



City of Homer

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Memorandum 22-041

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
FROM: Rob Dumouchel, City Manager
DATE: February 1, 2022
SUBJECT: Mobile Food Service (Food Truck) Code Update

Homer City Code (HCC) Chapter 8.11 covers Mobile Food Service, otherwise known as food trucks. Mobile Food Services are relatively popular in Homer and add character to the City's restaurant scene. They also provide an avenue for entrepreneurs to start small food businesses. It is not uncommon for a Mobile Food Service operation to lead to an investment in a brick-and-mortar restaurant.

In reviewing HCC 8.11, there are some items that require modification to ensure that our Mobile Food Service permitting program fits today's food truck scene and is not creating unnecessary barriers to the operation of these businesses.

This review and update of HCC 8.11 was paired with the review and update of HCC 19.02 for special events. Often Mobile Food Services are conjoined with special events and it made sense to update the two chapters simultaneously. Please note that we will be waiving Mobile Food Service Permits for special events permitted under HCC 5.46 (assuming adoption), although all the general standards for Mobile Food Services will still apply. See Memorandum 22-XX for more information on the initiation of the special events code update project.

Mobile Food Service Issues

Staff, along with Councilmembers Venuti and Hansen-Cavasos, note a number of issues within our Mobile Food Service permitting program that required review. Namely permit pricing, application requirements, and formalizing access to City property during permitted special events.

Update Notes

The draft in ordinance 22-XX makes a number of changes. The following will give a high-level overview:

- **Changes the permitting body from the Police Department to the City Manager or Designee:** Permitting of Mobile Food Services, which are frequently located on private property, is largely a zoning clearance process under this updated chapter. I intend to delegate permitting authority to the Planning Division.
- **Creation of a General Standards section:** This section sets clear standards for operations to include requirements that a Mobile Food Service owner/operator register to collect sales tax; have property owner permission to operate at their location; be in appropriately zoned or permitted locations; not

create traffic hazards, not negatively impact other businesses through noise, odor, etc.; provide waste collection and removal; comply with City sign code; post their Alaska Department of Environmental Health and City of Homer permits; contain all operations (excluding generators) within the Mobile Food Service unit; and, if authorized to operate in a right-of-way or on City property, hold a certificate of insurance that meets standards set by the City.

- **Update to Permit Application Requirements:** This update streamlines the requirements to the completion of an application, payment of a fee set in the fee schedule, and proof of insurance (if operating in a right-of-way or on City property).
- **Removes HCC section 8.11.060:** This section connected HCC Chapter 8.11 to Chapter 8.08 Itinerant or Transient Merchants. This is no longer an appropriate connection.
- **Removes HCC section 8.11.070:** This section was focused on conduct of the business. It required Mobile Food Services to be operated in conformity with the zoning code; prohibits operating in front of or immediately adjacent to a business offering the same or similar commodities in a fixed location; prohibits operations in parks; and prohibits operation in congested areas of the Homer Spit. This section is removed from the proposed ordinance for the following reasons:
 - **Zoning Code:** Already applies
 - **Operating Next to Similar Business:** Most Mobile Food Services operate on private property, I don't want to encourage the City to decide what specific businesses can exist on what parcels. If the zoning code allows the use, and a Mobile Food Service that can meet the City's permitting requirements while having permission to operate on private property, then they should be able to compete and operate at that location.
 - **Parks:** The update to the special events code would allow operating a Mobile Food Service in a park as part of a permitted special event, or with other authorization from the City Manager (an example would be a specific Mobile Food Service could be approved to operate during regular baseball league games).
 - **Homer Spit:** Mobile Food Services can only operate on private property or in locations authorized by the City. The general standards in the proposed HCC 8.11.035 replace the need for this specific language.

Separate from Ordinance 22-XX is Resolution 22-XX which will modify the Fee Schedule. That Resolution will move Mobile Food Services from the Homer Police Department section to the Planning and Zoning Section of the Fee Schedule. It also reduces the permit fee from \$400 (\$390 permit plus a \$10 application fee) to \$50. This brings our program in line with both Kenai and Soldotna.

Staff Recommendation: Introduce and adopt Ordinance 22-XX