

Commerce Place Food Truck Pilot Program Public Feedback

October & November 2012

- I believe that having food trucks is good for downtown because it attracts a diverse group of people to the downtown area. Being a student here it is very important for me to eat local and organic foods when available. Unfortunately many of the brick and mortar business only provide a limited option of this and are not willing to make adjustments. The food trucks will provide that much needed variety and they seem more willing to take customer concerns about ingredients seriously from my experiences.
- I absolutely love the idea of allowing food trucks down town. Not only does it allow variety, it gives a variety of options to choose from that may not be found in chain restaurants. I also enjoy helping out small businesses around the state, because they are trying to make a living as well.
- As someone who lives and works in downtown Greensboro, I am a big supporter of the food truck program. Food trucks offer more variety in dining options, and we desperately need that in downtown. I understand the concerns of the brick-and-mortar business owners - of course competition can be worrisome (I'm sure Subway was not happy when Jimmy John's moved in) - however, food trucks offer a different kind of food option. Should I be on my way to dinner at Liberty Oak, I'll not be de-railed by a taco truck. Similarly, if I'm looking for quick and affordable food, I'll not forego a trip to a food truck for a sit-down meal. The city should also consider allowing food trucks to park near businesses that serve food AFTER that business has closed for the evening. More food options in downtown, especially in the evenings and late-night, are certainly needed. Hooray for the food truck program!
- I think the food trucks are a great idea. I work in the VF building downtown and have walked at least twice a week since the pilot program began to meet one of my girlfriends for lunch. Weather was beautiful and a way to get exercise. Food was GREAT! My suggestions would be a bigger variety of trucks and some type of space to allow for seating. I don't always want to go so a sit down restaurant for lunch and being able to breathe some fresh air helps clear your head from being in the office. I hope the city of Greensboro will continue to allow the food trucks all throughout downtown.
- I have enjoyed the program. The variety and taste of the food has been great. Service has been great. The food is fresh and it's fast. I have experienced food truck programs elsewhere and I think this one is top notch. Parking spaces have been plentiful; I hate driving around and around on Elm St. trying to find a parking space somewhat close to the restaurant of my choice. I plan on supporting the program as long as it continues.
- The Pluses: I have eaten there about 1/2 dozen times since the pilot began, and it has been great to have more options for a quick grab-and-go lunch, with convenient parking. I really enjoyed Taqueria El Azteca, Great Escape, 1618, Baguettaboutit, Stameys BBQ & Chirba dumplings.
The Minuses: They're not all that competitive pricewise w/ informal restaurants. Noise & pollution from the generators. Also, the City should make the license/permit fees equitable as far as existing downtown restaurants (who have to pay real property taxes directly or indirectly as part of rent). Maybe the license could be per day.
For me, the food trucks are not competing much with the table-service restaurants -- my lunch options are home, bag lunch, drive-through or Jimmy John's delivery and food trucks - I don't want to pay for gas AND parking AND tip - I'll pay for 2 out of 3. Also, they should put a food truck at the new park parking lot on Spring Garden by Freeman Mill.

