

Sidewalk Vendor Ordinance

City Council

October 21, 2025



Background

- Increase in sidewalk vendors throughout Alameda the last few years at annual events and community celebrations
- City Council Strategic Plan project #CS33
- Interdepartmental team collaborated to create a framework and permit process for non-motorized sidewalk vendors in the public right of way and on public property
- Reviewed sidewalk vending ordinances from Dublin, Hayward, and Santa Monica



SB 946 – Safe Sidewalk Vending Act

- SB 946, the Safe Sidewalk Vending Act (2019)
 - Decriminalizes sidewalk vending
 - Allows cities to establish a permit system within specified framework of restrictions
 - Effort to create economic opportunities for low-income and immigrant communities while also protecting public health and safety



Community Input

- Solicited input from Thompson Ave neighbors, business community, local mobile vendor, and Alameda Unified School District
- Strong support from Alameda Chamber and Downtown Alameda
 - Does not impact brick and mortar sidewalk displays



Framework

- Applies to non-motorized sidewalk vendors on public property and right of way, not private
- Stationary – prohibited in residential neighborhoods, allowed in commercial from 7:00am – 10:00pm
- Roaming – allowed in all areas from 8:00am (or sunrise) to 8:00pm (or sunset)
- For safety purposes, not allowed on Thompson Ave and specified surrounding streets during December on Fri/Sat/Sun from 4:00pm to 9:00am and week before Dec. 25th



Permit Process

- City Encroachment Permit required. Applicant must show proof of:
 - City business license
 - Alameda County Environmental Health Dept permit (if selling food)
 - CA Seller's Permit (tax license)
 - Insurance, including workers' comp and commercial auto with a minimum of \$1,000,000
- Apply annually with \$50 permit fee



Operational Requirements

- Maintain ADA clearance on sidewalks
- Comply with Noise Regulations and no flashing lights
- Not within 200 feet of permitted special event
- Safe distance from driveways, crosswalks, corners, bus shelters, school drop offs, etc.
- Not blocking bike lanes or obstructing visibility
- Cannot sell prohibited items
- Maintain sanitary conditions



Vendor Education

- Website in multiple languages and QR code
- Brochure in multiple languages for Code Enforcement Officers and Business Districts to share when encountering vendors
- At Christmas Tree Lane, posting A-Frames with website and vendor program info



Enforcement

- Enforced by City Code Enforcement Officers
- Primarily complaint based with limited proactive enforcement for specific events
- Enforcement of evenings and weekends intermittent due to staff availability and overtime
- Verbal and written warnings that can escalate to three administrative citations (\$100, \$200, \$500) then permit revoked. Equipment can be impounded by Police Department



Considerations

- \$50 annual permit fee could be reduced or waived
- Business license minimum annual fee of \$119 could be reduced or waived.
 - Requires updating the Business License Ordinance and fee schedule.
 - Sets a precedent



Comments and Questions

