



## YOUTH COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Honorable Mayor Edwin M. Lee  
Honorable Members, Board of Supervisors

**CC:** Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board  
Carlos Garcia, Superintendent, San Francisco Unified School District  
Barbara Garcia, Director, Department of Public Health  
Maria Su, Director, Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families  
Jason Elliott, Mayor's Liaison to the Board of Supervisors  
Nicole Wheaton, Commissions and Appointments, Mayor's Office

**FROM:** Youth Commission

**DATE:** April 23, 2012

**RE:** Youth Commission position on Board of Supervisors file no. 120193 Ordinance: 1) amending Public Works Code Section 184.85 to modify the permissible distance between mobile food facilities and school; and 2) adopting environmental findings

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At our regularly scheduled meeting of April 16, the Youth Commission considered this ordinance, which amends the current Mobile Food Facility requirements in the Public Works Code that stipulate mobile food trucks must keep a distance of at least 1,500 feet from all middle and high schools in the San Francisco Unified District (SFUSD) to 500 feet (with likely amendments to be made based on schools' off-campus policies and locations with respect to commercial corridors).

With a vote of 11 in favor and 1 opposed, the Youth Commission adopted a motion to support this legislation.

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We would like to give you some context for the position expressed above.

The Youth Commission heard from a number of sources as we considered this item. Primary sponsor Supervisor Scott Wiener gave a presentation, a representative from the SFUSD answered questions and shared the school district's position, and eleven people (ten food truck entrepreneurs and one Lowell High School student) spoke in public comment.

Supervisor Wiener explained the genesis of the legislation by speaking about the importance of local government supporting small businesses in general and San Francisco's vibrant "food scene" in particular, of which food trucks are a key part. The Supervisor talked

about how food trucks activate public spaces and thereby increase public safety, and he remarked on how often food trucks employ immigrants, women, young people and others who don't necessarily have the capital to start a brick-and-mortar restaurant.

At root, the Supervisor wants this legislation to help strike a “balance” between the need to protect SFUSD’s school lunch program and food truck vendors’ desire to have more places to set up shop. About five years ago, in an effort to increase student use of the free/reduced lunch program (and thereby federal reimbursements) and decrease childhood obesity, the City adopted legislation that requires there be distance of at least 1,500 feet between SFUSD middle and high schools and food trucks. The legislation currently before the Board of Supervisors would reduce that distance in an effort to provide food trucks with more places to set up. Supervisor Wiener related that as a result of conversations with SFUSD staff, he would likely amend the proposed ordinance based on individual schools’ off-campus policies and locations vis-à-vis commercial corridors. In particular, amendments would likely include: reducing the required distance to 500 feet between food trucks and middle schools (not a single SFUSD middle school allows students to go off campus for lunch); reducing the required distance to 500 feet between food trucks and some 75% of SFUSD high schools (most high schools also do not have off-campus privileges for students); reducing the distance to 1,000 feet between food trucks and Lincoln, Lowell, School of the Arts, and Washington (these schools have off-campus privileges of various sorts); and reducing the distance to 500 feet between food trucks and Hilltop and Galileo high school (these schools are situated heart of the Mission and very close to Ghirardelli Square, respectively).

School district representative Mr. Chris Armentrout made clear that the district and the legislation’s sponsors share a commitment to keeping the SFUSD’s school lunch program healthy and supporting local small businesses like food trucks, and that the district is happy to be working with the Supervisor to address the district’s concerns about the legislation. However, Mr. Armentrout made clear that the district has two fundamental and serious concerns regarding this law: an “economic” concern that allowing food trucks closer to schools will decrease student use of the free/reduced lunch program and thereby hurt SFUSD’s bottom line,<sup>1</sup> and a “social justice” concern about the stigma endured by students who cannot afford food trucks when their peers go off-campus to buy lunch.

The ten food truck vendors who spoke in public comment in support of the legislation shared a number of perspectives, including an argument that the price-point of their gourmet food was too high for SFUSD students, that SFUSD students were fundamentally not their target demographic, and that, if in fact SFUSD students did want to eat their food, it was nutritious, locally grown and sustainably produced—a far cry from the obesity-producing “roach coaches.”

A student from Lowell High School who spoke in public comment as well as a Lowell-attending Youth Commissioner related that everyday many students at their school walk well more than 1,500 feet off campus to buy lunch. Another Youth Commissioner argued that the SFUSD’s concerns about the legislation are weakened by the fact that the same 1,500 foot controls do not exist between schools and brick-and-mortar restaurants, while another suggested that the SFUSD’s concerns seem to arise from the fact of off-campus privileges as such (and not food trucks in particular).

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<sup>1</sup> 61% of SFUSD students qualify for free reduced lunch, according to the most recently available figures from the 2010-2011 school year (<http://www.sfusd.edu/en/assets/sfusd-staff/about-SFUSD/files/sfusd-facts-at-a-glance-2012.pdf>).