Appendix A: Engagement Summary to Date

This work to date has included numerous small-group conversations, two focus groups, and an online survey. Upon publication of this report, a second survey will be posted to gather detailed feedback on program recommendations from any interested member of the community. Two additional forums will be held in July 2025, including a focus group for current and prospective vendors on July 8 and a focus group for brick-and-mortar business owners and organizations that work in Pittsburgh's business districts on July 10.

As policies enter the legislative process, there will be additional opportunity for public comment and feedback. This Appendix outlines the first round of engagement as a window into the process used for developing these recommendations but is not a comprehensive discussion of all engagement for this initiative.

EngagePGH Survey Responses

Discussions in focus groups and feedback received through Engage Pittsburgh highlighted priorities for residents. The survey received 41 responses from 40 unique IP addresses (all 41 responses were kept) between January 10 and February 28, 2025. It was posted on Engage, advertised to focus group invitees, and promoted on the Department of City Planning's social media pages, as well as through other points of outreach. It was a big-picture survey asking for responses to five questions:

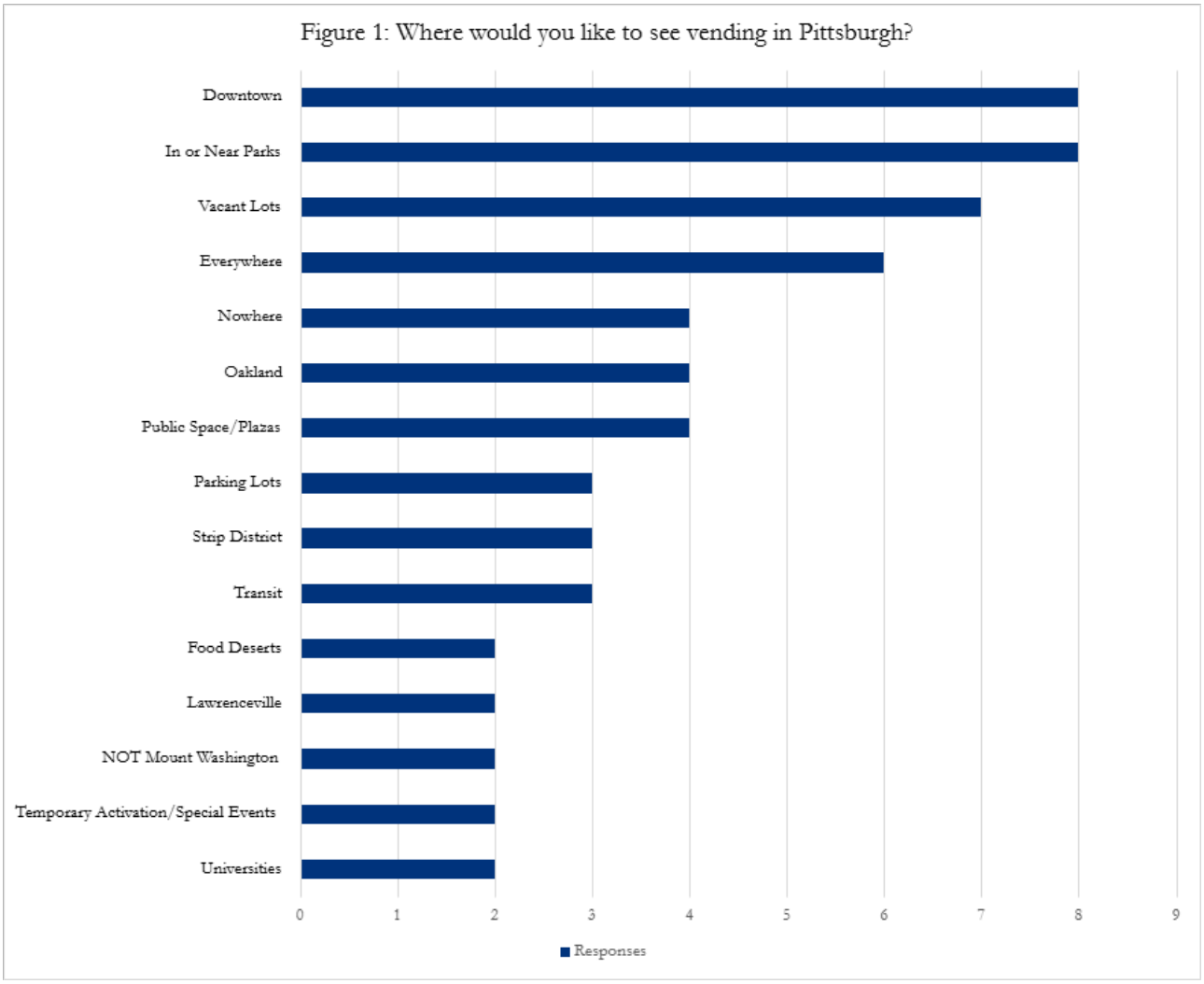
1. Where would you like to see vending in Pittsburgh?
2. If Vendors are located on the sidewalk or street, what concerns would you want the City to consider?
3. If vendors are located on city-owned lots, what concerns would you want the City to consider?
4. If vendors are located on private property, what concerns would you want the City to consider?
5. What types of vending would you like to see?

