

City of Madison Vending Oversight Committee Meeting
Street Vending Staff Report
2025-2026 Overview & 2026-2027 Preview
Unless otherwise noted, the below statistics are current as of 1/21/2026

2025-2026 Vending Overview

Art & Craft:

License Issued – 98

Enforcement

Written Warnings: 2

- Cosmo Joe
- Hanna Bettner

Merchant Vending:

License Issued – 8

Enforcement

Education/Observation: 1

- Puffin Pass (signage)

Sidewalk Cafes & Roadway Cafe:

License Issued – 77

SWC: 55

RWC: 22

Enforcement

Education/Observation: 15

- Alchemy Café
- Molten Monkey Pizza
- Hawks
- Ivory Room
- Rare Steak House
- The Botanist Social
- Irish Pub
- Hawks #2
- Colectivo on State
- Settle Down Tavern
- Nitty Gritty
- Wando's
- Whiskey Jack's
- State Street Brats (They operate a food cart and restaurant. This incident was because of their deep freezer, smoker, and equipment in ROW when they were getting emergency repairs on their roof. Was notified of their use of ROW space by Mall Crew.)
- Old Sugar

Verbal Warnings: 14

- Chocolate Shoppe
- 107 State
- Izakaya Kuroyama

City of Madison Vending Oversight Committee Meeting

Street Vending Staff Report

2025-2026 Overview & 2026-2027 Preview

- Madison's
- Tipsy Cow
- Cento
- Ivory Room
- Tipsy Cow #2
- Rare Steak House
- The Botanist Social
- Hawks
- The Old Fashioned
- Genna's Lounge
- The Roxy

Written Warning: 5

- 107 State
- Dandy Fire, Inc. (license payment issues for Woof's and Dvinos)
- Ivory Room
- Ancora Coffee
- Tipsy Cow

Citation: 4

- Tipsy Cow
- 107 State
- The Borough
- Tipsy Cow (second citation)

Food Cart Vending:

Mall Food Vending

Mall Concourse Food Licenses Issued - 32

Southeast Campus Vending

Southeast Campus License Issued - 6

State Street Night Vending

State Street Night Vending License Issued - 3

Citywide Vending

Licenses Issued - 78

Umbrella: 66

Basic: 12

Enforcement Food Cart Vending:

Observation/Education: 6

- Sandwich Hub
- Sista's Chicken & Fish
- Sunroom Cafe
- El Wiscorican
- La Fogata
- Nana's 608 Restaurant

City of Madison Vending Oversight Committee Meeting

Street Vending Staff Report

2025-2026 Overview & 2026-2027 Preview

Verbal Warning: 2

- MexSal Mobile
- Toast

Written Warning: 3

- Sunroom Café
- Toast
- Bit of Briana

Citation: 0

Basic Street Vending License (not food):

License Applications Received/In process – 0

Enforcement

Written Warning: 1

- Angela Opoku - Schroeder Ct./Rd.

TOSVOD – Top of State Vending Overlay District

TOSVOD application received/in process – 0

Game Day Vending

License Applications issued: 6

Citation: 1

- Brian Beaman (ticket seller)

Banners Permits:

Number of individual organizations that have applied for a Banners Permit – 25

Number of individual Banners Permits in process or issued – 47

TEM Permits:

Number of Tabling Permits issued – 500

Street Vending Program — 2025 Year-End Recap

Vending activities have slowed down with about 30% of food carts still operating. Art & Craft vending has not been active on weekdays or weekends. Food vending activity similarly slowed as the fall semester concluded and student presence decreased across campus-adjacent areas. The late summer and fall portion of the 2025–2026 generally tracked as expected seasonal patterns. As is typical in Wisconsin, vending operations remained highly weather dependent.

Sidewalk Cafe and Roadway Cafe operations largely wound down in late October and early November due to earlier-than-usual cold temperatures and snowfall compared to the prior year.

City of Madison Vending Oversight Committee Meeting

Street Vending Staff Report

2025-2026 Overview & 2026-2027 Preview

As fall transitioned into winter, staff worked closely with Parks Division to support city-sponsored events and maintain winter activation at select parks, allowing licensed food vendors to operate when conditions permitted.

