



Agenda Item: 11.A
Date of Meeting: December 8, 2025
Department: Public Works

STAFF REPORT

To: City Council
From: Nora Gamino
Subject: **ORDINANCE - First Reading and Introduction of an Ordinance Adding Chapter 5.34 to the Bishop Municipal Code Relating to Mobile Businesses**
Prepared On: November 20, 2025
Attachments: Ordinance No. XXX Update to Title 5 Mobile Businesses

Background/History:

The City does not currently have comprehensive standards governing mobile businesses, defined in the ordinance as mobile vending operations, including the sale of food or merchandise from a vehicle, on either private property or within the public right-of-way. In practice, the Public Works Department has issued encroachment permits for all mobile business operators, including mobile food vendors, even when a vendor is not physically encroaching into the public right-of-way. This approach has created unnecessary administrative burden and placed Public Works in the position of managing vendor locations, durations, and operational details on a case-by-case basis.

Mobile business operators often request guidance from the City regarding acceptable locations, operational limitations, and compliance requirements, highlighting the need for clearer and more predictable regulations. At the same time, staff has identified the need to ensure that vending activities occur safely, do not obstruct mobility, and do not create conflicts with driveways, schools, intersections, or pedestrian routes.

The proposed ordinance creates a clear, flexible, and enforceable framework for mobile vending that removes unnecessary permit requirements while retaining common-sense operational restrictions needed to protect the public and adjacent businesses.

Analysis/Discussion:

The ordinance does not create any new mobile vending permit or regulatory program. Vendors will continue to operate with only a City Business License and any required Inyo County health permits (if applicable). A Public Works encroachment permit will be required when a vendor places tables, chairs, signs, or other equipment in the public right-of-way. Vendors operating solely from their vehicles and legally parked in the right-of-way will not require any Public Works approval.

Although the City does not currently charge for encroachment permits, this ordinance does not prevent the City from establishing a fee in the future should the need arise.

The ordinance establishes clear time, place, and manner requirements to ensure that mobile vending activities do not interfere with traffic, business access, pedestrian circulation, or public safety. These include setbacks from fire hydrants, crosswalks, building entrances, bus stops, and school frontage. Vendors must also comply with all state and local health, safety, and parking regulations.

The proposed ordinance significantly reduces the administrative workload for the Public Works Department by eliminating the current practice of issuing encroachment permits for all mobile food vendors, regardless of whether they actually encroach into the public right-of-way. Under the new framework, vendors who operate solely from their vehicles and do not place items such as tables, chairs, signs, or other equipment in the right-of-way will no longer require any permit from Public Works, allowing the department to focus on safety and access rather than routine approvals. This shift also removes staff from the role of assigning or managing vendor locations, resulting in a more efficient process for both the City and vendors while retaining the ability to regulate only those situations involving actual encroachments.

Vendors will have increased flexibility to operate throughout the City, provided they comply with the limited restrictions in the ordinance. This reduces the need for location-specific approvals and creates a predictable, and standardized set of operational rules for mobile businesses.

The ordinance also limits noise generated by mobile vending operations by prohibiting amplified sound or music used to advertise or draw attention to the vending vehicle. Only non-amplified sound is allowed, and it may not be used while the vehicle is stationary or be audible beyond 200 feet. These provisions help ensure compatibility with surrounding residential and commercial areas.

Economic Impacts:

There are no significant economic impacts.

Budget Impacts:

There are no significant budget impacts, however the ordinance is expected to reduce administrative workload related to permit processing.

Legal Review:

City Attorney Pucci has reviewed this item and finds that the recommended action complies with the law.

Recommended Action:

Council consideration to approve the first reading and introduction of an ordinance adding Chapter 5.34 to the Bishop Municipal Code relating to mobile businesses by title only.

Approved By: Robin Picken 12/1/2025

Approved By: Ana Budnyk 12/1/2025

Approved By: Dean Pucci 12/1/2025

Approved By: Pam Foster 12/3/2025

