



City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council
Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

File #: 22-318, Version: 1

Item #: C-8.

CC - (1) Authorization to Release a Request for Proposals for an Operator to Establish and Manage a City-Owned and Funded Safe Parking Site(s); and (2) FOUR-FIFTHS VOTE REQUIREMENT: Approval of Related Budget Amendment to Appropriate \$275,000 from the City General Fund's Unassigned Fund Balance to Support the Operation of a Safe Parking Program for One Year.

Meeting Date: October 11, 2021

Contact Person/Dept: Helen Chin/ City Manager's Office

Phone Number: (310) 253-6022

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☐ **Attachments:** ☐

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☐ **Date:**

Public Notification: (Email) Meetings and Agendas-Committee on Homelessness (08/16/2021 & 10/07/2021); Saint Joseph Center (08/16/2021); Upward Bound House (08/16/2021); Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (05/23/2021)

Department Approval: John M. Nachbar, City Manager

RECOMMENDATION

The City Council Ad Hoc Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee (Mayor Fisch and Councilmember McMorris) (Subcommittee), recommend the City Council (1) authorize the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an operator to establish and manage a City-owned and funded Safe Parking Site(s); and (2) approval of related budget amendment to appropriate \$275,000 from the City General Fund's Unassigned Fund Balance to support the operation of a Safe Parking Program for one year **(requires 4/5ths affirmative vote)**.

BACKGROUND

Culver City's self-administered Point-In-Time Count for January 2021 showed a 35% year-on-year increase in homelessness since January 2020. During the 2021 Point-In-Time Count, City staff

counted visible unsheltered individuals, cars, vans, RVs, tents, and makeshift structures. Staff worked with Homelessness Policy Research Institute staff at University of Southern California (USC) and used Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) estimated multipliers to project Homeless Count totals for 2021.

The 2021 Homeless Count recorded a 125% increase in unsheltered people living and sleeping overnight in their vehicles. Fifty-four of the City's total 291 unhoused individuals (19%) lived in their vehicles as of January 2021. Staff and homeless services providers anticipate the number of people living in their vehicles will continue to increase as renters continue to accrue rent arrears related to the pandemic and its economic fallout.

Unsheltered people living in their vehicles face exposure to health and safety risks such as lack of sanitation, vulnerability to targeted crime and harassment, lack of locations to legally park overnight, and difficulty accessing the Coordinated Entry System (CES),¹ while most outreach teams operate during daylight hours and focus on unsheltered people in encampments.

Safe Parking as a programmatic intervention to connect vehicle dwellers with case management services, secure overnight parking, and basic sanitation began in Santa Barbara in 2004. The first Safe Parking location in Los Angeles County began operations in 2018. Today, the County has 644 allocated vehicle spaces across 27 sites operated by seven nonprofits. While a notable increase, the Countywide capacity to provide safe parking for vehicle dwellers is minimal compared to the need: the 2020 LAHSA-administered Point-In-Time Count estimated 18,900 people lived in cars, vans, RVs, and campers as of January 2020.²

DISCUSSION

At its May 13, 2021, meeting, the Subcommittee discussed the implementation of a Safe Parking Program at a City-owned parking lot and recommended proceeding with an RFP process to identify a qualified operator. The RFP would require an insured service provider to establish and operate a Safe Parking site on a City-owned parking lot for overnight parking, using General Fund revenue from the City, if approved. If selected, an operator would be required to:

1. Operate Safe Parking Programming (site security, access control, sanitation, case management services, and meals) on a City-owned parking lot for up to 20 participants at a time;
2. Prepare cost estimates and invoices to the City for site setup;
3. Screen participants and enroll them into the Coordinated Entry System using the Homeless Management Integration System (HMIS);
4. Document and notify City of program terminations and safety issues requiring redress from the Police Department, City Manager's Office, and/or City Attorney;
5. Coordinate and leverage relationships with legal, senior, mental health, physical health, and homeless services, reducing barriers to permanent housing placement for participants; and

