

Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Vice Mayor Chappie Jones
Councilmember Pam Foley
Councilmember Sergio Jimenez
Councilmember Matt Mahan

SUBJECT: Actions Related to RVs
in the City of San José

DATE: September 28, 2022

Approved



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Direct administration to explore cost and strategy required to conduct a comprehensive count and inquiry of RVs throughout the City of San José to gain a deeper understanding of factors such as location, demographic information, whether the RVs are operable versus inoperable, and the goals of individuals dwelling in RVs.
2. Based on findings, identify level and type of services and funding needed to assist individuals living in RVs to establish their desired stability in a location safe and appropriate for their RV or other appropriate housing option.
3. Leverage existing efforts to identify locations for emergency interim housing or other uses to support unhoused people by considering these locations as potential RV safe parking sites and explore other options for RV safe parking including expansion of faith-based organization property usage, city-owned land, and affordable housing lots that have yet to receive entitlements.
4. Direct administration to prioritize siting of RV facilities first in districts that have both (a) need as evidenced by existing RVs parked on streets, and (b) specific identified sites that have been approved by the Council office in which the site is located as suitable for an RV safe parking facility. Further priority will go to sites that meet this criteria and sites where the City has or can directly acquire site control.
5. Ensure sufficient community outreach is conducted, consistent with the council outreach policy, to inform neighbors and incorporate community feedback prior to approval of sites.

DISCUSSION

San José constituents continue to reach out to council offices regarding RVs parked on residential streets for extended periods of time. Due to the high cost of living, work flexibility, and other factors, the number of individuals living in RVs throughout the City of San José has increased. A number of local municipalities bordering the City of San José have recently adopted legislation

focused on recreational vehicles. Some have taken a public safety approach, stating that RVs parked on narrow streets posed a public safety threat to motor vehicles and bicyclists. Others have less successfully proposed bans on recreational vehicles within city limits.

Individuals who are living in RVs are part of our community and it is critical to work towards solutions that meet the needs of RV dwellers, while also addressing quality of life concerns brought forth by residents of San José. Gaining a thorough and comprehensive understanding of demographic factors of RV dwellers will allow the city to propose policies that meet the needs of individuals living in RVs. For example, if there are several unhoused families using an RV as their primary place of residence, the administration can explore safe RV parking options that cater to the needs of unhoused families to provide the appropriate services and resources.

Additionally, it is recommended that the administration explore methods to leverage existing efforts to identify emergency interim housing or other supports for unhoused individuals and consider whether these sites may be viable for RV safe parking. While flexibility may be needed in specific design, such as how mechanical repair, waste disposal, and towing will occur, given the nature of RV usage, it is anticipated that such sites will be available on a 24/7 basis. This can include additional partnering with local faith-based organizations that are willing to enter an agreement with the city or utilizing affordable housing lots that are currently waiting to receive entitlements. Given the inherent challenges in siting and establishing RV facilities and the growing need, the intent is to prioritize limited funding for those sites located in districts that have an established need, where the Council office has approved a site for RV safe parking, and for which the City has or can directly acquire site control from a willing public agency or private party by purchase or lease to expedite the process.

As the City of San José pursues various avenues, BeautifySJ should escalate trash services and implement bio-waste services for individuals living in RVs to address the ongoing environmental concerns surrounding dumping of grey and black water. It is prudent for the City of San José to consider potential solutions that address the needs of all community members, including individuals who live in RVs. Our city should aim to preserve the rights of individuals living in RVs while simultaneously maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.