



Legislation Text

File #: 25-311

Version: 1

Agenda Date: 4/1/2025

Item #: 1.

Study Session regarding homelessness, encampments, recreational vehicle campers and anchor out vessels. (*Sharon Ranals, City Manager; Captain Adam Plank, South San Francisco Police Department*)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council conduct a study session regarding homelessness, encampments, recreational vehicle campers, and anchor out vessels.

BACKGROUND

This study session serves to provide the City Council and the South San Francisco community with data, policy, and case law at the federal, state, regional, and local levels on homelessness. Homeless encampments, recreational vehicle campers (RVs) parked on public streets and lots, and anchor out vessels moored in open waterways are all elements of the homelessness challenge.

Federal Case Law

Martin v. Boise

This case has been much discussed in the news and in local government circles, but it is helpful to have the scope of the ruling in mind while reading about the *Grants Pass* decision (explained below) and the current state of constitutional restrictions on local regulation of various homelessness issues. In *Martin v. Boise*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers California, considered the constitutionality of applying two city ordinances to individuals experiencing homelessness. The first ordinance prohibited the use of “streets, sidewalks, parks or public places” as a camping place. The second ordinance banned “[o]ccupying, lodging, or sleeping in any building, structure, or public place, whether public or private.” The Ninth Circuit held that criminal enforcement of the ordinances violated the United States Constitution’s prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment, which is contained in the Eighth Amendment, when individuals had no access to shelter within that jurisdiction. The Ninth Circuit reasoned that the acts of “sitting, lying, and sleeping” are “unavoidable consequences of being human,” and “the state may not criminalize conduct that is an unavoidable consequence of being homeless - namely sitting, lying, or sleeping on the streets.” Since the Ninth Circuit’s ruling in 2019, federal trial courts have relied on *Martin* in determining whether local regulation of homelessness are constitutional.

Importantly, *Martin* was limited to Eighth Amendment consideration. Other courts have ruled on the constitutionality of various regulations of homelessness focusing on additional provisions of the US Constitution, including the Fourth Fourteenth Amendments’ prohibition on unreasonable searches and seizure of property and enforcement of civil penalties for violations of local regulations.

Johnson v. Grants Pass

Weeks after *Martin* was decided, *Johnson v. Grants Pass (Johnson)* was filed in the U.S. District Court for Oregon. *Johnson* expanded on *Martin* by holding that issuing civil citations to the homeless was cruel and unusual punishment that violated the Eighth Amendment.

Johnson also expanded *Martin* by finding that homeless individuals did not have to wait until they were cited or prove

that no shelter bed was available to sue to the city. Instead, they could come together in a single class action lawsuit and sue the city preemptively. The City then had to prove that adequate shelter beds were available for everyone.

Johnson additionally provided that the unhoused had an affirmative right to protection from the elements and that the homeless were also entitled to protection from the elements as well.

The case eventually reached the Supreme Court, which held that the enforcement of generally applicable laws, including laws regulating camping on public property, does not constitute “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment. The Court first highlighted that the determination of what constitutes cruel and unusual punishment focuses on the question of what method or kind of punishment a government may impose after a criminal conviction, rather than on the question of whether a government may criminalize particular behavior. Although the Court had previously held in *Robinson v. California (Robinson)* that it was cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment to criminalize the status of drug addiction, the public camping ordinances at issue in *Grants Pass* applied regardless of status and thus did not constitute cruel and unusual punishment. The Court also declined to extend *Robinson* to prohibit the enforcement of laws that proscribe certain acts that are in some sense “involuntary” because some homeless individuals cannot help but do what the law forbids.

Because *Grants Pass* dealt exclusively with the Eighth Amendment, the other cases mentioned above are unaffected. Local government agencies considering regulation of homeless and local law enforcement agencies must consider the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments’ restrictions on unreasonable searches and seizures of property, disability and other prohibited forms of discrimination, and a variety of other practical issues that have been addressed in court orders.

