

REPORT FROM

OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Date: August 1, 2024

CAO File No. 0220-05151-0549
Council File No. 22-1324,
22-1313
Council District: All

To: The City Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer



Reference: C.F. 22-1324; C.F. 22-1313

Subject: **PILOT RV-TO-HOME PROGRAM IN COUNCIL DISTRICT 7;
COMPREHENSIVE CITYWIDE STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE
EXPERIENCING RECREATIONAL VEHICULAR HOMELESSNESS**

SUMMARY

On March 22, 2023, and November 14, 2023, the City Council approved the Housing and Homelessness Committee reports relative to the City Administrative Officer's (CAO) proposed Citywide Rehousing Strategy for People Experiencing RV Homelessness and the Pilot Recreational Vehicle (RV)-to-Home program ([C.F. 22-1313](#)) and a Comprehensive Citywide Strategy for People Experiencing Recreational Vehicular Homelessness ([C.F. 22-1324](#)), respectively. This report addresses the instructions included in the two aforementioned reports, as summarized below:

1. Provide quarterly basis with performance and outcome data related to a Citywide Rehousing Strategy for People Experiencing RV Homelessness ([C.F. 22-1313](#));
2. Expand the Citywide Rehousing Strategy for People Experiencing RV Homelessness using the Encampment Resolution Funds.
3. Identify funding for Time Limited Subsidies
4. Implement a vehicle recycling pilot program to service the City of Los Angeles;
5. Identify \$1 million for the Vehicle Recycling Program
6. Develop a plan to scale up the Council District 7 RV-to-Home Pilot Program;

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council, subject to the approval by the Mayor:

1. APPROVE the CAO's proposed citywide Enhanced RV rehousing strategy for people experiencing RV homelessness modeled after the CD7 RV-to-Home Pilot Program

BACKGROUND

On March 22, 2023, and November 14, 2023, the City Council approved the Office of City Administrative Officer's (CAO) recommendations for People Experiencing Recreational Vehicular Homelessness. It directed the CAO to provide on a quarterly basis performance and outcome data related to a Citywide Rehousing Strategy for People Experiencing RV Homelessness. Then on November 14, 2023 it also directed this Office to expand the Citywide Rehousing Strategy for People Experiencing RV Homelessness using the Encampment Resolution Funds; identify funding for Time Limited Subsidies (TLS), and the Vehicle Recycling Program. It further directed the CAO to develop a plan to scale up the Council District 7 RV-to-Home Pilot Program.

As such, this report identifies existing resources that are being utilized for Recreational Vehicle (RV) dwellers, voluntarily removing vehicles from the public right ways, and identifying solutions to some of the operation barriers when addressing RVs.

DISCUSSION

COMPREHENSIVE CITYWIDE RV STRATEGY

The primary objectives of the CAO's coordinated oversized vehicle dwelling operations are to offer services and resources to people experiencing vehicular homelessness, including housing or shelter where and when available, and to address public health, safety, traffic, and welfare hazards associated with vehicle dwellings and abandoned vehicles.

Since May 2022, the CAO's Regional Outreach Coordinators have led and/or helped to coordinate more than 372¹ RV/vehicle dwelling operations, in 14 Council Districts. Council District 13, at this time, has led their own efforts in addressing vehicle dwellings. This Office has maintained a database to track all CAO coordinated operations, see Table 1: Citywide RV Geographic Information System map below. For additional information on a Council District basis see Table 1. The data captured includes the number of operations across the City, amount of waste disposed of by the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN), citations and tows by the Department of Transportation (LADOT), and housing placements.

