

# Sidewalk Vending Ordinance and Pilot Program

County Health Department &  
County Executive Office

Board of Supervisors

February 24, 2026



# Background

- SB 946 (2018): Limited local restrictions and penalties
- SB 972 (2022): Allowed CMFOs to prepare low-risk food
- SB 635 (2025): Prohibited collecting or sharing vendor citizenship status or criminal history
- Changes in state law led to a proliferation of unpermitted vendors
  - May 2023 – January 2026: 133 NOVs for lack of health permit and other violations in unincorporated county. 90 additional NOVs in cities.
- Public health and safety concerns: foodborne illness, pedestrian and vehicle access, and fire and environmental hazards

# Board Direction

- Convene Task Force
- Draft sidewalk vending ordinance
- Return to Board with proposed ordinance and implementation plan
- Develop public awareness campaign
- Direct County Legislative Committee and state lobbyists to monitor, report, and share relevant information regarding other jurisdictions' approach to sidewalk vending and to write a letter to the State Legislature informing them of the unintended local consequences of SB 946 and SB 972

# Task Force

- Met April 3 and May 15, 2025
- Includes EHS, County Counsel, District Attorney, Fire, Public Works, and Sheriff's Office
- Developed concept for Pilot Program outreach and public awareness campaign
- Met with California Highway Patrol
  - Agreed to collaborate with County and enforce on state freeways and ROWs

# Sidewalk Vending Ordinance

- Applies in unincorporated county areas
- Requires seller's permit, business license, and health permit
- Vending only allowed on paved public sidewalks and pedestrian paths
- Requirements for allowable vending equipment, locations, hours of operation, and sanitation
- Administrative warnings and fines for violations
- Impound food, goods, and vending equipment
- Dispose of impounded items that cannot be safely stored or that are perishable

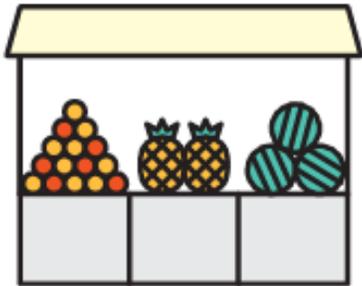
1. Sidewalk food vendors are now  
Compact Mobile Food Operations or:

# CMFOs

COMPACT MOBILE FOOD OPERATIONS



Push cart



Stand



Pedal-cart



Wagon

Note:

Temporary restaurants also known as pop-ups are not considered CMFOs and are not permitted under the law. Pop-ups may include food preparation and stationary tables with an overhead canopy.



# Pilot Program

- Outreach Team
  - 2-4 EHS inspectors, 2 Public Works staff, and 1 Deputy Sheriff
  - 15 compliance events over 6 months and visit 3-5 vendors per event
  - Focus on unincorporated Santa Maria and Santa Ynez Valley areas
  - Purchase storage equipment

• Costs:	Six months staff overtime:	\$32,522.10
	Two c-trains:	\$7,500.00
	<u>One chest freezer:</u>	<u>\$2,000.00</u>
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$42,022.10</b>

# Public Awareness Campaign

- Alert the public to health risks of consuming food from unlawful vendors (e.g., foodborne illness and pest contamination)
- County PIO will conduct six-month multifaceted media campaign
- Digital and social media
- Earned media (e.g., press releases in local newspapers)
- Example [Public Service Announcement](#) (PSA)

# Stakeholder Outreach

- January 30, 2026: County held a stakeholder meeting in Santa Maria
- Invited sidewalk vendors, nonprofits, business owners, and city staff
- Feedback from local business owners:
  - Unlawful vendors not paying taxes or fees or acquiring permits
  - Unfair competition between unlawful vendors and lawful businesses
  - State laws unintentionally incentivized unlawful vendors

# Proposed Ordinance vs. Status Quo

- Proposed Ordinance:
  - Defines “sidewalk” and “sidewalk vendor”
  - Specifies hours of operation and allowable vending locations
  - Clarifies EHS’s authority to impound contaminated food and equipment
- Status Quo:
  - EHS continues to impound contaminated food
  - County does not impound cooking equipment due to lack of storage space and staffing

# Recommended Actions

## Either:

- a) Receive and file an update on the status of the EHS's sidewalk vending outreach efforts over the past six months; and
- b) Consider the introduction (First Reading) of an Ordinance amending the Santa Barbara County Code to adopt regulations regarding sidewalk vending countywide;
- c) Read the title and waive further reading of the Ordinance in full;
- d) Continue the hearing to March 3, 2026, on the Administrative Agenda to consider recommendations, as follows:
  - i. On March 3, 2026, adopt the Ordinance (Second Reading) amending the Santa Barbara County Code to adopt regulations regarding sidewalk vending countywide;
  - ii. Direct the County PIO to develop a public awareness campaign using earned media; and
  - iii. Approve Budget Revision Request No. BJE – 0010755 to establish appropriations of \$42,022.10 in Fund 990 for staff to initiate a six-month Sidewalk Vending Pilot Program to enforce the Sidewalk Vending Ordinance for the period of April 3, 2026 through October 3, 2026 (4/5ths vote required).
  - iv. Determine that the above actions are exempt under the provisions of the CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), finding that the actions consist of administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

# Recommended Actions

Or,

- e) Receive and file an update on the status of the EHS's sidewalk vending outreach efforts over the past six months; and
- f) Determine that the above action is exempt under the provisions of the CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), finding that the action consists of administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.



# Questions?