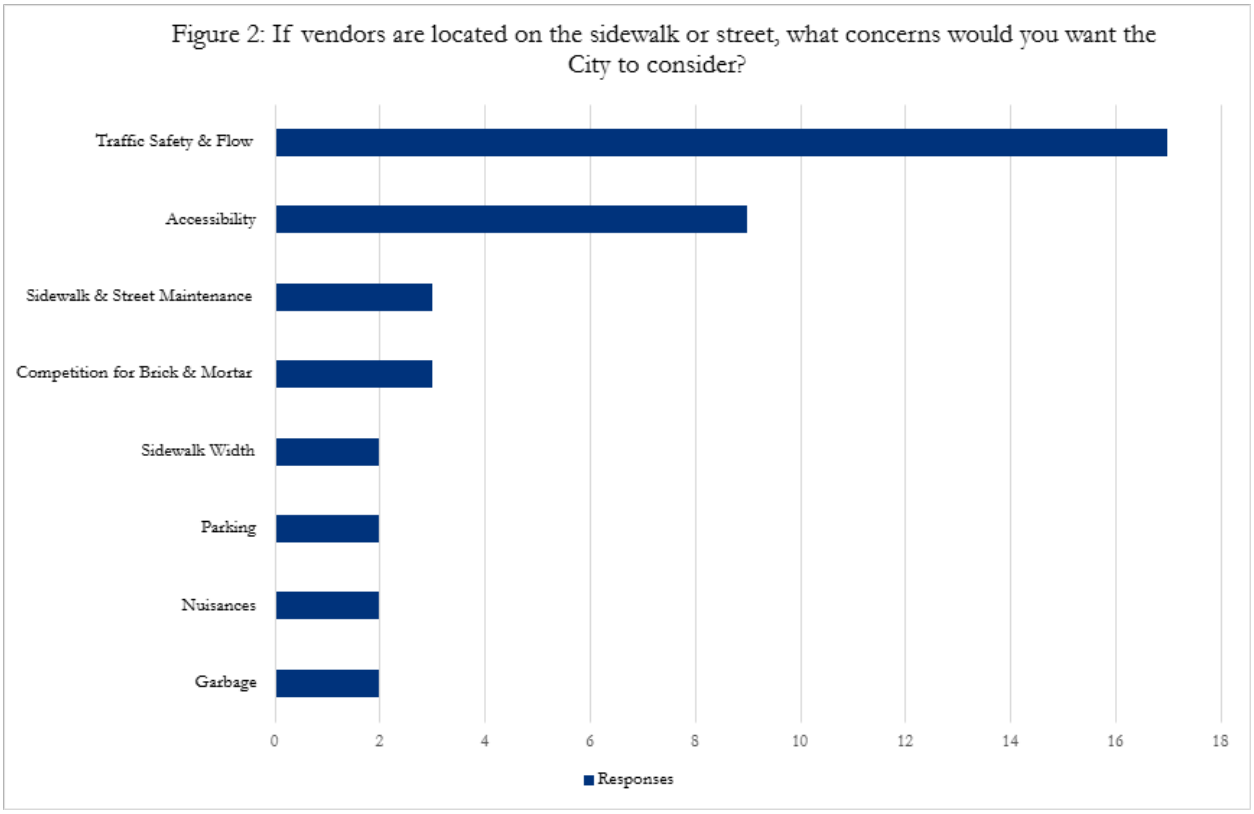
Overall, these responses reflect an appetite for vending opportunities downtown, in and near parks, on vacant lots, Oakland, and generally any appropriate public spaces. Of these respondents, 28 reflected a positive view of expanding vending, 3 offered a mixed opinion, 6 were against vending altogether or against expanding vending, and 2 did not offer a preference one way or another or submitted a response that was not responsive to the question. Respondents pointed to an opportunity to open vending along transit corridors, especially the new University Rapid Transit line and T stations.

