



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember
Don Rocha

SUBJECT: SAFE PARKING PILOT PROGRAM **DATE:** October 16, 2018

Approved

Date

10/16/18

RECOMMENDATION

Approve staff recommendation with the following modifications to the Safe Parking Pilot Program grant agreement:

1. Direct LifeMoves (GRANTEE) to initiate the program with enrollment of up to seventeen (17) households immediately after receiving City Council approval.
2. Clarify that employment status or 'employability' are not factors in qualifying for enrollment in the Safe Parking Pilot Program

BACKGROUND

In 2014, Housing staff led conversations on the possibility of establishing a city-sponsored Safe Parking Program in San Jose. In the year that followed, attempts at starting such a program were made without results forthcoming which led Safe Parking to fade from the conversation. In October 2017, City Council deemed Safe Parking a priority topic of discussion with seven votes, the second highest priority item.

On March 15, City staff released to the public a request for proposal (RFP) through which qualified organizations could submit responses delineating how they would manage and operate a Safe Parking Pilot Program using the City's Housing Trust Fund at an amount not to exceed \$250,000. Ultimately, LifeMoves has been selected for the operation of a Safe Parking Pilot Program at an overflow parking lot south of the Seven Trees Community Center and Library in the Seven Trees neighborhood of District 7.

ANALYSIS

A quick Google search highlights the fact that people living in cars have unfortunately become a symbol of Silicon Valley to national and local audiences alike. Publications including the New York Post talk about Silicon Valley's 'Car People' among whom is included a 54-year-old San Jose State University Professor. Q&A sites such as Quora are full of variations of the question 'where can you sleep in your car at night in San Jose,

California?'. It is understood people are living in cars in the very communities we have been tasked to lead. Less obvious is that this is happening to college students and professors, school teachers and students, disabled retirees and working families. Indeed, our latest homeless census counts over 100 families with children living unsheltered. Many believe this number is greater.

I am thankful that my colleagues, Councilmembers Jimenez, Diep, Peralez, Nguyen, Davis, and Arenas, joined me last October voting to make Safe Parking a priority in 2018. I am also thankful for recent actions taken by City Council and the Mayor which display leadership and a desire to be bold in addressing the homelessness crisis that afflict our unhoused and the communities where they dwell.

A Safe Parking Program is yet another temporary solution to homelessness that is necessary in this moment but never ideal. We should be bold and decided in maximizing the help this tool could provide to those who need it in our community. Pursuant to this thought, I am recommending that we expand the number of families that can participate in this pilot program. I am also recommending that staff clarify on all appropriate documents and the grant agreement with LifeMoves that participants 'unemployed or unemployable' still qualify to apply for a spot in this Safe Parking Pilot Program.

The Seven Trees Community Center's overflow parking lot has 20 parking spaces facing out to Los Arboles St. and away from adjacent homes. If one counts parking spaces in the middle and back sections of this lot, at least 40 additional parking spaces can be counted (Attachment A). Given the ample space and significant investment the City is making in this program, it seems appropriate to utilize 17 outwardly facing spaces to start and increase the program's capacity from there. To start with 10 families and gradually increase this number to a ceiling of 17 over the span of a year significantly curtails the impact of this program. We are in a state of emergency and so it follows the time for small steps is past. We must be aggressive in our approach.

Lastly, though no such distinction is made in the Housing Department Grant Agreement with LifeMoves, it is important that we clarify publicly that disabled and otherwise 'unemployed or unemployable' parents with children 17 and under can still apply and be part of this program. A clarification of this nature would negate the distinction made in staff's October 2 memo titled 'Safe Parking Pilot Program' which reads 'To qualify for the Pilot Program, the adults in the family must be employed or employable'.

It is understood there are other programs available to homeless families whose head(s) of household have disabilities. Unfortunately, these alternative programs are often filled and families are left with nowhere to go if we disqualify them from more generally available shelter opportunities. Under no circumstances should we send the message that a certain kind of hardship in a family is disqualifying in obtaining access to help.

Attachment A
Google Maps Aerial View of Seven Trees Overflow Parking

