



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jacky Morales-Ferrand

**SUBJECT: REPORT ON SAFE PARKING
PILOT PROGRAM (COUNCIL
PRIORITY #13)**

DATE: February 25, 2019

Approved

Date

3/5/2019

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the report on the progress and status of the Safe Parking Pilot Program.

BACKGROUND

The 2017 biennial homeless census counted 4,350 homeless persons in San José. Out of the total 4,350 individuals, 74 percent were unsheltered (were living in vehicles, on the streets, in abandoned or storage structures, or in homeless encampments). The biennial point-in-time homeless census counted 104 families with children experiencing homelessness in San José with 340 individuals living in these families. This represents approximately 8 percent of the total homeless population counted in the census in San José.

From January to December 2018, the Housing Department received 423 calls to the homeless concerns hotline regarding homeless persons sleeping in their vehicles. During the same period, 272 occupied vehicles were reported to the City of San José Vehicle Abatement Program.

Safe parking programs create a safe and secure place for car and recreational vehicle dwellers to park and sleep. The program also increases access to available services and potentially decreases enforcement actions for people living illegally in vehicles.

The Mayor and the City Council have taken several actions to support the development of a Safe Parking Program. In October 2017, the City Council approved Council Priority #13, which called on the administration to “explore and create a safe parking program which would allow parking for people who live in their vehicles.” In addition to creating a pilot program, in February 2019, the City Council approved an ordinance to legally allow safe parking on both public and private lots. The City Council directed staff to return with a revised setback that would allow more operators to participate in the program.

In October 2018, after an extensive procurement process, the City Council approved a \$250,000 contract award with LifeMoves, a nonprofit that provides interim housing and supportive services for homeless families and individuals, to operate the first City-funded safe parking pilot program for families. During the City Council discussion, there were several questions and concerns about costs, experience of the operator, and the model's lack of flexibility. The City Council directed the Housing Department to return to the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee to provide an update on the pilot program after its first 90 days of operations. This memorandum provides a review of the first three months of operations.

ANALYSIS

LifeMoves began the safe parking pilot program at Seven Trees Community Center and Library on November 1, 2018. The service rich program can serve up to 17 families a night. In partnership with the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services, San José Police, and Council District 7, the program operates on an overflow parking lot at the Center seven days per week from approximately 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. LifeMoves offers basic necessities, while also providing individualized case management, employment development, and housing placement services.

Program Data and Outcomes

The following status update includes program data from November 1, 2018 through January 31, 2019. A total of 24 families (38 adults and 42 minor children) were enrolled during that time period. LifeMoves' priority is to engage participating families in finding the most suitable temporary (e.g., shelter) or permanent (e.g., affordable rental unit) option for each family.

Participants are referred to the program from a variety of sources, including:

- Waiting lists from two family shelters in San José (Family Supportive Housing and LifeMoves);
- City's Homelessness Response Team and homeless outreach teams;
- County Office of Supportive Housing and Social Services;
- School districts;
- First Five;
- Amigos de Guadalupe;
- Street outreach to vehicle dwellers in the Seven Trees neighborhood; and
- Outreach to Planned Parenthood and Women, Infants and Children.

The Homelessness Response Team along with LifeMoves continue to meet with new agencies, schools, and businesses throughout the City of San José where families may receive services to inform them of the pilot program. In the first 90 days, LifeMoves contacted 454 families to screen them for services in the Safe Parking Pilot Program. Of the 454 families referred to the pilot, 49 families were interested and screened to participate. A total of 24 families have been enrolled since the program commenced.

Lower Than Expected Participation Rates in the Program

One of the challenges has been lower than capacity enrollment at the site. Of 454 families referred to the pilot, 147 could not be reached. The remaining households provided the following reasons why families are opting out:

- 82 stated they were not interested in participating in the program;
 - Inconvenient location
 - Currently parked near or with friend/family
 - Staying in a motel
 - Prefer to wait for shelter
- 75 were sheltered or otherwise not in need of services;
- 60 stated they would call back when they needed services; and
- 41 did not have a vehicle or had an inoperable vehicle.

LifeMoves continues to be creative during the pilot phase to locate new referral sources. For example, LifeMoves works with a homeless youth agency to identify teen parents who live in their cars while their children temporarily reside elsewhere thus assisting with a safe place for the teen to park while they work to unify their family. Additionally, LifeMoves offers families who are hesitant about the program a trial run to see if it is a good fit before enrollment. The low number of participants may also be attributed to factors such as families seeking refuge with family members or friends and/or staying in hotels or motels. Many families do not want to travel long distances from where their children go to school. Another barrier to entering the program is the condition of the vehicle. If it is not operable, they are not eligible for the program.

