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### COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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April 16, 2013

New York City Council Committee on Health, Chair Maria Del Carmen Arroyo Transportation Committee, Chair James Vacca 250 Broadway New York, NY 10007

Re: Local Law to Amend the Administrative Code Creating Designated Mobile Food Truck Locations By Council Member Daniel Garodnick

In our Community Board 2 Manhattan District, including SoHo and Greenwich Village, the proliferation of Food Trucks in our neighborhoods have been a significant source of concern to our residents. Food Trucks can be seen illegally parked throughout the afternoon, evening and early morning hours, continually running their generators which are noisy and emit fumes. In addition, the proliferation of Food Trucks has created pedestrian and vehicle traffic in busy locations that cannot accommodate additional congestion.

Just this past weekend along Broadway, there were three separate YoGo Food Trucks parked within the crosswalks on Broadway between Prince and Broome. A fourth Food Truck that serves crepes was in place all weekend at the northeast corner of Broadway at Broome and a fifth Food Truck, Burgers and Things, located just across Broadway on the northwest corner at Broome. These five food trucks were all operating within two blocks in our most congested area in our District on a Saturday afternoon. Further exacerbating the congestion in this area, an additional forty-three mobile food vendors were identified occupying the sidewalks along this same Broadway Corridor in Soho, while another ninety-five additional general merchandise venders were also identified operating in this very same area.

While Community Board 2 and its residents recognize the necessity of Food Trucks and Food Vendors that service the people who visit and shop in our neighborhoods, the need to protect the local Community's interest in maintaining an orderly flow of pedestrians and vehicular traffic must also be achieved. The current congestion caused by the numbers of Food Trucks in our District constitutes an immediate threat to the health,

safety and well being of the public and our local residents. The failure to enact laws limiting the numbers of Food Trucks operating in the most congested areas of our District is irresponsible an unsafe.

As a result Community Board 2 Manhattan fully supports legislation to designate vending zones for Food Trucks. Designated locations for Food Trucks will make our area safer and reduce congestion in our most congested streets. Designated locations will also provide law enforcement with clarity as to their scope of enforcement and provide greater opportunity for Vendors who operate within the law.

Sincerely,

David Gruber, Chair

Community Board #2, Manhattan

Robert Ely, Chair

Environment, Public Safety & Health Community Board #2, Manhattan



# FOR THE RECORD

## Testimony to the New York City Council Committees on Transportation and Health Wednesday, April 17, 2013

### From Jennifer Brown, Executive Director, Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership

Council Member Vacca, Council Member Arroyo, and members of the Committees on Transportation and Health:

My name is Jennifer Brown, and I am the Executive Director of the Flatiron/23<sup>rd</sup> Street Partnership Business Improvement District. I am here today to respond to Councilmember Garodnick's proposed legislation, which would require the designation of "mobile food truck locations," defined in the draft as a place where mobile food trucks may vend.

On behalf of a neighborhood that has seen a proliferation of mobile food trucks over the years, I appreciate the Council's attempt to rationalize the siting system for food trucks. A thorough review and consideration of what makes the most sense for both the mobile food truck entrepreneurs and our neighborhoods is long overdue. We count among our stakeholders both fans of the food truck craze and followers of individual offerings, as well as small business owners and other members of the community with serious concerns about their presence. My staff and I have discussed the presence of food trucks multiple times with representatives from the NYC Food Truck Association and individual vendors, and I believe that a sensible approach to the situation, which provides opportunities for food industry entrepreneurs and balances the needs and concerns of our districts, can be achieved.

I do believe that this is a step in the right direction, but as the saying goes, the devil is in the details. With respect to the proposed legislation, I offer the following comments and concerns:

- There is no mention of Business Improvement Districts in the legislation in terms of the siting
  process, and we believe that at a minimum, the City's 67 BIDs should be more of an official part
  of this siting process in the areas where this is applicable. The NYC Food Truck Association, in
  their policy proposal, specifically mentions BIDs as important players in this process, and we see
  no reason why the Council would exclude BIDs.
- If this proposed process becomes anything like the newsstand siting process, where, similarly, there is public notification and an opportunity to comment on the proposed location, yet so often common-sense opposition is completely ignored as a result of the rules of siting, then we will have some real issues. If this occurs, the public notification and public comment process regarding mobile food truck locations will mean very little. The ability to successfully challenge a proposed location will be very important for our residential and business stakeholders, and right now, the way the legislation reads, DOT would consider the comments and may



incorporate changes or cancel plans, where it determines such designated mobile food truck locations would be inappropriate. It sounds like it could lead to subjective decision-making and fairly unilateral control over what the agency considers appropriate locations.

- The legislation proposes to increase the number of mobile food truck licenses initially by 5%, and eventually to a maximum of 450. I understand that this was likely included as a way to allow additional opportunities for growth in this industry. However, given the current competition for curb space in commercial areas throughout the city, we feel increasing the number of vehicles is ill-advised. It might be more advisable to launch the program with the current number of licensed mobile food trucks, see how it goes, and then consider an increase in the total number allowed.
- Related to that, with up to half of the proposed 450 locations being slated for Manhattan, I fear that there will be a large concentration in the most obvious areas, including our district, which is both residential and commercial. The legislation is not clear in terms of how it would address over-saturation, aside from saying that there will be no more than one per block face. I do agree with the one per block face limitation, because often times we start to see issues in the community not because of one truck here and there, but because of a concentration or row of trucks lining up on the major avenues. But with over 100 block faces in our district, we could potentially be looking at an over-saturation of trucks, worse than exists now on our highest-concentration days, if the only hard-and-fast rule related to saturation is no more than one per block face.
- There is no mention whatsoever about enforcement of said locations. Currently, the majority of food trucks are parking illegally in our district at muni-meter locations, with little or no enforcement aside from BID personnel advising them that they are in illegal spots. These trucks are given a license to go out and sell food, but there are very few, if any, locations in commercial districts where they can legally do so. Currently, it makes no sense. With designated legal spots, enforcement would conceivably become easier because it will be very obvious where the legal spots are and where they aren't, but what happens when the trucks don't get their desired spots, and show up in our neighborhoods anyway? A clear articulation of the intended enforcement of this proposed plan, and the penalties for not adhering to the siting system, need to be fleshed out and clearly articulated before we can determine if it will be effective, or if it will be business as usual (i.e. the current environment).
- While we recognize that mobile food trucks are popular with some of our stakeholders, particularly the office worker population, it is imperative that City government recognize that



there is a significant perceived disadvantage between mobile food vendors and bricks-and-mortar food establishments and other non-mobile businesses. When we hear complaints about vendors in our neighborhood from small business owners, it is almost always an issue of competition and fairness, in terms of the bricks-and-mortar businesses paying rent, overhead, taxes, etc., with regular health and other inspections, and the perceived inequity between what they go through and the vendor/mobile food truck scenario. At the least, legislation should strive to ensure that food trucks comply with the same environmental, health, sanitation, and consumer protection laws and regulations as brick-and-mortar restaurants.

- If they are to become more official, integrated members of our business community, food truck
  operators should also be required to clean sidewalks and streets adjacent to the locations where
  they have parked, and handle their trash appropriately, or face fines in the same amount as are
  levied on property owners and businesses that do not maintain the space outside their
  buildings.
- I support the recommendation of one of my BID colleagues, which suggests that a program such
  as this, if implemented, is done so on a pilot basis, with regular reviews and a chance for mobile
  food vendors and district stakeholders to provide feedback throughout the pilot period.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate my respect for the City Council for attempting to address the challenging issue of vending, including this proposed legislation as well as the group of bills that were introduced last year and recently signed into law. However, I would like to reiterate something that the NYC BID Association has said in the past, which is that we believe that a comprehensive, full, sweeping review of vending, including sidewalk vending (general vending and food), and mobile food trucks, needs to occur in order to address the myriad of complications and challenges surrounding the issue, rather than provide piece-meal solutions.

I thank you for your time and efforts.





NEW YORK STATE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

#### Comments

of

The New York State Restaurant Association

to the

Committee on Health Int. 1025-2013

April 17, 2013

10:00 a.m.

250 Broadway - Committee Room, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor



### NEW YORK STATE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Good morning members of the Committee. My name is Rick Sampson and I am the CEO and President of the New York State Restaurant Association ("NYSRA"), a trade group that represents approximately 5,000 food service establishments in New York City and over 10,000 statewide. NYSRA is the largest hospitality trade association in the State of New York and it has advocated on behalf of its members for over 75 years. Our members, known as Food Service Establishments ("FSEs"), represent one of the largest constituencies regulated by the City. New York City is one of the pillars of the culinary arts world. Our restaurants employ hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers and are a backbone of the tourism trade.

