

October 26, 2020

Safe Parking Lot Pilot Report

HRC/HAB COMMITTEE ON THE UNHOUSED

Executive Summary

The HRC/HAB joint committee was tasked with researching the viability of a safe parking lot pilot for unhoused people as part of an overall comprehensive strategy to support the City's current homelessness strategy and creating additional paths forward for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The following report includes identification of key issues, a general background of safe parking, analysis, conclusions, and suggested next steps.

It also contains three attachments, including sources for this report.

The HRC/HAB joint committee suggests that a successful safe parking program would embrace the following characteristics:

Robust community engagement; Location in a parking lot of a faith-based venue with nonprofit management; Safe parking for about eight to ten (8-10) vehicles; Transitional housing plan for each person with case management ; Onsite security; No RV's (for this pilot); Cost free for parking participants; Specific minimum amenities; Anticipated outcome of at least 75% residents achieving stabilized housing within two years; Focus on particular population of unhoused individuals (with vehicles) that currently aren't eligible, aren't able to reside in shelters, or don't fare well in shelters – i.e. older adults, couples, small families, single parents, people with specific medical conditions that make group situations difficult, or people with support animals; Complements Housing First with smooth transition into AH; NO cost to city

After considering all the variables and evidence based outcomes, the joint HRC/HAB committee believes that a well-planned safe parking pilot program aligns with key issues in the HSBC plan and would be a welcome/successful tool to address issues of homelessness in Boulder.

Key Issues Identified

In the Boulder City Council Study Session Regarding Homeless Strategy on July 14, 2020, staff identified key issues:

“The HSBC system is structured for continuous improvement in alignment with a Housing First philosophy, and HSBC has put in place several best practices for administration of homelessness services. Changes to strategies and programs are evaluated against:

- *Support for Boulder County Community Members – does the proposed change continue to prioritize resources for Boulder County community members and for the most vulnerable?*
- *Adherence to Housing First – does the proposed change ultimately aid a person in obtaining a permanent housing solution?*
- *Alignment with Data and Evidence – is the proposed change in response to trending or other collected data/evidence?*

- *Alignment to the Housing Strategy – does the proposed change meet the city’s goals for ending homelessness?*
- *Cost-effectiveness – does the proposed change meet the needs of the served population within a reasonable cost?”*

The HRC/HAB joint committee supports these key issues.

This report will address these key issues and demonstrate that a safe parking lot pilot aligns with all them.

General Background

During Council’s annual work retreat in January 2020, Council members Swetlik and Friend moved to have Council study a proposed 20/20 Comprehensive Unhoused Strategy to meet the gaps in services needed to support the Coordinated Entry Program currently used in Boulder as a path to curb homelessness.

For the June 29, 2020 joint HAB/HRC meeting, staff provided a memo to HAB and HRC. HRC/HAB unanimously decided to recommend changes/additions to Boulder’s current strategy, largely in line with the 20/20 Comprehensive Unhoused Strategy, which was forwarded to Council for consideration.

A committee was formed that included two members from HRC and two members from HAB to examine these recommendations with research and outreach.

At a subsequent City Council meeting, Council members approved the staff’s strategy.

Council members also provided input to the HRC/HAB joint committee that included:

1. Council has no ability or interest in the near future to spend city money on any additional efforts.
2. At the request of HAB/HRC, Council will provide a Council liaison to the joint committee. (Later, Adam Swetlik was designated as the Council liaison).
3. City staff was not to be asked to provide any research, staff support, etc.
4. Council and staff suggested that city land use and zoning may preclude many options but land owned by faith-based groups would be exempt and potentially viable for safe parking lots or sanctioned encampments. (Note: This pilot project would be on land owned by a faith-based group and would be exempt for the necessity of Council zoning/land use issues.)

Analysis

A Brief History of Safe Parking Lots

Safe Parking provides a temporary location for individuals living inside their vehicles to park in safety as a transition into more stable housing.

Members of the HRC/HAB joint committee studied various safe parking programs around the country. That research is noted in Attachment C.

Safe Parking seems to have been launched in Santa Barbara in 2004, when a counselling center partnered with city officials and faith leaders to open up parking lots each night for homeless families living out in their vehicles and to connect them to a continuum of care and housing.

In the past, some safe parking lots that were too large or poorly run did not have successful outcomes. However, as expertise grew, safe parking lots have been successful, especially when specific protocols are followed (as to number of vehicles, security, neighborhood engagement, etc.).

