



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Cassera Phipps, Senior Planner
MEMO DATE: September 18, 2019
WORK SESSION: September 25, 2019
SUBJECT: Safe Parking Program and Vehicle Camping Text Amendment

At the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on September 25, staff will provide an overview of the city's Safe Parking Pilot Program and proposed changes to the Development Code that would allow Vehicle Camping at eligible sites in the city. Staff seeks guidance from the Planning Commission regarding the draft code changes.

Background

In June 2018, Beaverton City Council enacted a camping ordinance that prohibited people from camping in their vehicles in the public right-of-way. At the same time, City Council expressed an interest in having a Safe Parking Program for people experiencing homelessness who live in their vehicles. Council asked city staff to explore developing a program to address this need. In response, the Safe Parking Pilot Program was launched in April 2019.

The goal of the Safe Parking Program is to provide stability and resources to individuals and families experiencing homelessness and to help them transition into housing. The program is managed by the City of Beaverton, who contracts with Just Compassion of East Washington County for case management of guests. The pilot program is administered by Mayor's Office staff who currently oversees operations at two host sites:

1. a city-owned property that is zoned R1; and
2. a property owned by Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District (THPRD) that is zoned Industrial (IND)

Each host site offers three parking spaces, which have been at full capacity since the start of the program. To date, the program has served 11 adults and 4 children.

Through consultation with the City Attorney's Office, staff identified changes to the City Code and Beaverton Development Code (BDC) that would allow the Safe Parking Program to be implemented throughout the city. In September, City Council adopted amendments to the City Code that expand the definition of "vehicle" and permit vehicle camping on parking lots owned or controlled by commercial interests, religious institutions, places of worship, public service nonprofits and public entities.

Project Description

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the city's role in supporting emergency and transitional housing options. However, some housing programs aimed at helping those experiencing homelessness face regulatory obstacles that limit the city's efforts to combat homelessness. As it relates to the city's Safe Parking Program, the Development Code does not define Vehicle Camping as a land use or allow it in any zone.

The Vehicle Camping text amendment would change the Development Code by:

- Adding a definition of Vehicle Camping that is consistent with recent updates to the City Code (BDC Chapter 90);
- Identifying Vehicle Camping as a civic land use in residential, commercial, industrial and multiple use zoning districts (BDC Chapter 20);
- Exempting Vehicle Camping from certain development standards, such as hours of operation (BDC Chapter 20); and
- Developing site design standards for Vehicle Camping that are intended to mitigate impacts on surrounding properties (BDC Chapter 60)

The proposed text amendment would remove barriers for existing and future host sites and could result in expansion of the city's Safe Parking Program.

Questions for the Commission

1. Potential site design standards include setbacks and visual screening. Should site design standards for Vehicle Camping vary depending on the abutting use or zoning designation?
2. Should Vehicle Camping site design standards apply to parking spaces only and/or associated storage and sanitary facilities (including toilet, hand washing and trash disposal)?
3. Are there other potential solutions you would like us to explore?

Next Steps

Staff will incorporate feedback from the September 25 Planning Commission work session and draft code language related to Vehicle Camping. Staff expect to return to Planning Commission on October 16, 2019 for a public hearing on the proposed text amendment.

Exhibits

1. Ordinance No. 4773 Amending Beaverton Code Chapters 6.02.322 and 6.02.324 Relating to Vehicle Camping
2. Safe Parking Program Host Site Info Sheet
3. Safe Parking Program Frequently Asked Questions
4. Safe Parking Program Guest Guidelines