Mobile Food Vending Permitting and Policies in Douglas County, KS

DOUGLAS COUNTY
FOOD POLICY
COUNCIL

Project Timeline

2023				2024	
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Form Team Understand challenges Collect existing research Develop timeline	Craft messaging Gather add'l research Create stakeholder map Meet with city staff	Compile current research Engage researcher Meet with city Commissioners & LRA Develop surveys and interview questions, & stakeholder engagement plan Implement stakeholder engagement	Compile surveys + interviews Synthesize data Develop findings & final report	Present findings to key stakeholders Revise final report if needed	Present report and policy recommendations to applicable governing bodies

CHALLENGE: Regulations, permitting, fees, and other requirements for food trucks to operate in Lawrence and Douglas County can be restrictive, unclear, and sometimes costly. This reduces opportunities for some food service entrepreneurs, especially those systematically disadvantaged, to enter the industry.

PURPOSE: Reexamine permitting processes, fees, and requirements for food trucks in Lawrence and Douglas County.

GOAL: Create equitable and fair regulations, provide sufficient resources, and offer efficient systems and processes for Food Truck owners to operate in Lawrence and Douglas County.

Food Truck Research

Food trucks compete directly with the broader food service sector and some brick-and-mortar establishments have lobbied against the industry.

…

Harmful parking regulations and fees are deterrents for food trucks to enter the industry. Established food trucks will actively seek cities and regions with more accommodating regulations.

Food Trucks in the US – IBISWorld (2023)

…our results suggest food trucks do not pose a unique threat to the restaurant industry. Rather, on the whole, food trucks appear to complement restaurants as both industries grow side by side.

These results strongly suggest that food trucks have been unfairly maligned by restaurants and their associations and that municipalities that have enacted anticompetitive restrictions on food trucks have been deceived. To right this injustice, cities should repeal restrictions designed to protect restaurants from competition and ensure any remaining restrictions on food trucks are narrowly targeted to protecting the public's health and safety, not restaurants' bottom lines.

Food Truck Truth – Institute for Justice (2022)

