

City of Sacramento

Legislation Text

File #: 2019-01245, **Version:** 1

Title:
Safe Parking Program

File ID: 2019-01245

Location: Citywide

Recommendation:

Pass a Motion directing the City Manager or City Manager's designee to further investigate and return with a proposed program framework, budget, listing of potential locations and partners for implementing a safe parking program for people experiencing homelessness living in their vehicles, including considerations for: the provision of case management and supportive services to transition the homeless from living in their vehicles to housing; an access mechanism that allows entry only via referral; and inclusion of a good neighbor plan.

Contact: Dennis Rogers, Chief of Staff, (916) 808-7007, Office of Councilmember Rick Jennings, District 7

Presenter: Dennis Rogers, Chief of Staff, (916) 808-7007, Office of Councilmember Rick Jennings, District 7

Attachments:

1-Description/Analysis

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Issue Detail: The total number of people experiencing homelessness sleeping in their cars has increased by 62% from 2017 (300) to 2019 (484). In the most recent Point-in-Time Count (PIT), there were 484 youth, seniors, veterans, families and individuals out of a total of 3,900 unsheltered people living in their vehicles. The Institute for Social Research at California State University, Sacramento (the authors of the PIT) recommended the exploration of a safe parking program in response to the growth in the region's homeless sleeping in their cars.

Policy Considerations: There are currently two safe parking bills that have been introduced in the

State Assembly. Assembly Bill (AB) 302 mandates a safe parking program at California's Community Colleges and AB 891 mandates all cities with a population of more than 300,000 to implement a safe parking program as defined. Both bills have moved out of the Assembly and are currently on the Senate Appropriations Committee's Suspense File.

Economic Impacts: None.

Environmental Considerations: None.

Sustainability: Not applicable.

Commission/Committee Action: None.

Rationale for Recommendation: In response to the 2019 PIT, Councilmember Jennings began researching the possibility of implementing a safe parking program in the City of Sacramento. Programs from around California and other states were reviewed. Ultimately, site visits were made for San Diego and San Jose to review safe parking programs in those respective cities. Site visits were undertaken in the month of July.

Upon review of the various programs and with the conclusion of the site visits, it was determined that a more in-depth review of the applicability of a safe parking program for Sacramento should be undertaken. More research is needed to clearly understand the needs of the families living in their vehicles in our community and the identification of non-profit partner(s) to provide the case management and staff support for the program.

Site visits to San Diego and San Jose were chosen to review an established program and a startup program. In addition, the funding models and staff level support were different. The San Diego model utilizes program participants for security and community building whereas the San Jose model is funded in large part by the City and has more staff and security personnel. Both programs utilize case management.

The San Diego program started in 2009 and has had 2,650 people (both families and individuals to date) go through the program with 65% (1,590) transitioning into stable housing within 90 days. It currently receives limited City resources (state homeless funding) with the program primarily funded privately. It operates on private property (church and private parking lot) and relies upon churches, non-profits and food banks for donations of food. The facility is gated and has program participants rotate for security responsibilities at night.

The San Jose program started up approximately a year ago. As of July 24th (the date of the site visit) in San Jose, the family parking lot program had a total of 60 families enrolled over the past year. Five of those families were asked to leave due to non-compliance with program guidelines. 40

families (67%) have transitioned from living in their vehicle to some form of housing and 15 families were still active participants. The active case management over the 90-day program focuses on stabilization and transitioning to housing.

The budget for the San Jose program is roughly \$375,000 with the City providing \$250,000 and the non-profit operator providing the remaining amount. The two largest costs for this program are security and professional case management staff. In comparison, the budget for the San Diego program is slightly over \$100,000 utilizing a system of self-governance saving the City the expense of security and some program personnel while still investing in case management.

Financial Considerations: None at this time. As part of the feasibility analysis, staff will return to Council and provide detailed costs estimates and funding sources for consideration.

Local Business Enterprise (LBE): Not applicable.

Background: Programs throughout California and in other states were reviewed with site visits completed in the month of July 2019 to San Diego and San Jose. The most critical conclusions and recommendations from the research and site visits are as follows:

- There needs to be an agreed upon overarching program goal. Is it simply a safe parking lot program or a service based safe parking program with the goal to transition from living in the vehicle to living in housing? It is recommended that this program be service rich and focused on people living in their vehicles and that there be a time limit tied to the goal of transitioning out of living in their vehicles.
- That entry into the program be by referral only and only provide parking at night during designated hours. In addition, that program participants must check in and check out each day. The check in/check out process allows program staff to assess progress on goals and objectives in consultation with the case management staff.
- That there are clear rules and agreements including not allowing parking within a minimum distance of the safe parking program parking lot during non-program hours.
- That program size be governed by the size of the lot and never exceeding a range of 10-20% of the available parking spaces. In addition, program size must be limited by the case workers assigned. The recommended family case load is between 12-20 families per case worker. The San Jose program experienced upwards of 40% of the participants sleeping at another location but taking advantage of the supportive services.
- That a good neighbor plan be included that provides among other items security throughout the night.
- That there are, at a minimum, restrooms but preferably also showers. The site that was visited in San Diego had restrooms but no showers. The site in San Jose was adjacent to a community center which has a library, restrooms and showers. There were also restrooms in an adjacent park that were available once the community center closed. The restrooms in the

park were locked with the security personnel in the lot having keys to access the restrooms in the middle of the night.

- That the service provider has clear direction and experience in providing case management services to the target population of the program. Any donations of food, resources or services would need to be coordinated through the program provider. The meals need to be prepared offsite and distributed to those in the program upon check in for dinner and as a part of check out for breakfast.
- That the program must decide before implementation about the acceptance of recreational vehicles (RV's) due to potential grey and black water disposal issues.
- That the program be as low barrier as possible with exclusion for Penal Code 290 registrants and potentially serious and violent felonies.