Outcomes

Between November 2018 through January 2019, 14 families have exited the pilot program to either shelter (ten families), a family or friends' residence (two families) and/or a permanent housing opportunity/rental unit (two families). During this timeframe, the average length of stay at the safe parking pilot site is 17 days.

Resources being offered to the families have been client-centered. Eight families received vehicle assistance and/or repair services, ten families received housing assistance and seven families received employment services. Other services offered include advocacy, basic needs, bus passes, shelter referrals, childcare services, benefits assistance, and legal services.

The outcomes in the contract with LifeMoves at 90 days are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Goals and Outcomes

Goal	Outcome
Within 120 days of intake, 75% of households will move into a temporary destination (emergency shelter or transitional housing) or a permanent housing destination.	In the first 90 days, 100% of enrolled households moved into shelter or permanent housing.
100% of children enrolled in the program will be enrolled or re-enrolled in school.	In the first 90 days, 100% of school age children enrolled in the program were enrolled in school.
75% of permanently housed people will remain permanently housed for at least 90 days after program exit.	It is too early to provide data on this outcome. The update to the Committee in June 2019 will provide more information on this outcome.
75% of households that exit to temporary housing destinations will be connected to services for linkage to stable housing within 90 days after program exit.	LifeMoves exceeded the outcome. Of those who exited in the first 90 days of the program, 100% of the families remain connected to services at LifeMoves.
85% of participants who received services through the safe parking pilot program will feel they received helpful assistance.	LifeMoves exceeded the outcome. Collected from surveys participants, show 100% of program participants reported that they felt they have received help and are satisfied with the assistance they received.

Changes to the Operations and Program Guidelines

Based on the feedback from the City Council in October, LifeMoves made significant updates to both the operations plan and the program guidelines, the latter of which outline the participant expectations and is acknowledged and signed by each family. Both are viewed by the Housing Department and LifeMoves as working documents and continue to be reviewed and refined ensuring flexibility and incorporating lessons learned during the pilot period. The operations plan for the program is included as Attachment A. The program guidelines are included as Attachment B. Some of the examples of how the program model was modified to adhere to the needs of the families and the children include:

1. Hours are flexible beyond the initially proposed hours of 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. especially during the weekend, and to accommodate work schedules, holidays, or medical needs. Communication is strongly encouraged in order to maximize assistance.
2. Participants are provided more time to remain on the lot during the weekends.
3. The savings program is voluntary and provided based on each family's budget and case plan. Savings are a recommendation and mindset that the case manager encourages for self-sufficiency purposes and housing costs.
4. Families are offered a "trial run" to stay in the program prior to enrolling/completing paperwork. This creates a welcoming environment and allows families to make informed decisions.
5. Families are accepted into the program even if they do not have a license or vehicle registration. This issue will be addressed as part of the family's case plan.
6. Families are accepted into the program even if their children do not always stay with them in the car (as long as they are searching for housing as a family unit).
7. Families are accepted into the program for services such as showers, case management, and linkage to services, even if they don't park on the parking lot every evening. As long as they meet weekly with staff to engage in services, they are able to access the additional services that the program has to offer.
8. Families are okay to arrive to the Seven Trees Community Center prior to 7 p.m. as long as they are inside the Center and not loitering outdoors.

Safe Parking Pilot Expansion

On November 27, 2018, the City Council approved an expenditure plan for the Homeless Emergency Aid Program, which is a one-time funding allocation from the State. The plan included expanding the Safe Parking Pilot Program with LifeMoves at two additional City-owned facilities, specifically Roosevelt Community Center and Southside Community Center. Council direction was for a less service rich model at the additional sites. The expansion would allow for up to 50 households (individuals, couples or families) residing in vehicles to be enrolled on any given night. The goal is to provide a safe and dedicated location for individuals and families living in their vehicles to sleep in an effort to better coordinate referral linkages and alleviate the stress of continuously moving around for the families and individuals served. On March 26, 2019, the Council will consider a contract amendment with LifeMoves to expand the program to the two additional sites.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

A secondary update on the Safe Parking Pilot Program is scheduled to come back to the City's Neighborhood Services and Education Committee on June 13, 2019.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This item has been posted on the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee website for March 14, 2019.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

At the June 14, 2018 Housing and Community Development Commission (HCDC) meeting, the HCDC recommended for approval (6-3) the Housing Trust Fund Expenditure Plan for FY 2018-19, which included a funding allocation for the Safe Parking Pilot Program.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

This memorandum does not commit the City to additional expenditures.

COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action.

/s/
JACKY MORALES-FERRAND
Director of Housing

For questions, please contact Kelly Hemphill, Homelessness Response Manager, at (408) 975-4483 or kelly.hemphill@sanjoseca.gov.

Attachment A: Operations Plan
Attachment B: Program Guidelines