



Food Cart Pod Discussion

April 27, 2026 – Work Session



Agenda



- Background
- Tualatin's current standards
- Best practices in the area
 - Peer city standards
- Market driven approach discussion
- City supported model discussion
- Questions & next steps



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TUALATIN

Background



Economic Development

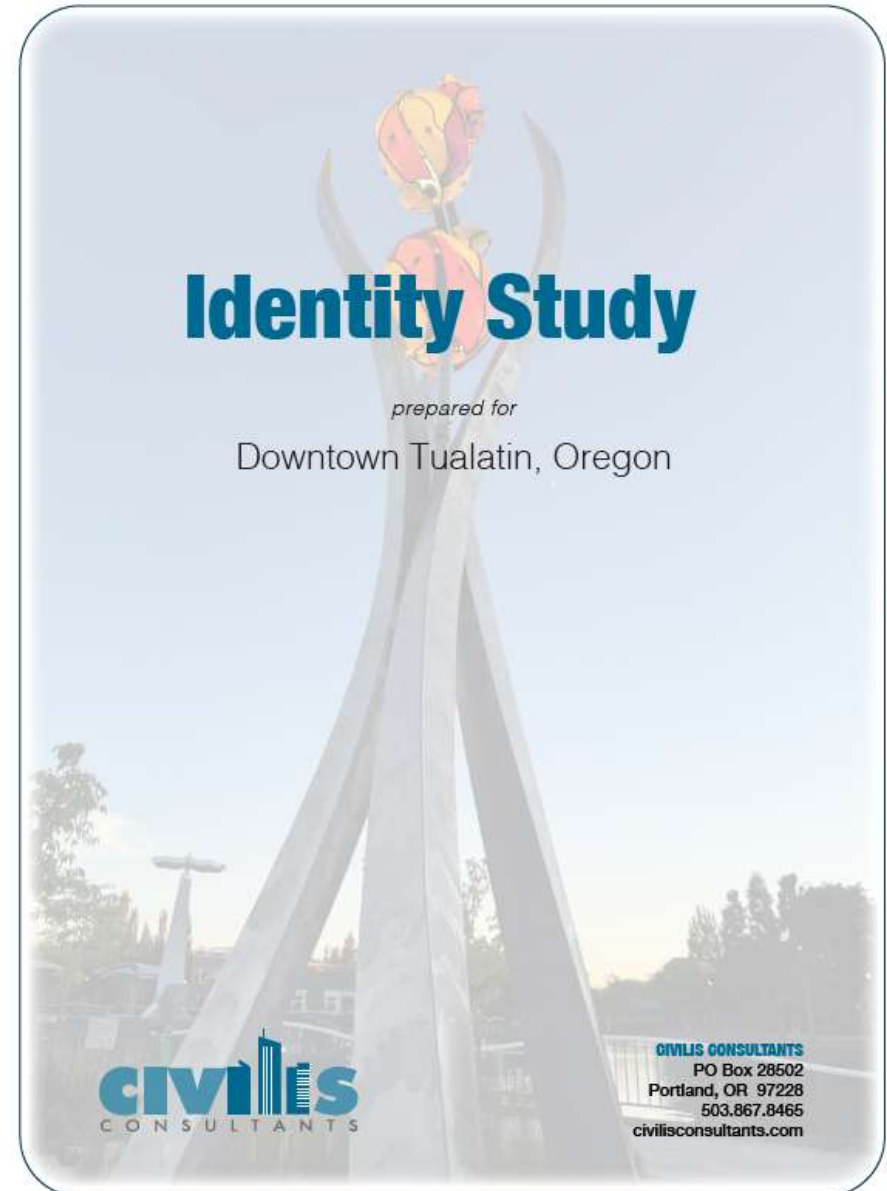
- Food Carts: *Revisit policy and specifications*



Background

Downtown Identity Study

- Overwhelming community interest in a food cart pod downtown near parks.
- 1/3 of respondents surveyed considered a food cart pod a “must have”.
- A food cart pod would support the following community identity frameworks:
 - Circulation
 - Activity



