



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Planning Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	May 31, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Status of Food Truck Industry in Hamilton (PED16122) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
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<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Jason Thorne General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## Council Direction:

At the Council meeting held on April 13, 2016, Information Item (h)(i) of Planning Committee Report 16-006 directed the following:

“(h)(i) Status of Food Truck Industry in Hamilton

That staff report back on the status of the food truck industry in Hamilton regarding the number of trucks and any issues with the City’s By-laws that may need to be addressed.”

## Information:

The food truck industry has evolved over the past four years with Council’s enactment of a Food Truck license category in the City’s Business Licensing By-law that created the flexibility and accommodation to support this changing business model. Hamilton is now seen as a leader among Ontario municipalities in the development of a progressive and innovative food truck regulation that has also sparked the industry’s growth. This “Open for Business” attitude has attributed to the Hamilton food culture evolution that not only supports charities, cultural and community events, but has also encouraged new businesses to invest in Hamilton.

In 2012, Schedule 6 (Food Services Vehicles) was created in the Business Licensing By-law that better defined the category of food trucks and reduced restrictions for the industry. These regulations recognize the food truck industry as a new business model and attempted to balance the industry with the existing restaurant industry in Hamilton.

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In 2014, the regulations were further relaxed, recognizing the value of the food truck industry for charitable organizations and the service they could provide to the community in local parks. The changes gave better accessibility to areas previously “off limits”, while restricting access around special events to ensure safety for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The clarity in the regulation has given a better understanding for the operators to work within the established guidelines.

The food truck industry is now an integral part of local festivals and community events. Supercrawl, Sew Hungry, Holy Food Trucks, Food Truck Alley and Down by the Bay are only a few of the food truck draws that have put Hamilton on the map for this industry. As an example, Sew Hungry, a local food truck rally on Ottawa Street, is an award-winning restaurant and food truck festival that annually attracts over 35 food trucks and thousands of citizens to this community. This not only generates business for the local restaurants and shops, but also becomes a Hamilton attraction that celebrates the history of Ottawa Street and brings our community together.

The food truck industry continues to evolve with 109 Food Service Vehicles being licensed to date in 2016. In 2015, there were 112 vehicles licensed, with many of these involving new businesses operating within the City. We are also seeing a trend of food trucks coming from other communities and obtaining licences to operate in Hamilton during specific events and festivals.

The industry has seen food truck businesses evolve from mobile units into permanent licensed restaurants as their products become known and their client base grows. This transition from food truck operators to restaurant entrepreneurs has occurred five times since 2013 as new restaurants open for business throughout Hamilton.

Over the past four years, the Licensing Section has investigated 35 complaints involving food trucks. The most common complaints were offences including operating without a licence, excessive noise and operating in an area where they were not permitted. With respect to offences of operating in an area not permitted, many of those complaints have been addressed with the relaxing of the regulations and allowing food trucks in areas of churches and schools for fundraising purposes.

Several municipalities have examined Hamilton’s Food Truck regulations as best practices; however, there may still be some areas for improvement. Developing a weekend or festival pass would be beneficial for some of the operators that come from out of town. Festival organizers would also like to see a more streamlined process for the approval of the food service providers, including food trucks. Also Licensing is examining a new trend of mobile farmers’ markets that service areas where traditional markets are not accessible.

As the Licensing Section continues to review and update each schedule in the Business Licensing By-law, any “fine tuning” of Schedule 6 will be brought forward for approval at that time. The Food Service Vehicle Schedule is anticipated to come forward in early 2017.

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