



Envisioning Vending as Economic Mobility in Pittsburgh

July 15, 2025

Agenda

- Vending in Pittsburgh
- Project Goals
- Engagement
- Recommendations
- Zoning Text Amendment
- Next steps



Portland, OR (Google)



Vending
promotes economic
opportunity,
placemaking, and
convenience.

Source: [Library of Congress](#) (Gordon Parks, 1943)

Current Program

- **Chapter 719: PLI licenses** in the street and sidewalk
 - **"Mobile"** - uses (mostly) metered parking spots and moves at least once every four hours
 - **"Stationary"** - uses a specific licensed location on the street or sidewalk and does not need to move
- **Zoning Code: permits** on private property
 - As the main use on a lot through the Outdoor Retail Sales & Services, Non-Accessory use
 - As a secondary use through the Outdoor Retail Sales & Services, Accessory use

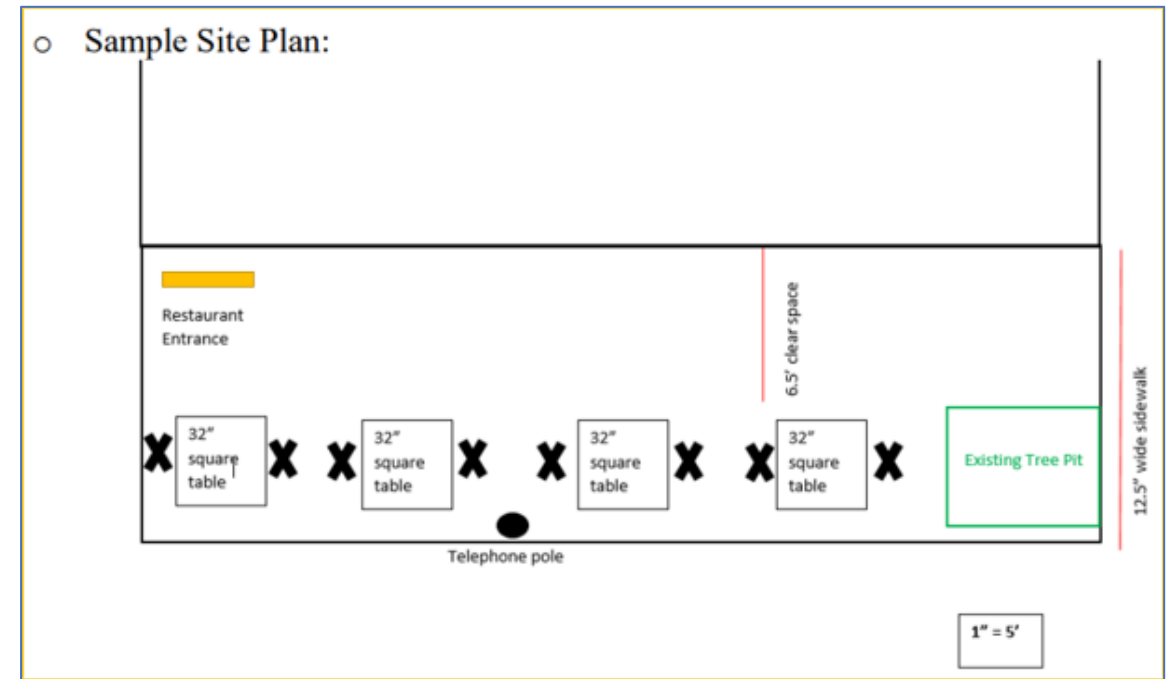
Pittsburgh has fewer licensed vendors than peer cities.

Key challenges include:

- Small volume of allowed vending locations
- Difficult process for adding new Stationary Vending locations
- Complex and confusing regulations
- Unsustainable fee structure (\$135 per license)
- Need for more compliance assistance

Developing recommendations to become a national leader in vending policy

1. Meetings with peer cities
2. Focus groups
3. 1:1 Discussions
4. Internal collaboration
5. Best practices reading
6. DOMI Outdoor Dining & Retail License



Precedent: DOMI Outdoor Dining [Guidelines](#)

Policy Recommendations: Amendments to Chapter 719

Create an integrated permitting process

Remove site-by-site evaluation, except Downtown and in parks

Change the definitions of "mobile" and "stationary"

Update license rules and regulations

Create a Group Sites Policy

Policy Recommendations: Private and public lots

Amend the Zoning Code to expand permissions for vending on private property and align with Chapter 719