State Data & Policy

State of California

In March 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom launched accountability.ca.gov, a new statewide platform to track housing and homelessness funding, reinforcing Governor Newsom’s push for greater accountability and a stronger focus on encampment abatement. The tool provides county-level data on housing production, compliance with state mandates, homelessness trends, and fund allocations.

Alongside this, the Governor signaled a major shift in homelessness funding, prioritizing encampment resolution over broader homelessness initiatives. He announced his intention to add a claw back provision to future rounds of the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) program, which would allow the state to reclaim funds from jurisdictions that fail to fully utilize their allocations or demonstrate measurable progress.

Additionally, the HHAP Round 6 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was released in early March, making \$760 million available to local jurisdictions. However, Governor Newsom has excluded additional HHAP funding from the January budget, instead redirecting state resources toward the Encampment Resolution Grant Program, which prioritizes the removal of encampments and the transition of individuals into stable housing.

These changes mark a clear shift in the administration’s priorities, with a heightened focus on visible reductions in street homelessness and strict accountability for local governments.

Regional Data & Policy

San Mateo County

San Mateo County's Hopeful to Horizons Ordinance, which applies to its unincorporated areas, allows authorities to charge a person living in an encampment on public property with a misdemeanor after receiving at least two written warnings and two offers of shelter are declined. Prior to the first warning, medical and mental health screening will be completed. Anyone cited with a misdemeanor violation automatically qualifies for participation in diversion programs provided by the San Mateo County Superior Court, avoiding jail time. The County cannot dismantle an encampment unless there is appropriate shelter for each person living there. Considerations for special needs such as pets, gender, sexual orientation, families, and age will be considered in placements. If an individual accepts shelter, their belongings with them will be itemized, photographed and put in storage for 90 days. The County will hold a shelter bed for 72 hours.

In January 2025, San Mateo County (County) began a three-year grant-funded program called Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF). The ERF program is expected to be live at the end of March, and the County has hired the associated case managers. The ERF program added a Dignity on Wheels trailer every 3rd Monday of the month at Parking Lot 7 in South San Francisco, located at 371 Miller Avenue. Dignity on Wheels offers showers, laundry, and other hygiene services. ERF identified South Maple Avenue, Lowrie Avenue, and the area near the southbound Highway 101 off-ramp at Produce Avenue as their priorities in South San Francisco. The ERF resources will focus on mental health, physical health, substance abuse, counseling, and shelter/housing opportunities that offer long-term solutions.

As reflected in the County's 2024 One Day Homeless Count Executive Summary, included as Attachment 2, a total of 2,130 people are experiencing homelessness, of which 1,145 are unsheltered and 985 are sheltered. Between 2022 and 2024, the total number of people experiencing homelessness increased by 18%, driven by an increase in people experiencing sheltered homelessness. The Point in Time found that 40% of those experiencing homelessness were in RVs, 31% in cars or vans, 19% on the street, 7% in a tent or makeshift shelter, and 3% had other shelters. The City of South San Francisco counted 79 individuals experiencing homelessness in 2024, up from 42 individuals in 2022.

The County asserts it has 15 to 30 unused beds every night with potentially hundreds more as hotels are converted into permanent and interim housing along with the County's Navigation Center. While only enforced in unincorporated areas of San Mateo County, the County hopes this will serve as a model for the 20 incorporated cities.

The County of San Mateo continues to enforce overnight parking ban on oversized vehicles and have provided designated RV camping areas to discourage illegal street parking.

In 2022, there were two Safe Parking Programs, which served people living in RVs. At the time of the 2024 count, there was one Safe Parking program which operates as a scattered site program. The location of the remaining Safe Parking Program was not disclosed.

Local Data & Policy

South San Francisco

The City of South San Francisco's (City) policy largely follows San Mateo County's Hopeful to Horizons Ordinance with one exception. The South San Francisco Police Department (SSFPD) does not arrest individuals for being homeless.

Homeless Outreach Team

In 2015, the City formed the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), which is also comprised of representatives from LifeMoves, San Mateo County, Samaritan House, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and St. Vincent de Paul

(SVDP).

