



STAFF REPORT
1/22/2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: Adopt Ordinance No. 1219 Coachella Healthy Food Truck Permit Pilot Program (ZOA No. 24-03) for active date farms

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt Ordinance No. 1219, second reading, to implement a Coachella Healthy Food Truck Permit Pilot Program for the operation of mobile food trucks in active date farms.

BACKGROUND:

On March 13, 2024 the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1209 establishing sidewalk vending regulations in compliance with SB 946. The requirements of the Riverside County Environmental Health have been challenging for sidewalk vendors to obtain a County health permit and the City currently does not allow mobile food trucks without a special event permit. The City recently sponsored the Coachella Container Park on Grapefruit Boulevard, which is a private enterprise and a City approved location for sidewalk vendors and food trucks. The Healthy Food Truck Permit Pilot program would allow a limited number of mobile food trucks subject to incorporating healthy menu items as encouraged in the City of Coachella General Plan Community Health and Wellness Element. The program will further enhance economic opportunities by creating unique and healthy culinary experiences in the Coachella Downtown and at existing date farms.

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed ordinance at a study session November 6, 2024 and provided feedback that includes:

- Flexibility with alcohol service at date farm food trucks. The ordinance presented at the study session only permitted alcohol service with scheduled farm to table experiences.
- Consider allowing phased parking improvements at date farm food trucks.

On November 20, 2024, the Planning Commission recommended to the City Council adoption of the program with modifications that include:

- Allow a maximum of 3 food trucks at date farms
- Standard accessible restrooms may be permitted instead of executive restrooms
- Allow outdoor open grilling or asadero style grilling at date farms.

Since the Planning Commission meeting planning staff consulted with the Public Works Director and it is recommended that the food truck program not include the Avenue 53 soccer park since it

is not a City park managed by the City of Coachella or have the availability of restrooms.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The Coachella Healthy Food Truck Pilot Program would allow mobile food trucks as a 4-year pilot program with annual permit renewals, subject to menu and operational requirements in City parks, in the Downtown (DT-PV) and Downtown Transition (TR-PV) Zone, and on active date farms. The City is working with the Riverside University Health System (RUHS) Nutrition and Health Promotion Branch and Coachella Blue Zones initiative in order to develop criteria for a healthy food truck. The program would require the mobile food trucks meet nutritional standards set forth in the Blue Zones Food guidelines and Blue Zones Restaurant Pledge with an emphasis on nutritional guidelines such as eating seasonal fruits and vegetables, whole grains, beans, and nuts; using plant-based oils; reducing sugar and dairy and increasing plant-based options. It also includes guidelines and recommendations on optimizing the food environment and eating experience and promoting health options. The efforts would complement the Coachella Blue Zones initiative with the aim of improving health outcomes by including simple guidelines for how the world's longest-lived people ate for most of their lives.

The Coachella Healthy Food Truck program requirements for date farms are outlined below:

Date Farms

- 3 food trucks maximum per lot with a minimum 1-acre size that must be an active date farm with a minimum of 30 date palm trees
- Requires a minimum of 1 signature food offering with date ingredients or offer of the direct sale of date fruits
- On-site parking required
- Requires activity areas such as cornhole and horseshoes
- Allows accessory retail pop-up businesses
- Operating Hours – 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- On-Sale Alcohol service permitted with approval of a Conditional Use Permit.
- Planning Commission approval is required as a non-hearing item

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Adopt Ordinance No. 1219 (ZOA No. 24-03), second reading, to establish a Coachella Healthy Food Truck Permit Pilot Program for the operation of mobile food trucks at active date farms.
- 2) Deny the proposed ordinances.
- 3) Continue this item and provide staff with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends Alternative #1. The pilot program is a limited term and would accomplish the following:

- Serve as an intermediary path for sidewalk vendors to brick and mortar businesses
- Provide healthy food options to Coachella residents in compliance with the Coachella Health and Wellness Element
- Establish a visitor experience in Coachella date gardens, Coachella Date Trail/Coachella Ruta de Datil, with mobile food truck businesses traditionally not permitted in an agricultural setting

Attachments:

1. Ordinance No. 1219 ZOA No. 24-03 Coachella Healthy Food Truck Permit Pilot Program - Healthy Food Truck Permit Ordinance – Date Farms