- As someone who has grown up in the food cart industry and in Greensboro, NC I feel like the advent of food trucks in downtown is one more nail in the coffin of downtown restaurants. So many restaurants depend on lunch business just so they can break even. According to downtowngreensboro.net, there are approximately 21,000 workers in downtown Greensboro and 54 restaurants. That means in a work year with approximately 250 workdays, those same workers will be able to go to each place a mere 4.63 times. IN THE WHOLE YEAR! My mother has been a downtown vendor and small business person in downtown for the last 20 years. We were there when Woolworth's was still open and Elm St. was a ghost town. The only thing that the city council and downtown Greensboro has given us is a hard time. She's not even allowed to have a table so as to make her fresh squeezed lemonade on. She has to use a cooler. And now we are having a "food-truck experiment"! Take care of the original small business owners first
- I've been in NC for 17 years and have seen little progress, this is major! You should check out other cities and see how they run their food trucks, it's a great idea which provides work, it's great for the economy, food trucks buy gas, food, bring people in from surrounding areas. I don't know why Greensboro has to have so so so many restrictions. Please Greensboro, look at other cities and see how they do it and maybe you can use their ideas.
- I love the variety and convenience of the availability from the food trucks. When I want a restaurant I will patronize. A restaurant has the same restrictions. But, a restaurant only pays employees the waitress/waiter minimum wage of what? \$2.71? Please!!!! Restaurant owners make a good profit. Let us have the trucks for our convenience when the luxury of restaurant time is not convenient. I LOVE New York City street vendors!!!! Bring it on Greensboro
- I actually got to enjoy one of the food trucks in Downtown Greensboro yesterday. All I had to do was walk across the street and I was there. I loved the convenience and the food was hot and delicious! Also, it cuts down on rushing somewhere to eat during your lunch hour and less gas! Please consider keeping the foodtrucks in Downtown Greensboro!
- Greetings, I am writing on behalf of my parents who are hard working restaurant owners in Downtown Greensboro. We have been blessed to be able to make a living for the past 12 years from the business which is based in the heart of downtown. We are grateful for the loyal customers who work downtown. I would respectfully ask that the City strongly consider not allowing food trucks downtown in order to preserve downtown based businesses and allow them to continue to remain a vibrant and vital part of downtown. These businesses invest heavily in the downtown infrastructure. My parents' business is dependent solely on the lunch business as it is not set up to open for dinner. Allowing food trucks downtown, I fear, will hurt existing businesses that depend on a limited clientele base. I would strongly recommend that other non-downtown locations be considered for food truck expansion. Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback!
- This pilot really needs to include more nights and Saturday lunch. This really doesn't allow people that don't work downtown enjoy the awesome food trucks!
- This is absolutely ridiculous!!!!!! I am a manager at a downtown restaurant not far from the food trucks. We were struggling before the food trucks came and now are really struggling since they have come!!!!!! Why would Greensboro allow for food trucks downtown when there are plenty of restaurants to choose from? Why is Greensboro not concerned about its own businesses? I would appreciate an explanation and compensation for lost revenue due to this great idea. Also, reimbursement for the rent and utilities that we have to pay to operate and try to have a successful restaurant in the city of Greensboro.

- My office is located on Commerce Place. I support the idea of the food truck program for convenience and variety of lunch options; HOWEVER, when one or more trucks cranks up a gasoline generator it gets very loud in this business community and makes it difficult work. Not to mention that, like a lawn mower idling outside your window for 3+hours, after a while you are ready for it to STOP! I realize that electricity is not provided to the trucks, but is there not some noise limitations that could assist those trying to work?
- I was visiting my family in California last weekend when we ran across a really cool event at the Presidio in San Francisco called "Off the Grid" <http://offthegridsf.com/>. It was a celebration of family time outdoors as well as an introduction of local food trucks and restaurants to the people of SF. In a large common area that used to be a place for troops to drill, families had a chance to play games, listen to music, eat food from various vendors and enjoy the great California weather (which was in the 90s all week, not my idea of great California temps, I was missing the cool Fall of NC).The main person behind Off the Grid, and the explosion of food truck businesses in the SF area is Matthew Cohen of the SF Cart Project who had an idea to make the process of going into the food cart business more streamlined for people who needed jobs in the Bay Area. <http://www.sfcartproject.com/about>
- LOVE THEM. I caught the announcement of who was going to be downtown yesterday off Twitter. I went down and thoroughly enjoyed my lunch from the 1618 truck. It was a beautiful day and a great meal. It is nice to see Greensboro encouraging such enterprises as Food Trucks. Many cities have gourmet food trucks serving up delicacies daily. I even blogged about it! Thanks I hope we keep it up
- I visited the Food Trucks yesterday and had a very tasty lunch. My concerns are as follows:1 - Gas powered generators used by vendors. They generate both air and noise pollution. If the city dedicates an area for food trucks, please provide electrical outlets (for a fee) to improve the dining experience.2 - Picnic and restroom facilities. Again, if the city commits to a food truck area, picnic tables and restrooms would be nice. Part of the permitting fee(s) could go toward maintaining these common areas (i.e. food court).
- These are great! I work just a few blocks from where they sit and everyone in my office loves them, very convenient and quick to grab lunch and go. I would love to see these continue, and become more of a staple so they can become more competitive (in terms of specials etc.). There aren't many options for grabbing a quick lunch downtown if you don't want fast food, pizza, or jimmy johns so these have been a very welcome escape from the boring lunch.
- As a restaurant owner in Greensboro I was not opposed to food trucks until I saw the article that we will have to pay the \$1600 shortage to close commerce. I wonder what the city would be willing to do for me. If I was allowed to pay the \$20 a day to business in the city I would save a minimum \$2700 a year in taxes. Not sure this is fair to all the small businesses that Greensboro supposedly wants.
- I tried out the Food Trucks today and I love it! Is there any way that picnic tables might be added to the green space right next to where the trucks are parked?
- I just wanted to voice my support for the food truck pilot. I have visited multiple trucks for both lunch and dinner and have thoroughly enjoyed them. My family and I love the variety and the new experiences - this also gives us another reason to explore Downtown Greensboro. I hope that this program is a huge success!
- The food trucks have already offered a very compelling draw for my friends and me to stay in the downtown area where we live, instead of venturing out for food & entertainment. Most of us work near the airport, so weekday lunch is not as big for us as for the many downtown workers, but nights and weekends when we'd otherwise drive 5+ minutes out of downtown to access a good variety of casual food. It gives Greensboro a friendlier, more progressive urban feel.

