

# Street Vending

**DISCUSSION WITH HOUSING, SAFETY & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

**MAY 5, 2025**



# Street Vending

## Council Priority Alignment

- ▶ Great Neighborhoods and Safe Communities

## Purpose

- ▶ Introduce the policy topic referral related to street vending, including a summary of current ordinances, benchmarking analysis, and Committee discussion points

## Key Takeaways

- ▶ There is growing concern among stakeholders – in multiple areas across the city – regarding street vending impacts
- ▶ Charlotte is an outlier when comparing our street vending policies/ordinances to other large cities across the nation

# Street Vendors: Policy Referral Summary

## **Description**

- ▶ As the city continues to grow, densify, and attract large events, there is a need to evaluate existing street vending-related policies, to better ensure a safe and welcoming environment that balances the interests of street vendors, residents, business owners and pedestrians

## **Policy Questions**

- ▶ Is the city's fine structure for illegal vending appropriate to ensure adequate enforcement?
- ▶ What broader policy and/or ordinance enhancements may be needed to strengthen the city's ability to ensure street vendors contribute to a safe and vibrant atmosphere?

## **Committee Charge**

- ▶ Review the city's applicable ordinances
- ▶ Review enforcement tools utilized by other large cities across the nation (including North Carolina)
- ▶ Determine if any ordinance changes and/or policy recommendations are needed

# Street Vendors: Anecdotal Feedback/Concerns

## Illegal Vending (e.g., unpermitted vendors on Tryon Street)

- ▶ Illegal vendors occupy sidewalks, bicycle lanes and parking spots, creating obstructions and safety risks
- ▶ The presence of illegal vendors encourages loitering, leading to increased incidents of disputes and violence
- ▶ Some illegal vendors lack health permits and do not follow sanitation guidelines
- ▶ Illegal vendors directly compete with permitted Tryon Street Mall Vendors, undermining their business and damaging relationships with the city

## Legal Vending Locations (with street vendor challenges)

- ▶ Dozens of small business and property owners in **NoDa** cite frequent challenges related to street vendors, including blocked sidewalks and loading zones, obstructed sight lines (for drivers and pedestrians), disputes between vendors, and general safety concerns
- ▶ Street vendor-related issues are growing in **South End**

# Street Vendors: Referral Timeline

The desired timeline for the policy referral is summarized below:

Date	Action(s)
May 5	- Introduce referral to HSC Committee
May 6 – May 30	- Gather stakeholder feedback (from diverse sources) - Develop policy recommendations
June 2	- Share policy recommendations with HSC Committee for discussion and vote (if ready)
June 9	- City Council Action Review
June 23	- Request for Council Action (Policy Item)
TBD	- Implementation phase

If any milestones above are deferred, the Request for Council Action will be pushed to the August/September timeframe, due to Council's summer meeting schedule

