

# City of Houston's More Space Program



PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

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

Option	Considerations
Off-Street Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximizes decision-making by each business to decide parking vs. space.</li><li>• Utilizes parking not currently needed due to occupancy restrictions.</li></ul>
Sidewalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited options to provide 6' social distance clearance plus business space.</li><li>• Wheelchair users and pedestrians would be most impacted.</li></ul>
On-Street Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• \$17/day/space to bag meters.</li><li>• Safety concern: active space adjacent to vehicle lanes (would require equipment for protection not available).</li></ul>
Active Traffic Lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety concern: active space adjacent to vehicle lanes (would require equipment for protection not available).</li></ul>

# 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

The Original Ninfa's



# 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



**City of Houston's  
More Space  
Program**

The More Space program helps restaurants accommodate more customers while maintaining social distancing during COVID-19.

Please report any comments or complaints to the City of Houston Planning & Development Department at:  
 Phone: (832) 393-6660  
 Email: [MoreSpace@houstontx.gov](mailto:MoreSpace@houstontx.gov)  
 Website: [http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/More\\_Space\\_Forms.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/More_Space_Forms.html)  
 Or by calling 311

 **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

## Houston More Space Program Notification Form

Houston's new More Space program is designed to help restaurants accommodate more customers while maintaining social distancing during COVID-19. The new program, outlined in [Ordinance 2020-010](#), allows any restaurant that concludes food service at or prior to midnight to convert 50% of their off-street parking spaces to space to serve customers. This expanded outdoor dining space will provide much needed relief to restaurants, while still allowing Houstonians to patronize these businesses while following safe and healthy guidance.

Business Name (DBA):

Business Address:

Business Telephone Number:

Contact Name and Position at Business (person submitting Notification Form):

Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces Provided as of May 31, 2020:

Number of Off-Street Parking Spaces During Participation in More Space Program (must be at least 50% of Parking Spaces as of May 31, 2020):

**I affirm that all information submitted is true and correct, and I understand the More Space Program and the business will comply with the following:**

- The reduction of off-street parking spaces will not change driveway access, pedestrian access, or the required number of ADA-spaces.
- The More Space Program is valid only through COVID-19 occupancy restrictions. (Defined as the time when a City of Houston Executive Order by the Mayor of Houston imposes temporary restricts on certain businesses and City premises is in effect.)
- Restaurant owners and management are responsible for ensuring their continued compliance with Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission rules and each individual permit.
- The overall program and/or individual sites are revocable by the City of Houston at any time.

Signature and Title of Contact Person:

Date:

**Submit**



# 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