At the same time, staff began shifting operational focus toward preparation for the upcoming 2026–2027 vending season. This included proactive outreach to vendors regarding key application timelines and requirements, such as January 2, 2026, opening of the application portal and the February 1 application deadline to support efficient processing ahead of April 15, 2026, season start.

In 2025, Street Vending staff, operating at full capacity, focused on improving efficiency and licensing experience through clearer application guidance, continued outreach and education efforts, and improved communication around timelines and expectations. These efforts are intended to streamline the licensing process, support vendor success, and contribute to a more efficient and predictable 2026–2027 season.

Enforcement Overview

Due to complaints received during the late fall and winter months, enforcement efforts focused on education and compliance across multiple vending programs. This included vending activity in residential-adjacent areas, such as Oak Street, with an emphasis on site maintenance and winter operations. Staff also addressed compliance concerns involving newly licensed vendors in the Mall Concourse following the food cart review, including orientation on tow vehicle requirements and site assignment rules. All complaints received are investigated to ensure accurate attribution and appropriate resolution.

In late 2025, staff also identified instances of unlicensed food vending activity advertised through social media platforms. Staff are actively working with these vendors to bring them into compliance by providing licensing guidance, facilitating retroactive licensing where appropriate, and ensuring vendors are informed and prepared for the upcoming application cycle.

As broader economic conditions continue to place pressure on individuals and small businesses, staff anticipate continued growth in vending as an accessible entrepreneurial pathway. This trend may increase demand for education and outreach and, as participation expands, may also require additional enforcement attention to support compliance and minimize conflicts.

2026-2027 Season Preview

Art & Craft:

Applications Received/In Process – 38

License Issued – 0

Enforcement: Nothing to Report

Comments: Staff have spent significant time exploring ways to expand opportunities for Art & Craft vending on Saturdays. Last year, for the first time, a waiting list was implemented due to increased demand, and expanding site availability remains a key consideration. This season, competing demands for right-of-way space, including sidewalk café requests from brick-and-mortar businesses on the 100

City of Madison Vending Oversight Committee Meeting

Street Vending Staff Report

2025-2026 Overview & 2026-2027 Preview

block of State Street, ongoing construction at the State Historical Museum, and heightened interest in licensing, have further influenced placement decisions. Staff continue to evaluate potential additions and alternative locations to support as many applicants as possible. At this time, it remains to be seen whether another waiting list will be necessary.

Merchant Vending:

Applications Received/In process – 2

License Issued - 0

Enforcement: During the 2025-2026 season, staff observed that the newest Merchant Vendor, Puffin Pass, was using their assigned vending space to display a table with multiple signs. This prompted a review of ordinance regulations and the City sign code to ensure compliance. Staff are working directly with Puffin Pass to provide guidance and education regarding the appropriate use of Merchant Vending spaces. This situation also presents an opportunity to reinforce understanding among all Merchant Vendors about the proper use of vending areas and signage, supporting consistent compliance across the program.

Comments: The enforcement activity outlined above has helped staff identify more effective ways to communicate Merchant Vending requirements going forward. Lessons learned from this season will inform education and guidance for all vendors, ensuring clearer expectations for the use of vending spaces and signage in future seasons.

Sidewalk Cafes & Roadway Cafe:

Applications Received/in process – 17

Sidewalk Cafe ONLY applications - 14

Sidewalk & Roadway Cafe applications – 3

License Issued - 0

Enforcement: Nothing to Report.

Comments: During the 2025–2026 season, the largest enforcement effort consuming staff time continued to be Outdoor Overnight Storage. To promote consistent compliance, staff plan to schedule meetings with repeat violators from last season. These meetings provide an opportunity for candid discussion regarding the allowances and expectations of the program, now entering its third year. They also allow staff to emphasize operational requirements and ensure that all sidewalk and roadway café operators are fully aware of the City's commitment to bringing this issue into complete compliance moving forward.

Food Cart Vending

Mall Food Vending

Mall Concourse Applications received/in process – 7

Mall Concourse Licenses Issued - 0

Enforcement: Nothing to Report.

Comments: Nothing to Report.

Southeast Campus Vending

Southeast Campus Applications in process – 1

City of Madison Vending Oversight Committee Meeting

Street Vending Staff Report

2025-2026 Overview & 2026-2027 Preview

Enforcement: Nothing to report.

Comment: Granger Hall has begun construction. Staff have worked with Traffic Engineering and Parking Utility to find new vending locations to offset the loss of 3 sites due to the expansion of Granger Hall.

