

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montrose Management District (MMD) engaged Walter P Moore to coordinate and submit a Special Parking Area application to the City of Houston as defined by the City Houston's Code of Ordinances Chapter 26, Section 26-511. **Figure ES1** provides a map illustrating the boundaries of the proposed Montrose Special Parking Area (SPA) within the Montrose District, and **Figure ES2** shows greater detail of the boundaries of each individual property within the proposed special parking area. The Montrose SPA boundary in general is defined as the area along Westheimer Road from Mandell Street to Taft Street and along Montrose Boulevard from Hyde Park Boulevard to Harold Street. The boundary evolved over time to reflect an area around the nexus of Montrose and Westheimer, with the understanding that should the designation as a SPA prove beneficial to the community that it could be expanded later if desired by the community.

The Montrose District has created a Parking Management Plan of which the Special Parking Area application is but one aspect. The Parking Management Plan offers a comprehensive approach to meeting the parking demand in the Montrose District in a manner suited to the conditions and character of the community. The Special Parking Area application specifically is intended to address changes in off-street parking requirements of the City of Houston. For that reason, it is limited in scope to the area described above and until such time as further amendments or expansion of the boundary are warranted. Other aspects of the plan such as incentive programs to promote structured public parking and capital improvements aimed at improving the pedestrian experience are not regulatory in nature and therefore may be expanded at any time to the entirety of the Montrose District as appropriate. Goals of the Parking Management Plan include:

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1. Better utilize the existing supply of parking throughout the commercial core of the Montrose District through increased shared parking and valet parking.
2. Increase the supply of parking within the commercial core of the Montrose District through the strategic addition of structured parking.
3. Increase awareness of off-site locations for parking, including parking available to the public as well as spaces limited to parking associated with a particular business.
4. Improve the walking experience within the commercial core of the Montrose District in a manner that will allow for a more enjoyable journey from parking areas and between

destinations, thereby making longer walking distances both acceptable and an economic benefit to the District.

5. Increase the use of alternative travel options to reach the commercial core of the Montrose District.
6. Improve on-street parking conditions throughout the Montrose District, including the residential areas surrounding the commercial core. This is intended as an enhancement to the public street but not included in meeting parking requirements for proposed uses.
7. Annually assess the successful implementation of the Parking Management Plan.

The Special Parking Area application is intended to allow for better use of existing parking areas by proposing that all classes of use in the Montrose Special Parking Area with the exception of Class 2 (Residential) and Class 9 (Automotive) be allowed to deviate from citywide off-street parking standards as follows:

1. All parking spaces can be located off-site, if necessary. (Not including required handicap parking which must be provided on-site or adjacent, within 100 feet.
2. All parking spaces may be in off-street parking areas located within 500 feet walking distance of the boundary of the business parcel.
3. Up to 80 percent of spaces may be in off-street parking areas within 800 feet walking distance of the boundary of the business parcel, assuming that a convenient, safe path is available.
4. Up to 80 percent of spaces may be in off-street parking areas within 1,000 feet walking distance of the boundary of the business parcel if:
 - a. A convenient, safe path is available
 - b. Valet parking is available, or
 - c. Approval is granted by the Planning Director
5. On-street parking of any kind is not considered in meeting parking requirements.
6. All distances listed above are allowed only with the SPA boundary.

The proposed changes do not reduce the number of spaces required by new developments; they allow for more flexibility for off-site parking provided that it is still within reasonable walking distance. They add flexibility beyond the current code by allowing all parking to be off-site, off-street parking and at a greater minimum distance. They build upon current code language by utilizing 800 and 1,000 foot distances already established for structures of 30,000 square feet or less (Analysis of commercial structures in Montrose show that the very vast majority of businesses are 30,000 square

feet or less). While still recognizing that a number of spaces need to be available within a limited distance from a business to accommodate customers that may not know or desire to seek parking at a greater distance. Current cases exist for successful use of both shared parking and on-site parking in Montrose at a very easy walkable distance of 500 feet.

As identified in the inventory and assessment of the parking availability and deficiency as part of this application, there is an existing deficit in on-site parking as compared to the existing code. This results in the currently observed parking that overflows into the surrounding neighborhoods. The deficit likely exists because many of the businesses existed prior to current code requirements and have been grandfathered in, meaning they are exempt from current requirements. The Special Parking Area application allows the District to build on the established walkable nature of the area to allow development without impacting what makes Montrose the unique place it is today. The District is committed to working with existing business owners and developers to find opportunities for shared parking.

It is critical that the Special Parking Area application be considered in concert with the other aspects of the Parking Management Plan and the unique character of the Montrose community. While the SPA proposes maximizing use of the existing inventory of parking, other aspects of the plan are intended to increase the supply of parking, promote alternative transportation options, address the impacts of parking on surrounding residential areas, and to improve the overall walkability of the community.