Expand Adopt-A-Lot to include vending as a permitted use

Today's ordinance amends 3 Chapters

Chapter 911: Primary Uses

- Use Table
- Use Standards

Chapter 912: Accessory Uses

- Residential Accessory Uses and Structures
- Nonresidential Accessory Uses and Structures
- Outdoor Retail Sales and Services (Accessory Use)

Chapter 922: Record of Zoning Approval and Certificate of Occupancy

- ROZA Exemptions

Chapter 911: Use Standards and Use Table

- Replace the Non-Accessory Use with a new Primary Use
- Remove requirement to locate more than 100 feet from competitive businesses (this restriction would still apply in the Right-of-Way)
- Replace language on health, fire, and other approvals with requirement to obtain a vending license, if applicable

Chapter 911: Use Standards and Use Table

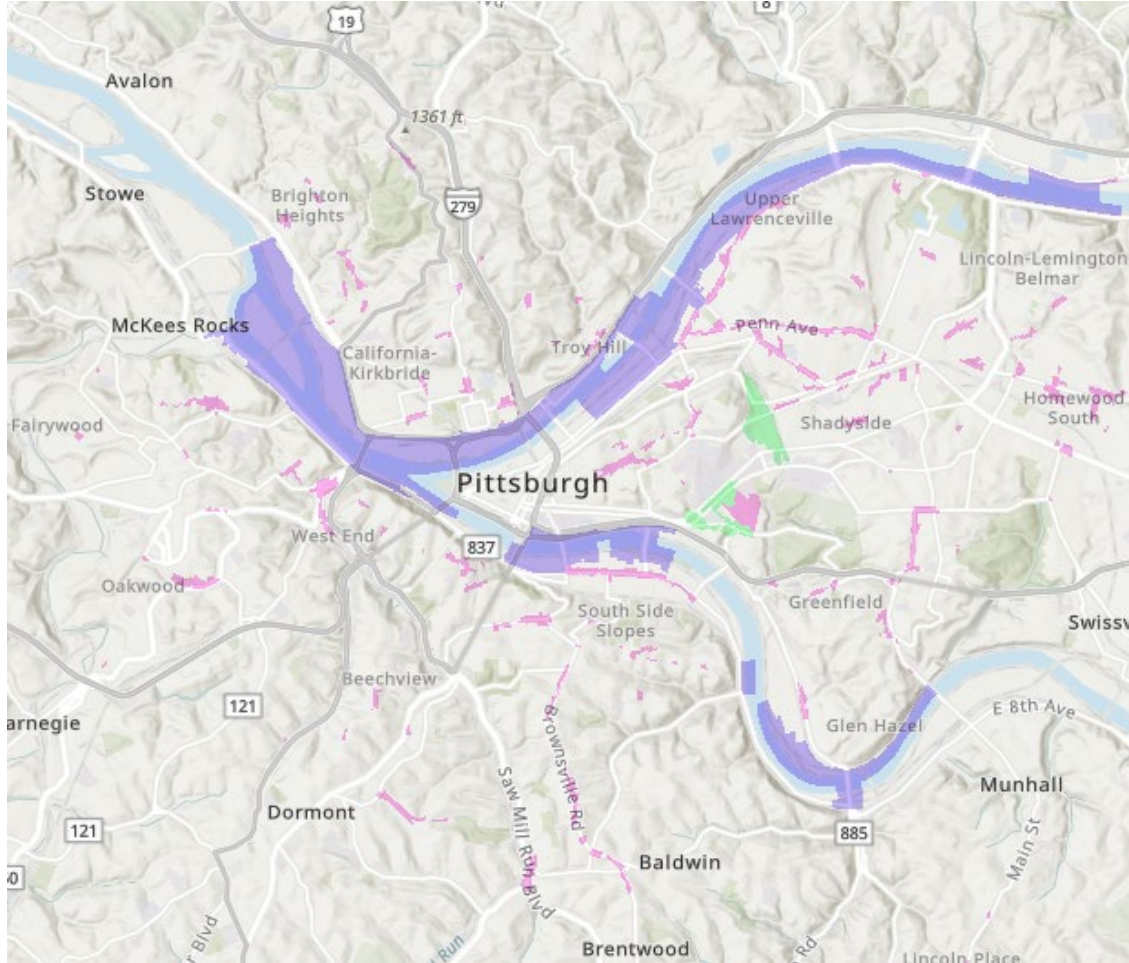
Current Permissions

- By-right: UC-MU and UC-E
- Administrator Exception:
Most RIV districts
- Special Exception: in LNC
and R-MU

