

November 11, 2012

My name is Jerry Trice and I am the owner of the Chef Driven DC food truck. I have been a professional chef in the metro DC area for over 17 years. I have always held my head high as a Culinary Institute of America alumni and maintained professionalism in every aspect of the food service industry. It has always been a long-term dream to own my own restaurant and I have pursued this vehemently for the past 6 years. I have come to the realization that currently, given the economic downturn and stranglehold of prime locations by big landlords, a mobile food business is more of a viable reality while the search continues for a suitable brick and mortar still continues.

Through hard work and sheer determination we launched just this past April. My business has grown more rapidly than projected. Currently I have 4 full time employees and am actively seeking another. Profit margins have always been slim in food service and we are holding our own currently. This is by no means a get rich quick plan for me or any other food truck owners. We rent kitchen space in the District, I use mechanics in the District, rent storage in the District, as well as use vendors based in the District.

All the while our expansion plans are still trudging along with the search of a suitable brick and mortar in the city. I strongly believe that DC can and will support a thriving local, artisanal chef driven restaurant concept with its' vast labor market and those residents who currently seek those inspirations both inside and outside of the District.

These aspirations would be all but extinguished if the new regulations were put into effect. This would mean a devastating, monumental setback for my company.

In particular, the new regs stipulate food trucks must operate with at least 10 feet of unobstructed sidewalk width outside of a MRV location in order to comply. This means 8 out of 10 of our best locations would be out of play. And with the proposal suggesting a MRV location would not be established "where the adjacent unobstructed sidewalk is less than 10 feet (10ft.) wide in the Central Business District...." this leaves very few applicable locations. This act would put current mobile food vendors in a race to occupy what few acceptable spaces we could find, bringing even more surrogate vehicles into play congesting rush hour parking spots and non-rush hour spots alike.

In a DDOT meeting with food truck owners and employees Oct.15, 2012 DDOT officials were more than vague in answering direct questions about how MRV location were selected as well as many other questions. Officials stated that they CAN make exceptions to the 10 ft. rule but there is no process or criteria in the proposed regulations to determine how these locations are determined or how many trucks are allowed. There was no answer as to how these spaces would be allotted, available spaces vs. MRV permits distributed, or how these locations are to be ticketed or managed. I believe that these regs presented do not have a great deal of real solutions to the congested streets issue. They would mean doom for many operators. Needless to say, all this makes food truck owners very nervous.

We simply need regs that work.

In Earnest,

Jerry Trice  
ChefDriven DC