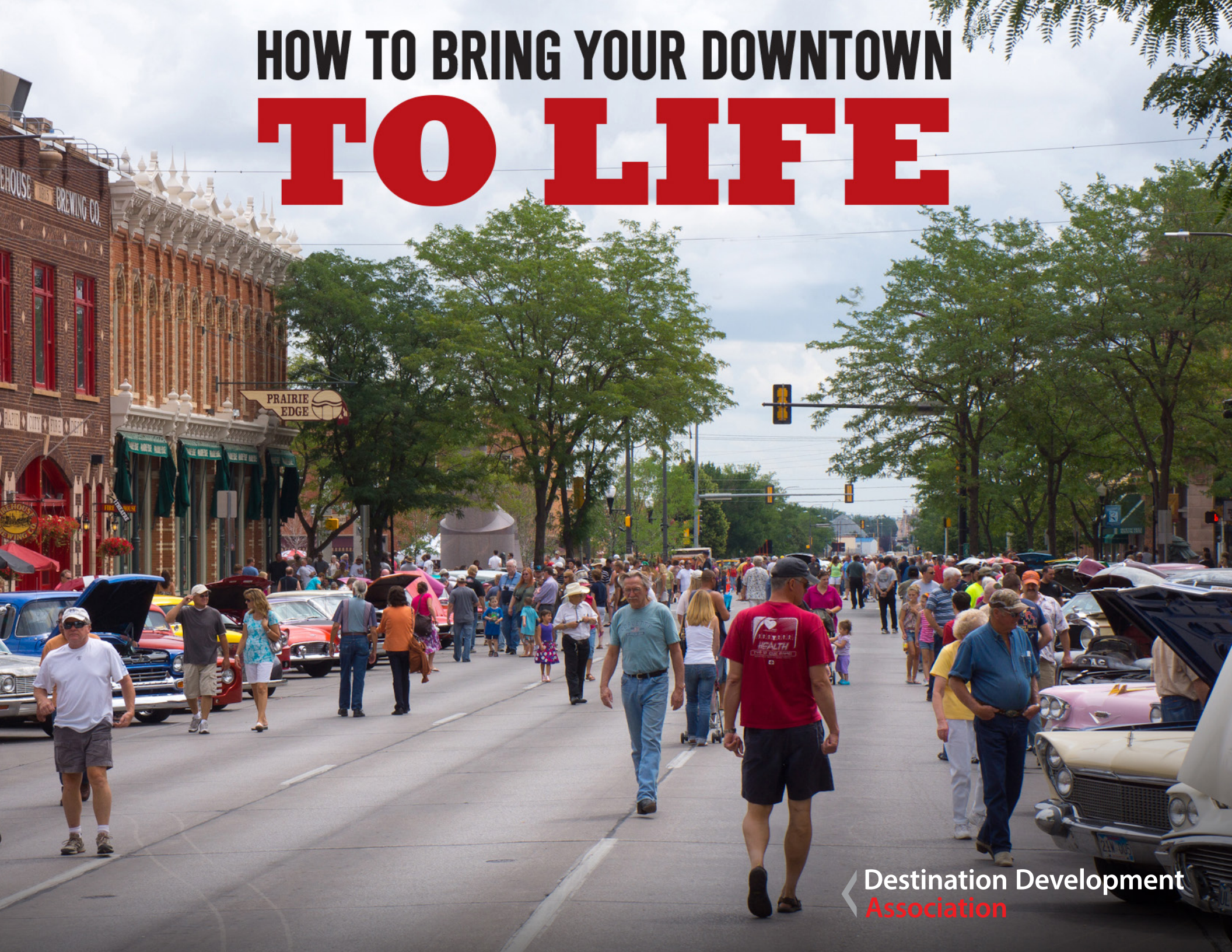
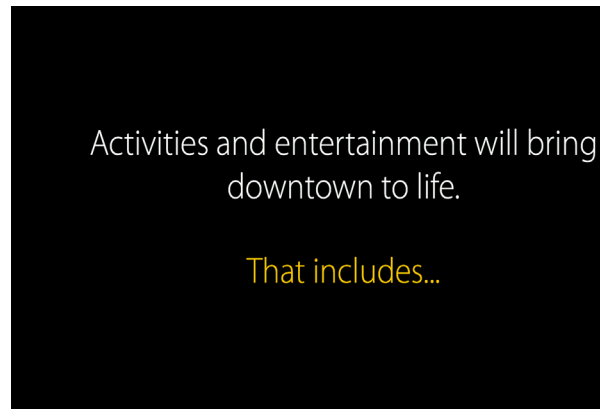
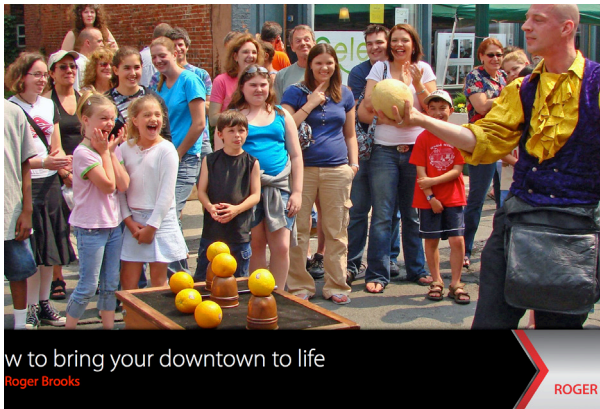


