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**FIRST STREET PATIO OPENS AS PART OF
MORE SPACE: MAIN STREET PROGRAM**

**Initiative by the City of Houston, Downtown District and METRO allows
restaurants and bars to expand outdoor seating along Main Street**

HOUSTON, TX — The first establishment taking part in Houston's [More Space: Main Street](#) economic revitalization initiative has opened its street patio: [Little Dipper](#), a historic district bar known for its pinball machines, cheap bourbon and lively jukebox selection, served the first guests on its expanded roadway patio over the weekend.

A partnership between the City of Houston, Houston Downtown Management District (Downtown District) and Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO), More Space: Main Street allows restaurants and bars to create expanded patios on Main Street between Commerce and Rusk. The program aims to make it safer and more comfortable for visitors to

- MORE -

PAGE 2

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return to Downtown establishments, helping Houston's food and beverage industry recover from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several more business applications for the More Space: Main Street program are in varying stages of the review and permitting process.

"This is one of those rare projects that solves several different problems at once," said Scott Repass, owner of Little Dipper and a Downtown District board member. "It is a healthier option for people wanting to go out and for restaurants and bars wanting to serve them. It is an attraction that will bring people Downtown. And it makes use of an underutilized but beautiful part of Main Street."

In the summer of 2020, the City of Houston introduced the More Space program to ease parking regulations and allow restaurants to use 50 percent of their private parking spaces for expanded outdoor dining. The City collaborated with the Downtown District and METRO to find a solution for Downtown restaurants eager to maximize guest capacity while protecting the health and safety of staff and patrons. In November 2020, Houston City Council approved the program.

Mayor Sylvester Turner offered his congratulations to Scott Repass and Little Dipper, for being a champion of this program and a model for other Main Street restaurants to follow.

"This is the perfect time of year to enjoy Houston's patio weather, and I know Houstonians will enjoy the peace of mind of having extra space to dine while social distancing," said Mayor Sylvester Turner. "Programs like More Space: Main Street show that we can support our local businesses while continuing to observe pandemic protocols. We want Houstonians to gradually return to their routines and favorite past times, and in Houston, dining out is a big part of our culture."

The mayor also encouraged people who participate in the program to wear a mask in public spaces and maintain social distancing.

To support small businesses taking part in the program, the Downtown District board of directors approved a Street Patio Grant Program that will help offset expenses related to patio expansions. After their street patios are installed, businesses can apply for a \$2,500 grant. While Little Dipper is the first to open, several other Downtown establishments are in various stages of the application process.

For more information about More Space: Main Street, visit www.houstontx.gov/planning/MoreSpace-MainStreet.html.

ABOUT DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

The Downtown District was formed in 1995 for the purpose of revitalizing the urban core of the country's fourth largest city. Over the past decade, the Downtown District has used a combination of public funds and private resources to catalyze area improvements focusing on the city blocks bordered by Interstate 10, Highway 59 and Interstate 45.

The Downtown District operates under the leadership of a 30-person board of directors who oversee the implementation of the District's strategic initiatives. Funding for the Downtown District comes from a special assessment on all downtown property owners.

For more information visit www.downtownhouston.org.

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