



## City Council Agenda Item

**City Council Meeting Date:** October 1, 2019

**TO:** Jim Throop, City Manager

**FROM:** Christie Alarcon, Community Development Director  
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**SUBJECT:** Discussion and Consideration of Safe Parking Pilot Program

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### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends City Council:

- 1) Discuss implementing a Safe Parking Program (Program) as a Pilot Program as previously approved by Resolution 6179(18) (Attachment 1); and
- 2) Direct staff to prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a comprehensive Safe Parking Program at a selected location; or
- 3) Provide alternate direction.

### **Background:**

The City, like many other communities throughout the County of Santa Barbara and State of California, continues to struggle with the various effects of homelessness in our community. During the 2017 Point In Time (PIT) count, 219 persons were counted as experiencing homelessness and living without shelter in Lompoc. While there is one homeless shelter that serves the City's homeless population, it is a 56-bed year-round emergency shelter, which is often full year-round. In fact, the City, like many other cities throughout the State of California, declared a housing shelter crisis in October 2018.

In October 2018, the City ceased operation of the 30-day Riverbed Triage Center where it encountered 69 persons experiencing homelessness. While amazing successes were accomplished with housing some of those experiencing homelessness, there were many service-resistant clients who still are homeless. Some were able to find beds in shelters, rooms for rent, but overall, many found it challenging, even with Section 8 housing vouchers, to find housing in Lompoc.

Unauthorized homeless encampments have been prevalent throughout the City, exposing homeless persons to traffic hazards, crime, risk of death, injury, exposure to

weather, lack of adequate sanitation services, and other conditions that are detrimental to their health and safety.

The impact of homeless persons lodging in public parks, parking lots, bus benches, and other places not meant for human habitation, has an adverse effect on resources, as well as on the use and enjoyment of the public spaces for their intended purposes for the public at large.

In addition, homeless persons sleeping in their vehicles and recreational vehicles throughout the City are having an adverse effect on the residential community and business community. Large vehicles parked for long periods of time can block visibility when pulling out of driveways, for pedestrians crossing the streets, and pose other health and safety hazards.

While the Police Department receives many complaints from Lompoc residents and business owners regarding vehicles parking overnight and creating such hazards, due to recent court cases there is little the Police Department can do to enforce without offering a “safe place” for those experiencing homelessness to sleep.

On December 4, 2018, staff presented the Safe Parking Pilot Program for discussion. The proposal was for a three (3) month, temporary time period, where Program participants would be allowed to camp overnight in an designated parking area in the City Hall parking lot (directly across from the Police Department). Participants would be allowed to park safely between the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., seven days a week.

**Discussion:**

After much discussion, the City Council directed staff to return with an alternate location, off of the main thoroughfare of the City. The following locations have been discussed as possible options for safe parking:

1. John-Mansville Park Parking Lot (Attachment 2) 300 North A Street  
Concerns/Limitations: Baseball fields are two of the few lit fields available for youth sports in Lompoc and are utilized until 10 p.m. throughout the week. The parking lot is also identified as an emergency evacuation site and must be ready for utilization in the case of an emergency.
2. City Hall Parking Lot (Attachment 3) 100 Civic Center Plaza  
Concerns/Limitations: Located on one of the City’s main thoroughfares. Various Council and Commission meetings held in the evenings that have a potential to run up to, or past 10pm.

City Council – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month  
Utility Commission – 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month  
Human Services Commission – 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month  
Parks & Recreation Commission – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every month  
Planning Commission – 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month

Beautification & Appearance Commission – 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month  
Economic Development Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month

3. Ocean & I Street Parking Lot (Attachment 4) 121 South I Street

Concerns/Limitations: Farmer's Market is held at this site every Friday afternoon from 2 p.m. – 6 p.m. (Spring through Fall) and 2 p.m. – 5 p.m. (Winter); also located on one of the City's main thoroughfares.

Under the current zoning code, staff would be required to obtain a Minor Use Permit (MUP) at a cost of \$1,360 and a processing time of approximately 10 business days. If the zoning code amendment currently being considered is approved prior to initiating this process, staff would be required to obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) at a cost of \$2,500 and a processing time of approximately 10 business days.

Designating a Safe Parking Lot will allow the Police Department the ability to enforce the City's ordinance prohibiting residential use of vehicles (LMC Chapter 10.30), which City staff have received, and continue to receive, numerous complaints regarding camping on city streets and have heard the frustration of the community regarding inability of City to act on this concern.

The California Assembly is advancing legislation to protect homeless people who live in their cars and/or recreational vehicles from fines and vehicle impounds. This legislation has limited the local governments from citing illegal camping on City streets.

From a Human Service standpoint, funding a comprehensive Safe Parking Program is ideal. A comprehensive Safe Parking Program would include more than just a safe parking environment, but also support services for transitional homeless persons who are living in their vehicles. Advocates could construct action plans with participants that place emphasis on permanent housing solutions, employment, training, emergency support, asset stabilization and asset building. In order to determine the cost and identify of a qualified service provider, this would require the solicitation of proposals from outside agencies to determine the cost, qualifications and service level of the program. In very general queries with similar services in neighboring cities, those costs range from \$55,000 to \$360,000 per year. The \$55,000 relies heavily on volunteer support for case management, which would require an agency with a strong volunteer base and robust administrative capacity.

**Fiscal Impact:**

It is estimated that there will be minimal incidental costs associated with the Safe Parking Pilot Program, if the City would solely be identifying a site to be utilized. The cost would not be expected to exceed \$5,000. Because staff does not know who or how many are willing to utilize the site, staff could return to Council should security be needed for the site or other fiscal impact before continuing with the program.

It would be in the City's best interest to be prepared to have funding allocated for on-site security and portable restrooms, parking lot clean-up and implement the use of such in order to deter any negative behavior. Such costs are estimated at approximately \$5,000 monthly or \$50,000 for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2019-20.

If the City Council directs staff to move forward with designation of a site, then a funding allocation of \$5,000 would be required.

If the City Council directs staff to move forward with designation of a site, including security and portable restrooms, then a funding allocation of \$55,000 would be required.

If the City Council directs staff to move forward and solicit proposals in order to provide a comprehensive Safe Parking Program, then those proposals will be presented to the City Council for funding consideration. As mentioned earlier, the range could be between \$55,000 and \$360,000.

**Conclusion:**

Identification of a Safe Parking Pilot Program site will allow staff to determine the level of program participation, necessity of additional funding (if any), and will provide the City the necessary alternative option to allow citation for those illegally living in their vehicles on City streets. The City Manager will provide to the City Council regular reports on the site usage and/or concerns that may arise during operations. If the City Council directs staff to do so, staff can return with a comprehensive Safe Parking Program proposal and proposed costs for such program for City Council consideration. At any time the City Council can discuss augmenting or discontinuing the program.

Respectfully submitted,

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Christie Alarcon, Community Development Director

**APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:**

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Jim Throop, City Manager

- Attachments: 1) Resolution 6179(18)  
2) John-Mansville Park Parking Lot  
3) City Hall Parking Lot  
4) Ocean & I Street Parking Lot