



## CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 8/4/2020

ALL

Item Creation Date: 6/25/2020

PLN - More Space Program and Ordinance

Agenda Item#: 37.

### **Background:**

The Planning and Development Department recommends the establishment of the "More Space" program and suspension of Chapter 26, Sections 490 of the Code of Ordinances related to off-street parking. These combined efforts are intended to provide an economic boost to restaurants by increasing the customer seating area during social distancing and limited occupancy rules to help while maintaining social distancing during COVID-19 occupancy restrictions. The new program and suspension of parking requirements will allow any restaurant to convert 50% of their off-street parking spaces to space to serve customers, while COVID-19 space restrictions are in effect. This expanded outdoor dining space will provide much needed relief to restaurants, while still allowing Houstonians to patronize these businesses while following safe and healthy guidance.

Specifically, this ordinance will create the More Space Pilot Program, which will:

- Allow restaurants to convert their underutilized vehicle parking spaces to areas for serving food (serving only, not food preparation), provided that in the additional space of the converted parking area, people and restaurants use good-faith efforts to follow the minimum standard health protocols recommended by Texas Department of State Health Services and the Governor's Open Texas Checklists, available at <https://open.texas.gov/>, Harris County and the City of Houston, all which may be amended from time to time.
- Establish that the Program is entirely voluntary; restaurants may opt in but are not required to participate.
- Establish that the More Space Program is valid only through COVID-19 occupancy restrictions as identified by the Mayor as being applicable within the City of Houston, and he may suspend this Program at any time.

Cities around the country are recognizing that as they open back up, that while social distancing restrictions limit the number of patrons inside of restaurants, there is space available outside. Houston's More Space Program is being advanced as Austin's Shop The Block and Dallas' Temporary Parklet Permit Program are implemented in our Texas' sibling cities, as well as similar programs in Tampa, Los Angeles, and New York.

DocuSigned by:

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Margaret Wallace Brown  
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