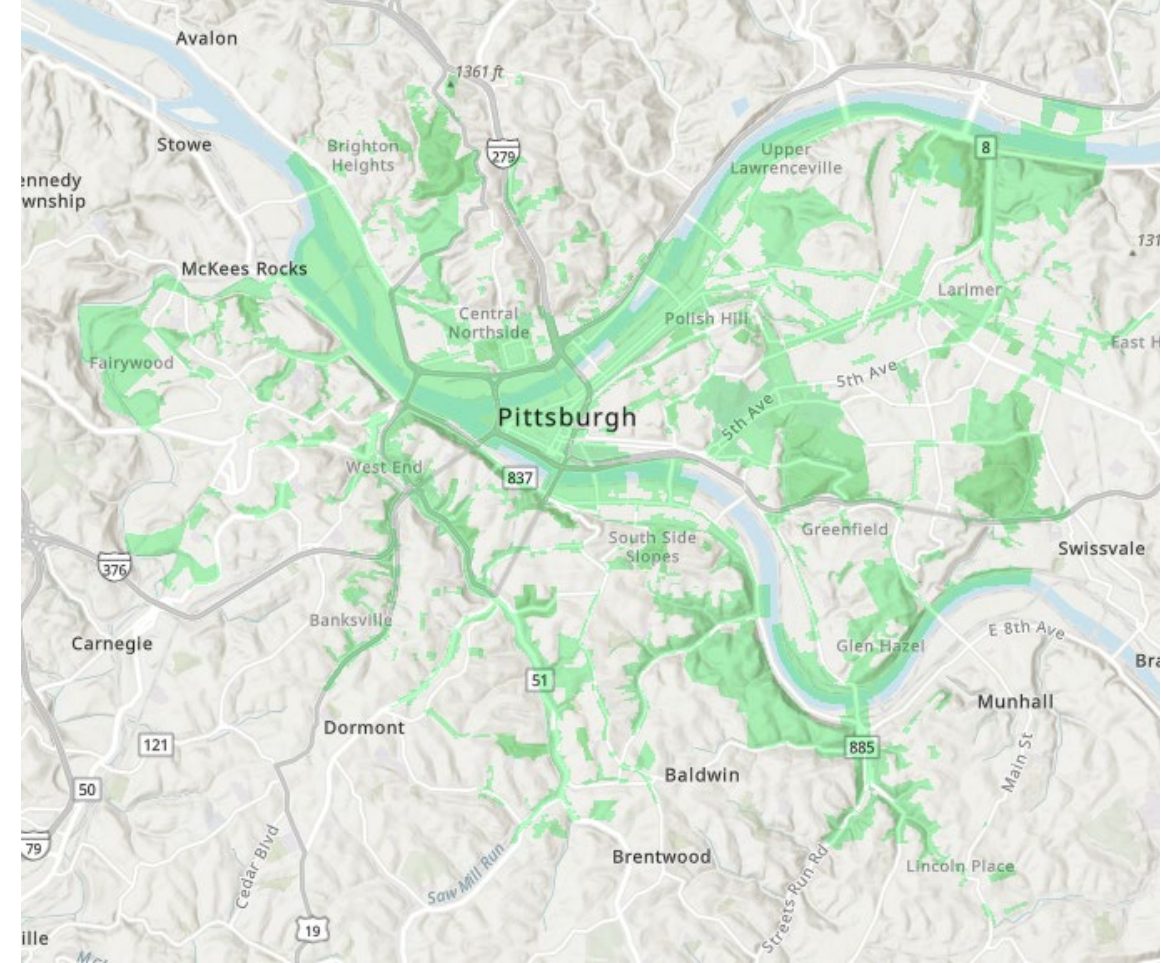
Proposed By-Right:

- All Mixed Use Districts
- Special-P and –EMI
- Golden Triangle
- Most RIV districts

Chapter 911: Use Table Changes (Non-Accessory/Primary)



Current



Proposed

- Permitted By Right
- Administrator Exception
- Special Exception

Chapter 912: Accessory Uses

Nonresidential Zoning Districts:

allow by-right in non-residential districts when accessory to any use

Residential Zoning

Districts: allow by-right in residential districts when accessory to:

- Agriculture
- Community Center (Limited)
- Parks and Recreation (Limited)
- Religious Assembly
- School, Elementary or Secondary

Chapter 912: Outdoor Retail Sales & Services

Accessory Use Standards

- Remove language requiring the use to be integral to the primary use and pursuant to the same business identification number.
- Replace language on health, fire, and other approvals with requirement to obtain a vending license, if applicable
- Add language requiring all standards to be met even with ROZA is not required

Chapter 922: Cases when no ROZA is required

1. Outdoor Retail Sales & Services as an Accessory Use if **no sales are made to the general public; OR**
2. Outdoor Retail Sales & Services as a Primary or Accessory Use if all the following are met:
 - The Use is **not located in a Residential Zoning District** or located such that Residential Compatibility Standards apply and;
 - **No permanent structures**, site features, or vehicles related to the Use remain when the Outdoor Retail Sales and Service Use is not occurring and;
 - If a Primary Use, there is another Primary Use on the Zoning Lot.