An excerpt from the executive summary of “Hidden in Plain Sight – Finding Safe Parking for Vehicle Residents” from the Seattle School of Law’s Homeless Rights Advocacy Project provides excellent information about safe parking:

“The road to homelessness is often complex and indirect. Often, some combination of uncontrollable external forces, unpredictable events, unfortunate consequences, and random chance overcomes an individual’s ability to stave off the eventual loss of a safe and stable housing option. A person’s vehicle can represent a personal refuge: the last remaining link to a sense of privacy, stability, and personal autonomy. Adequate shelters are also commonly inaccessible to vehicle residents because there is no place to leave the vehicle. For many, their vehicle is their home.

But vehicle residents are routinely punished for these circumstances. Many laws criminalize necessary, life-sustaining activities, which routinely affect all unhoused people. But vehicle residents, specifically, are disproportionately impacted from a complex array of laws regarding vehicles. Many parking restrictions effectively banish vehicle residents from major parts of the city. Often, vehicle residents are unable to pay for citations, which then evolve into criminal infractions. Other laws commonly allow for the impoundment of a vehicular home, forcing vehicle residents to endure even greater trauma on the street.

These laws do not result in deterrence or meaningful revenue, but they do harm to already vulnerable people, making them more resistant to recovering from poverty and homelessness. This result is not only inhumane, but amounts to a costly rotating door that generates significant fiscal drain. Accordingly, other reports have already shown why these laws can and should be revised to mitigate harm to vulnerable vehicle residents.”

Safe Parking Programs utilize existing public or privately owned parking infrastructure to provide vehicle residents with a safe, reliable, and legal place to park.”

In Boulder, it has been difficult to assess how many people currently live in their vehicles, although an effort has been made to ascertain this information. Anecdotal observation, however, indicates people living in their vehicles (i.e. Diagonal Plaza, parks, recreation facilities, various neighborhoods, etc.)

In Seattle, it is estimated that 42% of their unhoused population lives in vehicles. However, it generally is difficult to track these “invisible homeless” who live in their vehicles. According to the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, the Point in Time Count in 2018 found 268 people living in vehicles in the metro area; in 2019, it was 215 people. However, in Jefferson County, alone, a month-long count of the county’s homeless population found 200 people living in cars in that county alone – an indication that official data doesn’t come close to capturing the real numbers.

Lots can be for RVs, exclude RVs, or include both RVs and other vehicles. Some safe parking lots are very large and others are quite small (less than 10 vehicles). Over time, providers have learned that smaller lots with case management and security are much more successful than other choices.

Study/Safe Parking Lot Longmont HOPE

After examining successful safe parking programs around the country, the joint HRC/HAB committee finds that the new safe parking program at a church in Longmont and operated by HOPE, a nonprofit, is the best model for Boulder.

It was developed with careful consideration of safe parking programs with proven success, especially the safe parking program in Santa Barbara.

The following information is the result of a virtual meeting with HOPE's executive director, edited and approved by him:

“From a virtual meeting with Joseph Zanovitch, Executive Director, HOPE (Longmont)

Joseph Zanovitch is the E.D. of HOPE, a Longmont nonprofit that provides a variety of services to people who are experiencing homelessness. The nonprofit has established a successful track record for, at least, a decade. In addition to their other services, they recently began a pilot program for a safe parking lot for individuals who have vehicles but lack housing.

HOPE coordinated Longmont City Council approval and the participation of a local church to initiate a one-year pilot program of safe parking for 8 vehicles. RV's are excluded from this pilot because of their need for waste disposal.

HOPE does not advertise the name or location of the church for reasons of privacy. There is an intake process that involves an application, an interview and a background check. There is no charge for services.

Services include: case management, onsite security, entering at 6:00 PM, leaving at 8:00 AM, use of church for free meals, showers, bathrooms from 6-10 PM and 6-8 AM, and use of a porta-potty at other times

Their budget is \$100,000 for one year. The greatest expenses are for case management and security. Programs that are long-standing may not need security but new programs should have security for the first few years, at least. HOPE provided the funds for the budget. The city of Longmont incurred no costs.

It is possible that there be some federal funding in the future for such projects

Joseph advocates for small safe parking lots rather than larger ones for many sound reasons. It is easier to maintain security. It causes less neighborhood disruption. It does not use all the parking spaces in a facility. This project allows for 8 vehicles.