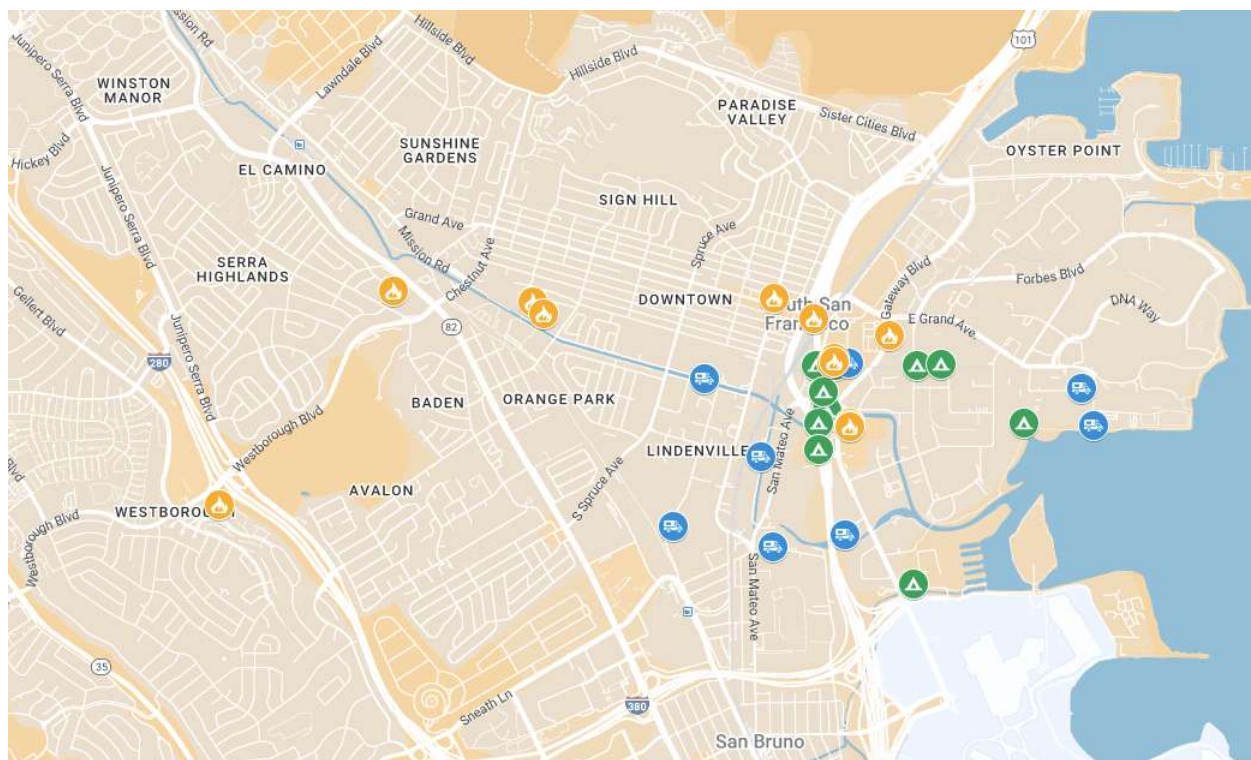
LifeMoves

LifeMoves is a non-profit organization whose mission is to end homelessness by providing interim housing, supportive services, and building collaborative partnerships, to engage with homeless individuals to offer temporary housing and connect them to social services. LifeMoves is a valuable partner for addressing unhoused circumstances in South San Francisco. In north county, LifeMoves has three case managers and two outreach workers. South San Francisco's assigned case worker, Francisco Valencia, also supports the City of San Bruno and the Town of Colma. SSFPD currently provides a workstation for Francisco, and regularly refers unhoused clients to him, expediting follow-up contacts. Francisco also responds to encampments and RVs with SSFPD officers, ensuring individuals are offered housing services when towing vehicles or removing encampments. Francisco tracks the number of encampments, locations, individuals involved, the frequency of outreach contacts, and whether services were accepted. Francisco facilitated permanent housing for 12 individuals in 2024 and 17 individuals in 2023 who were previously unsheltered in South San Francisco.

