



MEMORANDUM

Ordinance 25-54, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending Homer City Code Title 8 Permits, Licenses and Regulations by Adding Chapter 8.13 Temporary Retail Services. Davis/Aderhold.

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Date: August 5, 2025
From: Melissa Jacobsen, City Manager

At the July 28, 2025, City Council meeting, Councilmember Davis introduced Resolution 25-070 to direct the Planning Commission to amend city code, likely Title 21, to allow temporary retail structures on vacant lots in the Central Business District.

After discussion and postponement to August 11, 2025, city staff, including Community Development Director Engebretsen and myself, collaborated with Councilmembers Davis and Aderhold to develop a more streamlined solution that aligns temporary retail structures with mobile food service regulations, eliminating the need for the broader zoning code changes proposed in Resolution 25-070.

Currently, Chapter 8.11 regulates mobile food services as self-contained, movable establishments not requiring permanent utility connections. However, no clear framework exists for other temporary retail activities, such as mobile shops selling clothing or crafts. The existing Itinerant Merchant's License (HCC 8.08) is outdated, requiring burdensome processes like criminal background checks and high fees (\$1,020 for 180 days), and does not address mobile structures, making it unsuitable for modern entrepreneurs.

Ordinance 25-54 creates Chapter 8.13, Temporary Retail Services, to regulate self-contained small commercial buildings, no larger than 150 square feet that are designed to be readily moveable from location to location, without being permanently affixed to any site or permanently connected to any water or sewer utility service.

RECOMMENDATION:

City Staff have been approached multiple times this year by would-be entrepreneurs wishing to engage in temporary retail services, and Staff agrees with the sponsors that the avenue for temporary vendors of non-food items or services to operate in Homer is a gray area. Ordinance 25-54 gets us moving in the direction of finally saying "yes" to folks eager to open such businesses in our community. However, Staff believes a little extra time should be taken to re-craft this ordinance to also include updates to our outdated Itinerant Merchant code.