The current guests include people who don't qualify for shelters because they have pets or don't want to separate as couples or as families. Six of the eight groups of people have at least one working member of their group. Two of the groups have no member able to work. All receive case management. Some residents already are on waiting lists for permanently affordable housing. Others are expected to be able to save enough money for market rate rentals.

There is a very strict code of conduct for guests. One guest was ejected for domestic violence. There was another incident of tires being slashed. It was not clear whether or not it was just a random act.

The Longmont church offers many wonderful services, more than most safe lot amenities, including breakfast, dinner, shower facilities, etc. However, other safe parking lots often are able to obtain recreation center passes so that safe parking lot “residents” can get showers. Many of the amenities, like food, are provided by church volunteers and/or local businesses.

HOPE’s safe parking lot can be a model. They are working on a similar project that may start up in Aurora, Colorado. Much of their program is based on a model by New Beginnings Counselling Center in Santa Barbara. New Beginnings sells their manual for \$149.”

Key takeaways:

5. Small safe parking lot – theirs is 8 vehicles
6. Case management, onsite security
7. Yearly cost – about \$100,000 with no cost to the city
8. Strict code of conduct for parking participants
9. Focus on those who don’t fit into traditional shelter services
10. Amenities for parking guests

Boulder Staff “pros” and “cons”

In the June 29, 2020 staff memo to HRC and HAB, a section was included about Safe Parking Lots (in their Attachment C). That portion, pertaining to Safe Parking Lots, is attached at the end of this report.

City staff identified the following “pros” and “cons” of Safe parking lots in the June 29, 2020 staff memo. In this report, the HRC/HAB joint committee has added some “pros” and suggested mitigation for the “cons”.

“Pros” suggested by staff in June 29, 2020 memo:

- *Can reduce fire hazards and poor water quality conditions. Unsafe structures, open flames, and the proliferation of trash can be regulated.*
- *Protects parks and greenspaces from improper use*
- *Provides monitored area for people who cannot/will not access shelter and/or will not abandon vehicles*
- *Protects neighborhoods with limited parking*

Additional “Pros” suggested by the HRC/HAB joint committee:

- Provides a new shelter model without any financial commitment from City
- Makes visible a previously invisible population and connects them with services
- Increases the safety of parking lot participants and neighborhoods
- Increases opportunity for successful transition to affordable housing because people are able to get a good night’s sleep, to recharge their batteries (literally and figuratively), and maintain personal hygiene vital to successful employment

- Demonstrates solid success in transitioning unhoused individuals into permanent housing with case management/supportive services. Safe parking program provides connecting link to available city services.
- Provides a gap service that complements the City's Housing First approach with no additional City financial commitment.
- Requires no Council votes nor lengthy expenditure of staff/Council time

"Cons/Unintended Consequences" presented by staff in June 29, 2020 memo (with suggestions for mitigation added):

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Regular costs for clean-up, security and monitoring will be high. Diverts funding from housing. In some cases, the amount paid per parking/camping space is nearly as much, or more, than the amount required placing or retaining people in housing.*

Suggested Mitigation: A partnership between a faith-based entity and a nonprofit to manage the location, program and participants obviates the need for any City funding or management obligations.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Discourages people from seeking certain services. Currently, CE system set up to encourage housing pathways. Municipal Court, MHP, and HOT resources focused on high system utilizers to move them directly to housing.*

Suggested Mitigation: Does not discourage people from seeking other services and, indeed, is a perfect complement to city/county services, providing transitional supports that lead to permanent housing, especially since current demand for affordable housing far outweighs availability of such housing. The participants at the safe parking lot will be people who are not traditionally viable for the shelter – either because they have no safe place to park their cars or because they don't meet/want shelter criteria.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Some communities report an increase in crime rates in the area.*

Suggested Mitigation: There is no data to support this claim, since there are no safe parking lots in Boulder. This safe parking program would have security available during all "open" times.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Encourages spread of disease. Exposes campers to risks of pneumonia and frostbite.*

Suggested Mitigation: A pilot program is a gap service developed to expand city resources towards keeping the homeless population safe and sanitary. Additional severe weather options could be included by program partners.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Vehicles are not considered places for human habitation and create a false sense of protection from the elements. Programs more common in warmer locations.*

Suggested Mitigation: This project will have a severe weather plan that, at the very least, matches the city's severe weather shelter plan. Sleeping in a vehicle is far

superior to sleeping on the ground without a blanket. In addition, onsite security will monitor participants' safety in a way that their safety would not be monitored without the safe lot. Finally, Summit County and Longmont now offer safe parking.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Unhealthy living situations for children.*