LifeMoves has two shifts - one during the day from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM and one in the evening from 2:30 PM to 10:30 PM.

LifeMoves is funded by Measure K through San Mateo County. The contract term between LifeMoves and San Mateo County began in January 2025 and will conclude in July 2027.

As indicated in the map below, which shows homeless encampments (green tent icon), recreational vehicle camper frequent locations (blue RV icon), and confirmed arsons/unlawful fires (yellow fire icon), the high frequency encampment locations are along Highway 101 and in the underpass/overpass areas of Caltrans and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR):



When dealing with an encampment on private property, the owner or business representative typically requests a No Trespassing Order that mandates the individual to vacate the property within a defined period. This order is issued by

SSFPD, resulting in a citation or arrest if the person continues to interfere with business operations and does not vacate the property.

If the encampment is located on City property, Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), or Caltrans property, officers will initiate contact and attempt to identify all individuals living there. SSFPD will ensure our LifeMoves case manager is aware of the encampment and will offer housing services to individuals. SSFPD officers and LifeMoves will maintain communication with individuals living in these areas so they have accurate contact information and can provide them with updates on service opportunities. Once it is determined that the encampment needs to be removed based on public safety, public health, or environmental concerns, officers will issue a written form that gives the individual a reasonable amount of time (minimally 48 hours) to remove their property. SSFPD coordinates with the Public Works Department to schedule an encampment clean-up. Public Works staff helps to remove the items, and retains any valuables associated with the encampment for 20 days.

As reflected in the letter included as Attachment 1, UPRR has authorized SSFPD to enter its property and right of way to enforce trespass statutes/ordinances, tow abandoned/illegally parked vehicles, and remove homeless encampments. 2025 marks the second year of such authorization. If the encampment clean-ups require approval and coordination with agencies like UPRR or the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), it often extends the encampment removal process due to the need for proper notification, planning, and resource allocation.

Table 1 below provides towed vehicle data for calendar year 2024 from SSFPD that were associated with unhoused individuals declining services:

Table 1

Type	Number	Reason
RVs	5	SSFMC prohibiting 72-hour parking
	2	Expired registration more than six months
Vehicles	17	
Boats	1	

SSFPD issued 80 citations in calendar year 2024 for SSFMC 8.44.050(b), which prohibits RV parking on any city roadway between the hours of 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM.

SSFPD's Traffic Unit monitors the problematic areas within the city and now dedicates time during their shifts to addressing parking and municipal code violations related to RVs. This approach has been successful in preventing long-term parking in specific areas, the accumulation of debris on sidewalks/roadways, and helps deter other individuals from parking at the same location.

The City and its three towing companies have experienced challenges that are not unique to South San Francisco, but rather ubiquitous to other cities: 1) a dearth of tow trucks large enough to tow large RVs; 2) space to store RVs before properly disposing of them in compliance with environmental requirements. Potential solutions to address these challenges will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion section of the staff report.

Anchor Out Vessels

As of February 27, 2025, the City had 21 abandoned/derelict vessels that were not in compliance with the City's Mooring Regulations Ordinance in the area adjacent to Oyster Point Cove as shown in the map below:



Of the 21 non-compliant vessels, 11 are occupied by unhoused individuals, and the remaining 10 are abandoned/derelict and unoccupied. The City entered into on-call agreements with three salvage companies for removal/demolition of non-compliant vessels and provided 10-day notices as required by the City's Mooring Regulation Ordinance and the State of California Harbors and Navigation Code.

Over the last 18 months, the City has engaged with subject matters experts from the San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission (BCDC), Coast Guard, San Mateo County Harbor District, and Richardson Bay Regional Authority (RBRA).