6. Implement site rules to ensure participant, staff, and neighbor health and safety.

After the completion of the RFP process, staff will return to City Council with a recommended course of action, which may include contracting with a specific provider, releasing a modified RFP, or taking no further action at this time.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact to release an RFP. If City Council decides to move forward with the Safe Parking Program, staff recommends the appropriation of \$275,000 from the City's General Fund's Unassigned Fund Balance to cover operating cost for a period of one year. As mentioned above, Housing Division staff researched 27 Safe Parking Sites throughout the Los Angeles County region ranging from Westchester to Lancaster operated by seven operators and encompassing 644 vehicle spaces. Based on this research, the operation of a 20-space Safe Parking Program will cost approximately \$275,000 (including a 15% contingency).

After consultation with Housing Authority Special Counsel, the Low and Moderate Income Housing Asset Fund (LMIHAF) cannot be used to support Safe Parking Programming. . If authorized by Council, funds may be appropriated from the City's General Fund's Unassigned Fund Balance. Alternatively, funding may be available from the City's Parking Authority, however, the use of these funds must first be clarified by Parking Authority Special Counsel.

City staff met with representatives of LAHSA on May 23, 2021 to discuss Safe Parking funding. Based on the conversation, funding from LAHSA to support a Safe Parking Program in Culver City is unlikely. LAHSA released Safe Parking RFPs in 2019 and 2020, each for a three-year term. The 2019 RFP expires on June 30, 2022. While LAHSA does not have a firm timeline for its procurement process, the LAHSA RFP process has previously taken six to seven months from RFP release to contract implementation. If LAHSA followed a similar timetable to issue its next Safe Parking RFP, the release would occur in December 2021 for services to begin on July 1, 2022. To date, LAHSA has not released a third Safe Parking RFP and Housing Staff is unaware of any anticipated release date.

LAHSA staff informed the City they have two means of establishing Safe Parking. The City may wait for the LAHSA RFP process and suggest sites to potential providers at the LAHSA RFP Bidders' Conference, or the City may put forward its own funding and establish Safe Parking directly with an operator.

The City would not be guaranteed a Safe Parking site within City limits if it participated in the LAHSA RFP process. Safe Parking operators could choose to include a site in Culver City as part of their RFP responses, or not. LAHSA also prioritizes Safe Parking funding for Service Planning Areas (SPA) that are underserved. For example, SPA 5 has four existing Safe Parking sites, SPA 1 (Antelope Valley) has two and SPA 3 (San Gabriel Valley) has none.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sample Safe Parking Program Operating Budget

2. Survey of Los Angeles County Safe Parking Programs

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Authorize the release of a Request for Proposals identifying a Safe Parking site operator to manage a City-owned overnight parking lot; and
2. Approve a related budget amendment authorizing appropriation of \$275,000 from the City General Fund's Unassigned Fund Balance to support the operation of a Safe Parking Program for one year **(requires 4/5ths affirmative vote)**.

NOTES

1. Coordinated Entry System: In order to qualify for federal Continuum of Care homeless services funding, local jurisdictions must use a Coordinated Entry System to document and coordinate homeless services across participating agencies. In Los Angeles County, the Coordinated Entry System exists across 8 regions, called Service Planning Areas (SPA's). Culver City is within SPA 5 [Westside], for which the Adult and Family lead agency is St. Joseph Center; the youth lead agency is Safe Place for Youth.
2. Motivated by concerns ranging from untreated RV wastewater to social media commentary, cities across the US moved to criminalize vehicle dwelling through banning overnight parking, oversized vehicles, and targeted enforcement of "quality of life" violations on vehicle dwellers unable to pay to renew their car registration or drivers' licenses. The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty found a 33% increase in such restrictions on vehicle dwellers between 2016 and 2019 alone, with a larger increase of 213% in such laws between 2006 and 2019. Local ordinances to criminalize vehicle dwelling correlated with an overall increase in vehicular and unsheltered homelessness; that is, the ordinances did not reduce the prevalence of homelessness despite the cost cities placed on taxpayers to cite, tow, and confiscate vehicles from their owner-occupants.