policy discussion would involve the feasibility and structure of a downtown food truck park.

### Food Truck Park Considerations

Designated food truck parks are typically hybrid models that combine private business operations with municipal zoning and regulatory oversight. In many cases, independent vendors lease space within a shared site, often paying monthly rents ranging from \$500 to \$1,000. In exchange, vendors gain access to shared amenities such as:

- Seating areas
- Lighting
- Electrical connections
- Water hookups
- Restroom facilities

Some municipalities accommodate food truck parks on publicly owned land, including parks, surplus parking lots, or underutilized parcels. However, the City of Fort Bragg has limited

public land to offer for this purpose. At present, the only potentially viable publicly owned sites – outside the public right-of-way – are the public parking lots adjacent to City Hall. However, both lots are heavily utilized, so repurposing them for mobile vending would require careful consideration of parking demand, circulation impacts, and competing municipal needs.

Given these constraints, partnership with private property owners or exploration of alternative underutilized sites may be necessary to successfully implement a food truck park within or near downtown.

### **Committee Discussion Talking Points**

1. End Goal Clarification: What is the City’s vision? More food access, economic development, and public space activation, all three? Others?
2. Public vs. Private Role: What level of public investment is appropriate? Are we willing to reallocate public parking for economic activity and public gathering space? Or should mobile vending be limited to only private property?
3. Prioritize Downtown Location Policy Direction: Do we want to expand access, modify, or further restrict access? Do we prefer a more flexible dispersed model using public and private land, or site-specific location(s)?
4. Explore Designated Food Truck Park Model: Clustering vendors in a shared space with amenities was the most consistently supported idea. What is the viability and tradeoffs of establishing a designated food truck park in a centralized location, with consideration given to:
  - Private property partnership?
  - Potential shared amenity requirements?
  - Operational and management structures?
5. Return with Feasibility Analysis: Do you want staff to return with a more detailed analysis of potential sites, operational models, and ordinance amendments to support a designated food truck park and/or revised downtown location standards?

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

Revisions to mobile vending regulations are exempt from CEQA.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY**

Goal 1: Invigorate Economic Opportunity and Community Vibrancy

Program: Revitalize Fort Bragg consistent with the character of the community by supporting existing businesses and attracting a variety of local business ownership, supporting buyer empowerment, and creating employment opportunities to encourage spending within our local economy.

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Mobile Vending Units have been the topic of discussion at Monthly Business Roundtable Meetings that take place on the first Wednesday of the month at 10 am in Town Hall, located at 363 N Main Street.

A steering committee assisted with the development of survey questions that the City promoted through Press Release, website, social media channels, flyers, and hand-walked to downtown businesses.

The public is invited to attend this meeting of the Community Development Committee, as well as any future meeting held by the committee, Planning Commission, and/or City Council.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Provide further direction.

Take no action.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Ordinance 945-2019
2. Community Food Truck Survey Results

**NOTIFICATION:**

- Planning Commission
- The following “Notify Me” lists: Economic Development Planning; Fort Bragg Downtown Businesses
- The following Mobile Vending Units: Los Primos; La Taquería, Oaxacana; and El Torito