

## HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

### Safe Parking Program for Homelessness Response

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## MEMO PURPOSE

As requested by the City Council, the Commission will receive an informational overview of the safe parking pilot program

## BACKGROUND

City Council unanimously instructed staff to develop a safe parking pilot program on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and included \$450,000 per year for the pilot in the 2023-2024 budget. Below is a summary of the program city staff have developed.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

### Purpose

This program will focus on helping individuals living in their vehicles to find stable housing. In order to do so, participants will be offered a location to park their vehicles, and receive basic services that will help them on the pathway to stability, plus help eliminating barriers (like lack of employment or documentation of identity) and help navigating the housing system.

### Location

After careful evaluation of City-owned properties, City staff plan to use a portion of the property at 515 116<sup>th</sup> Ave NE (called the Lincoln Center, not to be confused with Lincoln Square) for the pilot. An ideal Safe Parking Program offers residents access to running water (for showering, laundry and hydration), electricity (for work, school and personal needs) kitchen facilities (for safely storing and preparing food), transit access, and a relatively secluded, quiet, and private location to park one's vehicle. Following relocation of the temporary men's shelter (run by Congregations for the Homeless) currently located on this property, this property offers these features without requiring the City to use additional funds to lease or purchase another facility or significantly modify property. The site also has a history of successful homelessness services uses, and the pilot safe parking program is an appropriate interim use of the property. City staff have reached out to business and property owners in the neighborhood surrounding the Lincoln Center to inform them of the City's intent, to address any concerns, and to consider any feedback.

### Operator Procurement and Program Facilitation

City staff have released a Request for Proposals that closes on February 10<sup>th</sup> to seek a program partner to operate the pilot safe parking program. Staff have been reaching out to a number of community organizations to generate interest in the proposed program, especially because of concerns that it may be difficult to find such an operator. Following a successful procurement process, staff anticipates the operational contract to be presented to the Council in spring 2023, with program launch to be expedited following contract approval. The selected operator will be responsible for all program services described below.

### **Population Served and Services Provided**

The Safe Parking program will serve vehicles of all types, including RVs and passenger vehicles, and will be open to vehicle residents regardless of age, gender, or family status. On-site services offered by contracted program staff will focus on helping vehicle residents to achieve permanent housing, including employment and education assistance, help navigating housing systems, obtaining documentation of identity and overcoming medical or mental health barriers. Additional program elements may include client assistance funds to help clients overcome basic barriers, like helping a client to pay for a state identification card so that they can apply for work.

The City-funded safe parking program and homelessness outreach program staff will also support the development of other safe parking sites and help to support the clients within those sites. Previous City of Bellevue work on Safe Parking concluded that the City should offer support to religious organizations in launching Safe Parking programs. The city-funded program will offer the same array of services offered to individuals residing on the city-owned safe parking lot to those residing in these religiously facilitated sites.

### **Safety**

The program operator will develop a safety plan that will address the safety needs of program participants, the surrounding community, and on-site staff. Details that the City will require will include a plan for 24/7 availability of staff, identifying the level of need with regard to on-site security staff, installing, as needed, fencing or other privacy barriers, establishing clear lines of communication and communication protocol with law enforcement, a plan for helping clients dealing with mental or medical health crises, and regular communication with City of Bellevue staff to report on ongoing security needs.

### **Program Evaluation**

City staff, in collaboration with the program operator, will use the following metrics to evaluate the Safe Parking program and inform decisions about potential program adjustments both when considering renewal and throughout the duration of the program. The program operator will be required to collect and report program evaluation data to the City on a regular basis.

#### *Demographic Information:*

- Age • Gender • Race • Household size

#### *Participant Outcomes:*

- Employment status at start and end of program • Total income at program enrollment and exit
- Percentage of participants that increase overall income during time in program • Housing status at exit • Referrals and services received while served in program

*Program Performance:*

• Total number of households served • Average length of stay • Vehicles served by type (RVs, vans, passenger vehicles)

*Safety*

• Number of calls to law enforcement • Program exits for safety concerns or rules violation • Number of emergency calls for mental and medical health concerns

**Project Timeline**

Below is the 2023 timeline:

<b>2023 City Actions</b>	
COB releases Request for Proposals	January 17 <sup>th</sup>
COB announces Land Use Review at 515 116 <sup>th</sup>	January 19 <sup>th</sup>
Request for Proposals submittal window closes	February 10 <sup>th</sup>
Select Program Operator	Q1 2023
Complete Land Use Review	Q1 2023
Congregations for the Homeless vacates the Lincoln Center	Late Q1 2023/Early Q2 2023
Program operator signs lease and contract	Q2 2023
Safe Parking Pilot Program Launch	Q2 2023