Background



Previous Discussion

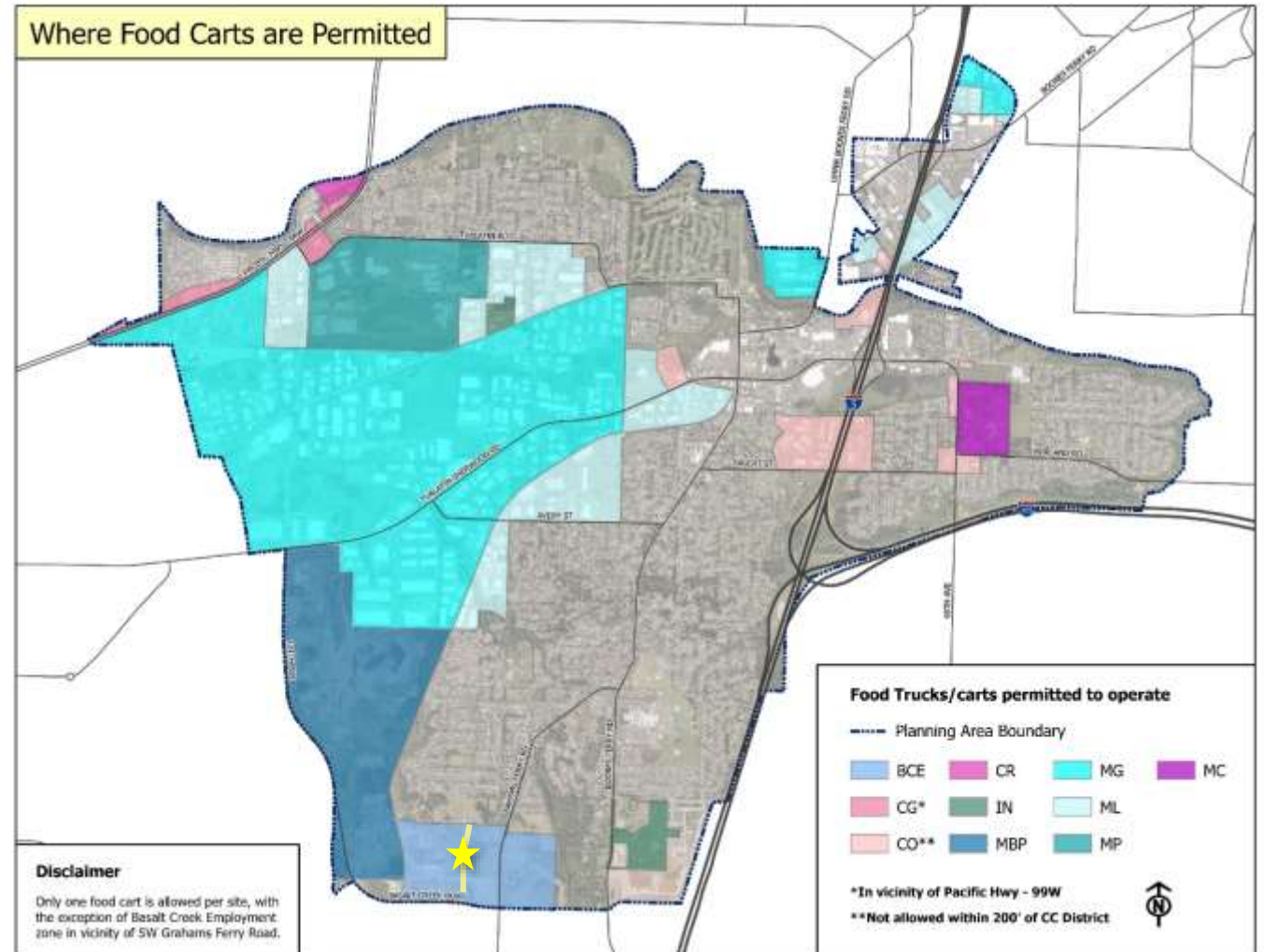
- Permit in the downtown (Core Opportunity and Reinvestment Area), possibly other areas of the city
 - Encourage outdoor gathering space that supports the Lake of the Commons and future Riverfront Park
- Research what other cities are doing
 - What is the best practice regarding siting on gravel or paved surfaces?
 - What is the best practice regarding utility connections?
 - What alternative models are out there that support small business development?



Where are food carts currently allowed?

