

The South Robertson Neighborhoods Council and neighboring communities are experiencing an increasing number of vendors who are operating illegally on local sidewalks in prominent residential and business areas. While outdoor food service operations offer entrepreneurial opportunities for vendors and convenience for customers, closer consideration must be given to their impacts on public safety and welfare. Some troubling incidents associated with sidewalk vending have been observed, including but not limited to the following:

1. Improper food handling and temperature control that increase the risk of food-borne illnesses.
2. No hand washing stations or sinks.
3. Open-flame grills fueled by unsecured propane tanks that pose fire risks, especially in high fire hazard zones and during our current drought.
4. Equipment and customers blocking the sidewalk, forcing pedestrians to walk in the street.
5. Cars stopping and causing traffic hazards in highly trafficked areas.
6. Large amounts of trash left behind, including the improper disposal of used cooking oil and other debris.

As sidewalk vending operations continue to expand, the associated risks and hazards have become more evident. The current ordinance, along with the rules and regulations, do not go far enough to safeguard public safety, health, and general welfare. The following proposed amendments would protect all included in this enterprise:

1. All sidewalk vendors (stationary and mobile) shall be required to obtain all applicable city, county, state, and business licenses/permits/decals. All required documents shall be prominently displayed in plain view.
2. All vendors who sell foods shall be required to obtain a permit from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.
3. All sidewalk vendors who sell foods shall comply with California Health and Safety Codes and LA County Department of Public Health standards, which regulate the preparation, handling, and distribution of food items, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Potable water and sinks for food handlers to wash their hands or utensils.
 - b. Food obtained from approved sources.
 - c. Proper equipment to maintain food at required temperature.
 - d. Foods stored, handled, and prepared under sanitary conditions.
 - e. Foods protected from contamination or adulteration.
 - f. Restroom availability for food handlers.
4. All food carts shall be self-contained with the appropriate equipment necessary to comply with food sanitation and safety requirements.
5. Open-flame grills or any cooking utensils requiring the use of a combustible agent/liquid, propane tank, and fossil fuels are strictly prohibited from use in the public right-of-way as they pose safety hazards and have the potential of causing great bodily harm or death in the event of an explosion or fire.
6. A vendor may not use a stationary cart to vend in residential areas.

7. Hours of operations for stationary vendors in areas zoned commercial or industrial shall be between the hours of 8 am to 9 pm, or consistent with the hours of operation of adjacent businesses.
8. All carts shall not exceed a length of 72 inches, width of 54 inches, or height of 78 inches including roof, awning, umbrella, or canopy.
9. Sidewalk vending shall not obstruct or impede pedestrian traffic on sidewalks or pathways or impede traffic on roadways. A minimum 5 ft. sidewalk clearance is required. All clearances shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Their equipment, including food, cannot overhang onto bike lanes or streets or otherwise block these areas.
10. Sidewalk vending cannot impede traffic flow or traffic safety. There should be no stopping or idling cars.
11. Prior to issuance of a permit, a vendor shall provide proof of general liability and worker's compensation that are acceptable to the City.
12. Any sidewalk vending business, having been found in violation three (3) or more times of any applicable regulation(s) within a one-year period, may have their permit suspended or revoked.
13. Food trucks shall be banned from parking at the curb for food sales.

There needs to be better enforcement. The vendors are cited and return the next day back to same location and still no permit and not in compliance. There needs to be more continuous enforcement rather than random visits with no follow-up.

Furthermore, it is incumbent of the City to dedicate the needed resources and funds to establish a separate City agency/department dedicated to the overall management of the sidewalk vending program. Responsibilities would include the oversight of the permit/suspension/revocation processes, effective communications/outreach with the surrounding communities, coordination of enforcement, and the establishment of a public complaint process.

The SORO NC strongly urges Los Angeles City Council to consider the above-proposed amendments and recommendations. A well-regulated vending program benefits the city, leads to orderly commerce, and safeguards the public's welfare.