Other Cities in San Mateo County

Redwood City

In October 2020, the City of Redwood City operated a temporary RV Safe Parking Program at a vacant lot near the Maple Street Correctional Center, which served 120 participants. The remaining RV dwellers were allowed on city streets with a permit program and placed on a wait list for the lot. The goal was to transition most of the RVs off City streets and into parking lots where those residents could safely park and work toward permanent housing. Each program participant was assigned a social worker who helped participants find more permanent housing along with other services like career readiness assistance and behavioral health assistance. The program was operated by nonprofit partner, LifeMoves. Prior to the launch of the program, there was an average of 110 RVs nightly, and by the end of the program in February 2023, 60% of the 91 households that joined the program had moved into permanent housing.

East Palo Alto

The City of East Palo Alto (EPA) continues to work with the County of San Mateo and nonprofit partners, LifeMoves and Project WeHOPE to offer case management, shelter, and interim and permanent housing to unhoused residents in EPA. Amid growing community complaints about oversized vehicles and RVs crowding city streets, at the time, EPA cited any vehicle that created an imminent, environmental health and safety concern.

In April 2022, the EPA City Council adopted a Master Temporary Use Permit (TUP) as one of multiple strategies to

address the increased number of unhoused residents in EPA. The goal of TUP is to expand its capacity to provide safe parking locations for unhoused residents in RVs and a temporary shelter option within city limits. The TUP program supports overnight parking programs beyond the RV Safe Parking Program to provide additional space for RVs so that EPA may effectively enforce its Ordinance of Oversized Vehicles, citing and towing vehicles parked during the hours of 2:00am and 5:00 am. The TUP is a single application containing all applicable site standards and conditions for different types of temporary housing including vehicles parked overnight on private property, temporary shelter provided in existing buildings on private property, and temporary housing placed on-site on private property.

City of San Mateo

The City of San Mateo's approach to address homelessness largely mirrors South San Francisco's, collaborating with county agencies and local nonprofits to provide a range of services and support systems for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Key components of San Mateo's strategy include:

Homeless Outreach Team (HOT): Operated by the San Mateo Police Department, this team comprises specially trained officers who engage with unsheltered individuals to connect them with housing and critical resources. The officers possess advanced certifications in crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques, aiming to reduce recidivism and improve the quality of life within the community.

The interim shelter programs available for unhoused individuals include:

- First Step for Families, which is managed by LifeMoves, and provides interim shelter and services to 39 families.
- Safe Harbor Shelter, located in South San Francisco and operated by Samaritan House, offers 90 beds for emergency shelter and short-term housing options.
- Pacific Emergency Shelter, located in Redwood City and also managed by Samaritan House, offers 74 rooms.
- El Camino House, Samaritan House opened this 44-room site in 2022 located in San Mateo.
- Homeless Help Centers: The Society of St. Vincent de Paul operates drop-in centers in South San Francisco, San Mateo, and Redwood City, offering basic necessities such as meals, clothing, and hygiene facilities. The San Mateo center, located at 50 N. B Street, provides assistance Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

Cities in Neighboring Counties

City of San Francisco

San Francisco (SF) continues to experience a high rate of inflow into homelessness. While 8,323 homeless individuals were observed on the night of the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, more than 20,000 people seek homeless services in SF over the course of a full year. These figures suggest that for every person the City is able to exit from homelessness through its Homelessness Response System, approximately three people become homeless. In 2024, 1,444 unhoused were counted as living in vehicles and 2,910 living unsheltered on the street or in a tent. The number of people living in vehicles increased 37% from 2022, but decreased 20% since 2019. SF found the majority of homeless families (90%) reside in vehicles.

SF provides one safe parking site for RVs at Candlestick Point, which holds 33 spaces. It is intended to hold 155 vehicles, but the City has been unable to fully utilize this site due to a lack of electricity, accessibility issues, and polluting diesel generators. In October 2024, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SFMTA) approved legislation that would prohibit the parking of large vehicles such as mobile homes, trailer parks, and campers overnight between the hours of midnight at 6 am on city streets. These vehicles may be towed if the inhabitants refuse an offer of shelter, housing, or other services. However, in December 2024, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors rescinded the RV parking restrictions followed by an appeal by a coalition of RV dwellers and homeless advocates. Law enforcement may only issue citations and new signage to ban overnight RV parking requires SFMTA board approval.