NYSRA would like to thank the Committee for engaging in a discussion about mobile food truck vendors and their impact on the restaurant industry. Working towards the smart regulation of mobile food trucks is important, especially as they begin to proliferate throughout New York City. Intro. 1025-2013 seeks to amend the Administrative Code relating to the creation of designated mobile food truck locations throughout the City of New York. Undoubtedly, mobile food trucks have become a part of the culinary world throughout America. From TV shows to the streets of New York City, mobile food trucks have become an avenue for many restaurateurs to expand their business and also for entrepreneurs to begin new enterprises in a way that was not previously available to them.

NYSRA does not have a position on many of the specific operating terms sought to be created by the legislation, including the number of permits to be issued to mobile food trucks, where designated parking zones will be allotted, or the specific provisions relating to administrative registration of such mobile food trucks. However, NYSRA does believe that any legislation seeking to regulate this industry must recognize the severe financial strains that mobile food trucks can place on brick-and-mortar restaurants when mobile food trucks operate either directly outside their doors or within a very close proximity. It is undeniable that opening a restaurant in New York City is a costly, time consuming, risky venture that requires huge sums of capital. It goes without saying that mobile food trucks avoid many of the obstacles faced by brick-and-mortar restaurateurs. For that reason, NYSRA requests that any legislation seeking to regulate mobile food truck vendors, and the locations where they operate, recognizes that mobile food trucks should not be allowed to park directly in front of or within a certain designated zone from any restaurant.

NYSRA recognizes that many restaurateurs are seeking to expand into the mobile food truck industry as these mobile operations can take advantage of neighborhood events, events in parks, and otherwise move to locations which may afford better foot

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### NEW YORK STATE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

traffic for their business. NYSRA does not believe that if the mobile food truck industry should be allowed to grow in New York City at the expense of those restaurants which have provided the backbone of neighborhoods and worked hard with the City and this Council to make New York City the culinary capital of the world.

In conclusion, the New York State Restaurant Association appreciates the efforts that this Committee is putting into evaluating the impact of mobile food trucks on the restaurant industry and the city as a whole. The New York State Restaurant Association looks forward to continuing its ongoing work with the Council to protect the restaurant and hospitality industry in the City of New York.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rick J. Sampson CEO and President New York State Restaurant Association 1001 Avenue of the Americas, 3rd Floor New York, New York 10018 212-398-9160

734367

# FOR THE RECORD

### Hafetz, Dan

From:

swarwick <swarwick@sprynet.com> Tuesday, April 16, 2013 3:22 PM

Sent: To:

Hafetz, Dan

Subject:

Food Truck Legislation

Because of a family illness I won't be able to attend the Council meeting tomorrow that will address this pending legislation but would like to submit these written remarks.

I live on Thompson Street just below Bleecker. There is a food truck parked on the East side of Thompson at the corner and a push-truck that sets up on the Bleecker block face of the same corner. Both bring increased litter to the neighborhood and have been seen using the public wastebaskets to dispose of the garbage generated by their truck. Also the City Council has recently approved the NYU Expansion plan that will bring 20 years of construction to the neighborhood along with an accompanying loss of parking spaces. We do not need to lose more spaces to food trucks that compete with neighborhood businesses.

I strongly support stricter rules on where food trucks can park I think the current legislation doesn't go far enough. And suggestion the following addition.

- No food trucks can be within 100 feet of each other even if on a different block face
- Block face and feet limitations apply to the push-cart type food vendors that sell from sidewalks
- There will be no designated food vendor parking in any area where there is construction within a 5 block radius that takes away parking space(s).
- The type of food being vended will be considered when assigning food trucks parking space, a truck selling one type of cuisine will not be allowed to park within 1 block of an establishment selling the same type of food.

I also think a mandate should be created that requires all the rules and regulations regarding mobile food vendors (trucks and pushcarts) that are administered by the various agencies be assembled in one place and made publically accessible, either in paper or electronic form. I have asked the community affairs officer of the 6<sup>th</sup> pct for over a year to provide me with a copy of the regulations regarding food trucks and he says they are not gathered in one place and he can't locate them. If the police cannot determine the rules how will citizens.

S.Warwick swarwick@sprynet.com Good morning Chair Arroyo, Chair Vacca, and Council Members. I am Liz Weinstein, Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding food truck vending in New York City. I am here with Dan Kass from the Department of Health, Kate Slevin from the Department of Transportation, and Lieutenant Dan Albano of the New York City Police Department.

Selling food from the street has been an evolving part of New York's streetscape for generations. Today, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is authorized to issue permits to 5,100 mobile food vendors. Of those vendors, 3,100 are year-round carts and trucks, 1,000 are fresh fruit and vegetable green carts, and an additional 1,000 are seasonal. Of these, DOHMH estimates that there are approximately 530 trucks; about 405 of which are year-round food trucks, and 125 operate only in warmer seasons.

The cart or truck owner is required to maintain both a permit to operate the cart or truck as well as a license to handle food. Each cart or truck can only have a single permit holder, but the Administrative Code allows a permit holder to employ multiple licensees to work the cart or truck. Citywide, year-round permits can be used to operate any type of mobile food vending unit, for example, taco trucks or coffee carts. Unlike the cap on permits, there is no cap on the number of licenses DOHMH can issue. Currently, more than 18,000 licensees are active in DOHMH's system.

DOHMH requires all permit and license holders to pass its food preparation safety course, and currently requires a biannual inspection of the cart or truck at the time of permit renewal. The Department of Consumer Affairs is responsible for handling the renewal process for both permits and licenses through its licensing centers.

Three different City agencies handle enforcement of mobile food vending rules. Health inspectors enforce food safety rules and time and location restrictions (such as vending at a bus stop or too close to the crosswalk) in the City's Administrative Code and Traffic Rules. NYPD officers can also enforce time and location violations, but do not generally enforce Health Code violations. In addition, the Department of Sanitation can issue violations to vendors who fail to maintain sanitary conditions at their truck or cart or who do not have proper waste receptacles.

The proliferation of food trucks is a relatively new phenomenon in New York City. These trucks provide diverse dining options for both residents and tourists and create new job opportunities. The City's partnership with the Food Truck Association in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy was instrumental in bringing high quality, hot meals to residents and volunteers in stormaffected communities, and we thank them for their assistance.

We know that food trucks are an important part of the vending universe, and making legal vending spaces available for food trucks is an idea worthy of discussion. City rules prohibit trucks from vending at metered spaces and require trucks to comply with all other parking rules

and regulations, leading food truck vendors to use ad hoc methods to find legal vending space on streets.

The Administration has made several recent efforts to improve the legal operation of mobile food vending. Just last week new Health Department rules went into effect intended to improve the sanitary practices of mobile food vendors and the commissaries they use to clean, store and outfit their carts. The Department also clarified that permit holders who own the truck or cart will be liable for the actions of licensees who work at their truck or cart. In practical terms, this means the permit holder will be held responsible for any NOVs written to the truck or cart, rather than liability being limited to the licensee working when the violation was observed.

The new rules also require the permit holder to appear in person at the truck or cart's biannual Health Department inspection, rather than allowing a designee to appear on behalf of the permit holder. These efforts will help curtail the illegal leasing of permits by absentee permit holders. To help stem the illegal transfer of permits, the Administration also supports a legislative requirement that the permit holder must also work as a vendor at least half time.

Regarding Introduction 1025, the Administration believes that this concept, generally, has merit and can be the beginning of a dialogue to establish a meaningful system for bringing a measure of order to the industry. However, the world of food truck vending is very complex and involves several agencies and therefore any changes to its regulatory structure would require careful

consideration and study. For these reasons, we cannot support the bill as drafted, but support its broader intentions and offer the following suggestions for a continued conversation on food trucks.

The Administration shares the concerns of City Council regarding the proliferation of food trucks, and we believe this may be an opportunity to take a more holistic view of mobile food vending operations. For the past few months, my office and several City agencies have been reviewing areas that could be improved around food vending regulation and enforcement.

We are interested in further exploring a market-based plan to allow food trucks to bid for the right to certain street locations, similar to the current Parks Department concession program.

Developing a strategy for awarding or designating locations would also be an opportunity to change some of the regulations to improve current food truck operations.

For example, we would like to consider encouraging food trucks to convert to clean fuel, low emissions vehicles and generators over the next three to five years. Two of the most common complaints we hear from residents and business-owners relating to mobile food vendors are that generators are loud and produce too much exhaust. For both engines and generators, the Administration supports encouraging trucks and carts to run on natural gas or other clean fuel to reduce emissions, in addition to setting a maximum decibel level to reduce noise pollution. We would also like to see food trucks and carts move to cleaner, greener, recyclable packaging

products during the same time frame. Both of these changes are consistent with ongoing Administrative initiatives intended to reduce New York City's environmental footprint.