# Street Vendors: Current State (Policy)

## Ordinances

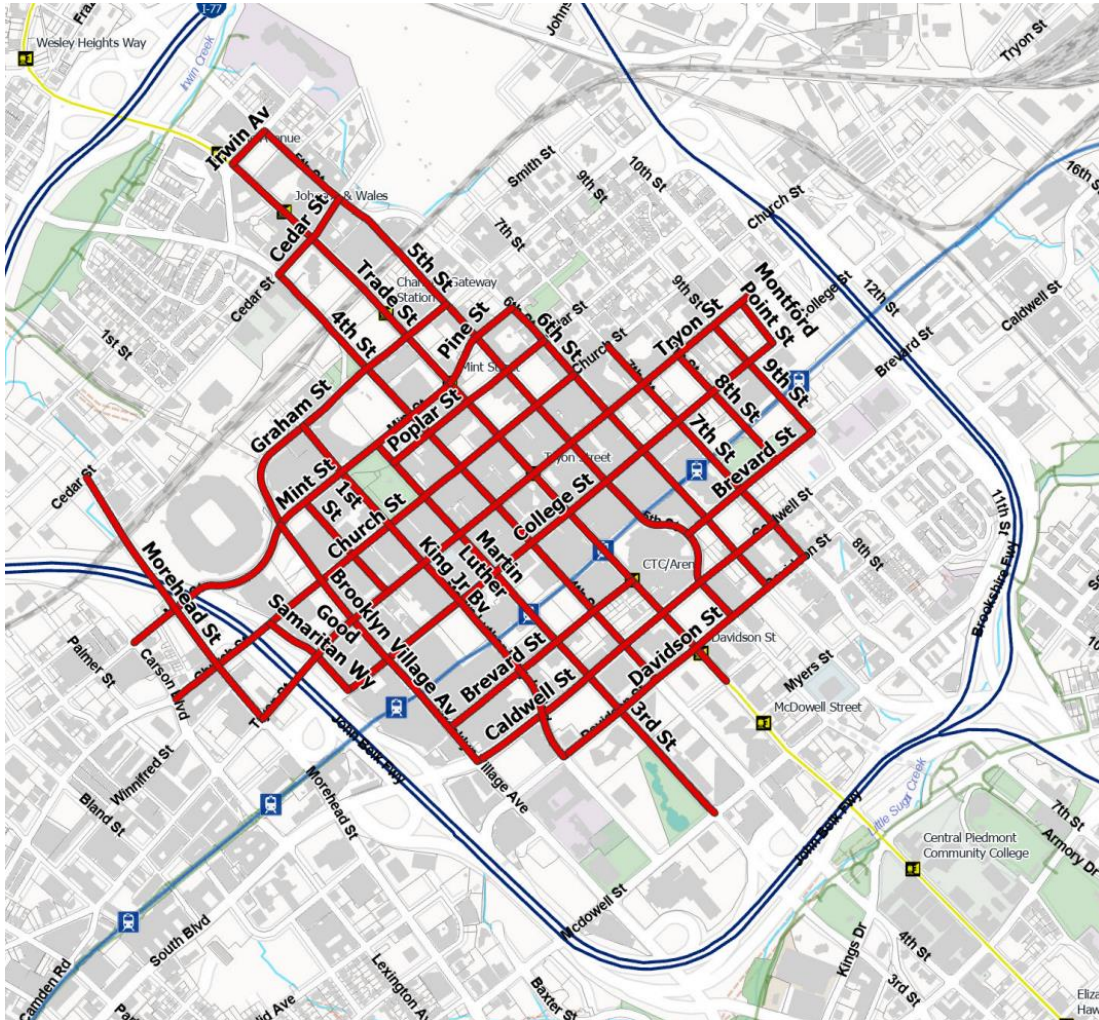
- ▶ Street vending is governed by **Chapter VI** of the City's Code of Ordinances
  - Article XIII – Peddlers
  - Article X – Tryon Street Mall Vendors
- ▶ This Chapter (most recently updated in mid-1980s) governs geographic-related requirements, allowed hours of operation, and licensing, etc.
- ▶ Violations of these ordinances can result in varying levels of fines, ranging from \$10-\$50

## Geographic Summary

- ▶ **City wide:** street vending is legal without a permit in all areas outside the Central Business District, Stadium District (Memorial Stadium) and Coliseum District (Tyvola Road)
- ▶ **Congested Business District:** street vending is illegal (see slide 7), except for Tryon Street Mall Vendors
- ▶ **Tryon Street Mall:** street vending is legal, but requires a permit (program is administered by Charlotte Center City Partners); footprint is from Brooklyn Village Ave to Eighth Street and the “100 blocks” of East/West Trade Street



# Congested Business District (CBD)



## CBD Overview

- ▶ The CBD is established in the ordinance (Article XIII)
- ▶ The most recent expansion to the CBD was in 2016
- ▶ The ordinance grants the City Manager authority to amend the CBD (either expand or reduce)
- ▶ The ordinance does not establish criteria to inform CBD expansion/reduction decisions
- ▶ The Tryon Street Mall Vendor program is governed by a separate ordinance (Article X), enabling permitted vendors to legally operate in assigned locations