Strategic Plan Alignment + Equity

Douglas County Food System Plan

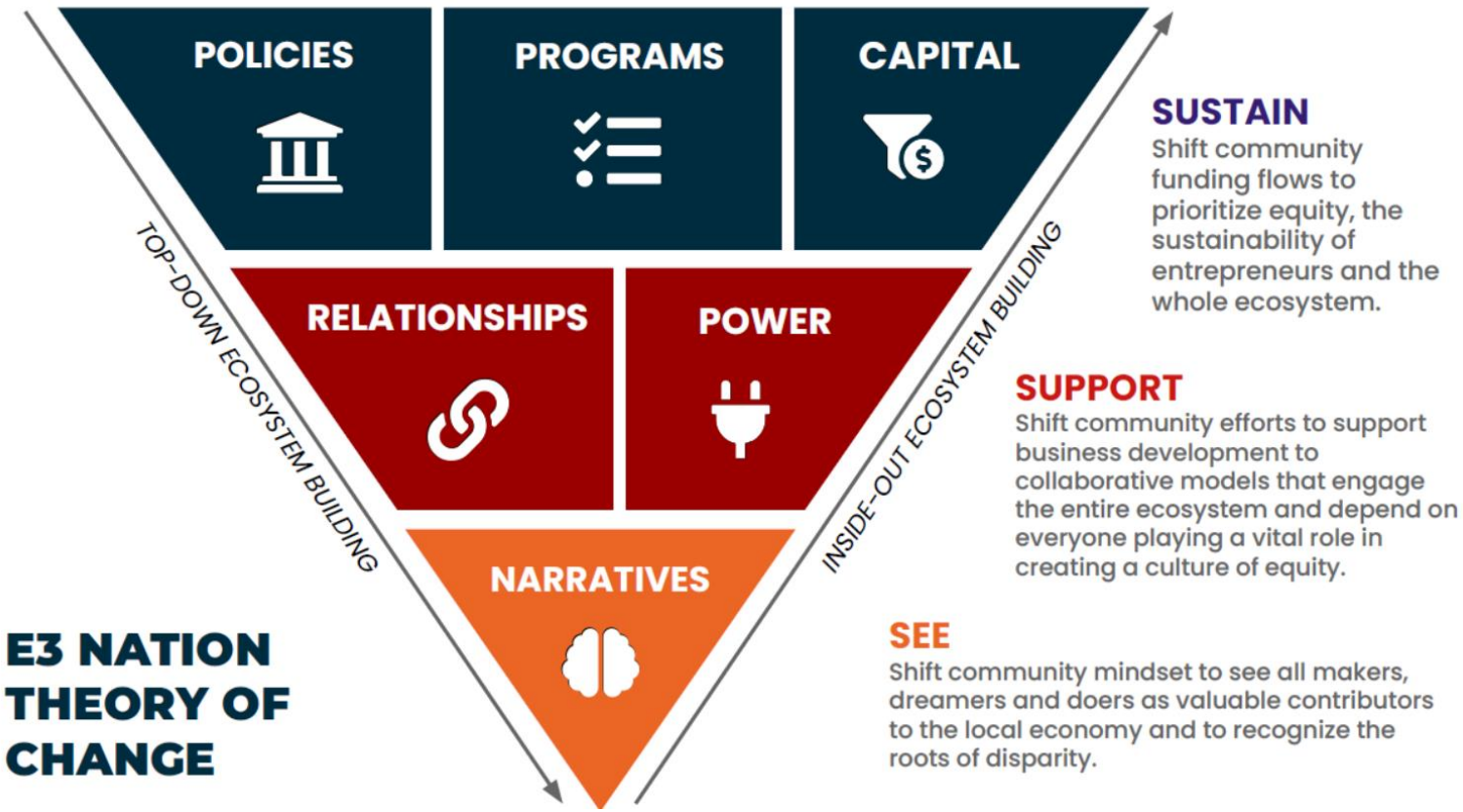
Plan 2040

Anti-Poverty Plan – Douglas County Community Health Plan

City of Lawrence Strategic Plan

Lawrence Economic Development Strategy Recommendations (Ernst & Young)

Downtown Masterplan



Increase the diversity of mobile food vendors, through expanding accessibility to the industry.

Stakeholder Map

Food Retail & Service

- Food Truck Owners/Operators/Staff
- Community Kitchens
- Farmer's Markets
- Food Service & Retailers
- Lawrence Restaurant Association

Producers

- Douglas County Producers
- Agritourism Operators

Community Voices

- Consumers
- Neighborhood Associations
- Aspiring Entrepreneurs

Local Government

Baldwin City
City Council, Planning/Zoning, Code, Clerk
Public Works/Utilities, Fire/Medical, Legal

Eudora
City & Planning Commission, Manager, Planning/
Zoning, Code, Clerk, Public Works/Utilities,
Public Safety, Legal

Lecompton
City Council, City Superintendent, Clerk
Public Works/Utilities, Fire/Medical

Lawrence
City & Planning Commission, Planning/Zoning,
Code, Clerk, Parks and Rec, Public Works/Utilities,
Fire/Medical, Legal, Sustainability

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Douglas County
County & Planning Commission, Administration,
Planning/Zoning, Code, Clerk, Public Works, Public
Safety, Legal, e-communities,
Sustainability

Other Stakeholders???

State Government

Kansas Department of Ag
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Business One Stop
GROW KS
State Fire Marshal

National Government

USDA

Economic Development

- Financial Resources
- RE Investors, Owners, Realtors
- Chambers of Commerce
- Eco Devo Organizations
  EDC, C.O.R.E, Wakarusa Valley Development

Engagement

- eXplore Lawrence
- Downtown Lawrence, Inc.