Suggested Mitigation: Living in a vehicle or any other place other than a home is not ideal for children. However, sleeping in a car with family, while waiting for permanent housing and receiving supportive services, is arguably better for children than separating them from their families or disrupting their school and community connections.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Siting may be difficult – lack of usable land/parking lots. No designated partner to provide space and administration of camp. Camp self-policing and/or security increases city liability and possibly not palatable to surrounding community.*

Suggested Mitigation: Several faith-based communities have indicated interest in partnering with a nonprofit for a safe lot program. Program management, implementation, and all other requirements would be the responsibility of the partners, not the city. Additionally, many businesses and neighbors in the Longmont program volunteer goods and services, so such programs can be palatable to the surrounding community.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. Increased security needs either undue impact on police or significant private security costs.*

Suggested Mitigation: Safe parking partners are responsible for both the cost and the implementation of security for the program, not the city. The impact on Boulder's Police Department is expected to be reduced.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. May not solve problems associated with illegal camping/parking, as some people will not want to follow campground rules and seek out unsanctioned sites.*

Suggested Mitigation: Of course. That is true for any new service, but it is equally true for all existing services. A pilot program for safe parking is just one additional tool in a complex of services that all support our Housing First approach.

- *Con/Unintended Consequences. May increase local homelessness as more people choose to camp, and campgrounds/safe parking do not offer an exit strategy from homelessness.*

Suggested Mitigation: There is no data to suggest that safe parking incentivizes homelessness. Rather, safe parking catches individuals using vehicles before they slip into abject homelessness. In fact, data indicates a very high rate of safe parking participants transitioning into stable housing with a rate of 65-70% that may be higher than most shelter rates.

Suggested specifics of a model safe parking program

This section provides a more detailed description of the specific characteristics of a safe parking pilot program that seem to provide the best options for successful outcomes for Boulder:

- **Robust Community Engagement.** A safe parking lot pilot program will engage respectfully with all neighbors from the outset. While there may be initial concerns, Longmont's experience (and the experience of other safe parking programs) indicates that neighbors are not inconvenienced. In fact, several nearby businesses regularly donate food and other items. Similarly, neighbors volunteer their time to help out at the sponsoring church. Longmont's program prohibits any day parking within three blocks of the safe parking lot. The location of the safe parking lot will not be widely publicized, further protecting the privacy of the neighbors and participants.
- **Located in the parking lot of a faith-based venue.** As city planning staff already indicated in response to Council questions, the location of safe parking lot at a faith-based venue would not require any Council zoning/land use changes. Successful safe parking lot providers suggest that only a small portion of the parking lot be utilized for a safe parking lot for management purposes, neighborhood satisfaction, and the convenience of the faith-based congregation.
- **Safe parking for eight to ten (8-10) vehicles.** After comparing safe parking lot projects and after studying successful elements, it is clear that smaller safe parking lots work much better than larger lots for a variety of reasons. It is suggested that the safe parking lot pilot in Boulder provide space for about eight to ten (8-10) vehicles. That number of spaces is small enough to manage appropriately yet large enough to justify the costs to the nonprofit, as well as provide useful data.
- **Transitional housing plan and case management.** Data and best practices indicate that the pilot program for a safe parking lot ought to require a transitional housing plan and case management for each individual, as a requirement for their entrance into the program. Outcomes for successful transition from homelessness into permanent housing have been demonstrated to increase with good case management. Case management also paves the way for accurate data collection.
- **Onsite security.** Onsite security creates a safe environment for the parking participants and eases any neighborhood concerns.
- **No RV's (for this pilot).** While safe parking for RVs may be a consideration in the future, the necessity for utility hook-ups and/or waste disposal is too much for a pilot program and would be difficult for a faith-based organization.
- **Cost free for participants.** When safe parking participants are exempted from fees, they can work with the case manager to set up a savings program. Often, it has been demonstrated, safe parking participants are successful at maintaining employment and saving enough money either to pay their share of Section 8 housing or save enough to get into market rate housing.
- **Specific minimum amenities.** These should include overnight parking with hours approximately between 6:00 PM and 8:00 AM, use of the faith-based organizations restrooms from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM and from 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM, porta-potty for other nighttime hours, no daytime parking within three blocks of safe parking lot. Optimal amenities would include availability of food, showers, availability of battering charging. It should be noted that some safe parking programs make arrangements with local recreation facilities for safe parking participants to use shower facilities. There are safe parking programs that allow their participants to stay during daytime hours. These are all

possibilities, but providing a base of minimum amenities seems vital to the success of such a pilot program.

