

**DISPATCH COFFEE MEMOIRE // IN SUPPORT OF
STREETFOOD**



I would first like to thank the ARRQ and the Commission for opening a public dialogue on the subject of street-food in Montreal.

I am the owner of Dispatch Coffee (Café Mobile Dispatch), a mobile espresso truck and coffee catering service, and I am in support of legalizing street vending on city/public property in Montreal.

My company specializes in locally sourced and handcrafted products. From our coffee beans, tea, baked goods, milk and packaging, we take pride in sustainable business practice. We have been booked for private

events and festivals, and we are developing a customized coffee delivery program that will service the downtown core with freshly roasted beans and freshly brewed coffee.

I have been working in the service industry for over nine years. My experiences range from waitress to barista, to coffee consultant and restaurant manager. I have studied market demand, and am well versed in customer needs and service.

Over the past two years, I had developed a business plan to run my own café. I became unsatisfied with my search for the ideal financial partnership and ideal location.

This past summer, I began an iced coffee delivery service with two chefs who had launched a sandwich delivery service. This joint venture started small, and through word-of-mouth and social media, our business spread from friends to the restaurant community to the neighborhood at large.

It was at the end of this summer, and receiving so much positive feedback, that I decided to tweak my original café plan into a mobile one. I launched myself full force into researching street-vending laws in this city, bought a truck, and converted it into a mobile café.

Throughout the start-up phase, I connected with the ARRQ. I admired their approach to

networking food trucks and ensuring that everyone respected the limits of Montreal's legislation.

So far, ARRQ events have garnered positive feedback from the public and the press. There are new websites, blogs and social media pages devoted to street food in Montréal. On Facebook - "Pour La Bouffe de Rue", amasses over 3000 followers. Each existing food truck in Montreal has their own Facebook and Twitter page with their loyal followers. Nicolas Cloutier who launched the Facebook page "Street-food Montreal" is developing a website and smart-phone application that will update food trucks' locations. In sum, street-food culture *already exists*.

I feel as though Montreal is currently behind on North America's street-food phenomenon. I perceive of our city as open-minded, worldly and influential.

We need to demystify that food trucks are a negative presence. Our culture reflects that it is in favor of innovation. It should not be a question of for or against, but of *how* can we integrate and evolve food trucks into existing restaurant legislation.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS:

Before I propose some possible solutions, it is important to address the common arguments against street-food in Montreal:

1. Food trucks are un-hygienic
2. Food trucks create unfair competition to existing restaurants/businesses
3. Food trucks promote unhealthy eating.

My response:

1. Food trucks adhere to the MAPAQ permit regulations. One pre-requisite to obtain this permit is that a mobile kiosk must be responsible for their own waste. This means, collecting the garbage surrounding their space, installing a fresh and waste-water tank on board and only dumping the waste water in a designated zone.

In addition, to own a mobile kiosk, I had to undergo the MAPAQ Hygiene and Safety Managers course. This certifies that I am My vehicle is subject to the same randomized inspections that restaurants are.

In sum, food trucks are built to be self-contained, collect and dispose of their own waste, and adhere to MAPAQ's standards. I argue that food trucks are equally hygienic as fixed restaurants.

2. The arguments of unfair competition fall under two categories:

1. Food trucks can park anywhere they want.
2. Food trucks pay less in taxes/overhead than regular business but have the opportunity to make the same amount of sales

Regardless of the presence of food trucks, the restaurant industry is fiercely competitive. No matter where a restaurant is located, there is always the threat of a new presence in the neighborhood, or an unexpected change in market demand.

The current gastronomical trend in Montreal is moving towards quality and craft and I believe that regardless of location, quality restaurants and businesses attract their clientele.

To argue that food trucks have an unfair advantage for profit margins is unfair and a shortsighted argument. A food truck is simply a different business than a fixed restaurant.

Restaurant owners are welcome to open their own food trucks, as much as food truck owners are free to open a restaurant if they so wish. Their products would likely be the same.