Supplementing regulations with additional resources

- Develop resources such as **grants and staff support** for vendors.
- Create **informational materials with clear guidelines** for vendors
- Build partnerships for an **accessible pipeline** from mobile to brick-and-mortar.
- **Facilitate relationships** among vendors and between vendors and brick-and-mortars
- **Work with partner agencies** to expand opportunities and keep regulations up to date.

Timeline

Phase 1: November 2024 – January 2025

- Conduct literature review and benchmarking
- Identify priorities and constraints for City departments

Phase 2: January – February 2025

- Gather Engage survey responses
- Hold internal and external focus groups

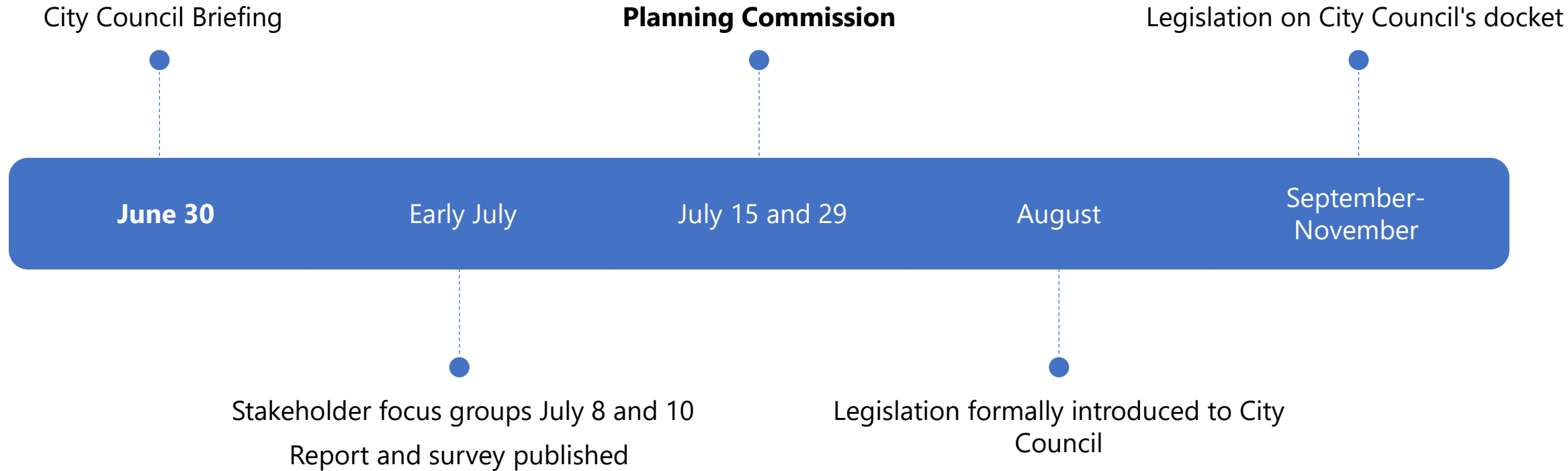
Phase 3: Spring-Summer 2025

- Draft whitepaper and refine recommendations
- Continued discussion and engagement
- Working with Mayor's Cabinet and City Council
- **Planning Commission Briefing and Hearing & Action on zoning text amendment**

Phase 4: Fall 2025

- Submit vending & zoning amendment legislation to City Council for adoption
- Produce updated materials on vending program

Legislative Milestones



Feedback from July Engagements

- Consistent and effective **enforcement**
- **Distance requirements** from storefronts and onsite vending at breweries
- **Space between vendors** and keeping locations organized
- Flexibility and **clear rules** for permitted locations
- More locations where there is potential to **make a profit**
- More locations in neighborhoods with **fewer retail and food options**
- Vendors providing "**eyes on the street**" and attracting foot traffic
- **Permit fees** should not pose a barrier to entry



Thank You!

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