Every aspect of the Parking Management Plan, including the Special Parking Area application, depends upon the concept that people will walk when the destination is worth it. Fortunately, the Montrose area is recognized as a unique and special place within Houston. It is already rated one of the most walkable neighborhoods in Houston (#2) and in Texas (#9) by Redfin, with a Walk Score of 81 (**TAB THREE**). The Walk Score is calculated on distance to the closest amenity in various categories, including but not limited to businesses, parks, theaters, school, and other common destinations. If the closest amenity is within a quarter mile, maximum points are awarded. Points decline as the distance approaches one mile. Amenities outside of one mile earn no points. Each category is weighted equally and the points are summed and normalized to yield a score between 0 and 100. It has been shown that the leading predictor of whether people will walk is the number of nearby amenities. Simply put, people are willing to walk in Montrose – despite the fact that the current walking experience needs many improvements. The SPA builds upon that willingness to walk while other aspects of the Parking Management Plan aim to improve the walking experience.

In addition to the Walk Score, research was done to determine how far parkers are typically willing to walk. Based on research in their book “Shared Parking,” the Urban Land Institute states that there are several factors that impact walking distance. These factors are as follows:

- Types of users (family, elderly couple, etc.)
- Frequency or occurrence of use
- Familiarity of the user with the facility
- The perception of security
- Expectations and concerns of the user
- Degree of weather protection
- Perception or absence of barriers or conflicts along the path of travel
- Cost of alternatives to walking (are their transportation alternatives)

Victoria Transport Policy Institute developed a level of service approach to parking for the variables above. For example with regards to the path of travel (weather) – traveling along an uncovered, outdoor path has a level of service of 400 feet to 1,600 feet (A-D). If there is friction along the path of travel (such as streets to cross, traffic signals) walking distance may be reduced by 25%.

Sources: <http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/index.php> and <http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm72.htm>

Other factors that impact the distance someone is willing to walk include.

- Is the user a shopper who has a number of location choices or visitor who comes to the site for a specific reason that will not be heavily influenced by parking convenience?
- Is convenience anticipated like in a suburban retail center? Or not, like in a downtown or for a special event where long walking distances are anticipated and considered part of the experience. These environments and their associated walking distances are summarized in the table below.

	Minutes	Average Distance (feet)
In a highly attractive, completely weather-protected and artificially climatized environment	20	5,000
In a highly attractive environment in which sidewalks are protected from sunshine and rain	10	2,500
In an attractive but not weather-protected area during periods of inclement weather	5	1,250
In an unattractive environment (parking lot, garage, traffic congested streets)	2	600

Shared Parking is limited by the proximity of destinations that share a parking facility. Exactly how close they must be depends on the type of land use and the type of user. The table below summarizes acceptable walking distances for various types of activities/destinations. Acceptable walking distance is also affected by the quality of the pedestrian environment, climate, line of site (longer distances are acceptable if people can see their destination), and “friction” (barriers along the way, such as crossing busy traffic).

Adjacent (less than 100 feet)	Short (less than 800 feet)	Medium (less than 1200 feet)	Long (less than 1600 feet)
People with disabilities	Grocery stores	General retail	Airport parking
Deliveries and loading	Professional services	Restaurant	Major sport or cultural event
Emergency services	Medical clinics	Employees	Overflow parking
Convenience store	Residents	Entertainment center	
		Religious institution	

The Special Parking Area application has been under development by the Montrose Management District for more than two years. There have been many opportunities provided for public involvement and input. It has consistently been the topic of discussion by the Mobility and Visual Improvements Committee and has also been presented to the full Board of Directors regularly. Also during this time, calls for public notice have been mailed to all properties within 500’ of the proposed SPA twice.