As another means of improving the visual environment on the streets, the Administration would support language holding vendors responsible for the cleanliness of their immediate vicinity, which would remove the burden from business and home owners to clean trash created or left by a vendor. In addition, the Administration would like City Council to authorize DOHMH, DEP, and DOT to rule make around air, noise, and lighting concerns, which are also among the most common vendor-related complaints.

Finally, the Administration cannot support legislation without the inclusion of a strong enforcement component accompanying any designation of locations for food trucks. As currently written, Intro 1025 prohibits trucks from vending at a non-designated location, but does not include penalties for those that do. The Administration is supportive of restricting the number of trucks per block face, and would also like to see penalties imposed for vendors who attempt to "rent" corners. The Administration supports a low threshold "strikes" program to encourage compliance within the industry. Trucks that violate the terms of the program more than a determined number of times would be removed from the program and lose their ability to vend. Strict hours of operation must be written into the legislation, which must also include provisions requiring trucks to move from a location for any potential length of time if there is construction, a parade, or any other event that makes the spot untenable. In addition, to

facilitate ease of towing, we support establishing maximum weight and size dimensions for food trucks, which present special challenges for NYPD's towing operations.

Food trucks are an iconic and championed part of the New York streetscape and food scene. While the Administration supports a creative solution for managing food trucks, we believe a program that meets the operational needs of the vendors, and supplies the Administration with necessary regulatory and enforcement tools has not yet been identified due to the complex nature of the vending world. We thank the Council for raising this important issue, and look forward to continuing this discussion. We are happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.



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### April 17, 2013

Testimony submitted by Monica Blum, President of the Lincoln Square Business Improvement District, to the New York City Council Committee on Health jointly with the Committee on Transportation regarding legislation in relation to creating designated mobile food truck locations.

Thank you Council Members Garodnick, Vacca, and Arroyo, and members of the Committees on Health and Transportation for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am President of the Lincoln Square Business Improvement District and am here to offer testimony regarding the legislation that would designate locations for mobile food truck vending.

While we agree with the findings of the Council that the number of food trucks has increased in recent years and that many of the food trucks park in violation of parking regulations, we cannot support this legislation as it's written for several reasons. In Lincoln Square, we have seen a proliferation of food trucks and in most cases these food trucks park squarely in front of existing food establishments, quick serves and delis. We have received an increasing number of complaints from local businesses that have been negatively impacted by food trucks parked outside of their establishments. In addition many food trucks violate existing parking regulations. This proliferation of food trucks also coincides with a tremendous increase in mobile food vendors. Accordingly, we believe that a comprehensive plan must be developed that would limit the number of food trucks allowed in a given area, taking into account mobile food carts, with specific siting criteria, and locations for both. The plan should pay special attention to the proximity of brick and mortar food establishments. This is the only way to address this growing city wide problem that impacts the quality of life of New Yorkers and causes incredible sidewalk congestion.

The bill as currently written merely assigns responsibility to the Department of Transportation (DOT) in consultation with Community Boards. There is no consultation with property owners, or businesses. For this and many other reasons, we believe that this legislation is flawed.

We currently have a similar situation with newsstand applications, also handled by DOT. There are no real restrictions as to where a newsstand may be located; there have been newsstand applications in our district directly in front of small businesses that sell magazines and newspapers. A newsstand application may be approved even if there is another newsstand one block away or directly across the street. Because these situations are not addressed in the newsstand regulations, the Community Board may not take these factors into consideration when reviewing newsstand applications. Although property owners must be notified of a newsstand application, business improvement districts have no consultative role. Unlike the newsstand regulation, this bill does not require notification of property owners or businesses.

We believe that approval of food truck locations must take into account many factors, and that any legislation must include a series of criteria, and must include notification of property owners, businesses and consultation with business improvement districts as well as Community Boards. We know our districts, and work closely with our businesses; we are responsible for maintaining clean sidewalks, 18 inches into the curb, in conjunction with businesses who are responsible as well. Food trucks and mobile food vendors have no such responsibility. Siting of food trucks should also require that retail mix of a particular neighborhood be taken into account - an issue that is not addressed in the draft legislation. We believe that food trucks should be precluded from block faces with any type of food establishment, including restaurants, outdoor cafes, quick serve eateries, delis and places where large crowds queue up such as movie theaters. Landmarks, houses of worship, and cultural organizations should also be taken into consideration when siting locations for mobile food vendors. It is also important to stress that food trucks must be in compliance with all of the appropriate health regulations in the same way a restaurant must be in compliance.

In addition to the many complaints we receive on a daily basis from delis and quick serves, businesses and residents have complained about the loss of metered parking. In many instances, many mobile food trucks illegally take up more than one parking space, and obstruct the sight line to the very deli that they are attempting to draw business from.

We currently have at least 8 food trucks that regularly come and park along a 12 block stretch of Broadway, in violation of parking meter regulations, and often in front of fire hydrants. This is in addition to 36 food carts daily, including 9 at the northern end of Columbus Circle near the Trump International Hotel & Tower. The mobile food trucks frequently move around in order to find a parking spot or two in front of a deli or small café.

Our recent customer satisfaction survey asked respondents to comment on situations or conditions that are affecting the quality of life or viability of business. Of the people who responded to that question more than a quarter of respondents had negative comments regarding food trucks or carts, ranging from economic impact on small businesses, and quality of life issues such as odors, noise from refrigerators or generators, impact on pedestrians, and traffic. The uncontrolled vending of food from trucks and carts also causes congestion, and dirty sidewalks.

We applaud Council Member Garodnick's efforts to address this growing problem not only in Lincoln Square, but also in many other locations throughout the City; however, with all due respect, this bill will cause more problems than it solves. What is needed is a comprehensive overhaul of the food vending procedures, rather than piecemeal legislation that does not take into account the total picture. We are happy to work with you on developing a workable solution.



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# Testimony to the New York City Council Committees on Transportation and Health Wednesday, April 17, 2013

## From Rob Byrnes President, East Midtown Partnership

Council Member Vacca, Council Member Arroyo, and members of the Committees on Transportation and Health:

My name is Rob Byrnes, and I am president of the East Midtown Partnership, a Business Improvement District covering all or parts of 48 blocks of Midtown Manhattan. Included in that area are more than 800 ground-floor businesses, including over 100 food service establishments. These are brick-and-mortar businesses which pay their pro-rated share of property tax and BID assessment, are subject to extensive regulations and licensing fees, and mandated by law to clean and maintain the exterior of their premises, whether or not the business owner is the source of disrepair or unsanitary conditions.

I am here today to offer testimony on Council Member Garodnick's introduction which would require the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation to designate "mobile food truck locations," defined in the draft as a place where mobile food trucks may vend.

The East Midtown Partnership commends Council Member Garodnick's initiative in attempting to resolve the ongoing problem of food truck siting, and we commend the entrepreneurialism of the men and women who are creating these businesses. We also applaud the NYC Food Truck Association for asking to be included in the Department of Health's letter grading system.

That said, we have significant concerns about and objections to this introduction, and strongly recommend additional actions be taken, whether through an amendment to this introduction or additional legislative action, to clarify laws as they pertain to food trucks.

#### Specifically:

- By placing the responsibility and control of the mobile food truck location siting process exclusively in the hands of the Commissioner of Transportation, we are concerned that locations could be designated arbitrarily and unilaterally, without adequate public review and participation. The introduction instructs the Department to notify the local Council Member and Community Board during the site-designation process, although their ability to object appears to be advisory. At a minimum, we think the City's 67 Business Improvement Districts should be part of this site notification process, and the ability of notified parties to contest an illadvised mobile food truck location should be strengthened in the legislation.
- The legislation would increase the number of mobile food truck licenses initially by 5%, and
  eventually to a maximum of 450. Given the current competition for curb space in commercial
  areas throughout the city, and especially in Midtown Manhattan, we feel increasing the number
  of vehicles is ill-advised.
- The legislation should guarantee that existing metered parking space will remain metered
  parking space. Many areas of the city, most specifically including East Midtown Manhattan,
  already suffer from an extreme shortage of metered curbside parking, which directly and
  adversely impacts commercial activity. The city's small business base cannot afford a decrease
  in the number of these spaces.
- While we recognize that mobile food trucks are popular with some consumers, it is imperative
  that City government recognize the disadvantage that currently exists against brick-and-mortar
  food establishments and other non-mobile businesses. This introduction does nothing to
  alleviate that disadvantage, and we feel it may actually exacerbate it.
- In order to return balance to the relationship between food trucks and non-mobile businesses:
  - Legislation must ensure that food trucks comply with the same environmental, health, sanitation, and consumer protection laws and regulations as brick-and-mortar restaurants. This is especially important as it pertains to exhaust, cooking and food odors, and noise from generators.
  - Food truck operators should also be required to clean sidewalks and streets adjacent to the locations where they have parked, or face fines in the same amount as are levied on property owners and businesses that do not maintain the public space outside their buildings.