Zoning

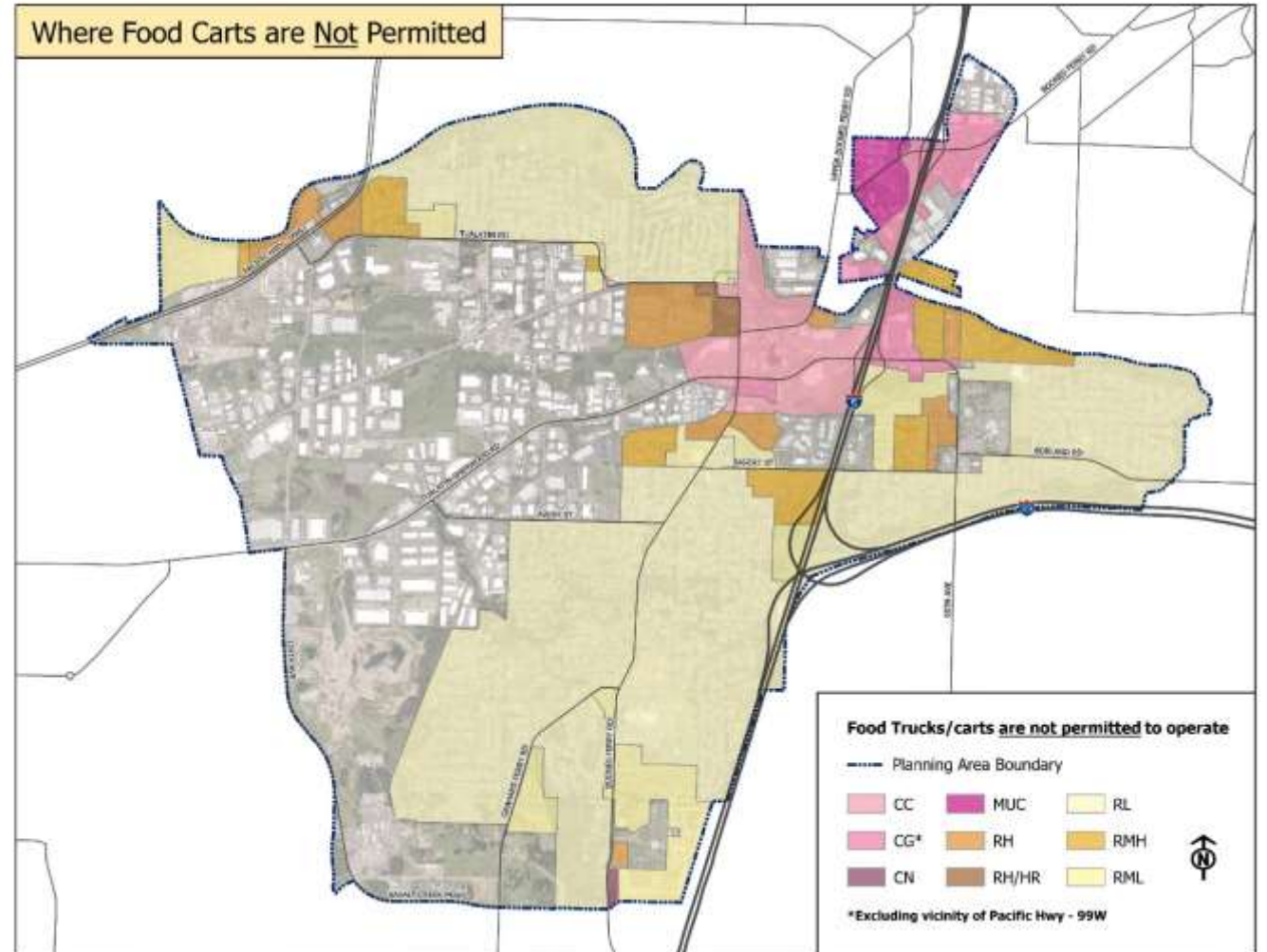
- Commercial Office
- Recreational Commercial
- General Commercial limited to 99W
- Medical Center
- Light Manufacturing
- General Manufacturing
- Manufacturing Park
- Manufacturing Business Park
- Institutional
- Basalt Creek Employment



Where are they not allowed?

Zoning

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Low Density Residential
- Medium High Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- High Density Residential High Rise
- Light Manufacturing
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Central Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mid-Rise/Office Commercial
- Mixed Use Commercial



What are Tualatin's standards?



Municipal Code Chapter 9-10

- Only one food cart on site at a time*
*exception in Basalt Creek Employment zone
- May only operate on paved surfaces (not gravel)
- Must not obstruct vehicular areas and /or pedestrian areas
- Self-contained systems (may not connect to public water, sewer, or electrical)
- Provide garbage and recycling for patrons



What are Tualatin's standards?



Allowance for Food Cart Pod limited to Basalt Creek Employment Zone

- Allows for one food cart pod development in Basalt Creek
 - Up to 10 food carts
- Reviewed through Architectural Review process, must:
 - Have frontage along Grahams Ferry Road
 - Comply with site & public improvement standards
 - Provide screening from public view



Local regulations for pods

- Majority of food cart pods are market driven development. Few cities have supported models.
- Variation in the scale of development and number of carts permitted.
- All cities required carts to be located on paved surfaces.
- Some cities require a covered pavilion or shelter.
- Utility connection requirements differ between temporary, permanent, or a choice of either.
- Usually subject to setback and screening requirements.