City of San José

One of the City of San José (SJ) City Council's focus areas is to reduce unsheltered homelessness and to clean up neighborhoods. The most recent Point-in-Time Count shows 6,266 homeless individuals in SJ, of which 1,880 were considered sheltered. As such, the SJ City Council directed SJ City staff to find ways to mitigate safety, environmental, and mobility challenges caused by oversized and lived-in vehicles parked on city streets. SJ's Department of Transportation efforts include vehicle inventory, site analysis, prioritization, enforcement, and clean up. These efforts are known as the Oversized and Lived-In Vehicle Enforcement (OLIVE) pilot program intended to address the environmental and safety issues caused by oversized vehicles and lived-in vehicles on city streets. The program is funded by a \$1.5 million budget addendum and directs the Department of Transportation to:

- Identify areas impacted by the parking of oversized and lived-in vehicles on city streets
- Establish temporary tow-away zones to allow cleanup of impacted areas and encourage vehicles to relocate
- Analyze the feasibility of installing permanent parking restrictions at select locations

Funding for this program allows for a full citywide inventory of oversized and presumed lived-in vehicles parked on city streets. Up to 30 sites will be identified for temporary tow-away parking restrictions (approximately one month in duration) to help facilitate the cleanup and street sweeping of the area and encourage people to move their vehicles out of the restricted zone. Vehicles that are not voluntarily moved from tow away zones will be subject to towing and impound. Based on the success of the temporary restrictions, up to 10 sites will be considered for permanent parking restrictions. The program will scale up in Fiscal Year 2025-26 to include 50 temporary sites.

SJ's vehicle inventory identified 2,071 oversized and/or presumed lived-in vehicles between the months of September and October 2024. Staff analyzed several additional data sets to determine vehicles proximity to sensitive sites including waterways, storm drains, schools, parks, emergency interim housing, and safe parking sites, as well as transportation networks and Vision Zero Priority Safety Corridors. Multi-vehicle clusters were also prioritized based on proximity to sensitive areas, total number of vehicles congregated, site conditions, observed levels of trash and bio-waste, potential obstructions, and City Council office priorities. Thirty sites were then prioritized based on this analysis. In December 2024, the City began outreach to neighborhoods with proposed parking restricted sites and to people living in vehicles parked in the sites. Now through June 2025, the City will establish parking sites, communicate with residents and council offices, and update the inventory map.

In addition to the City's OLIVE efforts, the LifeMoves Safe and Supportive Parking Program provides a secure location for families to stay overnight while receiving access to LifeMoves' services. The program provides temporary shelter, case management, and food and blankets. The program operates every day out of two parking lots in SJ and provides a safe, well-lit environment.

City of Berkeley

The City of Berkeley's Point-in-Time Count shows a total of 844 homeless individuals, consisting of 399 sheltered and 445 unsheltered individuals. Of those identified, 42% are chronically homeless, 4% are veterans, 8% are survivors of domestic violence, 3% are affected by HIV/AIDS related illness, 43% are affected by Serious Mental Illness, and 26% affected by Substance Use Disorder. The primary causes of homelessness include a housing related loss (33%), a job or income loss (39%), health related issues (21%), or a household loss/breakup related (14%). The top three ethnic groups affected by homelessness are Black/African American (43.8%), White (34.2%), and Hispanic/Latino (13.7%).

In September 2024, in response to legal action by businesses and residents, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 71, 513-N.S. known as the "Encampment Policy Resolution to Promote Healthy and Safe Neighborhoods," affirming the City of Berkeley's commitment to "housing first" by offering interim housing when closing encampments except for six specific exceptions including:

1. The Fire Department has determined that the encampment poses a fire hazard or emergency condition;

2. The Environmental Health Division of the Health, Housing, and Community Services Department has determined that the encampment poses an imminent health hazard;
3. The City has determined that a situation constitutes a public nuisance as defined in the municipal code;
4. The encampment is located on a City street median, in the roadway, or otherwise in dangerous proximity to the traffic;
5. The encampment is in an area where the City has authorized work;
6. The encampment interferes with or impedes city or utility companies' construction or maintenance activities in the public right of way.