In this city of great diversity, we recognize that an entrepreneurial spirit will always develop new ways of doing business, and we welcome them. However, in an effort to accommodate one type of business, the city cannot afford to put its hard-working, marginal small business people at a permanent disadvantage.



## Sunset Park District Management Association

### Sunset Park Business Improvement District

Serving Sunset Park's 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Community since 1995
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Brooklyn's Fifth: Many cultures, many shops, ONE avenue!

TESTIMONY FOR INTRO IN RELATION TO DESIGNATED MOBILE FOOD TRUCK LOCATIONS HEARING HELD APRIL 17, 2013

My name is Renée Giordano. I am the Executive Director of the Sunset Park Business Improvement District which represents over 500 very small businesses for the past 18 years. I would like to thank Councilman Garodnick for taking on this issue and attempting to find a solution that will benefit the different parties involved; namely the vendor, the public and the small business community. In 2007, our organization did a major study of the vending issue and came up with a localized solution which we felt would work for our community, businesses and vendors by creating a special vending zone along our 26-block shopping strip with designated vending locations along our side streets, just off of Brooklyn's 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 38<sup>th</sup> to 64<sup>th</sup> Street. Unfortunately, the City Council only held one public hearing and eventually just dropped the program.

Through the process of our own research, and while having to deal with the impact of not only the latest influx of food trucks, but general and food vendors on our sidewalks, I find that there are many facets to the issue of vending and unless each is looked at and dealt with within a regulation, the overall positive intent will be lost in the unforeseen circumstances that arise. I was glad to see that none of the locations can be used later than 12:00am or for more than 8 hours. Also the inclusion of community input and public hearings is appreciated, we just hope that the testimony will be taken seriously by the department.

In your forward, you want to "protect the City's interest in maintaining an orderly flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic while supporting food trucks and expanding the benefits they confer on the City." It is also important to include in the City's interests the support of the small businesses. If you create locations and place food trucks in locations which will create unfair competition for the small restaurants, you will be hurting the economic viability of an entire community. While looking out for the new fad of the increasing number of food trucks, we need to show that we understand and respect the small businesses which have been here in good and bad times and are the stable forces in a neighborhood. Our organization has at least 50 small restaurants which work hard and long hours, also benefitting the City.

I therefore would like to pose questions and some suggestions which could help you determine how to deal fairly with everyone involved in this situation.

- 1. How will the locations be chosen? How big will the locations be, ie will there be size restrictions on the trucks? Will they be able to add street furniture to their location? How could a designated area be removed?
- SUGGESTION: I would like to suggest that the DOT choose the locations together with a lot of input from the community and the members of the commercial strip where they are considering. When the green carts program was initiated, locations that had enough fruit and vegetable businesses were off-limits. I think that consideration needs to be given to how the location can handle possible lines and what other businesses are nearby. Placement is very important, and most of the locations will not be in isolated places. There should be a limit to the size of the truck and they should not be allowed to add tables and chairs in front. A restaurant has to go through a very rigorous process to be allowed to have an outdoor café.
- 2. Will the sites be assigned to specific trucks? If so, who decides which truck can be where? Will the food truck owner be able to request a site or will there be a lottery? Will the permit show where the truck is supposed to be? What if that truck is not planning to use the location on a particular day, does it remain empty? If the sites are not specific, who gets to be in each site, how will arguments over whose site it is and who got there first be decided?
- SUGGESTION: There should be a lottery and the site should be specific to the truck, not on a first come basis. This would cause arguments as to who was there first, and eventually we would see that trucks would start to come earlier and earlier to grab the spot first. However, if a truck won't be there, that space should be empty.
- 3. How will the police or other enforcement agent know if a location is an official location? Will there be signage? What happens to a truck that sets up in a non-designated location? Will the penalties be included in the final bill? SUGGESTION: There should be signage at each location so that the police, the food trucks and the public will know it is a designated

spot. This will also keep cars and delivery trucks from using the space and possibly tempting the food truck to use another location instead. If a truck uses a different location, perhaps there could be points added to his permit and after 3 points, it could be taken away for

a year. I think the penalties need to be included in the bill.

- 4. Will the permit be specific to the truck or the operator? How long will the permits be good for? SUGGESTION: I think it needs to be a combination of being specific to the truck and to the owner. If it is only the owner, it may be hard to monitor. Permits should only be good for a year.
- 5. Will the Health Department finally be compelled to issue letter grades and do surprise inspections, like for a restaurant? Will a food truck be able to idle?

SUGGESTION: In the past, the argument against surprise inspections and letter grades, such as restaurants are subjected to, was that agents didn't know where a food truck may be at any given time so they had to make appointments to inspect. Now there will be a designated location, so this argument isn't viable. As with any vehicle, a food truck should not be allowed to idle in a spot. If the engine is needed to cook, then the vehicle has to be redesigned.

- 6. Your intro allowed for only one space per block, is this a block or blockface? Could they be on a series of blocks? SUGGESTION: In any given commercial strip, there shouldn't be more than one food truck. Wherever possible, the truck should be placed on a sidestreet abutting the main strip. Again, the businesses that are already there need to be in the equation for determining a location.
- 8. Lastly, will this be a pilot program?

SUGGESTION: I suggest that this be a pilot program for 2 years, with continual evaluation perhaps every 6 months, from the public, the businesses, the food trucks and the agencies.

While we know that the regulations cannot limit free enterprise, your reasons for making new regulations and protecting the food truck have been stated as "Food Trucks not only provide jobs... but also generate revenue for the City through income and business taxes paid by vendors and other related businesses, such as their suppliers." This statement refers to the small businesses of the City also. In fact, a community's success and viability is tied to the economic stability of its commercial strip, not to the success of its street vendors. In most of NY, these commercial strips are made up of small businesses which are usually in long term leases, mostly have been here during good and bad economic, are at obviously fixed locations, are often paying high rents and operate under very strict regulations. At some point, the vending regulations <u>must</u> address their needs too and begin to make the playing field more even between the street vendor and the fixed-location business.

We hope that you take into consideration these questions and suggestion. It is necessary to work with the 67 Business Improvement Districts to create a comprehensive and fair regulation. For too long, the really small businesses, those with less than 5 employees, seem to be forgotten. For too long the small, local, family-owned businesses seem to be forgotten. Now is your chance to remember them while also dealing with this very new and touchy issue of food trucks on our streets. By dealing with this issue fairly, you will be setting the stage to address other vendor-related issues which have been plaguing our city and creating a double-standard for store-based businesses.

Thank you again for allowing us to testify and to help with the crafting of the future economic success of our great city.

Sincerely, Renée Giordano Executive Director of the Sunset Park BID

### BROADWAY RESIDENTS COALITION

April 17, 2013

Councilmember James Vacca, Chair NYCC Committee on Transportation 250 Broadway, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY 10007

## Re: Mobile Food Truck Legislation & Oversight Hearing T2013-6074 & T2013-6075

Dear Chairman Vacca -

Members of the Broadway Residents Coalition, made up of long-time owners & inhabitants of the Broadway corridor in the SoHo mixed-use neighborhood, offer our support for legislation being considered for the creation of designated mobile food truck locations in New York City.

On the following pages BRC submits additional information and specific suggestions regarding both this legislation and much needed oversight of the fast growing, but inadequately regulated, mobile food truck vending industry.

Sincerely,

Pete Davies, BRC Steering Committee

548 Broadway #5A New York, NY 10012

Leigh Bennie, BRC Steering Committee

543 Broadway, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor New York, NY 10012

Renée Monrose, BRC Steering Committee

542 Broadway #3F New York, NY 10012 Pier Consagra, BRC Steering Committee

542 Broadway, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY 10012

Linda Schrank, BRC Steering Committee

458 Broadway #8 New York, NY 10012

Peter A. Davis, BRC Steering Committee

543 Broadway, 6<sup>th</sup> Floer-New York, NY 10012

### New York City Council, Joint Hearing on Food Vendor Trucks

 Committee on Transportation & Committee on Health April 17, 2013

**T2013-6074:** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to creating designated mobile food truck locations.

T2013-6075: Oversight - Food Truck Vendors: Examining an Emerging Industry.

Broadway Residents Coalition: We are longtime inhabitants of SoHo, property owners and residents along the Broadway corridor who face the proliferation of food trucks on a daily basis. We have concerns regarding the lack of clear and enforceable regulations for food vending trucks, many of which have recently discovered our neighborhood and turned it into an unregulated outdoor food court. Our experiences & observations could help to guide the effort to create food truck legislation that will allow for responsible operations throughout the city.

**Vendor Counts:** Our systematic counts of vendors taken along Broadway over the past year show, on the 3 blocks from Broome to Houston streets, that there are upwards of 30 to 40 food vendors, including 10 food vending trucks, on any given weekend day (count sheets & a comprehensive tally for 2013 are attached).

