

ATTACHMENT A

FOOD TRUCK INTERVIEW RESPONSE SUMMARY

Staff conducted qualitative phone interviews with 20 mobile food vendors who operate within central Vancouver Island. A list of questions was used to direct the phone interviews. The following summarizes the vendor responses.

1. Type of Unit

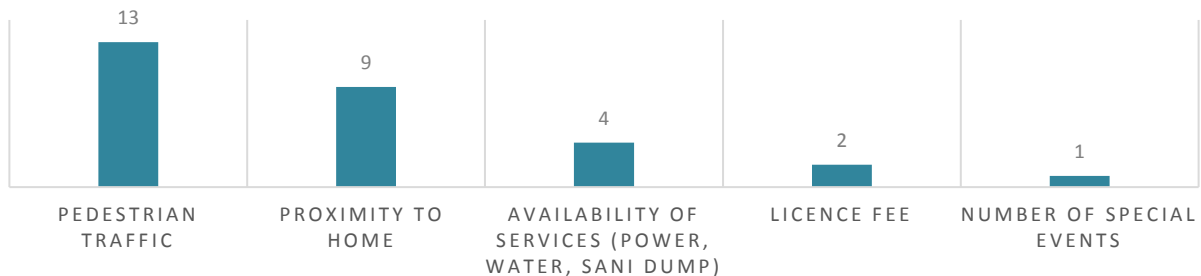
12 food trucks
7 food trailers
1 food cart tricycle

2. Primary Location

The majority of vendors operate in Parksville (8), Nanaimo (3), Ladysmith (2), and Qualicum Beach (2). Others operate mainly on the event circuit in the mid-Island area.

3. Factors Contributing to Location Appeal

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOCATION APPEAL



Summary:

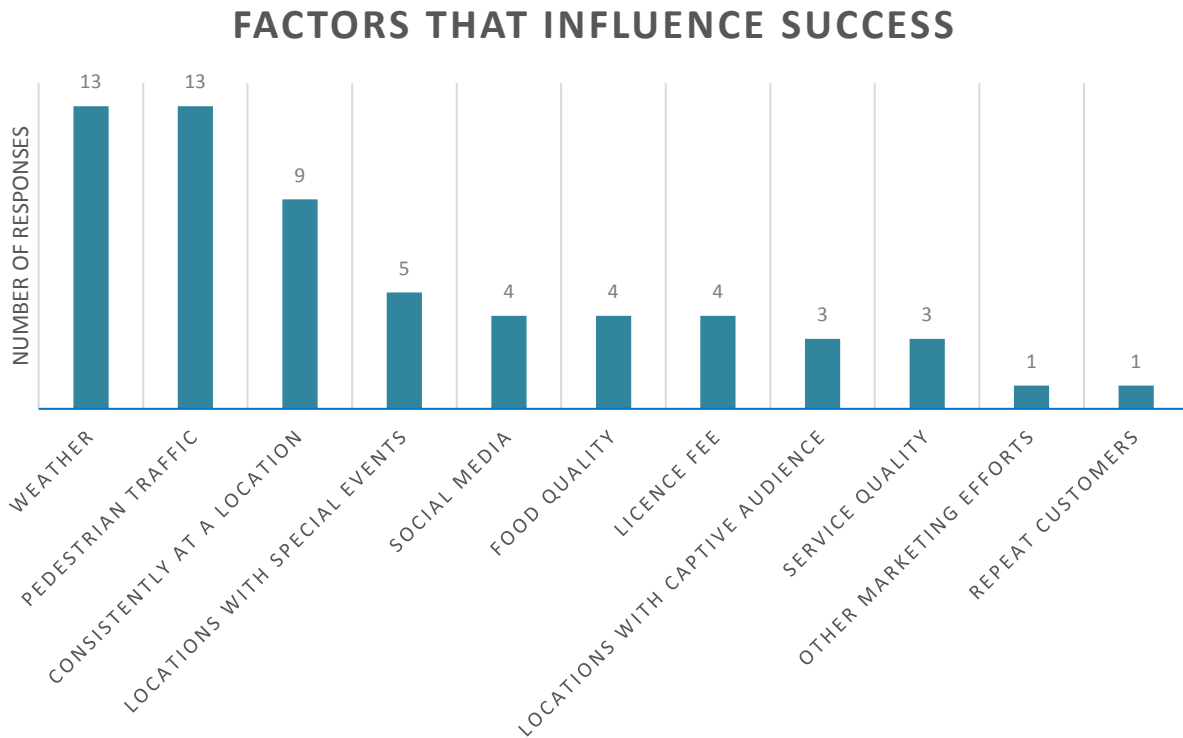
The amount of pedestrian traffic is the most important factor that attracted food vendors to their current locations. A location close to home is also preferable due to the cost of traveling with a food truck and the time it takes to set up and take down.