- Love the food trucks downtown! Would be nice if there were picnic benches/or benches to sit and relax in the area... but I enjoyed being able to grab a bite from the variety of food trucks that are there.
- Thank you, Greensboro! We are so excited about having food trucks in Greensboro. It feels a bit more like a city now.
- I think it's long overdue and can only help attract more people to the downtown area.
- Love the food trucks! They are amazing! Thank you for the alternative lunch options and the fun atmosphere. Way to go, Greensboro!
- In the first week the food trucks have been on Commerce, myself and my coworkers have visited 3x. It is a really great option to lunch and also good for the community. I moved here from the NY/NJ area, where food trucks are the norm and I have missed them. It is a unique experience to eat at a food truck and it is nice to see people who have never experienced it enjoy it so much. I wholeheartedly disagree with those that think it will detract business from local restaurants. I think it is better to have more options downtown to encourage people to come here, people like variety. I will say that so far 1618 Mobile Kitchen seems to have the best setup in terms of taking orders and moving the line. That seems to be an issue with some of the other trucks, you could use your whole lunch hour waiting in line. It would also be nice if there were benches or some sort of seating & umbrellas in the grassy area. Thanks for bringing food trucks downtown!
- I love, love, love the lunchtime food trucks. I work in the Wells Fargo building @ 300 N Greene, and there are very few places to grab lunch at this end of Elm St!! However, by the time I go to lunch at 1:00, much of the food is sold out. Four trucks aren't nearly enough for the crowd that's been showing up (government employees! cop cars! ambulances! utility trucks! it's great but it's gotta be much larger than you expected). At least 8 would be a much better number. Or a different mix--6 entree trucks, 2 dessert trucks (fully half, 2 of 4, were ice cream or cake, and while I sure like ice cream and cake, I'm not going to eat only ice cream or cake for lunch). I really want the chance to try all this yummy food, but if they're running out two hours before they're supposed to stop serving, the plan isn't working. More trucks, please?
- I am sending this on behalf of a lady who works at 221 Commerce. While they are excited about the food trucks, they are a little frustrated with the number of people sitting around their building eating and the trash these people leave behind. She figured that if some kind of seating was provided closer to the trucks, perhaps in the grassy area, it would encourage people to eat where trash cans are readily available.
- I work downtown and my colleagues and I LOVE the food trucks. We would love for them to stay and invest in some seating options in the grassy area on Commerce. What a great way to spend a lunch hour and enjoy some fantastic and unique foods!!!
- It seems bizarre that food trucks cannot operate and sell food every hour from 10 am to 10 pm. I often eat late in the afternoon and would LOVE for food trucks to sell me food between 3 pm and 5 pm, when many restaurants are in transition (i.e. closed) and people are hungry! Why force food vendors to sit and wait to sell from 3 pm - 5 pm? This is a classic example of illogical Greensboro thinking, which is why this town is slow on the uptake for the creative class to want to be here and create entrepreneurial ventures. Also, a pilot program seems pretty silly when the "wheel has already been invented" in countless other towns. No need to reinvent it, simply emulate what works other places.