**Illegal Parking:** Numerous food trucks are seen, on a regular basis, to unlawfully park within crosswalks, in bus stop zones, and at fire hydrants, adding to the often overwhelming pedestrian congestion on our narrow (17-1/2' wide) sidewalks.

**Trash:** Very few food trucks provide a trash receptacle near the truck, and few if any clean up customer trash in the area of the truck before the vehicle leaves at the end of the day. They leave behind cups, containers, plastic utensils & uneaten food, basically trashing the gutters, sidewalks & storefronts of the SoHo Cast-Iron Historic District.

Generators: Most food vending trucks use internal gasoline- or diesel-powered generators, none of which are regulated, but are known to spew carbon emissions and other dangerous particulate matter into the air. This is of special concern for the approximately 45 residentially occupied buildings along the already congested Broadway corridor (see attached maps: Broadway / SoHo: Buildings with Residential Units). Prior studies have shown this area has high levels of emissions (much of that due to heavy bridge-to-tunnel vehicular traffic moving through the core of SoHo). Add to that the food trucks operating with unregulated generators, running up to 12 hours a day directly beneath residential windows. Not only are the generators "dirty," they are noisy, and their loud & persistent hum and rumbling vibrations — not to mention cooking odors — are a constant reminder of their presence on the streets right below our homes.

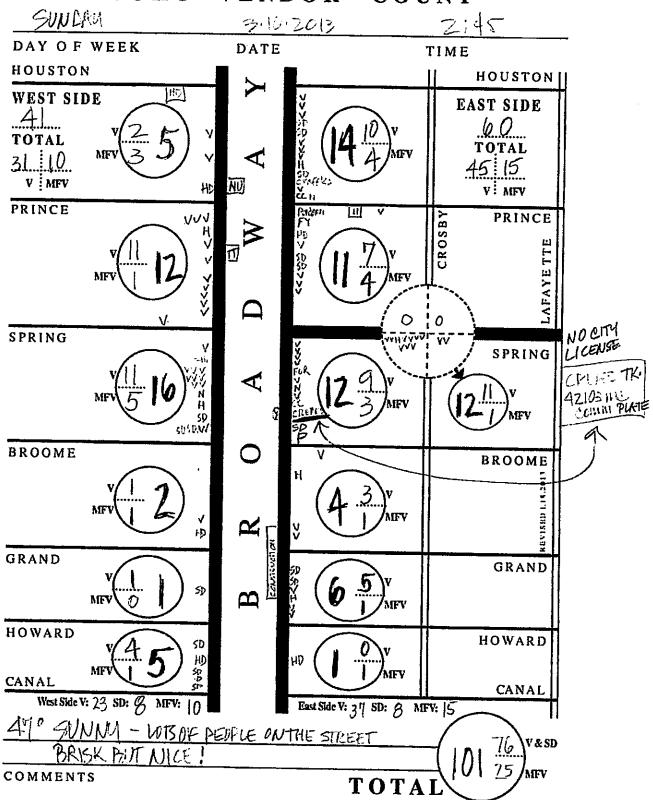
Mayor Bloomberg recently introduced to the streets of NYC the first food truck powered entirely by compressed natural gas, using generator motors that yield low carbon emissions. Acknowledging the problems with the generators currently in use by NYC food trucks and the need for healthier, low emission generators, the mayor remarked, "It produces almost three-quarters less in greenhouse gas than trucks run on gasoline or diesel."

On the following page are outlined specific considerations for pending legislation.

### Considerations for Mobile Food Truck Vendor Legislation (T2013-6074):

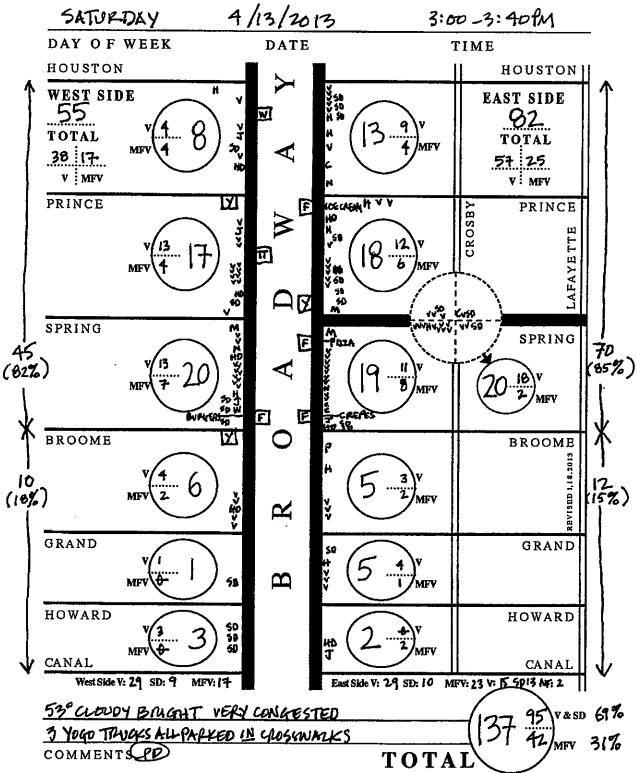
- 1. The Department of Transportation (DOT), when considering placement of food vending trucks as described in the pending legislation, should not allow food trucks to park, on either side of the street, directly below any building containing residential units (see Broadway / SoHo maps, attached).
- 2. DOH should require 15 feet of clearance between the property line of any such residentially occupied property and the food truck (15' clearance set as a line drawn from the property border to the edge of the sidewalk, where it meets the street).
- 3. DOT should specify that food vending trucks should not park within 15 feet of a crosswalk.
- 4. DOT should specify that food vending trucks should not park within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.
- 5. DOT should specify that food vending trucks should not park within 15 feet of a bus zone, including "bus bulbs" as found along Broadway.
- 6. DOT should specify that food vending trucks should not part within 15 feet of a subway entrance, including subway stairs and stair enclosures.
- 7. DOT should specify that food vending trucks should not park within 15 feet of building scaffolding erected on a sidewalk.
- 8. DOT should specify that there should not be more than one designated mobile food truck within 100 feet of another in any direction, including trucks on different block faces.
- 9. The Department of Health (DOH) should specify that food vending trucks should be required to supply a trash receptacle, to be placed on the sidewalk next to the curb within the outline of the truck.
- 10. DOH should specify that food vending trucks should be required to clear refuse from the area around the vehicle and, at the end of the work day, must thoroughly remove any and all trash on the sidewalk and in the street, in an area 18" out from the gutter, before leaving the area where the food truck has been vending.
- 11. DOH should specify that generators and motors used by food vending trucks should be required to be safe, quiet and "clean" (see following page for details).
- 12. Both DOT & DOH should seriously consider creating specific rules for "high density zones" pertaining to mixed-use districts that have a large residential presence, and where there now exists extreme congestion on the sidewalks and an extraordinary proliferation of vendors of all types.

### SOHO VENDOR COUNT



CC = Cup Cake Cart, FY = Frozen Yogurt Trucks, F = Food Truck, H = Halel Cart, HD = Hot Dog Cart, J = Juice Cart, LC = LoveSt. Coffee Truck, M = Mango Ladies, MFV = Mobil Food Vendor, N = Nut Cart, NU = Nuchas Food Truck, P = Pretzel, SD = Store Display extending onto Public Sidewalk, TT = Tribeca Taco, TS = TeeShirts, V = Vendor, W = Waffels, Y = Yogo Truck,

### SOHO VENDOR COUNT



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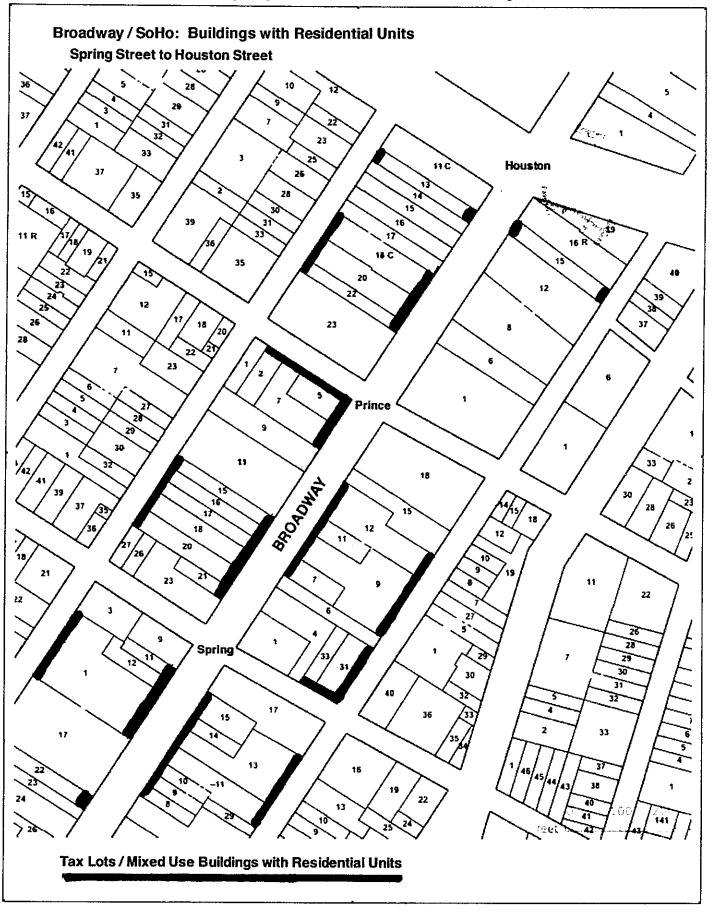
### SoHo - Broadway Vendor Count 2013

