

City of Spring Lake Park Staff Report



Agenda Date	Status
March 2, 2026 Work Session	
Requestor	Agenda Section
Administrator Buchholtz	Discussion
Agenda Item #: 2b	
Business Ordinance Updates	
Executive Summary	
<p>Staff is in the process of updating the City’s business regulation ordinances to improve clarity, modernize standards, and ensure alignment with current state law and best practices. A first draft has been completed for the following sections: mobile food units (last adoption 7/25/75); peddlers, solicitors and transient merchants (last adoption 10/3/05); vehicles for hire (last adoption 8/16/65); charitable gaming (minor update in 2012; last significant updates in 5/6/91, 7/15/91 and 5/20/95).</p> <p>These updates reflect substantial modernization of provisions that, in several cases, have not been comprehensively reviewed in decades. Staff is seeking City Council feedback on the initial draft to confirm policy direction before forwarding the revised sections to the City Attorney for formal legal review.</p>	
Background	
<p><u>Mobile Food Unit Ordinance</u></p> <p>The City’s existing catering food vehicle ordinance was originally adopted on July 25, 1975, and has not kept pace with the significant growth and evolution of the modern mobile food industry. What was once primarily limited to neighborhood ice cream vendors has expanded to include food trucks operating at private businesses, public spaces, and special events. The current code contains outdated terminology and regulatory standards that do not fully reflect current state and county licensing requirements, fire safety standards, insurance expectations, or contemporary operating practices.</p> <p>The proposed update modernizes and reorganizes the ordinance into a comprehensive Mobile Food Unit (MFU) chapter that clearly defines operator types, establishes a registration and permitting framework, and sets reasonable time, place, and manner standards. The revisions are intended to protect public health and safety, ensure traffic and pedestrian safety, minimize nuisance impacts, and provide clear expectations for operators,</p>	

while allowing mobile food businesses to operate in a predictable and business-friendly regulatory environment.

Vehicles for Hire

The City's Vehicles for Hire ordinance was originally adopted on August 16, 1965, at a time when traditional taxi services were the primary form of for-hire transportation. The ordinance establishes a local licensing and regulatory framework for taxicabs and similar services operating within the City. However, the City does not currently have any licensed vehicles for hire and has not issued such a license in many years.

With the widespread adoption of rideshare platforms such as Uber and Lyft, regulation of transportation network companies is now addressed at the state level, and the traditional municipal taxi licensing model is largely obsolete in Spring Lake Park. Given the lack of current licensees and the shift in how for-hire transportation services are provided and regulated, staff recommends repeal of the Vehicles for Hire ordinance as unnecessary and outdated.

Peddlers, Solicitors and Transient Merchant Ordinance

The City's Peddlers, Solicitors, and Transient Merchants ordinance was last substantially adopted on October 3, 2005. Since that time, legal standards governing door-to-door activity—particularly related to First Amendment protections—have continued to evolve. The proposed revisions are based on the current model ordinance developed by the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC), which reflects updated statutory authority and relevant case law.

The update modernizes definitions, clarifies the distinction between commercial activity and constitutionally protected non-commercial advocacy, refines registration and licensing procedures, strengthens due process standards, and updates prohibited conduct provisions. The intent is to align the City's regulations with current legal guidance while maintaining appropriate consumer protections, neighborhood safeguards, and public safety standards.

Charitable Gaming Ordinance

The City's Charitable (Lawful) Gambling ordinance was originally adopted in the early 1990s, with significant revisions in 1991 and 1995 and a minor update in 2012. Since that time, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 349 has been amended, and certain license classifications and regulatory provisions referenced in the City's code are no longer reflected in current state law. As a result, portions of the ordinance are outdated and would benefit from clarification and alignment with current statutory language.

The proposed revisions are based on the model ordinance developed by the League of Minnesota Cities and are intended to modernize definitions, update local approval procedures, clarify reporting and enforcement standards, and ensure consistency with current state requirements. The update does not modify the City's existing 3% local gambling tax structure but instead focuses on bringing the ordinance into compliance and improving overall clarity and enforceability.

Board/Commission Review

N/A

Financial Impact

Cost of publication; City attorney review costs

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council receive the proposed updates to the Mobile Food Units, Peddlers/Solicitors/Transient Merchants, Vehicles for Hire, and Charitable Gambling ordinances and provide feedback on the policy direction reflected in the drafts. Based on Council input, staff further recommends authorizing transmittal of the revised draft ordinances to the City Attorney for formal legal review and comment prior to scheduling introduction or adoption consideration.

Attachments

1. Mobile Food Units Proposed Ordinance Update
2. Peddler-Solicitor Proposed Ordinance Update
3. Lawful Gambling Proposed Ordinance Update