When asked about concerns for vending on the sidewalk or street, respondents most frequently expressed concerns about traffic safety & flow and accessibility for residents and visitors with disabilities. Three respondents pointed to concerns about competition with brick & mortar businesses and maintenance of the street and sidewalk.

In considering vending on City-owned vacant land, respondents expressed the most concern about garbage, followed by noise and maintenance, traffic safety and flow, restrooms, and cleanliness. The results were similar for privately-owned land; garbage and traffic safety & flow were top concerns, followed by making sure vendors have permission of the property owner. Food safety, noise, and parking were also concerns for three respondents each.

When asked about preferred types of vending, respondents were excited about food, arts and crafts, and beverages. Four respondents preferred to see no vending. Respondents expressed enthusiasm for supporting small and local businesses, entrepreneurs form marginalized communities, and culturally diverse food options. The following charts show the tagged answers that were mentioned in more than one response:


Figure 1: Where would you like to see vending in Pittsburgh?
Downtown
In or Near Parks
Vacant Lots
Everywhere
Nowhere
Oakland
Public Space/Plazas
Parking Lots
Strip District
Transit
Food Deserts
Lawrenceville
NOT Mount Washington
Temporary Activation/Special Events
Universities
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
Responses


Figure 2: If vendors are located on the sidewalk or street, what concerns would you want the City to consider?
Traffic Safety & Flow
Accessibility
Sidewalk & Street Maintenance
Competition for Brick & Mortar
Sidewalk Width
Parking
Nuisances
Garbage
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
Responses