Other important considerations: flat parking spot, ease of securing a location (designated for food vendors only), adequate area for customers to stand, location with a cluster of food vendors, flexibility of license fee and conditions (daily/monthly fees and not locked into contract).

4. Business Model

The majority of vendors operate at a combination of fixed locations and special events. The remainder operate on the event circuit or at fixed locations only.

5. Factors that Influence a Vendor’s Success



Summary:

The weather, the amount of pedestrian traffic, and operating consistently at a location were considered the most important factors contributing to vendor success.

Locations such as Parksville Beach and Maffeo Sutton Park that host many special events throughout the year are particularly attractive to vendors due the amount of pedestrian activity.

The respondents had differing opinions regarding the use of social media: some believe it is essential to success and others believe it does not significantly increase business.

Licence fees were deemed far less important to success than the quality of the location. One vendor commented: “The fee is not an issue if it’s a good location.”

6. Interest in an Intercommunity Business Licence

Most respondents stated that they would use an intercommunity business licence (ex. for mid-Island area)—if reasonably priced. This option is not currently offered to food vendors.

7. Awareness of Nanaimo's Food Truck Program

When asked if they had heard about Nanaimo's program, 65% said yes (but with limited understanding), and 35% said no. Staff sent information to 7 vendors who asked for more information.

8. Ways to Attract Food Vendors to Nanaimo

- Change the location within Maffeo Sutton Park (Staff made this change in October 2017)
- Offer larger festivals and events
- Allow vendors to stay in park locations during special events
- Need evidence that there are locations with enough foot traffic
- Knowledge of the City's food truck program. Some vendors had not heard about it.

9. Program Feedback

Positive Feedback

- Most vendors said that they found the licence fee to be reasonably priced
- Positive experiences at Nanaimo special events such as Canada Day and VIEX
- Westwood Lake Park and Maffeo Sutton Park are considered good locations by most
- Vendors have received a warm reception from the public

Suggested Improvements

1. Locations need to be reviewed:
 - Change some locations within parks (ex. Loudon)
 - Some locations aren't busy enough (ex. Brechin Boat Ramp, some on-street)
 - Some on-street locations are too steep, difficult to access, or unfeasible due to lack of dedicated spaces (ex. Hospital area)
 - Add more downtown on-street locations, particularly on Commercial Street
 - Consider dedicated food-truck parking spaces in the Downtown/Hospital area
 - Add more food cart locations and consider permitted mobile food cart areas
2. Licensed vendors want to be given preference for City events and/or have the fee waved.
3. Allow food trucks to operate on all private property, except in residential zones
4. Allow food trailers to locate on-street
5. Allow food trucks to operate Downtown during night time hours (10pm to 3am)
6. Allow payment flexibility (ex. Pro-rated, month-to-month)
7. Include bollard keys in licence fee
8. Provide vendors with program information, statistics on foot traffic, and special event lists
9. Actively promote food vendors (ex. Street Food App, marketing)
10. Improve Staff response time to vendor issues
11. Coordinator needed for food truck program (ex. Chamber of Commerce). Also suggested that coordination should be for entire Parksville/Qualicum, Nanaimo and Ladysmith areas.

10. Additional Comments

- Perception that Nanaimo does not have locations with enough foot traffic
- Maffeo Sutton Park viewed as the best location
- Many vendors recommended the Parksville Beach and Craig Street Farmers Market models:
 - Parksville Beach: coordinated by the Parksville Chamber of Commerce and includes a rotation of 10 food trucks, a few at a time.
 - Craig Street Farmers Market: Tuesday evenings, 180+ tables, multiple food vendors.
- Many vendors are currently on a rotational schedule in Parksville but they would consider Nanaimo on the “off days”
- February is the best time to start contacting mobile food vendors for the next season as they typically book all events by April or May
- Wednesday or Thursday night is best if a weekly/monthly food truck event is proposed. There is also interest in a Food Truck Festival.
- Nanaimo could be a niche place for winter vendors
- Clusters of food trucks with a variety of types of food work well and attract foot traffic
- It takes food vendors a long time to set up and take down so travelling long distances is not practical
- Vendors are willing to pay for a good location. They pay more than Nanaimo (\$665/year) at Parksville Beach (\$120/day), Transfer Beach in Ladysmith (\$20/day), and Coombs Market (\$250/day).
- One vendor mentioned they need approximately 2000 people at a location to be successful
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach
- There are significant costs (licensing fees, insurance) at the beginning of the year so payment flexibility is helpful