- **Strong nonprofit.** The nonprofit partner should be able to demonstrate solid fundraising capacity and strong case management that includes an application process, code of conduct, transitional plan, and expected outcomes. The nonprofit also will be able to collect data, track progress, and make appropriate program adjustments when indicated.
- **Anticipated outcome of at least 75% residents achieving stabilized housing within two years.** This is in line with most successful transitional housing goals and exceeds most safe parking lot outcomes that now seem to be from 35-70%.
- **Focus on particular population of unhoused individuals that currently aren't eligible or don't fare well in shelter – i.e. older adults, couples, small families, single parents, and/or people with emotional support animals.** This approach was highly recommended by proponents of the successful safe parking program in Longmont as being a good fit for any such program in Boulder County, as it addresses individuals with vehicles that traditionally don't qualify or often participate in current shelter services.
- **Complements Housing First goals with smooth transition into AH.** Appropriate safe parking lots promote and complement Housing First goals by providing the extra supports that increase successful outcomes. Meanwhile, the safe parking participants have an option that is more optimal than living on the street while waiting for enough houses in Housing First. Also, a safe parking lot provides the enhancements that assist some participants with the capacity to obtain market rate housing, leaving room for others to access Housing First – a clear benefit to Housing First.
- **NO cost to city.** An appropriate safe parking lot pilot is of no direct cost to the city, which meets one of Council's clear indications to the joint committee.
- **Coordination with Council only; no necessity for a lengthy formal approval.** In Longmont, the safe parking lot pilot did not require any Council votes nor did it require a great amount of Council or staff time devoted to the project. Rather, there was some coordination and information-sharing. Similarly, in Boulder, there are no zoning/land use issues requiring staff time or Council votes. Coordination between the project partners and city staff (with updates to Council) could provide a means for Council/city staff to work with project partners for coordination, data to be tracked, etc. in a manner that does not require inordinate staff/Council time.

Final thoughts on specific characteristics for a safe parking pilot: A safe parking lot is not the total panacea for those who are unhoused. Rather, a safe parking pilot with data driven characteristics can be one viable tool to complement and enhance the Housing First approach.

Alignment with HSBC and Boulder's Homeless Strategy Goals

The HRC/HAB joint committee ascertained the alignment of a safe parking program - based on extensive research, data, and evidence - with HSBC and Boulder's Homeless Strategy Goals.

Boulder city staff has stated that any changes to the current homeless strategy and programs should be evaluated against specific criteria. The HRC/HAB joint committee believes that a pilot program for safe parking meets all criteria:

- *Support for Boulder County Community Members – does the proposed change continue to prioritize resources for Boulder County community members and for the most vulnerable?*

There is substantive documentation that individuals living in their vehicles are among the most vulnerable (while among the most resilient when provided with support) and that the proposed change of sanctioning a safe parking pilot does not negatively impact any other resources or their prioritization for Boulder County community members, since the pilot is of no cost/management responsibility to the City or County.

- *Adherence to Housing First – does the proposed change ultimately aid a person in obtaining a permanent housing solution?*

Data overwhelmingly indicates that safe parking lots ultimately enhance and aid a person's ability to obtain permanent housing. Safe parking adheres to Housing First since it is a transitional measure with an extremely high rate of successful entry into permanently affordable housing and, even in some situations, facilitates the ability of a person to move into market rate housing.

- *Alignment with Data and Evidence – is the proposed change in response to trending or other collected data/evidence?*

Trending and other collected data/evidence about safe parking lots are overwhelmingly favorable, as indicated within all sources cited in Attachment C. Safe parking lots already exist successfully in other Colorado locales, including Longmont and Summit County. Data couldn't be more aligned.

- *Alignment to the Housing Strategy – does the proposed change meet the city's goals for ending homelessness?*

Boulder's Housing Strategy emphasizes best practices, research, and what has worked in other communities. Current safe parking data aligns with these points. Housing Strategy additionally emphasizes local issues and needs. For people living in their cars and for neighborhoods that are experiencing overnight parking of people living in their cars, a safe parking program addresses local issues and needs.