According to action taken at the City Council meeting on September 10, 2024, this change in policy reflects the need to balance compassion for the unhoused with the need to maintain public health and safety. In implementing this policy, the City Council affirmed its stance as a City that provides "care first, jail last", and that this new policy should not be construed as a broad deviation from the City's 'housing first' policy.

Vehicles and RVs pose a unique challenge for City staff. There are no state or local laws making it illegal to dwell in a vehicle in Berkeley. Vehicles are also governed by the California Vehicle Code (CVC) which supersedes local laws. The CVC requires all vehicles first be towed to impound prior to destruction. The tow companies have limited space for large vehicles, especially RVs, and many times will refuse to accept them. This has limited Berkeley's ability to remove RVs from the street, even if the occupant has received shelter.

Berkeley's interpretation of a 2018 state law, AB 2876, makes it illegal to tow a vehicle simply for compiling unpaid parking tickets or ignoring the 72-hour rule. Without another justification such as the safe flow of traffic or inoperability, towing a vehicle is considered an unconstitutional seizure per the Fourth Amendment. However, the City continues to enforce all parking regulations equally on a complaint driven basis, regardless of whether someone is using the vehicle as shelter. Staff have found that some vehicles will ignore enforcement efforts, and not all are towable by State law. Staff have found that some will move a few feet so as not to trigger the 72-hour rule. City staff have found success in moving RV residents into the shelter in the past and will continue this practice.

City of Mountain View

The City of Mountain View has implemented a comprehensive Safe Parking Program as part of its broader strategy to address homelessness, with a particular focus on individuals and families living in vehicles. Administered in partnership with MOVE Mountain View, a local nonprofit, the program provides a designated, secure location for eligible participants to park their vehicles and access supportive services aimed at stabilizing their housing situation.

Mountain View's Safe Parking Program includes the following key components:

Eligibility Criteria

The program is targeted to residents with a connection to Mountain View, including:

- Individuals or families with children enrolled in local schools;
- Those who work or previously resided in Mountain View;
- Seniors aged 55 and older;
- People with disabilities.

Service Model

In addition to secure parking, participants receive access to essential services such as:

- Restroom and hygiene facilities;
- Case management and housing navigation services;
- Access to wraparound support through MOVE MV and partner organizations.

Mountain View has over 100 Safe Parking spaces available at two city-owned lots and faith-based sites.

Public-Private Partnerships

Mountain View allows private property owners, including faith-based organizations, to host safe parking sites through a permitting process managed by the Police Department. Hosts must partner with a qualified Safe Parking Operator and comply with public health, safety, and security standards.

Community Integration

The program includes neighborhood outreach and engagement strategies to ensure that parking locations are well-managed and integrated into the community with minimal impact.

DISCUSSION

In addition to the intervention and support the City's Homeless Outreach Team offers unhoused community members, the City also invests in programs to help prevent homelessness. The City's most significant program is the locally funded Emergency Rental Assistance Program administered by the City's core service agency, the YMCA Community Resource Center. The City has provided roughly \$1 million in funding since February 2020 and assisted more than 275 households comprising nearly 800 individuals. This program prevents homelessness by paying past due rent owed by lower income households, thus avoiding evictions due to nonpayment.

The City also has local legislation providing for relocation benefits in the cases of housing units being deemed uninhabitable and unsafe. This prevents homelessness by giving tenants displaced due to code enforcement actions sufficient financial resources to find replacement housing.

The City recently adopted legislation providing relocation benefits for tenants displaced by changes of use in two types of naturally occurring affordable housing - single room occupancy hotels and mobile home parks.

