



CITY OF MCKINNEY, TEXAS

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	20-0012M	Name:	Parklets and Use of Downtown Public Parking
Type:	Agenda Item	Status:	Agenda Ready
		In control:	City Council Work Session
On agenda:	12/1/2020	Final action:	
Title:	Discuss Parklets and Use of Downtown Public Parking		
Indexes:			
Attachments:	1. McKinney Restaurant Council Proposal, 2. McKinney Restaurant Council Parklet Survey, 3. Draft Guidelines, 4. Presentation		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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Discuss Parklets and Use of Downtown Public Parking

COUNCIL GOAL: Enhance the Quality of Life in McKinney
5D: Promote reinvestment activities in McKinney’s historic downtown that balance preservation of historic character and current market needs

MEETING DATE: December 1, 2020

DEPARTMENT: Development Services - Planning Department
Main Street / McKinney Performing Arts Center

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RECOMMENDED CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

This is an informational item and no action is requested at this meeting. Based on feedback from Council, staff will prepare an ordinance for consideration at the December 15, 2020 meeting.

ITEM SUMMARY:

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants have been required to operate at reduced occupancy rates. Further, health and safety guidelines from state and national organizations point to a need to allow for greater space between restaurant patrons and employees.

Cities around the country and in Texas have addressed this need by allowing use of on-street parking spaces for expansion of dining space, sometimes called “parklets.” This approach creates additional dining space and allows for greater physical distance between people. Allowing this type of

expansion would support downtown businesses, while testing out a new strategy for improving the pedestrian environment.

BACKGROUND:

The McKinney Restaurant Council raised the idea of allowing dining in on-street parking spaces at the November 10, 2020 City Council Special Meeting. Members of the Restaurant Council noted that their businesses have been challenged by the reduced capacity and social distancing requirements that have occurred as a result of the ongoing pandemic. The McKinney Restaurant Council has provided responses to a survey about business support for a parklet program in downtown, which received 61 responses. In a multiple-choice question regarding whether they would be interested in a parklet, 24 respondents replied “Yes”; 27 respondents replied “No”; and 13 responded, “I’m not sure. I need more information.” The attachments to this report include the full set of responses and comments to the survey.

Currently, businesses may temporarily utilize on-street parking spaces under specific circumstances for a period of three days or less. A program that allows for longer-term use of spaces is proposed to respond to the pandemic. Staff will be presenting information on this program. Based on direction provided by the Council, a follow up ordinance will be drafted and placed on the December 15, 2020 agenda.

Short-term parklet pilot program (November 2020 - January 2021)

Beginning the week of November 16, 2020, staff began discussions with local business owners who have expressed interest in expanding operations into a parklet outside of existing restaurants. This short-term pilot program will run through January 3rd and is intended to offer flexibility during the holiday season.

McKinney COVID-19 Parklet Program

The McKinney COVID-19 Parklet Program is proposed as a response to the COVID pandemic and would expire when state of emergency declarations are lifted, unless renewed by the City Council. Based on guidance provided by Council, an ordinance will be drafted and provided for review at the December 15, 2020 Council Meeting. Draft guidelines are provided in the attachments.

This policy establishes standards for parklets in the downtown area that including the following:

- **Department process:** The program would be housed within the Development Services Department, and will include collaboration between the Historic Preservation, Engineering, and Building Inspections Divisions.
- **Location requirements:** There would be location requirements as outlined in the presentation, but they could be modified if there is a need.
- **Design requirements:** Design elements like railings, setbacks, site furniture, and more will also be regulated to ensure that these temporary spaces accessible, safe, and attractive.

Nearby Cities

Several other cities in North and Central Texas have introduced similar pilot programs, including San Marcos, Mansfield, Denton, Dallas, and Fort Worth. Of these, it appears that Dallas is the only city to have had businesses take advantage of its pilot parklet program. In informal discussions with staff in other cities, it has become clear that the cost of construction is a major barrier for many small businesses.