Furthermore, as Council and staff know, the Housing Strategy has six specific goals: 1) expanding pathways to permanent housing; 2) expanding access to services; 3) supporting efficient and effective services built on best practices and data driven results; 4) supporting access to a continuum of basic services as part of a pathway to self-sufficiency and sustainability; 5) supporting access to public information about homelessness and community solutions; and 6) creating public spaces that are welcoming and safe for residents and visitors.

In alignment with these goals, safe parking:

- 1) Clearly expands pathways to permanent housing as it offers a new way, with abundant and proven successful outcomes, as a pathway to permanent housing
- 2) Clearly expands access to services with a specific approach to a vulnerable population for whom such services currently do not exist.
- 3) Overwhelmingly exhibits best practices and data driven results, as is demonstrated in the information provided in Attachment C.

- 4) Strongly supports access to a continuum of services with required case management and supportive services
- 5) Supports access to public information by providing a start at gathering information on people who live in their vehicles – information that currently is not available in Boulder – and provides community solutions with a program that was generated by the community
- 6) Creates public spaces that are safe and welcoming to participants by the very nature of safe parking and is safe/welcoming to neighbors by decreasing overnight parking in neighborhoods.

• *Cost-effectiveness – does the proposed change meet the needs of the served population within a reasonable cost?”*

A safe parking pilot is extremely cost-effective as it meets the needs of the served population with no cost, whatsoever, to the City or County.

CONCLUSION

A safe parking program with proven characteristics has demonstrated success on the west coast and in other Colorado locales in accordance with data-driven evidence-based practices. There is ample documentation to demonstrate that a safe parking program meets HSBC criteria and aligns with Boulder’s Homeless Strategy.

Therefore, the HRC/HAB joint committee enthusiastically endorses a safe parking pilot program.

Next Steps

- The joint HRC/HAB committee requests that HAB and HRC accept this Safe Parking Lot Pilot Report and pass it along to Council as documentation for HAB and HRC’s overall support of a Safe Parking Lot pilot to add complementary cost-free services to unhoused people who do not traditionally fit into current shelter services.
- Council could approve/adopt/support a Safe Parking Lot pilot on the 2021 work plan – either by simply endorsing the idea or by actively seeking safe parking lot partners.

While no one solution fully addresses the complicated issues surrounding people who are unhoused, many smaller programs addressing specific needs can make huge strides towards facilitating affordable housing for many people. A Safe Parking Lot pilot would be a step in that direction.

This is the portion of the memo that pertains to safe parking and was contained in staff’s attachment C:

“Safe Lots and Designated Parking

Other communities such as Longmont are considering city-sanctioned parking. Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement (HOPE), a nonprofit in Longmont, is conducting a pilot program in Longmont, separate from city funding or participation. The HOPE project would only serve passenger vehicles and will serve no more than five to seven cars in the lot.

As with designated camping, safe parking amenities vary. Most provide safe, legal, overnight parking for individuals and families. Some provide shower and laundry facilities. People typically choose living in their cars because they have unease with shelter stays or wish to make use of the one asset they own. “Car homelessness” is difficult to quantify, but case managers report interacting more with families living in their cars vs individuals. Safe Lots are primarily located where there is a large gap between income and housing costs and where there is insufficient shelter space. Costs vary depending on amenities and economies of scale.

Figure 10: Sample Safe Parking Costs/Persons Served

<i>Program</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Parking Spots</i>	<i>Nightly People Served</i>	<i>Total People Served</i>	<i>Annual Budget</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>
<i>New Beginnings (est. 2004)</i>	<i>Santa Barbara, CA</i>	<i>133 across 24 lots</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>8,800</i>	<i>\$270,000</i>	<i>Public, Private</i>
<i>Road to Housing (est. 2012)</i>	<i>Seattle, WA</i>	<i>26 spots across 4 lots, 15 RV spots in 1 lot</i>			<i>\$360,000</i>	<i>Public</i>
<i>Dreams for Change (est. 2010)</i>	<i>San Diego, CA</i>	<i>78 spots across two Lots</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>2,650</i>	<i>\$55,000</i>	<i>Private</i>
<i>One Starfish Parking (est. 2014)</i>	<i>Monterey, CA</i>	<i>27 spots across 5 lots</i>		<i>75</i>	<i>\$100,000</i>	<i>Public, Private</i>

Program budgets range from \$55,000 to \$360,000 per year. The San Diego program with a budget of \$55,000 relies heavily on volunteer support for case management, outreach and services in partnership with Jewish Family Services, a local nonprofit in the area. Seattle operates the program with the largest budget of \$360,000 which covers costs for remaining open 24 hours a day – \$13,846 per year per space. (For comparison, a permanent supportive housing unit with case management costs \$18-20K annually, and the Emergency Family Assistance

Association (EFAA) Keep Families Housed program helps families stay in their housing with up to 3 payments totaling \$1500 in rental assistance.) All other designated parking programs above operate exclusively overnight. Every program partners with at least one non-profit organization (typically faith-based) to provide some combination of funding, parking lot space, outreach, services and case

management. When Sonoma County investigated safe parking programs, they chose not to implement safe parking because they could not align it with Housing First.