Equitable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Community Engagement + Surveys

Baldwin City Third Friday Market, 9.15.23

Cottins Farmers Market, 9.28.23

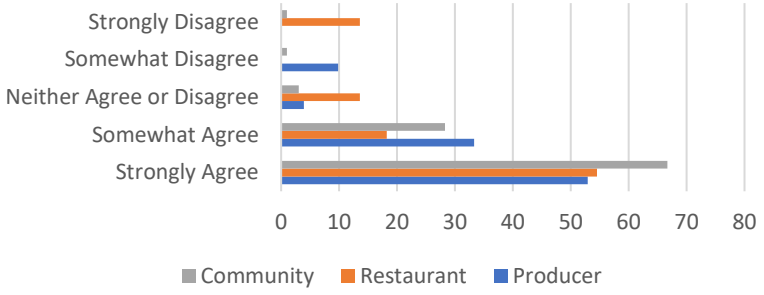
Lawrence Farmers Market, 9.30.23 and 10.3.23

Eudora Farmers Market, 10.05.23

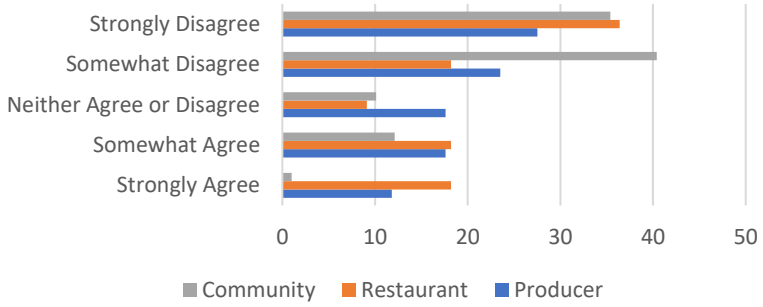
Kaw Valley Farm Tour, 10.07.23

112 local community surveys, 22 restaurant surveys, 51 producer surveys

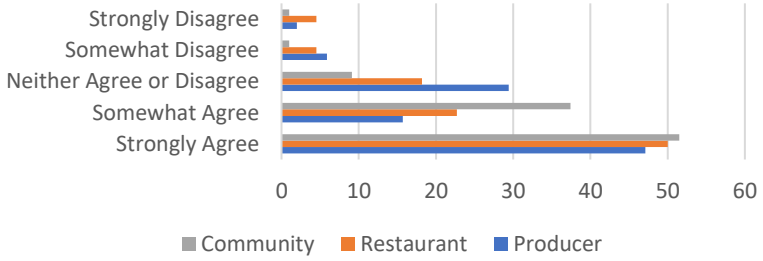
I believe the presence of food trucks would provide diversity in the type of food offerings that could be made available to Lawrence-Douglas County community members.



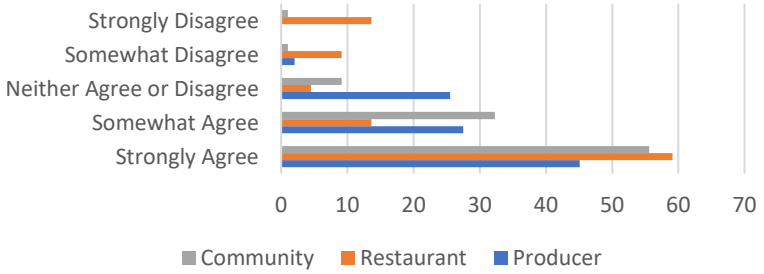
I believe food trucks will negatively impact revenue in Lawrence-Douglas County's "brick and mortar" restaurants.



I believe the presence of food trucks would increase Lawrence-Douglas County's desirableness as a place to live, work, or start a business.

