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## **Market-Based Parking**

### *Frequently Asked Questions*



## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**What is Market-Based Parking?** Market-Based Parking (MBP) describes an area that is exempt from the City's off-street parking regulations. That is, the City doesn't require property owners to provide a minimum amount of parking for their businesses. Instead, MBP allows property owners to determine how much parking is needed to service their customers and provide that amount.

**Does this already exist anywhere in Houston?** Currently, the only area in Houston that is exempt from the off-street parking regulations is the Central Business District (CBD) downtown area and small portions of east downtown and Midtown. The current boundaries are I-10 East to the north, McGowen Street to the south, Emancipation Avenue to the east, and I-45 South/Bagby Street to the west. (See attached map)

### **What are the proposed Market-Based Parking boundaries?**

The new MBP boundary will include the remaining areas of east downtown (EaDo) to the Houston Belt and Terminal railroad tracks and a large portion of Midtown, excluding the residential area south of McGowen and east of San Jacinto. (See attached map)

### **Why are the boundaries changing?**

The current CBD boundaries create two different off-street parking requirements for EaDo and Midtown. By extending the boundary, we will have a cohesive MBP area. This allows the property owner to provide the exact number of parking spaces they need for their customers in their location, instead of having to provide a number determined by a city-wide analysis.

### **What rules are changing because of the new boundaries?**

The inclusion of EaDo and the commercial portions of Midtown into the MBP area will allow developers to provide parking based on market need and will not be bound by the regular parking requirements that studies suggest can be excessive for many mixed-use areas.

### **What are the benefits of this change?**

- *To support safer pedestrian and bicycle transportation* – The reduction of parking requirements means fewer unattended parking lots, fewer dangerous driveway curb cuts, and more blocks of pedestrian-friendly commercial development in one of the most walkable areas in Houston.
- *Preserve existing buildings* – Under the current requirements, property owners intending to repurpose their property are often forced to demolish a perfectly good building in order to provide the necessary parking spaces. MBP will encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures, which will increase property values and provide Houstonians with more services within a walkable distance.
- *Allows land to be put to its highest and best use* – Parking lots do not maximize property value for the city, the community or the property owner. Reducing the amount of land that lays in an undeveloped state is best for all. Furthermore, this change will encourage shared parking among area property owners, increasing parking opportunities while reducing the land used for it.

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- *Encourage other forms of transportation* – The public sector has made significant investments in public transit and busses in this area, providing people who live and visit these areas an array of options for getting around. With these options, in addition to privately-run ride-share and Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) the City’s city-wide parking requirements may be too high for this area. This change allows the property owner to decide how many spaces his/her customers will need, instead of being held to the one-size fits all requirement that is in place across the rest of the City.
  - *Encourage more affordable and attainable housing options* – Parking is expensive. By reducing this cost burden, multi-family developers can construct homes that have a lower price point. This will encourage a variety of housing costs that will serve the different housing needs of Houstonians wanting to live in these neighborhoods.
  - *Create higher density developments* - By allowing the property owner to decide on their specific parking needs, they are encouraged to put their land to more productive use and can construct a larger building that will attract more residents and visitors to the area.

***What is the City doing to encourage other forms of transportation?*** The Planning Department is working closely with METRO on their METRONext Plan. We support their goals of improving mobility, and connectivity to communities, while ensuring a return on investment. Additionally, the Planning Department’s Walkable Places Committee is developing recommendations that will help change development requirements along transit streets. These changes will create better connectivity between the neighborhood and METRO Light Rail stations and bus stops, as well as increase the safety along sidewalks and bike routes.

***How can neighborhoods protect their streets from being overrun with additional business-related parking?*** The City’s Parking Management Division offers a program for neighborhoods to limit spill-over parking. For more information, go to: <https://www.houstontx.gov/parking/resparkingpermits.html>

***What other cities have this type of parking?*** In Texas, Austin has a similar program. Dallas and Fort Worth are considering similar programs. Nationally, Los Angeles, Atlanta, St. Paul, MN, Seattle, and San Francisco have, or are in the process of creating comparable programs in their downtown areas.

***What initiated the process for the proposed MBP area?*** The idea of expanding the CBD boundaries began at the Walkable Places Subcommittee. On August 27, 2018, staff held a stakeholder meeting with area neighborhoods organizations to initiate conversation. On October 11, 2018, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed MBP area, and on October 25, 2018, the Planning Commission approved the proposed MBP boundaries and recommended the item for City Council action.

***When does the proposed MBP amendment become effective?*** That will depend upon City Council’s action to adopt the Chapter 26 ordinance amendment. The effective date has yet to be determined; however, the Planning Department proposes that MBP go into effect 60 to 90 days following City Council approval.

***For more information***

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