

Major Issues facing Chicago Food Trucks 8/24/2016:

- There are not enough Food Truck Stands, or viable locations that are also legal under the current ordinance (more than 200 feet away from a competing establishment). The continued enforcement (with fines up to \$2000) for a food truck parking within 200 feet of any food establishment including 7/11, Starbucks as well as regular restaurants has forced operators to only go where they know it is safe. Enforcement does not always come in the form of a ticket, but does result in the end of business for the day and in some cases the end of a viable location forever. The result is the entire community of 60+ Chicago based food trucks is forced to operate in only 2-3 distinct areas across the Loop and Chicago. Parking in these areas is scarce, and operators are desperate to make a living and to provide for their families. The industry has grown each year and the city has not increased our ability to operate to accommodate all of the new food trucks coming into the market. These are mom and pop small businesses who boot strapped their dream to own a restaurant, often times with their entire life savings. The trucks are being forced with a choice to either incur a \$300 parking ticket, a \$2000 blue sheet business ticket for parking too close to a “competitor”, or making no money and not being able to stay in business. This has led to some members of our community parking in inappropriate locations and acting in a desperate fashion. From the start we have encouraged our members to always abide by all street parking and traffic laws. And we continue to do so even in desperate times such as what the food trucks are faced with currently. As a solution we are first and foremost fighting to have the current ordinance changed to remove the 200ft restriction so food trucks can operate freely across Chicago. As a temporary solution we have suggested to BACP and CDOT a large list of proposed new locations for designated food truck stands that are in economically viable areas across the city.
- The current food truck stands are not big enough to accommodate the average size food trucks. As a solution we have recommended making the designated food truck stands twice the current size (80 feet) so more food trucks can fix at each location, increasing capacity for our industry and decreasing the need to park in inappropriate locations.
- The current 2 hour time parking limit does not take into consideration the needed set-up and tear down time for all food trucks to prepare and cook their food in a safe manner. As a solution we have requested the ordinance be changed from no food truck may park for no more than 2 hours to “no food truck may serve for no more than 4 hours.”
- It is a requirement for food trucks to operate out of a “commissary” location as their home base. Thus all food trucks have overhead in the form of rent, utilities, and property taxes (overhead similar to any restaurant). Many of our members also own brick and mortar restaurants and can certainly empathize with high rents and slim profit margins. But there is no law

preventing another restaurant from moving in next to another and we strongly assert that small business entrepreneurs operating food trucks should rightfully be afforded the same freedom to operate profitably and freely as they can in other major cities like New York, LA, Miami, and Austin.

Background:

- ILFTOA is comprised of all 60+ licensed cooking food truck in Chicago and across the suburbs with 100+ members total
- Current Chicago based food trucks who have grown into brick-and-mortar locations and restaurants who have jumped into food trucks: Beavers Coffee & Donuts, Donught Vault, Firecakes, Stans Donuts, Eastman Egg, Jerk Jamaican Grill, DaLobsta , 5411 Empanadas, Pierogi Wagon, Flirty Cupcakes, Bridgeport Pasty, Husky Hogg BBQ , Tamale Spaceship, Fischman's Chow Down, The Roost Carolina Kitchen, The Slide Ride, Cheesies Pub and Grill , The Jiberito Stop, La Patrona, Gioridanos, Harolds Chicken, Nan Sense, Chicago Cupcake, The Fat Shallot, Warm Belly Bakery, Fido to Go, Caponies Express, Toasty Cheese
- Chicago has the most restrictive food truck operating laws in the nation. Chicago also has the least amount of licensed mobile food vendors out of any major city. By comparison Los Angeles County has embraced mobile food vendors and has seen a significant economic impact from the nearly 9,500 licensed mobile food vendors. These businesses spend \$170 million annually in supplies, taxes, and regulatory fees. Chicago is in a fiscal crisis and we need all the help we can get from the city to help our struggling mom and pop small businesses. It is time to change our food truck laws so owners here can have a fare shake at making an honest living. The restaurant industry is already hard enough with 90% failure rate; food trucks are not immune from this statistic. They city has no problem licensing new food trucks and collecting that revenue. They must do something to help accommodate this increase in operators.