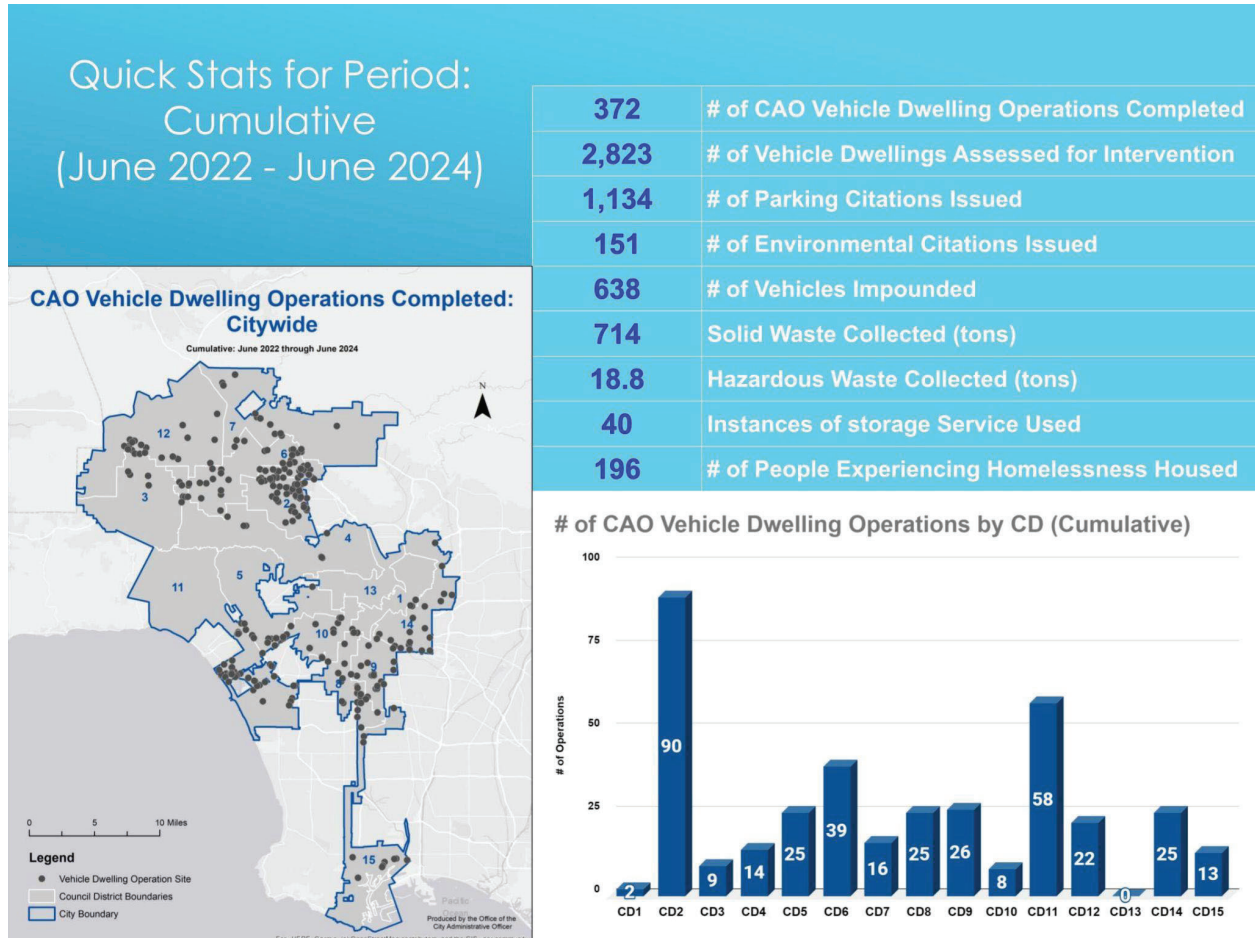
¹ These operations are a combination of one off and greater scale operations that have two or more RVs at a site. These efforts were coordinated by the CAO in conjunction with City Departments and the Council Districts.

Between May 2022 and June 2024, a total of 2,823 vehicle dwelling encampments were processed that required city intervention via this process. Of the 2,823, this process allowed LADOT to issue 1,134 citations for parking related violations. Certain violations that were not corrected, posed an immediate public safety risk, violated community caretaking guidelines, and were vetted by City Attorney guidance, were subject to tow. Through this process, 638 vehicles were deemed eligible for towing and impounded by the LADOT.

These efforts have also allowed LASAN to remove 714 tons (1,427,965 pounds) of solid waste and 18.8 tons (37,593 pounds) of hazardous waste from city rights of way. LASAN's Watershed Protection Division (WPD) issued 151 citations relevant to environmental hazards posed by vehicle dwellings. In 40 instances, LASAN storage services were utilized. LASAN storage is offered at every Comprehensive Cleaning and Rapid Engagement Plus Program (CARE+) operation and is used when essentials like medication, identification, valuables, and other personal belongings are identified at an encampment prior to the service taking place. These essential items are placed in a 65 gallon bag and stored for the person who it belongs to within the encampment. If the person experiencing homelessness is on site, they remain with their items and if they are not on site, they are provided the opportunity to retrieve their stored items.