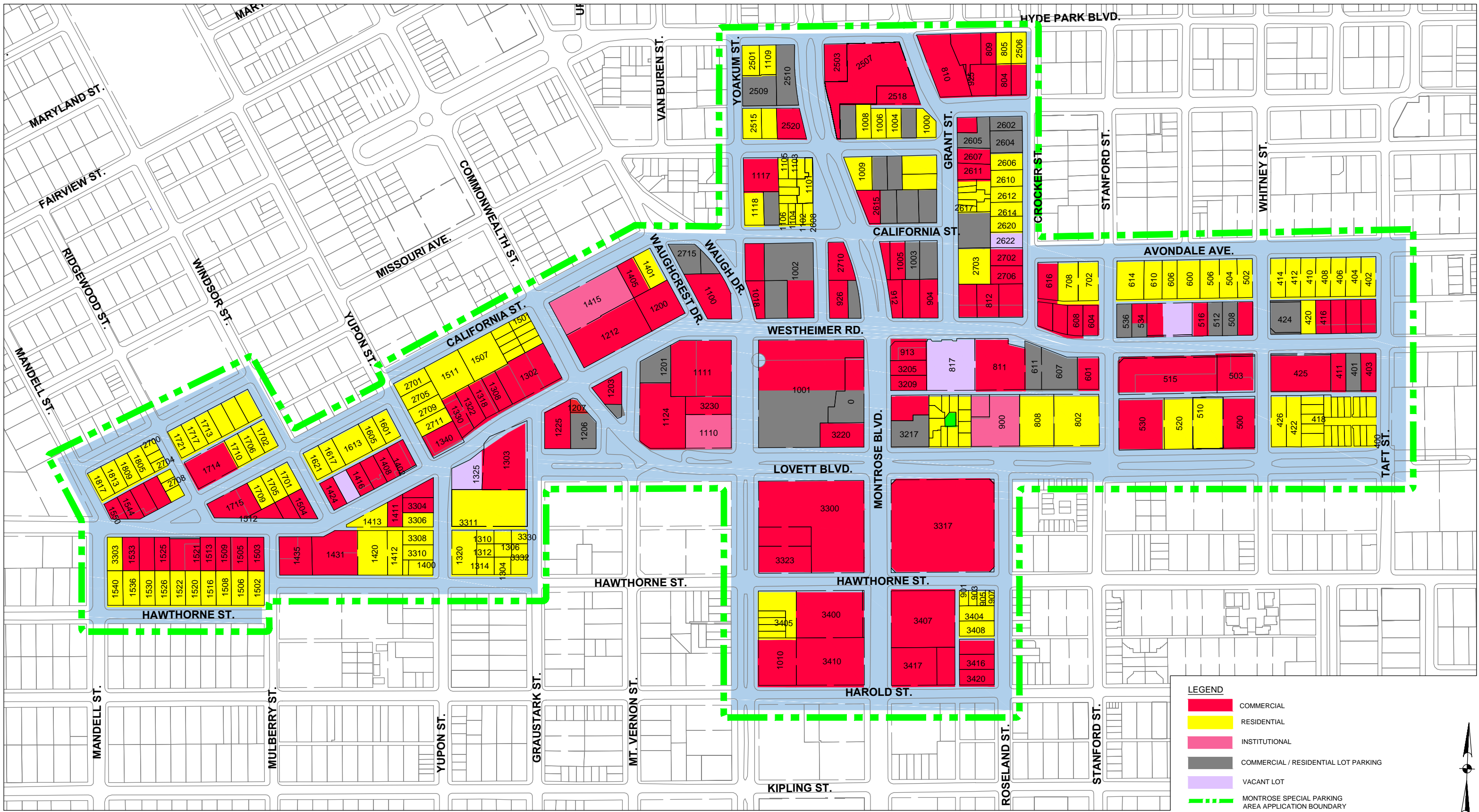
Additionally, there have been several public forums. On December 2, 2015, Montrose Management District hosted its second public meeting on the Special Parking Area application and process. Since the December 2, 2015 meeting, MMD staff have met with a number of civic associations and continues to do so in an effort to continue communication about the District. The Planning Department conducted a meeting about the Special Parking Area on April 12, 2016. The Montrose Management District has responded to calls and emails for additional information following public notice for presentation before the Plan Commission.

The Montrose SPA represents an effort to address parking by the following:

- Implement programs to maximize the use of available parking (and build upon ongoing efforts) such as shared parking and valet parking;

- Acquire additional parking where strategic and appropriate, including off-site and on-street parking where contextually appropriate (on-street parking is intended as an enhancement to the public street but not included in meeting parking requirements for proposed uses);
- Improve amenities that make walking, biking and transit even better options to arriving via private auto and parking on-site or very nearby;
- Recognizing that the uniqueness and complexity of Greater Montrose Area requires study and experimentation to determine the most effective set of programs to fully implement and manage a Special Parking Area; and
- Incorporating measurable objectives and milestones that allow all parties to measure effort and success.

The MMD has designated a Montrose Special Parking Area that is appropriate to the unique and complex character and conditions of the Greater Montrose Area. Where additional on-site parking could erode the character of the community. Establishing communal parking garages could provide substantial additional parking to the area, but installations of garages is a long term strategy that will require financing, partnership, and planning to ensure that they are appropriately located.



Project Number: P03-13007-00

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FIGURE ES2: PROPOSED MONTROSE SPECIAL PARKING AREA BOUNDARY

MONTROSE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
SPECIAL PARKING AREA

Scale: 1" = 300'-0"

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