HOW TO BRING YOUR DOWNTOWN **TO LIFE**



How to Bring Your Downtown to Life | Handout



- If locals won't hang out in your downtown, neither will visitors!
- Community first, visitors will follow
- So how do you turn your downtown into a thriving destination?
- We set out to find out – surveyed 400 successful downtowns and downtown districts
- Found the 20 most common ingredients to their success.
- One was activities and entertainment
- More than 370 had this ingredient

Activities and entertainment will bring your downtown to life

- Street musicians and performers
 - Food carts and trucks
 - Vending carts
 - Artisans in action
- Imagine your downtown with all of these!
- Think of your downtown as a year round public market (not a farmer's market – but a marketplace)
- This can work as well in a town of a thousand people as it can in any metropolitan area
- The power of public plazas – one of the ingredients is Plazas must be programmed

Why is this important?

- Because the heart and soul of any community – besides its people – is its downtown
- You MUST bring downtown to life
- If you don't, you'll be one of thousands of ghost towns in the making across North America
- If you have vacancies in your downtown, what comes first?
 - People.
 - Businesses won't come unless people hang out there
 - If people are there, merchants will follow
- People went to the suburbs, and malls were developed
- And then there was a proliferation of strip malls
- Businesses gravitate to where people are spending time
- But – you can't hang it on special events. Special events are not enough
- You need 100 days a year minimum to ensure success

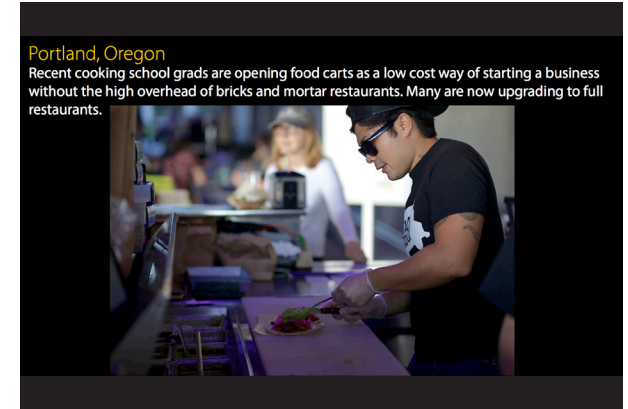
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1. In the U.S. alone they account for \$10 billion in annual sales.

Why street vendors?

- Because it is the easiest, fastest and least expensive way to revitalize a downtown
- Easiest – fastest – least expensive
- A great way to kick start the process
- If you are working on downtown revitalization, this is where to start
- In the US alone, they account for \$10 billion in annual sales
- Historically a large part of the economy dating from the 1600s
- In Europe and Asia they have had street vendors for thousands of years – this is nothing new
- There is a tremendous spill-over effect to brick and mortar merchants
- They reduce crime by adding life to streets devoid of activity
- They incorporate immigrants into the local economy
- It creates a positive social and economic interactions between different ethnic and cultural groups
- It creates opportunities for people with limited resources
- It creates a fantastic business incubator environment for new and emerging businesses
- Studies show street vendors and artisans improve the quality of life
- Visitors love the authenticity that comes from local talent on display



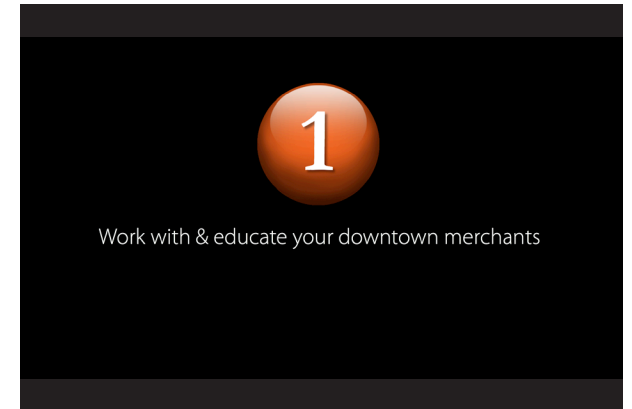
Portland, Oregon

Recent cooking school grads are opening food carts as a low cost way of starting a business without the high overhead of bricks and mortar restaurants. Many are now upgrading to full restaurants.