Lastly, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and other outreach service providers continue to be an essential component of this process. To date, they have been able to house over 196 people experiencing vehicular homelessness in interim housing, including A Bridge Home sites, Tiny Home Villages, and motels, with some participants now being permanently housed.

Table 1: Citywide RV Geographic Information Systems Map



State of California Encampment Resolution Funding Program

The State of California’s Encampment Resolution Funding (ERF) Program was initially authorized in 2021 through Assembly Bill (AB) 140 (Chapter 111, Statutes of 2021), which allocated \$50 million for the first round of funding. SB 197 (Chapter 70, Statutes of 2022) amended the program and AB 178 (Chapter 45, Statutes of 2022) allocated an additional \$300 million for Round 2 of ERF funding. ERF-3 was authorized in 2022 through Senate Bill 197 (Chapter 70, Statutes of 2022), enacted under Chapter 7 of Part 1 of Division 31 of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) (sections 50250 et seq.). This third round of funding includes \$400 million appropriated by SB 101 (Chapter 12, Statute of 2023). The ERF Program is administered by the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) and is designed to fund proposals and programs that resolve unsheltered homelessness at targeted encampments. Grant funds from this program can be used to ensure pathways to permanent housing or directly into

permanent housing, using data-informed, non-punitive, low-barrier, person-centered, Housing First, and coordinated approaches.

Our office has on behalf of Council Offices submitted two applications for the third round of the State Encampment Resolution Fund Grant (ERF-3-R Window 2) which closed on April 30, 2024. The Office of the CAO submitted an application for Council District 1 requesting \$6.3 million to serve and house individuals experiencing homelessness along State Route 110. An application requesting \$4.9 million was submitted for Council District 7 to house encampment residents and RV dwellers in Pacoima.

The Office of the CAO resubmitted two Window 1 applications during ERF-3-R (Window 3) on June 28, 2024. An application requesting \$4 million was resubmitted on behalf of Council District 4 to continue and expand their existing Los Angeles River Project to assist people experiencing homelessness (PEH) in interim housing transition into permanent housing. The second application requesting \$7.1 million was resubmitted on behalf of Council District 13 to establish a Hollywood ReFresh Spot modeled after the Skid Row ReFresh Spot. This proposed project will provide a variety of services including bathrooms, showers, laundry, device charging stations, mail, harm reduction materials, case workers and housing navigators, to those experiencing homelessness in Hollywood. The project will also transition encampment residents into interim housing.

Award notifications are still pending for these four applications. The Office of the CAO is the designated administrative entity that is responsible for the maintenance and reporting of State Encampment Resolution Fund Grants.

TIME LIMITED SUBSIDIES

Identifying and securing both interim and permanent housing resources for people experiencing RV homelessness is a key component for addressing RV homelessness. PEH living in RVs are less likely to accept assistance without demonstrating a path to permanent housing, like through Time Limited Subsidies (TLS).

TLS is a Housing First, Low Barrier, Harm Reduction, Crisis Response program focused on assisting participants who move into a permanent housing situation. TLS provides case management and financial assistance, including rental subsidies, for a period up to twenty-four (24) months. The associated case management helps participants rapidly obtain and stabilize in permanent housing in either the private rental market or affordable housing.

During the development of the CAO's Citywide RV strategy and operations, it became apparent that PEH are interested in housing; however, many were reluctant to accept shelter in a congregate setting (i.e., A Bridge Home, Tiny Homes, etc.). The offer of a motel room was more likely to be accepted; however, this was also not enough for many

to relinquish their RVs. The offer of TLS would encourage PEH experiencing RV homelessness to more readily accept housing and relinquish their vehicles due to its pathway to permanent housing. The City already funds TLS, which can potentially be leveraged for people experiencing RV homelessness.

VEHICLE RECYCLING PROGRAM

As the City continues to move forward with its homelessness efforts, including its Citywide Vehicle Dwelling operations and Inside Safe, it is important that the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) have funds available to address the recycling of any recreational vehicles (RVs) that are impounded during these operations once they are eligible for disposal. An initial contract amount of \$1 million was identified to allow LAPD - Commission Investigation Division (CID) to secure a contract with SA Recycling to begin the dismantling of unsafe and unclaimed RVs, boats, and other vessels and allow Official Police Garage's (OPGs) to clear valuable storage space in the OPGs.