# Street Vendors: Benchmarking

**City staff analyzed the street vendor policies across approximately two-dozen large cities across the nation (including five in North Carolina), observing the following insights:**

## **General Street Vending Restrictions**

- ▶ Compared to Charlotte, a vast majority of cities included in the analysis have more stringent, city-wide street vending restrictions
- ▶ Whereas Charlotte allows street vending in most areas other than the Congested Business District, the comparison cities generally allow vending only in certain designated locations

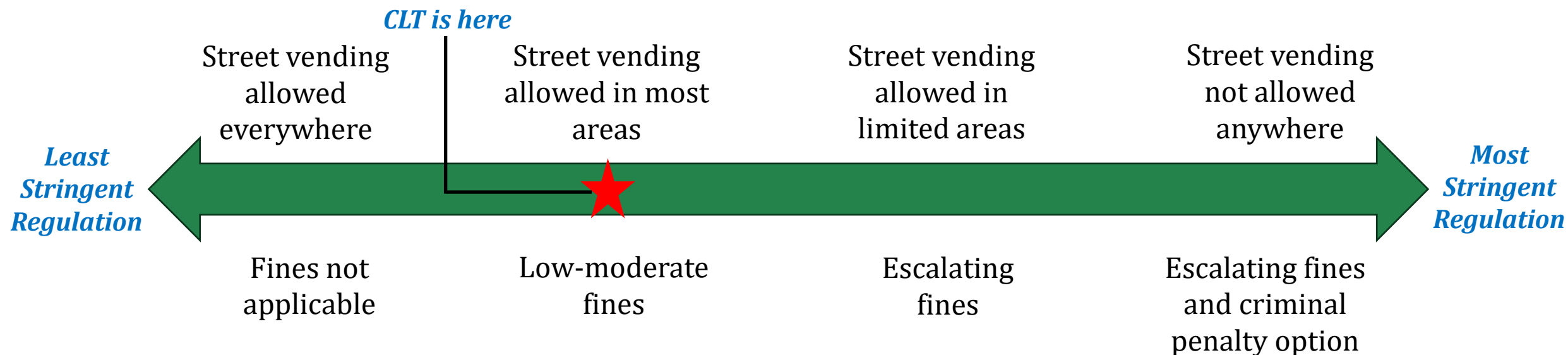
## **Illegal Street Vending Fines**

- ▶ Almost all cities included in the analysis have fines that are higher than Charlotte, and many cities have escalating fines for repeat offenders
- ▶ Fines of up to \$500 (for a first offense) appear common, compared to \$10 - \$50 in Charlotte
- ▶ Some cities have a criminal penalty option (though there may be state statutory constraints that limit this option in North Carolina)



# Street Vendors: Policy Continuum

*The continuum below is shown for illustrative purposes, to generate discussion and preliminary feedback from the Housing, Safety and Community Committee*



# Street Vendors: Policy Considerations

**Committee discussion and feedback:**

- 1. Big picture thoughts on the need for street vending-related policy enhancements
- 2. Specific thoughts on the need for enhanced enforcement options, such as higher fines

***Street Vendor Policy/Program Modernization Example***

Potential action	Desired outcome
1. Higher/escalating fines for violations of street vending ordinances	Stronger deterrence in areas subject to fines for violations (e.g., CBD and Tryon Street)
2. Expand the footprint of the existing CCCP-administered Tryon Street Mall Vendor program into parts of South End	Enhanced regulation of street vending in a high-growth, densifying area, with a willing/capable administrative partner
3. Establish new administrative process whereby communities with high concentrations of small businesses and pedestrians could petition the City to include a multi-block street segment in the Congested Business District	Enable communities – that <u>demonstrate</u> broad community support – to formally request the Congested Business District designation whereby street vending is illegal