- WE WANT FOOD TRUCKS. I hope the experiment is wildly successful. We need something like this in our area.
- Try to provide a way for online menu and prices so we can see what's there before we go.
- I am thrilled that Greensboro is studying the feasibility of food carts downtown. Having spent time in Portland, Oregon, home to numerous food carts and various food cart "pods" throughout the town (with an app for food cart maps), I have long desired for Greensboro to afford its residents the same culinary experience. I have already enjoyed Taqueria Azteca's food cart at the corner of Spring Garden and Chapman for dinner. Without a doubt, it is exciting to think about the possibilities for downtown. I do hope that the city is able to support such an endeavor for the long-term.
- I am happy the city is open to setting up this test. I hope the trucks perform well and that the city ends up supporting their efforts. I understand they need regulation and to pay their fair share of fees and taxes but if they are well managed, can be a contributor to the local economy and social fabric. We are very late to this game and hope our history of making "No!" our first response to good ideas becomes resounding "yes!"
- I am very excited about the prospect of having food trucks operate in Greensboro. Having recently visited larger cities like Portland and Seattle, I feel that it is something that will enrich the city and bring increased foot traffic to the downtown area. Neighboring cities such as Durham are experiencing great success with similar programs. I believe initiatives like these will encourage people to visit and recreate in Greensboro instead of traveling to Charlotte, or Raleigh/Durham. I hope to see this program succeed and to see the city continue to think of inventive ways to improve our city.
- I am SO excited that Greensboro is going to have food trucks now! I really hope these next two months are a success. My classmates at Elon Law and I are really looking forward to mix up our normal lunch routine.
- As a local resident, I'm very excited to see food trucks coming to downtown; even if it is just as a test. Our most vibrant cities across the nation have a robust food truck community and it's great to see Greensboro beginning to experience that. This just gives us more reason to enjoy all the shopping, restaurants, bars and venues located downtown. You can bet you'll see me often at the trucks!
- I have moved down here from the Pittsburg area and lived in the DC area and have missed having food trucks for their diversity, fresh food and ability to support small businesses. Some of the trucks in the Food Truck Festival do very well in the Raleigh/Durham area and they move around almost on a daily basis and are not stuck in a defined area. This is most helpful as this gets the word around for their business and doesn't block or lock them into a location which would cause slight chaos for neighborhoods or businesses. I hope that the council takes a look at the various food trucks Twitter links and see their schedules and diverse locations and happy customer comments. Greensboro needs to evolve with this upcoming industry for the small business person and give the public more of a choice to spend their money in the city of Greensboro. This is a very good thing.
- It's a great idea; it won't hurt the restaurants business at all. It's just a way to grab something good and keep on going. I hate to go in a restaurant to order something to go, they always use styrofoam. YUCK!
- We had such a great time at the food truck festival. Sure, the lines were LONG, but the food was worth it. We can't wait to see who signs up for the pilot program. We are very excited and are planning on eating dinner at the trucks a couple nights per week. Thank you for being open to allowing them downtown!

- I think it's a great idea!
- Wonderful idea--I hope it can be expanded and made permanent. I live at the Lofts at Greensborough Court in the 300 block of S. Elm. There are many times when a quick, affordable, tasty meal would be just right. It would not alter any decisions I might make about a more formal meal at our wonderful downtown restaurants. Thanks for asking!
- I'm excited about the food truck pilot program. I think it's a great way to add culture and variety to the downtown experience. Friends in other cities RAVE about their food trucks!
- I think the pilot program is an excellent compromise for those who want food trucks & those who don't. It's enough time to tell if it will help or hurt the downtown cafes & restaurants. I also strongly feel that food trucks should be allowed to operate after 9pm to serve the bar & music club crowds. That would have virtually no conflict with downtown restaurants
- Awesome idea! I love to watch programs like great food truck race. I really hope Greensboro uptown allows it!