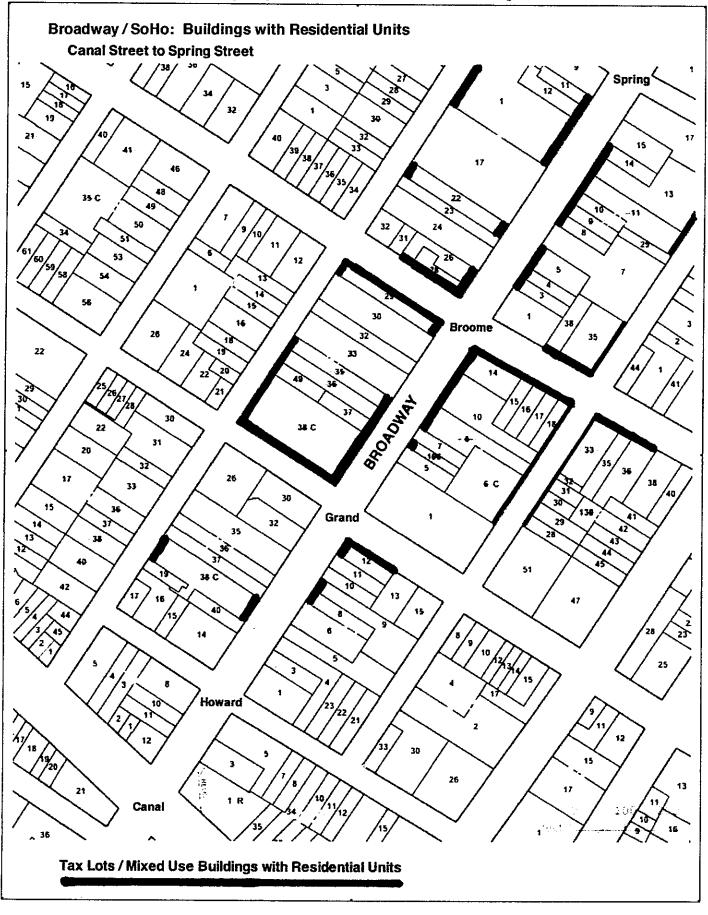
April 17, 2013

General Vendors & Mobile Food Vendors along Broadway between Houston & Canal

Tally taken each weekend by members of the Broadway Residents Coalition

	V: General	Vendo	r	SD: E	xterio	or Sto	re Dis	play o	n Sid	ewalk		MFV:	Mobile	e Food	l Vendor	·	
Date	Day of Week	Br	Broadway: Houston to Canal Street							Sub-Total Broadway					Total	MFV Total	MFV % of Total
			West	Side	Side		East Side				Both Sides of Spring						
		V	SD	MFV	ALL	٧	SD	MFV	ALL	•	ν	SD	MFV	ALL			
5-Jan-2013	Saturday	27		11	38	30		15	45	83	7		3	10	93	29	0.31183
6-Jan-2013	Sunday	18		9	27	22		13	35	62	8		4	12	74	26	0.3514
12-Jan-2013	Saturday	24	9	14	47	22	10	14	46	93	13	2	2	17	110	30	0.2727
13-Jan-2103	Sunday	21	10	13	44	19	12	14	45	89	12	3	1	16	105	28	0.2667
19-Jan-2013	Saturday	17	12	12	41	25	11	15	51	92	12	2	2	16	108	29	0.2685
20-Jan-2013	Sunday	16	4	11	31	20	4	12	36	67	11	0	1	12	79	24	0.3038
26-Jan-2013	Saturday	13	1	10	24	15	2	11	28	52	3	0	2	5	57	23	0.4035
27-Jan-2013	Sunday	14	9	12	35	18	10	12	40	75	_ 2	3	1	6	81	25	0.3086
2-Feb-2013	Saturday	15	10	10	35	15	10	13	38	73	5	2	2	9	82	25	0.3049
3-Feb-2013	Sunday	2	10	12	24	9	10	12	31	55	1	0	1	2	57	25	0.4386
9-Feb-2013	Saturday	2	6	5	13	2	8	11	21	34	0	2	1	3	37	17	0.4595
10-Feb-2013	Sunday	9	11	6	26	7	8	13	28	54	5	0	1	6	60	20	0.3333
16-Feb-2013	Saturday	17	9	12	38	18	11	15	44	82	8	3	2	13	95	29	0.3053
17-Feb-2013	Sunday	8	8	12	28	5	9	12	26	54	1	0	3	4	58	27	0.4655
23-Feb-2013	Saturday	3	7	10	20	6	6	9	21	41	0	1	2	3	44	21	0.4773
24-Feb-2013	Sunday	15	6	9	30	17	_ 6	11	34	64	5	0	1	6	70	21	0.3000
2-Mar-2013	Saturday	16	11	15	42	23	7	17	47	89	8	2	2	12	101	34	0.3366
3-Mar-2013	Sunday	17	10	10	37	17	10	10	37	74	10	0	1	11	85	21	0.2471
9-Mar-2013	Saturday	21	9	14	44	23	8	15	46	90	11	2	2	15	105	31	0.2952
10-Mar-2013	Sunday	23	8	10	41	26	8	14	48	89	11	0	1	27	116	25	0.2155
16-Mar-2013	Saturday	13	9	9	31	14	6	12	32	63	1	2	1	4	67	22	0.3284
17-Mar-2013	Sunday	18	6	13	37	23	4	15	42	<i>7</i> 9	8	0	1	9	88	29	0.3295
23-Mar-2013	Saturday	30	5	8	43	27	8	9	44	87	8	2	1	11	98	18	0.1837
24-Mar-2013	Sunday	23	12	14	49	23	9	17	49	98	10	2	2	14	112	33	0.2946
30-Mar-2013	Saturday	14	3	13	30	25	4	15	44	74	11	0	1	12	86	29	0.3372
31-Mar-2013	Sunday	13	10	11	34	15	7	19	41	75	4	1	1	6	81	31	0.3827
6-Apr-2013	Saturday	24	8	16	48	26	11	25	62	110	13	3	1	17	127	42	0.3307
7-Apr-2013	Sunday	17	5	15	37	22	5	23	50	87	10	2	1	13	100	39	0.3900
13-Apr-2013	Saturday	29	9	17	55	29	10	23	62	117	15	3	2	20	137	42	0.3066
14-Apr-2013	Sunday	24	4	14	42	24	7	16	47	89	15	0	1	16	105	31	0.2952
20-Apr-2013	Saturday																
21-Apr-2013	Sunday																
27-Apr-2013	Saturday																
28-Apr-2013	Sunday																
4-May-2013	Saturday																
5-May-2013	Sunday																
11-May-2013	Saturday																
12-May-2013	Sunday																
18-May-2013	Saturday																
19 <b>-</b> May-2013	Sunday																





From: Eleuteria Slater <terislater@mac.com>

Subject:

Date: April 17, 2013 12:51:00 AM EDT
To: Eleuteria Slater <terislater@mac.com>

ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORS ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE 12 Henderson Place New York, New York 10028

The Honorable Daniel R. Garodnick Th New York City Council 250 Broadway, 16th Floor New York, New York 10007

April 17, 2013

Re: Testimony of the Association of Neighbors on the Upper East Side on Intro 1025-6075

Dear Council Member Garodnick,

Over the years, our organization has worked on zoning, environmental and quality of life issues. The safety of our streets and public spaces has been of paramount interest to us. Our local stores are the lifeblood of our residentially zoned neighborhood. These C1 and C2 local retail uses are widely mapped throughout the city's residential neighborhoods. They face many challenges on a daily basis and residential neighborhoods can not function without them. We are blessed with a variety of eating and drinking establishments in all price ranges. There are countless affordable restaurants offering excellent food from all corners of the world. Many of them are "hole in the wall" restaurants, tiny establishments run by immigrant entrepreneurs who work tirelessly to make a go of their businesses.