An initial \$250,000 was transferred to LAPD in early December 2023, as approved by the Mayor's Office, from the Homeless Emergency Account for the Pilot RV-to-Home Recreational Vehicle Recycling Program. On February 22, 2024, the City Council approved an additional transfer of \$750,000 from the Unappropriated Balance to the City Recreational Vehicle Program account to fund vehicle dismantling.

Since the implementation of the Pilot RV-to-Home Recreational Vehicle Recycling Program on December 1, 2023, the program helped dismantle and recycle over 600 vehicles, including 454 dilapidated and unsafe RVs, trailers, buses (which represents approximately 11.6% in LAHSA's 2023 Point in Time Count estimate of 4,000 RVs on Los Angeles Streets used for habitation).

In an effort to continue with this program, a motion was introduced that requests for Council approval to transfer the remaining \$2,250,000 from the Unappropriated Balance to the City Recreational Vehicle Program account to continue funding vehicle dismantling.

RV-to-Home Program CD 7

In 2022, Council District 7 (CD 7) collaborated on an innovative Pilot RV-to-Home rehousing program in partnership with West Valley Homes YES (WVHY) through an initial grant from the Hilton Foundation. The goal of the program was to provide a proven solution to address RV homelessness. WVHY prioritizes individual choice, safe storage for vehicles, and incentives for participants who accept both housing placement and are voluntarily willing to dispose of or sell their vehicle.

As of March 5, 2024, 120 individuals have been housed, 104 in interim housing, and 16 individuals in permanent housing. Of these 120 individuals, only 10 of them have returned to the streets or an unknown location. The program has removed 79 RV's from the public right of way. Of which a total of 67 vehicles have been disposed of and another 12 are pending dismantling.

CD 7 was allocated \$500,000 in the 2023-2024 Adopted Budget to address RV homelessness. On January 9, 2024, CD7 contracted with WVHY and allocated \$500,000 from the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year to continue with the Pilot program.

CHALLENGES

Financial Incentive

One of the most commonly identified elements of any strategy to address RV homelessness is an incentive program that provides money or gift cards to people living in RVs to encourage them to accept offers of housing and voluntarily relinquish their vehicles after doing so. A key component of the program was providing incentives to the participants after the vehicle was relinquished, scrapped, or sold.

As implemented in the CD 7 RV Pilot Program, offering an incentive program can be incorporated so long as there is a "public benefit." In other words, public benefit could include the removal of a safety or environmental hazard which can be posed by RVs that are dilapidated. Further, the amount of the incentive and how to track should be consistent across the City to ensure they are being used consistently and as intended.

RV Storage

The temporary storage of RVs has been a topic explored over the last several years. During the pilot, the storing of RVs was considered crucial in building participants' trust. CD 7 incorporated this element into their RV-to-Home pilot and has found it to be an effective approach for those that are open to housing, yet hesitant to accept if it requires them to relinquish their RVs. Storage locations were identified and secured by the service provider, West Valley Homes YES. While this element is essential, it also presents a significant challenge. There are very few if any available City-owned or City-controlled lots that are large enough to accommodate RVs and that are not already planned for other uses, such as interim or permanent housing, or restricted for some other reason, such as zoning restrictions.

If a lot is identified, it is necessary to determine if an Auto Park Permit is required. An Auto Park permit would be required for any parking lot used for more than eight vehicles in which money (or other consideration) is given, SEC 103.202 Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC). If the property qualifies for consideration as an Auto Park, and in order to be properly permitted, it must have: Proper zoning and use clearance, insurance, proper payment of taxes to the Office of Finance, properly executed lease, and follow Los Angeles Police Commission Board rules governing Auto Park.

One of the challenges with being able to offer storage for vehicle dwellers that are interested in housing is the zoning restrictions for storing RVs. The Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) contains specific regulations pertaining to RVs and RV usage. This includes definitions and existing enumerated uses that address a variety of scenarios, such as RV storage, rental, and sales. The LAMC also makes reference to abandoned automobiles, which is relevant in the discussion of a citywide RV trade-in program, given that RVs used for shelter may be considered abandoned if they have an expired registration for six months or more. Altogether, the LAMC limits the storage of RVs to industrial zones MR1, M1, MR2, M2, and M3 with fencing and enclosure requirements and abandoned automobiles to industrial zones MR1 and M1 and certain commercial zones (C2, C4, C5, CM) with approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) throughout the City.