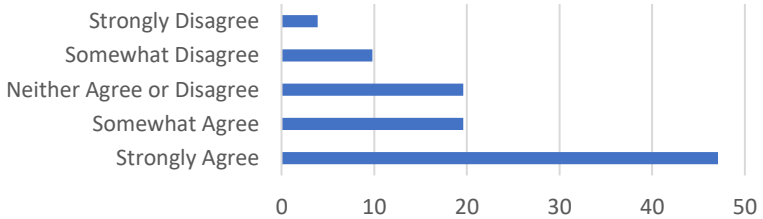


I believe that the presence of food trucks in Lawrence-Douglas County would align with the City of Lawrence's Strategic Plan Goal to promote prosperity and economic security among individuals and businesses.



I believe the presence of food trucks would promote equity and inclusion in Lawrence-Douglas County among small business owners and entrepreneurs within the food industry.

I believe the presence of food trucks in Lawrence-Douglas County would benefit local producers by increasing opportunities for partnership and additional revenue....



Food Truck Focus Groups

10.03.23 - The Pretzelly Truck, JB's Tacos, Torched Goodness, Streamline Coffee

10.04.23 - Wild Alive

10.05.23 - Uplift Coffee, Fire Canyon Barbeque, Just Fork It, Bap Stop, Matties Wok and Roll

"It was a very convoluted process even figuring out (A) what permits/inspections were required to operate my food truck, and (B) the necessary steps and chronological order of the process. Once that was figured out, the actual permitting/inspections were easy enough and fast, but it took a long time to get there."

"I had a hard time figuring out which city and county permits I was required to have. I felt like the first 3 years I was open, I got 3 different answers on which permits were required. One year, I ended up spending over $1,400 on permits that were not actually required."

Letters of Support

AMERICA'S SBDC KANSAS

The Chamber LAWRENCE • KANSAS

NetWork Kansas

LAWRENCE RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Policy Recommendations - Code of the City of Lawrence, Kansas

Section 6-1704 currently states *the application fee for a Mobile Food Vendor's License is $300.00. The fee shall not be pro-rated or refunded for any reason, including denial of an application or revocation of a license.* We ask the Commission to consider making this a 12-month license, effective the date issued, as opposed to being based on the calendar year.

Section 6-1711 (f) currently states *Mobile Food Vendors are prohibited from offering for sale any food and/or beverage from a single property for more than three (3) hours out of every day, except as part of a City Approved Event.* We ask the Commission to consider increasing the number of hours to a range between 9 and 12 hours.

Section 6-1711 (g) currently states *The City may approve a Site Plan establishing a location for Mobile Food Vendors as a permanent or seasonal element of a site only when the following conditions are met:*

> *(1) The owner must submit to the City, for its approval, a standard Site Plan showing, among other things, the location on the site of Mobile Food Vendors as either a permanent or seasonal element of the site;*
> *(2) The proposed Site Plan must meet all requirements of Chapter 20 of the Code of the City of Lawrence, as amended, and the provisions of this Article; and*
> *(3) The real property that is the subject of the Site Plan must be located in a zoning district where Fast Order Food, as that term is defined at Section 20-1724(6) of the Code of the City of Lawrence, as amended, is a permitted use.*

We ask the Commission to consider removing section (g), which was not in the original ordinance (8571) but added as an amendment (9026).

Additional Recommendations - City of Lawrence, Kansas

City Clerk's office to make an addition to the Mobile Food Vendor License Application, adding a checkbox for "fire inspection per IFC 319", for the applicant to either indicate such an inspection has been performed or not.

We ask that multiple departments within the city: Clerk, Planning and Development, Parks and Rec, and Fire Prevention continue to find ways to streamline the permitting and inspection process through their internal procedures.

Douglas County Food Policy Council – Next Steps

Create a resource guide for mobile food vendors and those interested in having a food truck on their premises.

Continue to host events focused on food business entrepreneurs.

Leverage relationships with community partners to connect food truck entrepreneurs.

Monitor the number of mobile food vendor permits issued throughout Douglas County, annually, over the next five years.

Monitor the number of active restaurants in Douglas County, annually, over the next five years.

Questions?

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