As a food truck owner, I have to conform to the MAPAQ and CSST fees and codes, pay

corporate insurance as well as vehicle insurance, pay taxes on every sale, store my vehicle in the winter, and undergo regular mechanical maintenance (which when broken down to a monthly cost, balances out to almost a small storefront rent in the Plateau).

In addition, many food trucks do pay property taxes as well to store their supplies, or run their preparation kitchens.

3. I draw a parallel from this argument to that of "do guns kill people or do people kill people". My position on the latter argument is that violent people will use whatever means available to them to achieve their end goal. It is not the presence of drugs that makes people murderers. By the same token, food trucks that might offer a fast-food menu will not convince a healthy, conscious eater to alter their lifestyle and values.

In Montreal, we are surrounded by fast-food chains and unhealthy options as much as we are refined eateries; I argue that it is a personal freedom to choose what we wish to consume, in the privacy of our own homes, or on the streets of Montreal.

If we examine the menus of the existing food trucks, we can see that their owners have an artisanal approach to food preparation. They take pride in their products

WHAT I PROPOSE:

I propose integrating food trucks into the existing restaurant legislation. I agree that it is important to protect existing commerces, but 60 meters distance is too much as a standard, and would be virtually impossible to find the right space in our downtown and surrounding core. I propose an adaptation of this rule: that the type of commerce influences the distance restriction (i.e. if I want to station my coffee truck downtown, I would not be able to park within 30-60 metres of an existing espresso bar/café, but If I am surrounded by fast food restaurants, I might be free to park within 10 metres.)

Food trucks should adhere to the same proximity restrictions that any new business setting up in the location should.

I agree that food trucks must adhere to the same security, hygiene and cleanliness protocol (we are already registered with the C.S.S.T, MAPAQ and are open to M.E.V boxes).

I am in favour of semi-mobile set-ups. If I could find a parking spot that adheres to the proximity restrictions, it would be beneficial for me to stay in that location (whether locking up at night, or returning to my home-base) and stay for up to one

week. This would allow me to amass my online followers as well as build up a regular clientele within the neighborhood.

A day in the life of a food-truck:

While considering the details in legislation, It might be helpful to understand the timeline and logistics involved in setting up for a day of service on a foodtruck.

It takes me about one and a half hours to set-up and take down, depending on how far I need to drive to reach my destination. In this time frame, I need to set-up my equipment and accessories for full service (when driving, everything needs to be stored securely and removed for service each time.) I need to source my electricity (if I am using a generator, I must pick it up from the rental location and fill it up with propane). If I am connecting directly, I need my electrician to set me up. Then, I need to get my water tanks filled from a nearby source via hose.

For these reasons, is difficult for me to move locations more than once in an eight-hour day.

Of course, having a headquarters would facilitate a shorter set-up time, as I would have all of my supplies and amenities localized. If street-food were legalized, I

would invest in such a space.

For these reasons, If you decide to pursue a pilot project and zone areas in Montreal for each food truck, I would be in favor of a semi-permanent location, where I could either lock up at night, or bring my truck back to the same location without the hassle of a permit each day.

In sum, street food:

- enriches culture
- supports innovation (converting a small space on wheels into a functional and safe restaurant requires creativity and innovative design. Creates jobs for urban planners, and sustainable designers)
- supports sustainable trade, economics, development
- liven city landscape
- unifies culture (the language of diverse food, accessible prices)
- offers a more feasible opportunity to entrepreneurs
- emphasizes artisanal business

Successful coffee trucks in North America:

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are needed to see this picture.

<http://www.local123cafe.com/>
Local 123 Café - San Fransisco

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<http://reveillecoffee.com/>
Reveille coffee truck - San Fransisco

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<http://www.manuallabourcoffee.com/index2.php>

Manual Labour coffee trailer - Toronto

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<http://www.brigadecoffee.com/>
Brigade Coffee - Louisiana