To the extent the City wants to incorporate the incentive and storage of RVs, it should be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office for legal considerations and liabilities.

ENHANCED RV PROGRAM

As directed by the City Council, this Office and CD 7 partnered to develop a proposed Citywide program that looks to expand and/or incorporate elements similar to the RV-to-Home pilot. The proposed model would include a number of programmatic elements from the RV-to-home pilot program, such as outreach, service referrals and linkages, and interim housing resources specifically for this population.

Prioritization

The locations are to be selected by the Council Offices and may submit target locations in the form of a referral process. The key criteria for Offices to identify include:

1. Housing availability
2. Between 10-15 RV dwellings, but no more than 15.
3. Condition of the RVs (i.e., dilapidated, operational, etc.)

4. Safety concerns
5. Conditions of the roadway and public right of way (e.g., blocking bike lanes, visibility of traffic signs, etc.)

Coordinated Target Based Outreach

The proposed program would consist of targeted outreach to the RV dwellers at the priority location(s). Outreach teams would work with the individuals for a minimum of 4 weeks and no more than 2 months. Outreach staff, which could be reassigned or leveraged from existing City resources, would focus on developing relationships and building trust with the participants by providing services, prioritizing their autonomy, and offering assistance when participants hesitated to enroll in the program.

Outreach staff would complete a “Housing Response RV Outreach Form” per each PEH. This document would have an extensive list of questions and answers linked to demographics, status of vehicle, and participant’s current housing options/goals. This form would be completed per location identified.

Once the Housing Response RV Outreach Form is completed, the Council District will have the opportunity to evaluate the outcomes and use this document as a tool to decide where the operation will take place.

Incentive

In an effort to offer an additional resource to those residing in RVs, a \$500.00 incentive would be provided for those that voluntarily relinquish the RV and have accepted housing. The incentive would be distributed to individuals in the form of a gift card. In cases of multiple individuals sharing an RV as a dwelling, the incentive would be provided to the head of the household.

Temporary Storage

Temporary storage for RVs owned and registered under the occupant residing in the RV, would be available, if needed. This resource would be offered to individuals that are transitioning to interim housing, yet hesitant to completely relinquish their RV. To help individuals adjust to life without their vehicles and to avoid unnecessary storage issues, stored vehicles would remain off limits to the owner, until a final decision is made.

Length of temporary storage would be determined on an individual basis; however, it is not to exceed two to three months. The service provider would be responsible for identifying storage lots and securing the necessary permits.

Coordinated Meetings

Once the location is confirmed, weekly meetings with City departments and Outreach entities should start. City departments would include LADOT, LASAN, WPD, and LAPD. The meeting space should allow all partners to provide updates regarding Outreach engagement, challenges and/or concerns of the identified location/community.

Ongoing Program Evaluation

As is current practice, it is recommended that any new program models launched have regular evaluations to assess program effectiveness and to identify any modifications to programming that would enhance services and outcomes. It is recommended that the anticipated program outcomes consist of the following metrics:

1. % Interim Housing Placements
2. % of People Engaged
3. % of People Contacted
4. % Vehicles Dismantled
5. % Vehicles Relinquished

The proposed model includes elements of the current pilot such as the Outreach, service referrals, coordination among all relevant partners, and offers of interim housing, when available. It would also utilize the prioritization process and allow for the Council Districts to identify and select their priority locations. However, there are several elements of the program that pose a challenge and require further review.

RV Task Force

The Mayor's Office has created an RV Task Force that consists of Council District representatives, LADOT, LAPD, City Attorney, and LASAN. The task force is broken up into multiple groups, including: Acquisitions and Development; Budget and Finance; Legal and Operation; and Services and Outreach. This Task Force aims to address some of the challenges, including increasing tow yard capacity, identifying storage for RVs, and housing resources.

At this time, the Mayor's Office is working with the LAPD-Commission Investigation Division to secure lots that can be utilized for the temporary storage of vehicles that

have been impounded. These lots, to be administered by the Police Department, would not serve as Official Police Garages (OPGs), but for overflow storage of impounded vehicles that are awaiting to be dismantled, to otherwise complete legal processes, and/or to allow for OPGs to have capacity for the Mayor's RV Inside Safe and the CAO's RV operations.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of the recommendations in this report will not have an impact on the General Fund.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendations in this report comply with the City Financial Policies in that budgeted funds are being used to fund recommended actions.

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