Examples: Portland, Oregon

- In Portland, Oregon, cooking school grads are operating food carts as a low cost way of starting a business without the high overhead of brick and mortar restaurants. Many are not upgrading to full restaurants

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Examples: Athens, Georgia

- In Athens, Georgia, the Food Cart Festival started a vibrant downtown food culture centered on street vending. Then they added musicians and entertainers, and voila! A vibrant downtown scene.

How do you make it happen – the 10 things you need to do

Work with and educate your downtown merchants

- The merchants tend to fight street vendors and musicians, thinking they are competition
- The argument of competition and keeping people out of businesses is totally false. 100% false. They are wrong. They don't get it.
- They should check out the places that encourage street vending and see how it works
- Creates social interaction
- An outlet for affordable goods and services
- Brings towns to life
- Keeps local spending, local
- Celebrates diversity
- Keeps young people in town longer creating "third places" and small business opportunities
- Are a tourism draw and amenity
- They are authentic to the community
- There's not a country in the world that doesn't have street vendors



Get the government entity on board



Define the locations



Create conducive venues

Get the government entity on board

- City or local town government
- Tell them we need to get people downtown, often – merchants will follow, retail space will follow, tax base follows
- There are hundreds of great examples
- This is a re-emerging trend and is growing rapidly
- Bringing downtown to life means more cash
- It slows leakage

Define the locations

- Lowell, Massachusetts put up signs where public performers can operate
- No permit required
- Three strikes, you're out
- Must perform at designated locations
- Noon to 10:00 pm
- No amplified music
- Performers: acting, signing, playing musical instruments, pantomime, juggling, magic, dancing, puppetry, reading, creation of art, reciting
- Mind your noise level
- The Downtown Development Authority issues and manages the performers
- Been very successful

Create conducive venues

- Case history Park(d) Plaza
- East Village Arts District, Long Beach, CA, population 40,000 in the district
- Developed in 2012
- Cost \$6,000 and 30 gallons of paint
- Size: 2,250 square feet (209 square meters)
- Took part of a parking lot, painted it, and put up some umbrellas and chairs
- Food trucks, entertainers
- Creating these places can be simple, and is important



Define the rules

Define the rules

- Don't overregulate! The easier the better
- Asheville, NC has been reducing regulations
- Better yet: don't regulate it at all in the beginning
- Don't create obstacles to people coming downtown
- As success builds, you can start adding additional rules and regulations, and then start collecting fees or taxes
- In the beginning the priority is to bring downtown to life, not worry about money
- Let it grow organically



Start slowly: Weekends during the peak season.
And evening hours to bring people back downtown.

Start slowly: weekends during the peak season and evening hours to bring people downtown

- Start with Friday evenings from 4:30 to 8:30 or 9:00, Saturdays from noon to 4:00 and from 5:00 to 9:00
- Sundays from 11:00 to 4:00 or so



Invite the vendors & performers in

Invite the vendors and performers in

- Amherst, Massachusetts pays a \$25 stipend with a \$3,000 annual budget
- \$10,000 annual budget divided by \$35 per 4 hour performance will fund 285 performances a year
- At 100 days a year (or during the season) that's 3 performers each day
- They make most of their money from tips, but this will seed the effort and get things started
- This does not include vendor trucks or food trucks; they pay their own way
- Reach out to high schools and local colleges
- Use social media
- Have it written up in local newspapers and publications and Chamber of Commerce newsletters – other local organizations
- Contact vendors directly appearing in farmers markets, in other neighboring towns

8

Contract with vendor cart companies
and work with street vending organizations

9

Market them!
Social media, here we come!

10

Help them grow: Economic Gardening

Contract with vendor cart companies and work with street vending organizations

- www.proresourcesinc.com
- Lease vendor carts
- Leasing agent to many vendors on Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, CA
- This creates a small business incubator, if needed
- www.inclusivecities.org has a section on street vending

Market them!

