

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

Safe Parking Program performance and next steps

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**DIRECTION**

Staff will present an overview of progress and results to date in the city's Pilot Safe Parking Program and outline next steps for extension of the program.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider directing staff to return with a resolution authorizing an amendment to the Professional Service Agreement and Lease Agreement with 4 Tomorrow to extend the Safe Parking Program at Lincoln Center or at another location through 2026.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**History**

In 2024, in alignment with Council priorities and Council direction, City staff publicly announced a request for proposals to seek a facilitator for a City-funded Safe Parking pilot. City Council approved an operational contract and lease agreement with Bellevue-based nonprofit 4 Tomorrow to facilitate the pilot program on February 5, 2024, authorizing an initial program pilot period through June 2025.

4 Tomorrow completed upgrades to the program's day center space and parking area at 515 116th Ave NE (Lincoln Center), a City-owned facility that had previously served as the temporary home for the men's shelter. 4 Tomorrow welcomed its first Safe Parking program participants on May 10, 2024.

The Safe Parking program provides parking for up to 20 vehicles that are serving as residences, prioritizing families with children who live in the Bellevue area. City of Bellevue Homelessness Outreach staff perform an initial assessment of all program participants before referring them to 4 Tomorrow. 4 Tomorrow then conducts a background check of all participants and ensures they are willing to establish a set of goals that will help them to attain indoor housing.

While on site, participants receive one-on-one support in finding housing and overcoming other barriers. They also have access to showers, washers and dryers, a working kitchen, and several indoor spaces for congregating or resting. The program provides additional services during severe weather events so that families with children are not forced to sleep in their vehicle on especially cold or hot days.

Program Performance

Since program launch, the City's Safe Parking pilot has met or exceeded expectations and positively impacted dozens of families. As of February 11, 2025, the program has hosted 53 families (69 children

and 106 adults). So far, 30 of those families have obtained stable housing, and others are working on this goal.

In December, 4 Tomorrow provided a report to the City detailing the agency's first six months of hosting Safe Parking (Attachment A) and measuring performance in categories established by the City. Those include, as of December 2024:

- 80% of program participants who exited the program have moved into stable housing.
- The average length of stay in the program is 58 days.
- Many families have been connected with supportive services, including 17 families connected to childcare services, 14 families connected to mental health services, and 10 families connected to food assistance.
- 11 households had at least one person gain employment while enrolled in the program.
- Virtually no neighbor or safety concerns since program launch: program staff have received zero calls to the 24/7 phone line for community concerns, there have been no complaints to city staff, and no emergency response calls for crimes or other disturbances.

The initial contract period from February 2024 through June 2025 is expected to stay within the original contract budget of \$672,350. In addition, the City has directly spent \$95,097 on site renovations, permitting, and related program startup costs. The majority of contracted program funds are dedicated to 4 Tomorrow's program staffing and operations, as well as limited direct assistance to program participants. 4 Tomorrow staff are onsite daily to facilitate the program and open the day center, provide security when the day center is not open, and provide case management and services to program participants in seeking housing, employment, and other needs.

Next Steps

The current Council-approved contract is set to expire in June 2025. For the program to continue beyond that date, Council will be asked to approve a contract extension. As part of the adopted 2025-26 budget, the Council has allocated continuing operational costs for the Safe Parking Program of \$450,000 per year. 4 Tomorrow and the City anticipate the operational contract costs for the program staying within the Council-adopted budget through December 2026, given continued use of its current location and maintaining the current program capacity of 20 vehicles at a time.

Program Site

The property at 515 116th Ave NE is planned to become part of the City's Grand Connection project and a catalyst for the Wilburton area. The office building on the site, which hosts the Safe Parking Program day center, is aging and slated for demolition, potentially in 2026. The Finance and Asset Management Department and City Manager's Office staff are working together to establish a timeline for the building that balances the needs of the Safe Parking Program and other City priorities. City staff are additionally working to identify alternative facilities for the Safe Parking Program following demolition of the Lincoln Center building. Alternatives being considered include (a) continuing to host the Safe Parking site on the same property, with temporary structures, for an extended period or (b) moving it to another location. Relocation of the program or use of temporary buildings on the Lincoln Center site would require extension or modification to the project's land use permit, as well as additional program capital funds and may be considered in the mid-biennial budget process if needed.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The Safe Parking Program aligns with Council Priority #12: “Support programs related to homelessness prevention and programs that help quickly house individuals experiencing homelessness,” and implemented 2021-2023 Council Priority #17, “Explore a safe parking program for homelessness response.” Further, it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan policies to support an intentional local community response to homelessness with supportive services provided to families, youth, and single adults (HS-18).

Fiscal Impact

The Council's adopted 2025-26 budget allocated \$450,000 per year for continued operation of the Safe Parking Program. These funds, in addition to funds already confirmed for the first five months of 2025 in the initial contract, are sufficient to cover the expected annual costs for the Safe Parking Program in 2025 and 2026.

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to return with a resolution authorizing an amendment to the Professional Service Agreement and Lease Agreement with 4 Tomorrow to extend the Safe Parking Program at Lincoln Center or at another location through December 31, 2026
2. Direct staff to conclude the current Safe Parking Program pilot.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Bellevue Safe Parking Program Six Month Report

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A