Food trucks invaded our neighborhoods in the last couple of years causing safety and sanitation problems while operating illegally with impunity. They competed aggressively and unfairly with our small businesses while offering nothing new in the way of affordable food choices. They are the square peg in the round hole - they do not fit the residentially zoned envelope and should not be permitted in residential neighborhoods.

It is impossible to see oncoming traffic with huge noisy, polluting trucks parked at the curb. It is impossible to walk on narrow sidewalks with food truck customers

lining up for their orders. They block our storefronts and take away our essential parking spaces. Community Boards should not be forced to make Solomonic

decisions when it comes to deciding where these trucks should be located

Where should food trucks be permitted? The financial district, Midtown, tourist areas - the areas of the city where thousands of people are on the street at lunch time

looking for an affordable bite to eat and where there is a dearth of choices. Many of these trucks belong to highly successful bricks and mortar businesses even national

chains. Some of our struggling "hole in the wall" restaurants could fit inside some of these trucks but have responsibilities and pay a price the truck

A few hundred trucks don't make up an industry and they are not more entrepreneurial than small bricks and mortar business owners with good ideas. Please protect our residential quality of life and the thousands of overtaxed, fee paying small businesses, our local retail uses. They are one of the city's most invaluable

industries.

Respectfully,

Teri Slater,

President, Association of Neighbors on the Upper East Side

### Ideas on Improving regulations for Food Trucks

### Presented by Joseph Glaser of the La Bella Torte Dessert Truck

The legislation is going to designate 450 parking spots for food trucks. Her are some ideas that might make it work better.

- 1. There is a total of about 75 food trucks in NYC (these are trucks only, carts are not included) issue Truck specific permits which should be issued to the owner of the vehicle or officer of that corporation. (in other words the registrant of the vehicle must match the name on the permit)
- 2. Assign location specific permits which will rotate certain spots on certain days (ex. Taco truck in spot A Mon, Wed, Fri., Grilled Cheese Truck in spot a Tues, Thurs, Sat., etc...) This will allow trucks that cannot get a mobile permit to work off a location specific permit, or temporary food service permit. This will also give the consumer more of a choice if the same truck is not in the same spot every day.
- 3. Food Truck parks specify specific parks or lots just for food truck (Ex. World Financial Center has 5 trucks a day and rotate 5 days a week)
- 4. A check in system to one central place which will let the other trucks know where they can and cannot go in that area
- 5. Issue more outer borough permits to prevent congestion in Manhattan.
- 6. Reasonable fee for the location permit
- Monthly City sponsored food truck rally in different areas of the city including the outer borroughs to promote the trucks give more access to consumers.
- 8. Shorter wait time to get mobile food vending licenses for employees
- 9. Promote trucks and locations through NYC website or twitter feed or Facebook page

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### City Council Hearing Wednesday, April 17, 2013

My name is Michael Addison, and I am the Vice President of Policy for the New York City Food Truck Association. I work with our President, David Weber, and members of the association on policy development and crafting best practices that preserve the benefits food trucks provide New Yorkers, while also addressing the interests of the City and other stakeholders.

### Advancing the Dialogue

The bill we are discussing today helps advance an important dialogue about finding practical solutions to the issues facing the food truck industry. Some progress has already been achieved in this area, thanks to the efforts of Council Member Garodnick and other Council Members who have taken an interest in tackling the challenges of regulating mobile food vending. But much work still remains. We understand that finding equitable solutions that address the interests of the City, food trucks, and other community stakeholders is a difficult task. And we look forward to working with City Council and the City's Agencies towards this goal.

### **Implementation Considerations**

As we move forward with this dialogue, we believe it is important to be mindful of several issues relating to implementation of the proposed bill. We are especially concerned about how designated food truck locations would be allocated throughout the city and among vendors. How locations would be added or subtracted is crucial as well. Also, food trucks serve a variety of communities throughout the City and sometimes follow very different business models. For instance, while many trucks rely on regular mobility as part of their operating model, some trucks instead choose to focus on serving a single community, and have done so for years. An understanding of the complexities and nuances of the food truck industry is critical for developing a regulatory scheme that is responsive to the nature of the mobile food market.

### **Principles-Based Policy**

Given the complexities of regulating food trucks and mobile food vendors, we believe it is advisable to develop principles-based policy guidance that focuses on desired outcomes more than specific methods. The mobile food vending market has evolved immensely in recent years, however, as this hearing illustrates, our regulatory framework has not evolved with it. Given the rapid innovation and change that can occur within this marketplace, maintaining some flexibility within any new regulatory scheme is imperative.

#### Community Stewardship

We welcome continued dialogue and truly appreciate the efforts of City Council and the City Agencies to provide greater regulatory certainty for the food truck industry. Also, aside from the topics just discussed, we welcome continued dialogue on other issues as well, including food safety, pedestrian safety, and refuse management as they relate to food trucks and mobile food vending. We believe in being stewards of our community, and these issues are of great importance to us. Through our own development of best practices and self-imposed guidelines, we hope we can serve as a model for the City and our industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michael Addison Vice President of Policy, NYC Food Truck Association michael@nycfoodtrucks.org



### Testimony from the Street Vendor Project before the City Council Committee on Transportation re: Food Truck Legislation April 17, 2013

Hello, my name is Sean Basinski, and I am the director of the Street Vendor Project of the Urban Justice Center. We have more than 1,500 members who sell food and merchandise on the streets and sidewalks of our city, including vendors who sell food from trucks. Council Member Garodnick did not consult us about this proposed legislation but we do appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

The rising popularity of food trucks over the last five years has been of great benefit to our city. Many people who could not afford to open a restaurant have lived out their dreams by opening a food truck. The innovative food sold from trucks has generated great excitement in the large food community that exists here. Food trucks are now activating many public spaces and providing employment opportunities for many hundreds, if not thousands, of workers.

Parking is a serious problem for vendors with trucks. We appreciate the Council's effort to begin a conversation about this issue. However, we believe the proposed bill raises as many questions as it answers.

The most important of those questions is: where will the parking spots be located? Instead of resolving that issue, this bill simply passed the buck to the Department of Transportation, which has never viewed vendors as legitimate part of our city streetscape. Just last week, DOT placed a bench in the spot where one of our vendors in Brooklyn has worked for many years. They have refused to move it aside – preferring an inanimate object to a small business owner who is trying to support his family and serve his community. Indeed, if DOT wanted to create parking spots for food trucks, right now, they could easily do so.

A much easier solution is at hand – to allow trucks to park legally at metered parking spaces, as other cities do. This would give vendors flexibility, which is critical to their business. It would also allow the city to generate fees from that parking space when it is being used by a food truck and when it is not. With more than 81,000 metered parking spaces in the city, a few hundred food trucks will have a negligible effect on anyone's ability to find a parking space. And food trucks are as legitimate users of that space as anyone else. In fact, food trucks provide an important benefit – delicious and convenient and inexpensive food – in whatever neighborhood they work.

Any complaints about food trucks generating trash or noise should be dealt with by enforcement of those laws that already exist. Our organization often resolves issues between residents or brick and mortar businesses who complain about our vendors outside. We stand ready to work with any stakeholders to ensure that food vendors can continue to serve New York, the city they have been an integral part of for more than 200 years. Thank you again for the chance to testify today.



April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Testimony for Hearing on Food Truck Vendors

My name is Laura Schultz, Economic Development Associate for the Hudson Square BID d/b/a the Hudson Square Connection. Our President Ellen Baer couldn't be here today and she's asked me to read this statement on her behalf. We'd like to thank the Council for taking on this difficult issue and for the opportunity to be heard.

Our BID is bounded by Houston Street on the north, Canal Street on the south, 6th Avenue on the east and Greenwich Street on the west. The Council approved the rezoning of our area this past March, but to date our neighborhood has been defined by its industrial past — although we currently have over 35,000 young creative professionals working in Hudson Square. Because of our lack of adequate retail, our neighborhood is virtually overrun by food trucks, all parking illegally, primarily in metered parking. Therefore, we have a great deal of experience with this issue.

- With respect to the legislation as currently drafted but we have several concerns:
  - First and foremost, although written in the original code, currently enforcement against illegal
    parking is non-existent and needs to be addressed along with penalties for violations. Lack of
    enforcement renders any new program irrelevant. We would like to work with the council to
    ensure that this is dealt with.
  - Although the food trucks cause hardship for bricks and mortar food operators, the trucks do
    satisfy the demands of an important market niche. We have experimented with solutions which
    concentrate food trucks in a single location (a kind of food truck "court") and would like to
    continue to do so, perhaps on specified streets with little retail. The legislation, as currently
    drafted, would not allow for this.
  - Third, the BID's should have a prominent and specific role in determining food truck locations in their respective districts. No one has a better understanding of these small businesses and their role in the local economy than BID's.

These are our initial thoughts. We hope that the Hudson Square Connection and the BID Managers' Association can play an active role in helping to further craft this important piece of legislation. Thank you for your attention.