- Help them grow
 - Economic gardening
 - Goal is to have them grow into a brick and mortar store
- Think about this: George Burns and Joan Baez both started as street performers

Examples: Brea, California

- A restaurant in downtown Brea was having trouble, despite adding outdoor seating and entertainment outside
- We suggested doing an experiment – building a small stage to set outside and having the musicians perform outside instead (non-amplified)
- They had the performers outside on a Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday night and did more business that weekend than in the previous 6 months combined
- It literally saved his business
- In Brea they are now working on ordinances to allow street vendors downtown

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Shreveport, LA: list of rules/expectations

- Passing the hat or asking for money is not allowed
- Performance permit: \$30 for a year (each member of a team has own permit)
- (In the beginning, don't even do this much – let it grow organically)
- 10:00 am – 10:00 pm
- Assigned a performance space
- No amplified music
- Cannot block pedestrian access
- Mind noise level
- The Downtown Development Authority issues and manages the performers



Granville Island, Vancouver, British Columbia

Granville Island is mostly a public market

- Major gathering place and performance place
- Always something going on, year round
- Rules:
 - Buskers must read and understand guidelines
 - Varying licenses from \$70 to \$400 for a group for a year
 - Three strikes you're out using a "three hole punch" system in their license, which they have with them. Can reapply the following year
 - Six indoor locations with 30 minutes blocks of time
 - Eight outdoor locations with 60 minute blocks of time, 11 am to 7 pm
 - No repetitions – play for an hour a day, three days – must use different material



- Amplification can be used, but with a predetermined decibel meter level per location
- Entertainment only. No product sales – they are a public market already
- Year round, rain or shine

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Santa Cruz, California

- A permit is required if the space required is larger than 4'x6' or takes longer than 20 minutes to set up. Fee is \$33
- Two hours on Pacific Ave, three hours in downtown alleyways. 11am to 10pm
- Un-amplified music only
- Created a street performers guild which works with business owners, the city



Savannah, Georgia

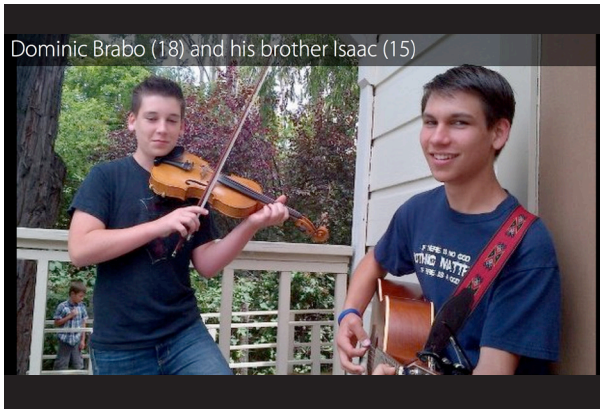
- Annual permit required, expires at the end of the year
- Revoked for 30 days after first offense, 90 days after second, third time, gone.
- There are defined performance places
- Sunday through Wednesday 9am to 9pm, Thursday – Saturday until 10pm
- No amplified music unless approved by the City Manager
- Management: Savannah Citizen Office



Greensboro, North Carolina

- Four hours maximum time per performance
- 11 am to 11 pm
- License is \$10 – it does require a criminal background check
- Performing groups of no more than five people
- No fire, sharp objects, spray paint, aerosols, firearms (even simulated), harmful chemicals
- Amplification ok, but if complaints must stop

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Santa Rosa, California

- Dominic Brabo (18) and his brother Isaac (15) decided to try performing
- They were recruited to perform
- Allows them to make some extra money, showcase their talents and practice their performance skills



Pushcart vendors

- City provides locations based on vendor interests. They have 25 locations
- Some vendors come back year after year; others don't last
- Push carts sell merchandise and/or food; all must be locally produced
- North Carolina health code requires that pushcart vendors only sell prepackaged goods
- They must be roll on/roll off carts
- Applications require insurance and permission (parking lot owners, property owners)
- Application is good for one specific location for one year
- There have not been any issues or complaints in Asheville
- The city tries to place carts strategically so that there isn't any competition with local restaurants



Food trucks

- Allowed for two years now
- Two permits are required: one for location, one for truck
- There used to be a limit of 10 trucks; now there is no limit
- The biggest challenge is finding good locations and parking lot owner cooperation
- Trucks are required to plug in. No generators allowed
- They are open and succeeding year round
- Initial concerns of competition, mess, lowering foodie brand
- Reality – no problems, no complaints, all positive. The quality of the food has maintained Asheville's foodie destination brand

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Buskers

- Busking is viewed by the community as a form of free speech
- Used to be regulated but is now open to everyone
- Dangerous acts require a permit (fire, sharp objects, heights)
- Busking reinforces the local culture and music. Visitors will love it!
- Asheville is one of the most visited, successful visitor destination in the US



Street market artisans

- Provide trays/spaces to rent to artisans and vendors
- Made their downtown a year round public market
- Everything is locally made
- Because it is so successful, some artisans have now rented indoor booth space