



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 11/17/2020

District I

Item Creation Date: 9/23/2020

PLN - More Space Main Street Project

Agenda Item#: 14.

Summary:

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING THE "MORE SPACE: MAIN STREET" PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZING THE CLOSURE AND USE OF PORTIONS OF THE RIGHT OF WAY OF MAIN STREET, AND SUSPENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON TO FACILITATE THE SALE OR PROVISION OF FOOD AND BEVERAGES OUTDOORS ON PUBLIC SIDEWALKS BY RESTAURANTS AND BARS; AMENDING SECTION 40-10.1, SIDEWALK CAFES, TO ADD DEFINITION OF RECLAIMED PEDESTRIAN AREA AND APPLY ITS PROVISIONS TO THIS PROGRAM; PROVIDING FOR OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO THE SUBJECT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.

Background:

The Planning & Development Department (PD) recommends the closure of segments of Main Street in downtown Houston and the reallocation of the right-of-way from vehicle space to "reclaimed pedestrian area" so restaurants and bars may seat customers. The More Space: Main Street program would build off of the City's successful implementation of the More Space Program approved by City Council on August 2, 2020 which converts unutilized vehicle space into active space for people.

This effort is intended to provide an economic boost to restaurants and bars by increasing the customer seating area while maintaining social distancing during COVID-19 occupancy restrictions, and support Downtown, as these businesses progress towards stable operations.

PD has coordinated with a wide range of City departments (including Houston Public Works, Legal, Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Houston Police Department, Houston Fire Department, and Houston Health Department), as well as external partners (including Downtown District and METRO) to design a program to support businesses while providing safe access and use.

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

- Allow the City Planning Office and City Traffic Engineer to close portions of Main Street between Commerce Street and Rusk Street not needed for continuous vehicle throughput and reallocate that street space as "reclaimed pedestrian area" to be made available to restaurants and bars that face the street to use as customer-serving spaces.
- Allow restaurants and bars to serve customers by establishing temporary enclosures and setting up tables and chairs.
- Designate PD to work with appropriate City departments to develop:
 - a Design Guide for businesses to use as guidance for enclosures, ADA access, and any other features; and
 - an Application for businesses to provide the City with sufficient information and schematics to approve participation.
- Designate Houston Public Works to design and implement the appropriate street closures, plus implement changes to traffic signage and signals.
- Establish no fee for businesses to participate in this program.
- Start the program with approval of this ordinance and continue through March 31, 2022.
- Assign business who apply, the responsibility to apply for participation in the program, design their space per the City's Design Guide, and receive appropriate permissions or permits from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.
- Confirm this program will be entirely voluntary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret H. Brown".

Margaret Wallace Brown, AICP, CNU-A
Director
Planning and Development Department

Contact Information:

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ATTACHMENTS:

| Description | Type |
|--|---------------------|
| More Space: Main Street Program Guidelines | Background Material |

More Space, Main Street Program Guidelines

Greater Houston Restaurant Association Letter of Support

Boundary Map

Cover Sheet

Backup material

Backup Material

Backup Material

Signed Cover sheet