## April 17, 2013 Hearing - Oversight: Food Truck Vendors: Examining An Emerging Industry Andrew Bozzo - Carpe Donut NYC

### Mobile Food Vending License

The requirement that any person working on a Mobile Food Vending Unit has a Mobile Food Vending License (MFVL) is an excessive standard that wouldn't be tolerated in any other industry including the traditional retail food service industry. The Mobile Food Vending community in New York hasn't had a voice so this problem has been allowed to continue. The process to acquire a MFVL takes about 3 months and in that time a person cannot work on a Mobile Food Vending Unit. Can you imagine the uproar from Starbucks or McDonalds if they were required to wait 3 months before a cashier they hired could work?

### Here are the issues with the process

Requiring each person to have a Certificate of Authority to collect Sales tax.

This requirement is unnecessary because the company that runs the Mobile Food Vending Unit files and pays the NYS for sales tax. If this requirement were dropped this would also benefit the state in that it wouldn't have to process all of these unnecessary requests for Certificates of Authority.

Requiring each person to take a Food Handling course.

This is required for each person even if they are not handling any food, so a cashier must take this course. On each Mobile Food Vending Unit there should be one person who has take the course but it isn't necessary for everyone.

Requiring a person to wait to receive their MFVL in the mail before they can work on a Mobile Food Vending Unit (this takes 6 weeks)

This is the longest delay of the entire process and the biggest issue. If a person has completed all of the requirements and submitted the application they should be issued a provisional license or be allowed to work with the receipt of their application filing as proof. Why this part of the process takes so long I don't know but it needs to be fixed.

#### Issues this causes the Mobile Food Community and the City

- We cannot staff our Units adequately and this causes us to lose revenue. If we lose revenue then the State and City do not
  receive as much revenue in Sales, Income and Payroll tax.
- If we identify a person that we want to hire very often they don't have the money or the time to wait to complete this process. The MFVL requirement keeps people out of work!
- If we invest time (3 months) and money into guiding a person through this process we cannot train or know if they are the worker we want for 3 months. If we decide that this person is not right for our company we lose our significant investment
- If a person invests the time and money into going through this process and they decide that they don't want to work on a
  Mobile Food Vending Unit afterwards they have wasted 3 months and hundreds of dollars.

#### Proposal

The city should not require each person on a cart to have a MFVL. If the city needs to have this requirement filled in some way then, each Mobile Food Vending Unit should have a manager that has a MFVL and the other workers can work under that manager without each having a MFVL. Any violations will go to the manager and safe food handling would be the responsibility of the manager.

#### Michele Birnbaum 1035 Park Avenue New York, New York 10028

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#### **Testimony on Intro 1025 Truck Vendor Bill**

My name is Michele Birnbaum and while I'm the Chair of the Vendor Task Force Committee of Community Board 8, I am testifying in my own behalf today, as the Board has not had the opportunity to review this Intro. They, have however, included in a past Resolution that they are generally supportive of assigned locations for vendors, subject to the details of such a proposal.

I thank the Chair and the Council Members for hearing my testimony today.

I and others have had discussions with Council Member Garodnick and had suggested that assigned locations might be a possible solution for the very strong concerns that communities are expressing about intrusive vending which has become detrimental to our streetscape and our quality of life.

And while I welcome the opportunity to comment on this bill, I, first, would like to differ with its premise which states that food truck vending is an important part of our community. With their persistence, hard work and proliferation and breaking some rules, they have made themselves a force that communities must deal with. But this is not to say that they are necessary to a thriving community. Their employees are often exploited and most often do not receive the benefits that other workers receive, and they are a significant intrusion on our streets.

I dispute the claim that truck vendors fill the gap and provide affordable food. Their presence has resulted in less brick and mortar groceries, delis and bodegas, thus decreasing competition between these businesses resulting in higher prices. The existing un-level playing field where vendors do not pay rent, salaries, workers benefits, insurance, utilities, etc. has seriously impacted these other businesses which **do** benefit the communities they serve.

As for the heart of the bill, I and others support assigned locations for food truck vendors and, over the years, have made that interest known to Council Members. I want to see metered spaces which trucks currently occupy turned back to the local businesses, and I want to see loading zones kept free for their intended use.

However, this bill does not go far enough in describing and restricting the locations of food truck vendors, and designation made solely by the Department of Transportation is of concern, despite the call for community review that the bill addresses.

The DOT needs firm parameters to guild them through the initial selection process.

For example, one vendor – one spot is a good idea, but where – on every block, every five blocks, every ten blocks, on avenues, on side streets, etc?

I suggest the following parameters. Food truck vendors should not be permitted in any residential area or in any mixed-use area where the retail is meant to support the surrounding residential community. If you live in an apartment building or a private home, you have an expectation, when stepping out of your front door in that residential area, of not having a commercial venture on your doorstep. The New York City Zoning Resolution does not permit commercial activity in residential areas, and vending is a commercial activity.

The owner of a building or business has liability for what happens on his sidewalk and is responsible for the cleanliness of the street up to 18 inches in to the gutter. As I walk the streets in my neighborhood where there is vendor activity, I see litter and garbage on the sidewalks or placed in tree pits, and I have neighbors whose buildings have received tickets for these infractions. This is a very serious issue. I and others have also been disturbed by the on-street cooking which generates smoke and odors which permeate the air and flow into apartments and stores. Currently, street vending is conducted with the significant intrusion on others. Food trucks and all vending should be permitted **only** in commercial areas.

It is my understanding that there are currently 3000 mobile food vending licenses, a category that includes not only trucks, but any cart that has wheels and can be moved, i.e. hot dog carts, bagel carts, peanut carts, carts which stand on the sidewalk and cook food. It is also my understanding that the Department of Health does not know how many of the 3000 food vendors that currently hold licenses are mobile food truck vendors, but guesses that it is approximately 300 to 400.

This bill provides locations for 450 food truck vendors plus an additional 5% of the current number in order to allow for growth in this industry. Because a food vendor that is currently holding a license has the autonomy to decide to switch to truck vending, and because the DOH does not keep track of how many there are of each kind of mobile food vendor, and because a proliferation is inevitable which will make the number of spots called for in this bill obsolete, it seems that the DOH should keep track of the number of each kind of mobile food vendor and that the number of mobile food truck vendors should be capped, preferably at this current estimated number. The bill does not state whether or not truck vendors, for whom there is not an assigned spot, can still vend, but it should. There should be no food truck vending except in these assigned locations.

Mobile food vending is becoming a popular way of expanding existing bricks and mortar businesses and will continue to remain so, because it is much less costly than long term leases and labor and insurance requirements necessary to open a bricks and mortar business. For this bill to make sense from a quality of life point of view, the number must be capped and a careful accounting must be kept.

Also, while it is important to limit the number of truck vendors to one on a block, other mobile food carts would still be on the sidewalk. Unless you dictate the distance in blocks between the assigned truck vendor spots, and/or limit the other food vendors that can be on the sidewalk on a block where there is a parked food truck, you can still have a block over-run with vending, and this accumulation doesn't even address the fruit stands and general merchandise vendors that could further crowd the pedestrian way and infringe on other businesses.

The bill talks about a fee paid at the time of location designation. Is that forever, for a year, for two years, etc. If that vendor is found non-compliant for any reason, what is the penalty? Is it a ticket? Does the location get revoked? Or, does he continue to vend in that spot with fines remaining the cost of doing business? This fee is called an "administrative" fee. It sounds like a one-time cost, but should it be, or should it be collected yearly like rent or collected for the term of a lease, if there is a limited term of spot designation?

With regard to the DOT presenting the proposed locations to Community Boards for their input, the bill reads that they may or may not incorporate the Boards' suggestions. The DOT could still put these vending spots where they deem appropriate. Even in commercially zoned districts, there may be spots where the DOT sees no conflict with regard to pedestrian flow, hydrants, street furniture, etc., but businesses may object to a food truck outside their establishments for any number of reasons. I believe these objections should be considered and that the review process should take place yearly and not just once during the initial phase. Areas change; conditions and pedestrian flow changes. These locations must be carefully monitored and frequently reviewed.

This bill is a step in the right direction only if strict parameters are in place to guide the decision makers.

Like most things in life, the devil is in the details, and while conceptually I support this effort, I'm not comfortable enough to support this particular bill, because of the serious concerns I've addressed: There should be no spots in residential areas; there should be a careful accounting that distinguishes between the number of food trucks from other food vendors; there should be a cap on the number of food trucks starting now and going forward; there should be a frequent renewal process of permit of assigned locations which takes into consideration vendor compliance and the appropriateness of a location as time goes by.

Please consider my comments, and incorporate them into this bill to make it stronger and to make it a bill that, if enacted, really makes a difference in people's lives.

Again, thank you for listening.

Respectfully,
Michele Birnbaum



BLT Expansion



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