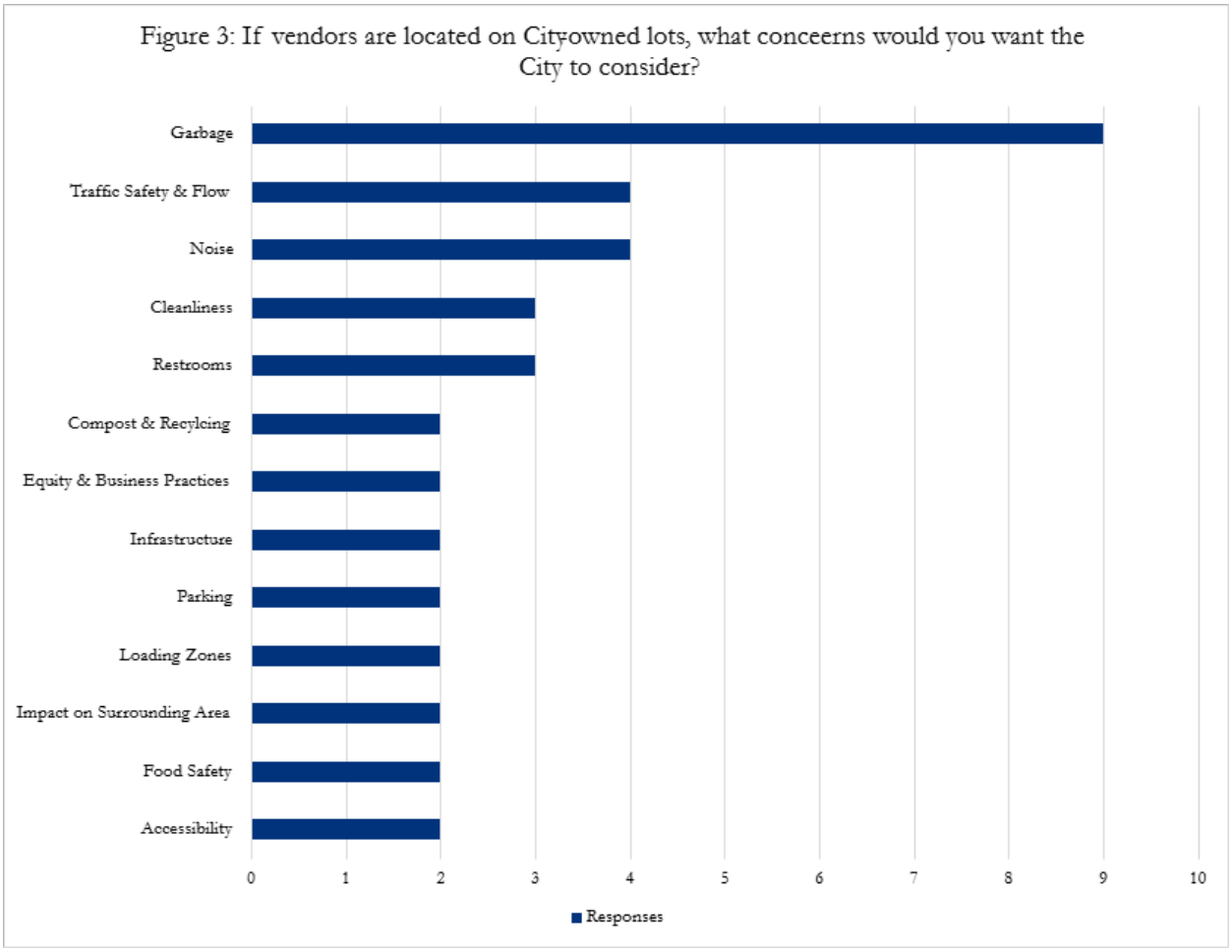
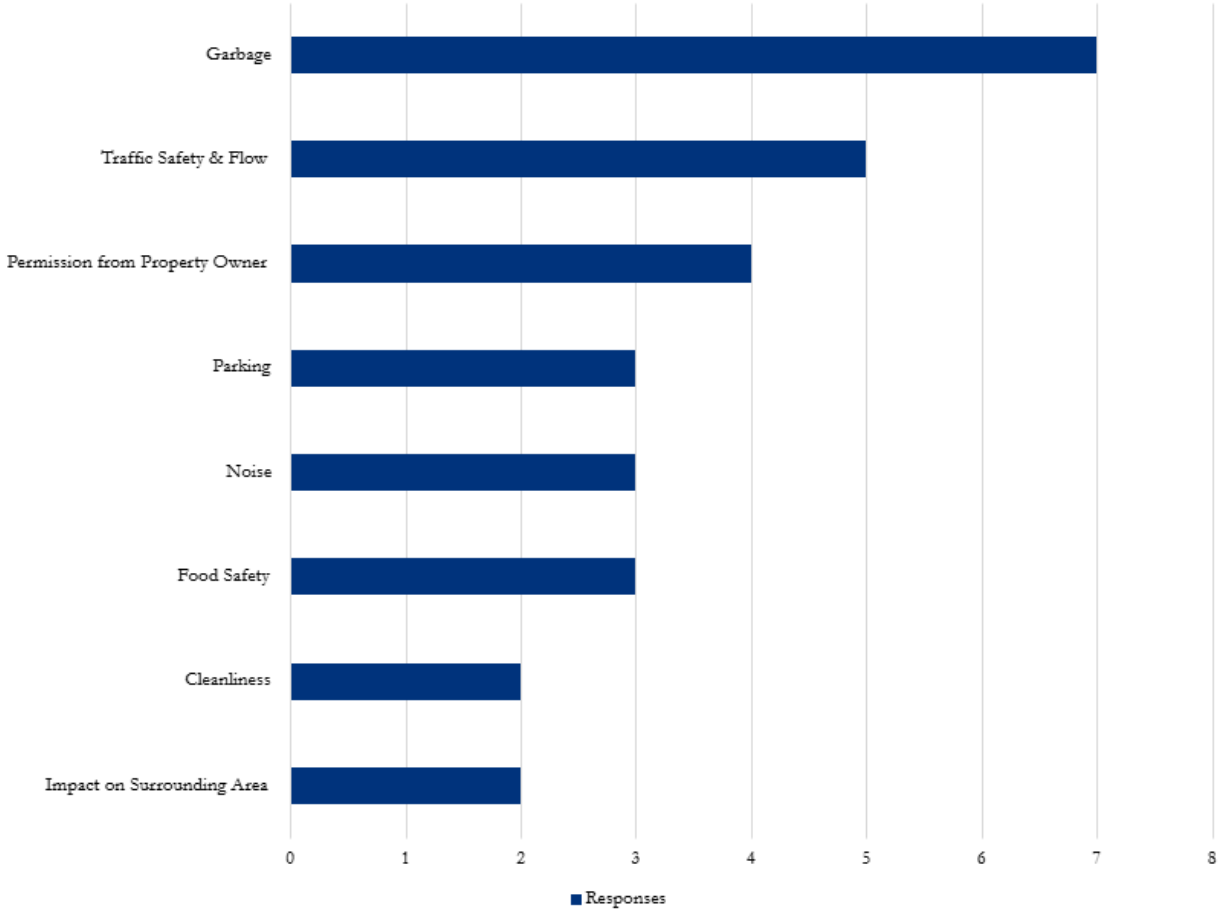
