

# CURBSIDE PARKING FOR DOWNTOWN SAN MARCOS

## BACKGROUND

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Main Street assisted downtown businesses by creating temporary Curbside Parking signs. At the time, over 100 businesses were closed due to state stay home orders, and curbside pickup was one of the few mechanisms by which businesses could make sales. Signs were laminated and taped to traffic cones as a temporary measure to encourage customers to purchase retail goods and services from downtown businesses while maintaining social distancing.

In June, A downtown business owner and Main Street Advisory Board Member, requested the short-term curbside spaces become a long-term option. After consulting with the businesses, Main Street staff learned that the curbside signs were used on a regular basis. Additionally, businesses witnessed driver behavior and reported seeing drivers unintentionally pull into a “curbside parking space,” reverse and relocate once realizing that space was allocated to curbside pickup.



The Main Street Advisory Board supported the installation of long-term curbside pickup signage, and drafted a recommendation to Council requesting their approval. The installation of signage for curbside parking spaces is intended as a measure to encourage the public to utilize curbside pickup when supporting downtown businesses.

## PURPOSE

Dedicated, 15-minute curbside parking spaces will offer a convenient method for businesses to safely provide goods and services to their customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the hope of the Main Street Advisory Board that these spaces will both stimulate sales to downtown businesses and encourage the public to make purchases in a socially distant manner.

## LOCATION

One curbside parking space is recommended per block face in the downtown area. Only blocks which are highly trafficked and host to businesses which utilize curbside pick up services will be selected for a curbside parking space. Staff estimates that 12-16 signs will be needed, on the assumption that each block receives one curbside parking space.

## USE & DESIGN

Customers to businesses which utilize curbside parking services will be encouraged to park in a dedicated, 15-minute parking space. Business types could include: restaurants, retailers and laundry services. Main Street communication with these business types shows that they are already promoting and utilizing curbside services to their customers. Curbside pickup spaces will be converted from 2-hour parking to 15-minute parking, with clearly marked signage.



## **COST**

Signage and installation materials will cost \$250 per sign; maximum of \$4,000. Cost assumes a maximum of sixteen signs. Funds for this project will be allocated from the Main Street Advisory Board fundraising account.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

After consulting with SMPD, staff recommends not enforcing the 15-minute time limit for curbside parking. NuPark, the system currently used for ticketing, will not accommodate different time limits for individual parking spaces. Therefore, it is not feasible to support enforcement of 15-minute parking spaces within the current 2-hour parking limits in use downtown. SMPD supports moving forward without utilizing the enforcement piece, with the understanding that parking behavior will be driven by expectation instead of enforcement.

This program is intended as a way to encourage the public to utilize curbside pickup, and businesses will be instrumental in communicating these expectations to the public and their customers. Already, businesses have witnessed drivers back out of a “curbside parking” space to park elsewhere once they saw the existing laminated signs.

## **PROGRAM DURATION**

A temporary program is recommended, as these curbside pickup spaces are intended to address challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is difficult to determine an end date. Staff recommends installing the signs immediately, then reassessing their success every six months through 2021.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Transportation sign shop will create signs in house. Transportation staff have offered to assist with the installation of curbside parking signage.

## **OUTREACH PLAN for Businesses**

As there is no enforcement to this parking program, businesses will play an instrumental role in educating their customer base on usage and expectations. Main Street will communicate curbside pickup signage installation and appropriate use via:

- Mailer/flyer delivered to affected businesses
- Email to affected businesses
- Main Street stakeholder newsletter

## **OUTREACH PLAN for Public**

Main Street has several avenues available for communication with the public. Staff will provide education and outreach regarding curbside pickup signage and appropriate use via:

- Press release
- Main Street newsletter to Downtowners (public newsletter to fans of downtown)
- Main Street social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
- Request to Communications: social media post to City Hall platforms
- Request to Downtown Association: share information with members
- Request to Chamber of Commerce: share information with members