State Street Night Vending

State Street Night Vending Applications Submitted/in process – 1

State Street Night Vending License Issued - 0

Enforcement: Nothing to report.

Comment: Nothing to report.

Citywide Vending

Licenses Submitted/in process - 11

Enforcement: Staff continue to dedicate significant effort to ensuring that all food vendors operating within Madison are properly licensed and following City requirements. This includes monitoring social media to identify new businesses advertising vending activity, reviewing notifications from Public Health Madison & Dane County when new Mobile Food Establishment Licenses are issued, and conducting rounds throughout the City to observe vending activity firsthand. When vendors are found operating out of compliance, staff take a proactive approach whenever possible to help them obtain proper licensing and ensure their operations meet all City requirements. This support includes facilitating retroactive coverage for past activity, ensuring compliance for the remainder of the current season, and providing guidance for applications for the upcoming 2026–2027 season.

Comment: Food Vending Citywide continue to represent the largest growth category for food vending in the City. As noted in the Art & Craft section, broader economic factors may continue to encourage individuals to pursue vending as an accessible entrepreneurial opportunity, suggesting that growth in this area will remain steady. While the program strives to provide ample opportunities for food vendors and a supportive operating environment, increased participation may also lead to more enforcement challenges, particularly related to zoning restrictions for vending on private property (Free-Standing Vending) and the growing concentration of food trucks throughout the city.

Basic Street Vending License (not food): 0

License Applications Received/In process - 0

Enforcement: Nothing to report.

Comments: This category remains challenging to facilitate due to limited opportunities for individuals to operate in the public right-of-way throughout the city outside of our High-Density Vending license types. In the past, staff have received applications from vendors seeking to set up pop-up tents near pedestrian walkways for resale-based operations. However, the city's layout and the structure of right-of-way areas do not easily accommodate this type of activity, limiting where such vending can be safely and effectively conducted.

TOSVOD – Top of State Vending Overlay District

TOSVOD application in process – 0

Enforcement: Nothing to report.

Comments: Nothing to report

City of Madison Vending Oversight Committee Meeting

Street Vending Staff Report

2025-2026 Overview & 2026-2027 Preview

Game Day Vending

License Applications received/in process: 0

Enforcement: Nothing to Report.

Comments: During the 2025–2026 season, support from the Madison Police Department was invaluable in maintaining compliance during Game Day operations. We sincerely thank Lt. Jennifer Hannah for her instrumental role in coordinating this support and wish her continued success and fulfillment in her next assignment.

Changes to the UW ticketing system, combined with the team's overall performance, contributed to fewer enforceable incidents last season. Looking ahead, staff are reviewing University plans for expanded use of Camp Randall Stadium for musical performances and anticipate requesting MPD support for both Game Day and select non-athletic events to ensure consistent oversight and compliance.

Banners Permits:

Number of individual organizations that have applied for a Banners Permit – 25

Number of individual Banners Permits in process or issued – 3

TEM Permits:

Number of Tabling Permits Received - 1

Number of Tabling Permits issued – 0

Comments: Staff have continued to meet with representatives from the Jehovah's Witness Organization, which remains the largest user of this permitting activity, to discuss strategies for processing their more than 500 annual applicants efficiently. These discussions focus on application timelines and addressing any friction in the process, and continued support for this organization remains necessary. In addition, like the end-of-2025 licensing correspondences, staff have reached out to other organizations that historically utilize TEM permits to inform them of the portal opening, application timelines, and related requirements, helping ensure a smooth permitting process for all applicants.

Ongoing Business:

- Committee Activity and Vending Map Approvals: Work surrounding the approval of vending maps will directly impact Art & Craft vendors, Mall Food vendors and Southeast Campus vendors. Staff will provide correspondence and assistance with site selection based on vendor seniority. Once the maps are finalized, staff will focus on processing incoming license applications to ensure a smooth continuation of operations.
- VOC and EDD Merger into BER: Staff continue to work on the merge the VOC and EDD committees into the new Business and Economic Resource Committee (BER). This includes ordinance changes, creation of the committee charter, and related procedural steps.
- Vendor Processing for 2026–2027 Season: Staff time will primarily focus on individual correspondence and license processing with vendors to facilitate an effective and organized launch of the 2026–2027 vending season.