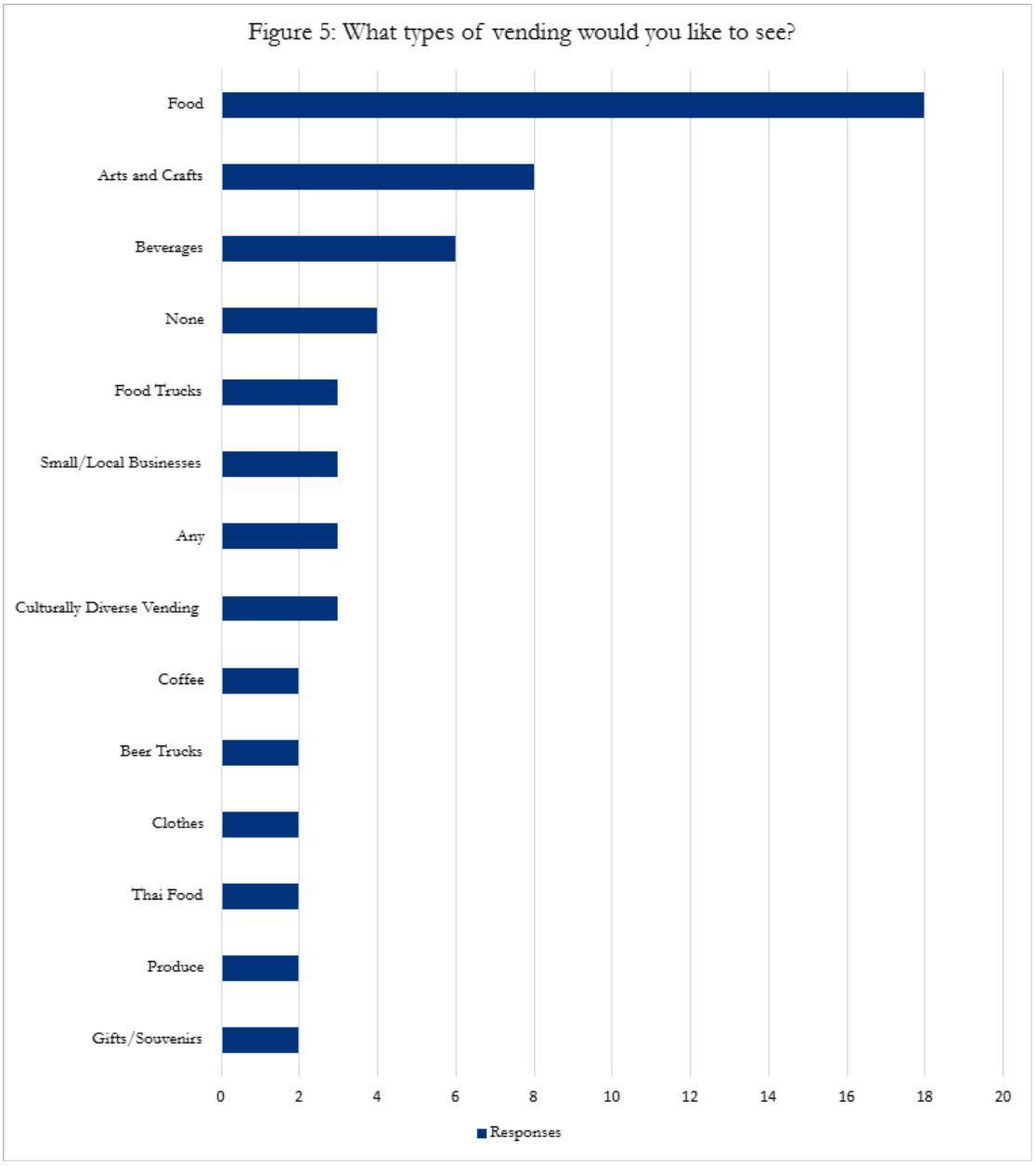