Housing outcomes are not readily available for these programs.

Considerations

Considerations for Safe Parking are very similar to those of Designated Camping services. While a vehicle can provide marginally more protection from weather than tents, vehicle camping also has some of the same risks. If either program were to be designated for Boulder, it is recommended that nightly security be provided and that campsites/lots for individuals and families be separated. The incidence of vehicle habitation appears to be more frequent in Longmont than in Boulder. The reasons for this difference are not definitively known. In some cases, this may be due to the distance from Longmont to the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless (and people opting not to travel to Boulder) or the more extensive family services that are available in Boulder.

Figure 11: Considerations for Designated Camping and Safe Parking

<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons/Unintended Consequences</i>
<i>Can reduce fire hazards and poor water quality conditions. Unsafe structures, open flames, and the proliferation of trash can be regulated</i>	<i>Regular costs for clean-up, security and monitoring will be high. Diverts funding from housing. In some cases, the amount paid per parking/camping space is nearly as much, or more, than the amount required to place or retain people in housing.</i>
<i>Protects parks and greenspaces from improper Use</i>	<i>Discourages people from seeking certain services. Currently, CE system set up to encourage housing pathways. Municipal Court, MHP, and HOT resources focused on high system utilizers to move them directly to housing.</i>
<i>Provides monitored area for people who cannot/will not access shelter and/or will not abandon vehicles</i>	<i>Some communities report an increase in crime rates in the area</i>
<i>Specific to Safe Parking: Protects neighborhoods with limited parking</i>	<i>Encourages spread of disease. Exposes campers to risks of pneumonia and frostbite.</i>
	<i>Vehicles are not considered places for human habitation and create a false sense of protection from the elements. Programs more common in warmer locations. Unhealthy living situations for children.</i>
	<i>Siting may be difficult – lack of usable land/parking lots. No designated partner to provide space and administration of camp. Camp self-policing and/or security increases city liability and possibly not palatable to surrounding community. Increased security needs either undue impact on police or significant private security costs</i>

	<i>May not solve problems associated with illegal camping/parking, as some people will not want to follow campground rules and seek out unsanctioned sites.</i>
	<i>May increase local homelessness as more people choose to camp, and campgrounds/safe parking do not offer an exit strategy from homelessness.</i>

Applicability to Homelessness Strategy

Designated camping, whether in tents or in vehicles, is not directly related to the Homelessness Strategy. As a stand-alone measure, designated camping would possibly dis-incentivize people from engagement in housing pathways (Strategy 1) or connection with the continuum of services (Strategy 4). It also would be counter to Strategy 6 - Create Public Spaces that are Welcoming and Safe for Residents and Visitors. If designated camping was limited to people who were engaged with the housing programs, it could meet the goals of the strategy. However, using data from SWS and the recent encampment closure, there is a high correlation between unsheltered camping, drug usage, and disengagement with the system. In addition, there does not appear to be a documented need from individuals for this service and is not recommended for families.”

ATTACHMENT B – Homeless Policy Research Institute Report Table

This is a table from a well-prepared December 2018 Homeless Policy Research Institute report that looked at safe parking programs nationally.

If some of the data looks familiar, a portion of this report (less services and outcomes) appears in the previous Attachment A.

This complete table from the original Homeless Policy Research Institute demonstrates successful outcomes for some safe parking programs. That table is provided below:

Program	Location	Parking Spaces	People Served Nightly	Total People Served	Annual Budget	Funding Sources	Services	Outcomes
New Beginnings (est. 2004)	Santa Barbara	133 spaces across 24 lots	150	8,800	\$270,000	Public, private	Outreach, HMIS-connected case management (monthly); food distribution; grants for medical expenses; job tutoring; toilets	432 (5%) obtained housing, 250 obtained employment
Road to Housing (est. 2012)	Seattle, WA	26 spots across 4 lots, 15 RV spots in 1 lot			\$360,000	Public	Outreach, HMIS-connected case management (bi-monthly) toilets	256 obtained housing
Dreams for change (est. 2010)	San Diego, CA	78 spots across 2 lots	70	2650	\$55,000	Private	Case management (not connected to HMIS), referrals to public benefits, employment and housing; food distribution; financial education; after-school care; toilets	1725 (65%) obtained housing or moved to long term transitional housing programs
One Starfish Parking (est. 2014)	Monterey, CA	27 spots (1-2 RV spots) across 5 lots		75	\$100,000	Public, Private	Case management (not connected to HMIS); referrals to showers, food, employment, housing, and therapy; provision of sleeping bags and gas cards; toilets	50 (70%) obtained housing

ATTACHMENT C: Source material for this HRC/HAB joint committee report

Primary Sources:

Colorado Safe Parking Initiative. This grassroots nonprofit all-volunteer organization provides basic information about safe parking. <https://www.colosafeparking.org>

New Beginnings Counselling Center Safe Parking Program. While their website provides information, their detailed and comprehensive manual can only be obtained through a \$149 purchase. It provides step-by-step information for implementing a successful safe lot parking program. A member of the joint committee purchased the manual. <https://sbnbcc.org/safe-parking/>

Hidden In Plain Sight – Finding Safe Parking for Vehicle Residents by the Seattle School of Law Homeless Rights Advocacy Project. This report contains 298 footnotes to support conclusions, as well as detailed information about the process. <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1012&context=hrap>

Homelessness Policy Research Institute – Safe Parking Programs. 2018 report for Los Angeles, provides the table that, in part, was utilized by Boulder City Staff in the June 29, 2020 memo to HRC and HAB. It demonstrates successful outcomes for safe parking lot programs. https://socialinnovations.usc.edu/homelessness_research/safe-parking-programs/

Expert input (via email, virtual meetings, and/or phone calls):

- E.D. Low Income Housing Institute
- PhD. co-author Hidden In Plain Sight, scholar with UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations
- E.D. University Heights Center (Community Center)
- E.D. HOPE – Longmont (HOPE’s programs include Longmont’s new safe parking program)
- Founding member of Colorado Safe Parking Initiative
- City of Longmont senior staff member

Other safe parking programs:

- Lake Washington Methodist Church Program in Seattle <https://lakewaumc.org/safe-parking-program/>
- Homeless Outreach Providing Encouragement (HOPE) in Longmont <https://hopeforlongmont.org/safelot-program-helping-those-in-need/>
- City of Mountain View, CA https://www.mountainview.gov/depts/comdev/preservation/safe_parking_program.asp
- Dreams for Change, San Diego, CA <https://www.dreamsforchange.org/programs>
- Local Overnight Safe Parking Program Summit County, CO <https://www.goodbridgecommunity.com/oist/lospp-membership-description>

Articles and other links:

- <https://www.coloradosun.com/2020/04/28/safe-parking-living-in-cars-in-Longmont/>
- <https://www.umcgiving.org/impact-articles/its-more-than-a-church-parking-lot-its-a-safe-zone-for-the-homeless>
- <https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2019/12/23/vehicles-homeless-crisis-dan-simon-new-day-pkg-vpx.cnn>

- South Western College, Chula Vista CA <https://www.theswcsun.com/safe-parking-lots-of-available-for-homeless-students-in-cars/>
- San Jose establishes safe parking zones for homeless with cars, with gyms, libraries and churches. <https://patch.com/california/campbell/san-jose-establishes-safe-parking-zones-homeless-cars>
- Palo Alto allows up to 4 vehicles in parking lots of houses of worship. <https://paloaltoonline.com/news/2020/01/14/safe-parking-program-moves-ahead-in-palo-alto>
- <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/homelessness/sd-me-homeless-parking-20171020-story.html>
- <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/10/11/20897485/california-homeless-safe-parking-lots-cars-rvs>
- <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-homelessness-society/wherever-i-park-my-car-thats-my-home-u-s-homeless-find-refuge-in-safe-parking-idUSKBN1O11CZ>
- <https://www.westword.com/new/safe-parking-sites-could-steer-homeless-to-a-better-future-11704647>
- Poverty Rate in Colorado. <https://spotlightonpoverty.org/spotlight-exclusives/outdated-assumptions-mask-true-poverty-rate/>
- <https://www.bartoninstitute.org/safe-parking>
- Metro Denver Homeless Initiative. <https://www.mdhi.org>