



The facts about food trucks in the City of Syracuse

Background

The City made changes last year to its mobile food vendor ordinance to expand opportunities for food trucks operating within the City. After receiving constructive feedback since these 2019 changes, the City is now reviewing and exploring further enhancements that will better serve all stakeholders involved. Our goals are to:

- continue to grow entrepreneurship and welcome food truck owners through new tools and opportunities
- reduce the risk of financial hardship on brick and mortar locations which have also invested in our community and contribute to a more vibrant City.

Who has been involved?

Staff from the City's Department of Neighborhood and Business Development and the Syracuse Common Council, led by DPW Chair Michael Greene, have met with members of the Syracuse Food Truck Association (SFTA), the Downtown Committee, as well as downtown businesses and eateries. Additionally, a public hearing on the subject was held in December 2019. Conversations are still ongoing, and the City Administration and Council have been encouraged by this dialogue.

What changes are being considered?

At this time no decisions have been made and we continue to seek feedback from stakeholders, the City of Syracuse is exploring the following:

- An expanded map of locations including downtown and other streets and blocks where food trucks can operate in the City. This may include City parks and other new areas of opportunity.
- Inclusion of late-night programming, allowing patrons of local bars and entertainment venues to access food trucks during late hours.

- Revolving locations for weekly food truck rodeos - this would open up added locations across the City and urban core for rodeos, which includes Downtown Syracuse, opening this service for trucks and patrons in new areas. This enhances the concentration of rodeos that were solely happening in Clinton Square.
- Review of the application process and fee structure for food truck rodeo street-closures and mobile vendor annual permits.

Why are changes being considered?

Upon going into effect in 2019, new food truck policies and procedures allowed for Wednesday Food Truck Rodeos in Clinton Square. Community members welcomed this addition and a new amenity to the downtown food offerings. An unintended consequence of this new event however caused some downtown businesses to experience a decrease in sales and lower traffic on days of the weekly food truck rodeos. Simultaneously, we know there are other locations and neighborhoods within Syracuse that could benefit from food truck rodeos as an amenity. We are working on a list of recommended locations for these activities.

What will happen next?

The City will continue to conduct engagement before any proposed revisions are released and considered by the Common Council. Community stakeholders and members of the public will have the opportunity to make their voice heard through a public meeting that will be held prior to any vote on the proposed revisions. More information on this time and date will be forthcoming. Any changes to the ordinance will go into effect prior to launch of the 2020 food truck season in the Spring.