Comparative analysis for pods



City	Beaverton	Happy Valley	Sherwood	Tigard
Model	Market Driven	Market Driven	Market Driven	Market Driven / City Supported
Where Allowed	MUC, COM, EMP	COM, IND	COM	COM, IND
Permit Type	Type II	Type II / Type III	Type IV & CUP	Type II
Carts/ Site	1+	1-4 / 5+	5+	20 max
Utilities	Permanent/ Temporary	Permanent/ Temporary	Permanent	Temporary
Surface	Paved	Paved	Paved	Paved
Restrooms	Permanent/ Portable	Portable for 1-4 Carts/ Permanent for 5+ Carts	Permanent	Permanent
Structure	Permitted	Permitted	Required	Required
Screening	Required	Residential	Residential	Residential

Market Driven

- There is current interest from 7 private developers to establish a food cart pod. Staff has spoken to 5 of them.
- Responsive to council priority and community desires.
- City has less control over specific site selection.

To support a market driven approach:

- Staff could be directed to update the development code to permit the use in all commercial zones and establish design standards.
 - Policy direction and confirmation would be sought in future work sessions.
 - Code update will be a required first step, prior to establishing a potential city supported model.
- Doesn't require staff to develop a new program to administer or manage (*no additional staff time beyond plan text amendment*).



Market Driven



BG Food Cartel, Beaverton

- 31 food carts on 1 acre
- 11,000 sq ft bar with indoor/outdoor seating
- Ability to host event for up to 150 people



HV Station, Happy Valley

- 18 food carts on 0.93 acre
- Adaptive reuse of an existing building
- On-site taphouse with indoor/outdoor seating



OC Brewing, Oregon City

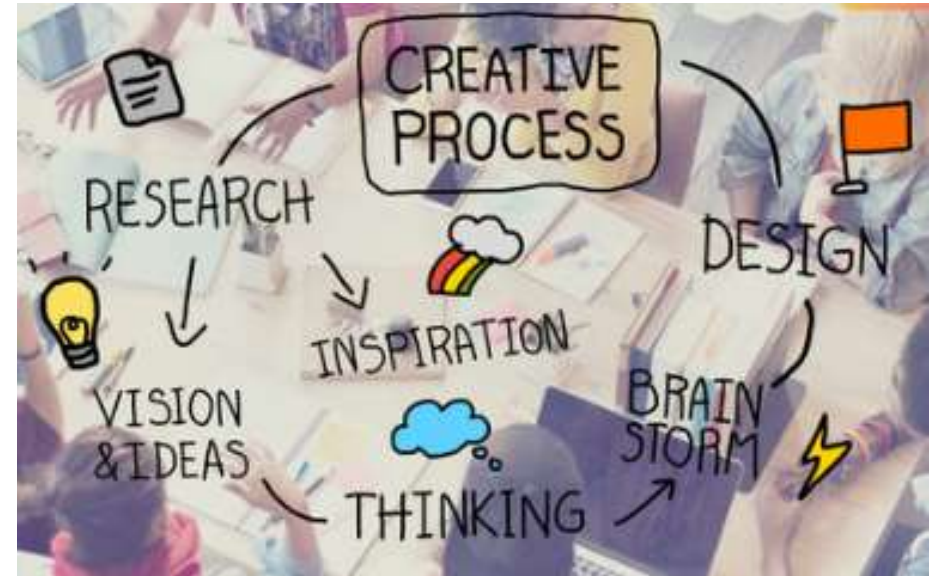
- 9 food carts on 0.32 acre
- Adaptive reuse of an existing building
- On-site brewery with indoor/outdoor seating

City Supported Model

- Staff found that Tigard, Eugene, and Milwaukie provide some level of support for food cart business development.
- All programs are run by an Economic Development Division.
- The downtown visioning project may identify feasibility of a city supported food cart program.

To establish a city supported approach:

- The code will need to be updated to permit food cart pod development in identified zoning districts and establish development standards.
- Future work session discussions will be required to establish program goals, scale, funding, and staffing.
- A new program will require additional staffing and funding.



City Supported Model



Launch Pod - Tigard

- Program to rent city purchased food carts located as an amenity on parkland
 - Modeled off the business incubator in the Tigard Library
- City program pairs entrepreneurs with business coaches from local nonprofits
 - Supports early phase entrepreneurs with reduced rent, business advertising, and access to customers
 - Entrepreneurs must apply for selection to operate for a 16-24 month period
- Requires commitment to build out economic development team to support a robust program



City Supported Model



Public Property - Eugene

- Program permits food carts in downtown parks: Kesey Square and Park Blocks
- Subject to application process and monthly fee
- Program administered by Economic Development Analyst
- Ongoing maintenance and vandalism repair handled by Facilities Team
- Required insurance can be challenging for food cart owners to obtain



Questions for Council



- Does Council support staff prioritizing a code update to support market driven approaches?

Next steps

- Discuss desired scale and complexity of development standards and utility connection requirements.

