

COUNCIL AGENDA: 6/6/23
FILE#:
ITEM: 8.4



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mayor Mahan
Vice Mayor Kamei
Councilmember Cohen
Councilmember Foley

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: June 6, 2023

Approved

Date: June 2, 2023

SUBJECT: City Initiatives Roadmap: Recreational Vehicles Communities Supportive Parking and Emergency Interim Housing

RECOMMENDATIONS

Accept staff's recommendations and direct the City Manager to:

1. Seek additional ways to partner with the County of Santa Clara to collaborate, coordinate and leverage procurement processes for supportive services for unhoused residents;
2. Affirm that the City's EIH and RV safe parking sites do not have a 6-month limit on stays but rather work with residents on a case-by-case basis;
3. Prioritize calls in the immediate vicinity of interim housing and safe parking sites to provide enhanced neighborhood services through BeautifySJ;
4. Discuss with VTA the potential to use the proposed interim housing site at Cerone Yard to deliver benefits for VTA operations and employees, including but not limited to helping reduce the impacts of unhoused residents on transit systems and supporting employees with housing options; and
5. Do not pursue Bernal Road South sites until the options of the VTA Cerone Yard site and the Cherry Ave site are exhausted while keeping to the timeline required to accept the Governor's units.

DISCUSSION

We appreciate staff's continued tenacity in identifying and proposing suitable sites for EIH and safe parking communities. Our city teams have demonstrated a remarkable level of compassion and determination to find viable locations for these vital solutions, and we have evidence demonstrating our EIH model is working. Therefore, we cannot take our foot off the gas now and let their efforts go to waste while thousands of unhoused residents languish on our streets each night. We should continue to advance every opportunity and identify ways to expedite processes that might otherwise slow down our progress.

Our innovative interim housing models have proven successful in more ways than one. Our six bridge and interim housing communities have served over 1,350 individuals since their inception; and more than 70% of residents remain stably housed after exiting, with 50% placed in permanent housing. More recently, according to the 2023 Point-in-Time homelessness census, San José saw a 4.7% decrease in overall homelessness and a 10.7% decrease in unsheltered homelessness. The data marks the second year in a row – and the only year in nearly a decade – that San José has seen consecutive decreases in the number of people living along our streets and creeks each night. A significant part of our model's success has been the ability to move quickly and at scale, relative to the magnitude of the homelessness crisis. In addition, our model provides a range of supportive services, such as job training, access to health care, and case management, that are critical to an individual's path to stable housing.

Moving quickly on supportive services and construction will be crucial to the future successes of this model. We recognize and appreciate the ongoing collaboration with the County, and we encourage city staff to explore additional ways to accelerate our ability to deliver supportive services. Increasing our collaboration and coordination on the delivery of supportive services will enable the city to reach more of our unhoused residents.

It is also important to highlight that an additional factor contributing to the success of our model is that the city does not have a 'one size fits all' that limits how long residents can stay at EIH or safe parking communities. Each resident housed at an EIH community, or safe parking community in the near future, follows an individualized housing plan that is tailored based on the individual's needs. It is important for Council to formalize this policy to provide stability and security for unhoused residents. Any uncertainty creates fear and anxiety about being unable to meet timelines and being forced to return to unsheltered homelessness; and impacts unhoused resident's decision to accept interim housing placements or maintain their previous encampment site as a backup option. The Council should formalize that every individual's stay at EIH or safe parking communities is determined on a case-by-case basis and is designed to meet a resident's individual needs.

The components mentioned above have collectively demonstrated the success of our EIH model, and we see the benefits extend to the host neighborhoods. Data shows that on average across five sites that have been operating more than a year, calls for police, fire, graffiti, and illegal dumping services went down. Put simply: unhoused residents living in EIHs *and* housed residents living in the neighborhoods that host them reap the benefits. As we seek to expand EIH and safe

parking sites, neighborhoods that take on these innovative solutions should be able to see increased, immediate benefits. One small way we can do this for city staff to prioritize calls for BeautifySJ services in the areas surrounding interim housing and safe parking sites. Staff has the capacity to focus blight and related services to respond in these areas, in great part thanks to increased staffing and resources for the BeautifySJ program. While the June Budget seeks to further expand and make the program permanent, BeautifySJ should explore ways to prioritize these calls using existing program staff and resources.

Finally, our ability to move forward is dependent on partnerships and collaborations with entities that own land in San Jose. As an example, we have worked with Caltrans on two sites. In addition, the city has worked with Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) on two sites. Specifically, VTA-owned sites on Marbury Road and at Santa Teresa Station have provided land for emergency interim housing and safe parking, respectively. We recognize VTA's leader in providing affordable housing more broadly. As we continue to work with VTA, we want to understand how unhoused people are impacting transit operations, often because they need shelter, and explore opportunities to use the city's EIH model as a win-win for all stakeholders. We are also aware that VTA employees face unique housing challenges and may be interested in exploring housing solutions through our innovative model. We encourage city staff to continue engaging VTA leadership and employees to find ways to address their unique housing needs.

We look forward to continuing to work with partners, stakeholders, and the community to advance our all-of-the-above strategy to address our city's homelessness crisis.

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 further state 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.