Finally, the City provides financial support for several nonprofits providing interventions to prevent homelessness - Legal Aid of San Mateo County's Home Savers program, which provides legal representation in eviction proceedings, and Rebuilding Together Peninsula's Minor Home Repair program, which allows lower income homeowners to maintain their housing as they age or face costly repair costs.

City staff has studied utilizing existing properties as potential RV storage lots or safe camping sites. One option in particular has been analyzed.

The 250 ft x 60 ft city-owned property at approximately 1461 San Mateo Avenue can accommodate around 36-40 RVs for long-term storage using a tightly packed parallel layout, maximizing space efficiency but eliminating maneuverability. If converted into a safe camping space, the site could accommodate approximately 18-24 RVs, allowing for necessary maneuvering, spacing between units, and access to improvements. There are currently 14 RVs on city streets in South San Francisco. One of staff's concerns is that a safe camping space could draw more RVs to the safe camping space and the City at large beyond the City's capabilities, which would compound the issue. The estimated cost to upgrade the site for either use ranges from \$150,000 to \$250,000, depending on what improvements are added, such as: paving the gravel portion of the lot, repaving the remainder, lighting, security cameras, improved access, and fencing. Staffing and management of the site would create additional recurring costs on top of the potential site improvements.

Staff is currently evaluating the possibility of leasing the lot to one of the City's contracted tow companies for use as an RV storage facility. Limited storage capacity for towed RVs remains a key challenge for tow companies when responding to City requests for RV removals from public streets.

San Francisco's Bayview Vehicle Triage Center Closure: Established to provide a secure location for individuals

living in vehicles, this site faced numerous issues, including infrastructure problems, environmental concerns, and legal challenges. Despite an investment exceeding \$18 million over three years, the facility never hosted more than 35 vehicles simultaneously and was ultimately closed, leading many residents back to street parking and prompting complaints from local homeowners.

San Jose's Safe Parking Program : San Jose established a safe parking facility to provide a secure location for homeless individuals living in RVs. However, strict requirements-such as the need for vehicles to be operational, insured, and have current registration-prevented many RV dwellers from utilizing the site. This resulted in underutilization of the facility and continued street parking issues.

Redwood City's Temporary RV Safe Parking Program (2020-2023): Redwood City launched a Temporary RV Safe Parking Program in October 2020 at 1402 Maple Street to address the growing number of RV dwellers on city streets. The site, managed by the nonprofit LifeMoves, could accommodate up to 40 RV households and aimed to transition residents into stable housing while reducing street parking concerns. By the program's conclusion in February 2023, 60% of the 91 participating households had successfully moved into permanent housing.

Pacifica Safe Parking Program (2022-2025)

Since June 29, 2022, the Pacifica Resource Center (PRC) manages the Pacifica Safe Parking Program that offers 29-day permits for unhoused individuals living in eligible oversized vehicles. With 13 dedicated parking spots, permits are renewable upon expiration. The goal is to help participants plan for permanent housing. The city's funding obligations include the striping of the parking spaces, regular police patrol of the parking spaces, co-hosting a mobile dumping station at a cost of up to \$30,000 per year and payments to PRC in installments of \$120,000 each June through 2024, as well as the provisions of dumpsters or drop off service for garbage disposal.

FISCAL IMPACT

While this study session is information only, if the City Council wishes to pursue potential solutions further, such as an RV tow yard, the cost will require a budget appropriation from the General Fund.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The study session on homelessness is connected to the Quality of Life strategic priority; both for individuals experiencing homelessness and for members of the community that are impacted by the many forms of homelessness - encampments, RVs, and anchor out vessels.

CONCLUSION

The challenge of homelessness is not unique to South San Francisco and comes in many forms - from homeless encampments to RV campers to anchor out vessels. The City's partnerships with San Mateo County, LifeMoves, and Samaritan House have been fruitful, but in order to address the more challenging homeless individuals that decline services and are rapidly transitory, the City will need additional resources and creative solutions.

Attachments

1. Authorization from Union Pacific Railroad
2. San Mateo County 2024 One Day Homeless Count Executive Summary
3. Presentation