Figure 3: If vendors are located on Cityowned lots, what conceerns would you want the City to consider?
Garbage
Traffic Safety & Flow
Noise
Cleanliness
Restrooms
Compost & Recylcing
Equity & Business Practices
Infrastructure
Parking
Loading Zones
Impact on Surrounding Area
Food Safety
Accessibility
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
Responses

Figure 4: If vendors are located on private property, what concerns would you want the City to consider?




Figure 5: What types of vending would you like to see?
Food
Arts and Crafts
Beverages
None
Food Trucks
Small/Local Businesses
Any
Culturally Diverse Vending
Coffee
Beer Trucks
Clothes
Thai Food
Produce
Gifts/Souvenirs
0
2
4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
Responses

Focus Groups and Interviews

Two focus groups were held on January 23 and February 5, 2025. The first was a discussion among business managers and technical assistance providers, City staff who work with small businesses, and a URA staff member, and the second was with vendors currently operating in Pittsburgh, City staff, and URA representatives. The project team has also engaged in smaller group discussions and interviews, mostly with city officials and partner agencies. These discussions brought up challenges with Pittsburgh's current policy and recommendations to address them that are reflected in this paper.

The group discussions on January 23 and February 5 each began with an overview of the current vending program, challenges that have come up, and examples of how other cities have structured vending programs. Most of the time in these group meetings was used for responses to a set of questions organized by topic, as follows:

Business District Focus Group

Current Policy:

- How does your work intersect vending policy?
- What has been your experience with current policy?
- What is working?
- What are the challenges? How do you or your clients respond to these challenges?
- Who benefits under current policy, and who is left out?
- How does the presence or lack of vending affect your neighborhood or constituency?

Future Locations:

- Where should the City allow vendors to locate...
    - In the Right-of-Way?
    - On public property?
    - On private property?
- What concerns are most important to consider?
- How should spots be allocated in busy areas? Lottery, waitlist, tiered pricing, others
- How can City policy facilitate positive interactions and collaboration between brick-and-mortar and vending businesses?
- How can the City ensure safe, enjoyable, and efficient vending experiences while preserving traffic flow?

Economic Opportunity:

- How can the vending program expand entrepreneurship opportunities in vending and brick-and-mortar operations?
- In addition to allowing more locations, what other resources are needed?

Governance:

- What has been your experience navigating current regulations?
- What information would be beneficial for the City to distribute to clarify policy?
- How should regulations be communicated?
- How can the City ensure equitable enforcement?

The Business District Focus Group was attended by representatives from the Office of Nighttime Economy and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, five business district associations, community organizations, and technical assistance providers, and staff from DOMI, PLI, and DCP.

Vendor Focus Group

Current Policy

- What has been your experience finding a location and getting your license in Pittsburgh?
- What is working?
- What are the challenges? How do you adapt to these challenges?
- What businesses does the current system work for, and who is left out?
- What has been your experience navigating current regulations?
- Do you currently or have you previously operated a business outside the City of Pittsburgh? How did the experience compare? How do you navigate different regulations?

Operations

- What do your operations look like?
    - How do you ensure fire safety?
    - What kind of structure do you use?
- How do you navigate relationships with brick-and-mortar businesses?
    - Do you have restroom or kitchen agreements?
    - Have you had disagreements around competition?
- How does your business support the neighborhoods where you operate?
- Do you ever cluster and share resources with other carts/trailers/trucks?
- What do you consider in choosing between vending or brick & mortar?

Future Locations

- Where would you like to see the City allow vending...
    - In the Right-of-Way?
    - On public property?
    - On private property?
- What concerns are most important to consider?
- How can City policy facilitate positive interactions and collaboration between brick-and-mortar and vending businesses?
- How can the City ensure safe, enjoyable, and efficient vending experiences while preserving traffic flow?
- What makes a location attractive?

Governance

- How can the City make it easier to find a location for vending?
- What information would be beneficial for the City to distribute to clarify policy?
- How should regulations be communicated?
- How can the City ensure equitable enforcement?
- How could the process of getting started and maintaining compliance be improved?

The Vendor Focus Group was attended by eight vendors, representatives from the Office of Nighttime Economy and URA, PLI, and DCP.