City of Houston’s More Space Program

City of Houston Quality of Life Committee
July 22, 2020
Problem Statement

• Due to COVID-19 restaurants must limit occupancy
• Reduced occupancy = reduced sales, hurting Houston economy
Approach

• Identify space available for additional seating, allowing more customers while still socially distancing:
  • Adjacent to existing space
  • Under owner’s control
  • Feasible for short-term use, without requiring significant investment

• Research peer cities:
  • Dallas
  • Austin
  • Tampa

• Work with CoH departments:
  • Planning & Development
  • Houston Public Works
  • Legal
  • Health
# Options Evaluated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Off-Street Parking   | • Maximizes decision-making by each business to decide parking vs. space.  
                          • Utilizes parking not currently needed due to occupancy restrictions.                                                               |
| Sidewalks            | • Limited options to provide 6’ social distance clearance plus business space.  
                          • Wheelchair users and pedestrians would be most impacted.                                                                 |
| On-Street Parking    | • $17/day/space to bag meters.  
                          • Safety concern: active space adjacent to vehicle lanes (would require equipment for protection not available). |
| Active Traffic Lanes | • Safety concern: active space adjacent to vehicle lanes (would require equipment for protection not available).                             |
Proposal for Committee Consideration

- Allow each business to convert 50% of their off-street parking to active space for serving food (serving only, not food preparation or storage).
- Driveway access, pedestrian access, and ADA-spaces must remain.
- All participating restaurants, to close all service within the converted parking area at or prior to midnight.
- Music/amplification prohibited.
- Program to last through COVID-19 space restrictions.
- Program and/or individual sites revocable at any time if safety concerns identified.
- Consistent with TABC July 17 “Guidance for Temporarily Modifying Your Premises”.

Note: Any restaurant with parking not required by CoH can convert that space to other uses, regardless of this proposal.
Example:
(For Illustration Only)

Current:
• 88 spaces
• 84 standard
• 4 ADA

Under Proposal:
• 44 spaces
• 40 standard
• 4 ADA
• 20 tables
Implemented Elsewhere

Melbourne, FL

Atlanta, GA
Tracking/Coordination

- Simple on-line “notification form” for businesses to submit
- Inventory of participating restaurants
- Signage for restaurants to post on-site advertising participation
- Mobility hotline + email + 311 for complaints
- “Best Practices” for safe design
- P&D to work with Management Districts and TIRZ’s to announce and answer questions
Parallel Effort: Main Street

- Preliminary conversation with CM Gallegos & stakeholders about converting portion of Main Street to pedestrian/bicycle only
- Use sidewalks for restaurant space; use roadway space for walking & biking
- Congress St. to Dallas St.
- Confirm delivery access to all addresses
- Currently engaging businesses & neighborhood to determine interest/address concerns