

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

January 11, 2022

Addressing RV Encampments During COVID-19 Recovery

On January 30, 2018, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a [motion](#) instructing the Directors of the Departments of Public Works, Public Health (DPH), Regional Planning, and the Chief Executive Office's Homeless Initiative, in coordination with the Sheriff's Department and County Counsel, to report back on recommendations for developing sustainable solutions to assist individuals living in recreational vehicles (RVs). The [report back](#) dated June 28, 2018 included recommendations on: (1) the proper disposal of unclaimed, dilapidated, and hazardous RVs; (2) minimizing improper disposal of RV waste; and (3) the creation of safe parking for RVs.

In light of the unprecedented times we have faced in the last two years, it is imperative for the County to update the recommendations and re-evaluate our approach to addressing RV encampments given their growth in the unincorporated areas and across the County. Almost four years after the adoption of the 2018 motion, the County has learned many lessons from the Vehicular Homeless Outreach Project (VHOP), a pilot program led by the St. Joseph Center. It is critical that the County use all of its current tools and resources to connect people experiencing homelessness (PEH) living in dangerous conditions in RV encampments to permanent housing; followed by proper

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disposal of RVs to clear the public rights-of-way and create safe and clean public spaces for all County residents.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought enormous economic and health challenges for all our constituents. The County mobilized all of its departments to respond to this emergency in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DPH guidelines. As part of the CDC guidelines, County teams engaging PEH have prioritized connections to interim housing such as Project Roomkey to limit the exposure and transmission of the virus.

The County's stay-in-place order was implemented to protect both unhoused and housed constituents. Now almost two years into the pandemic, as we examine actions taken to address the public health crisis, our housing crisis and our homelessness crisis, there is an opportunity to integrate into our recovery lessons learned to address PEH in RV encampments.

Since 2018, and especially during the last 24 months, while we appropriately focused County resources to housing those most at risk and vulnerable to COVID-19, we have seen an extraordinary growth of RV encampments. This growth has caused a major detrimental impact on the quality of life for both the unhoused population residing in the RVs and the residents and businesses around the RV encampments.

According to the VHOP team, in the last year alone—of the total number of RVs they came across, 40% were dilapidated and in need of towing and removal; 30% were mobile but unhealthy; and only 20% were mobile and in healthy conditions. And the average Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Prescreen Tool (the tool used to identify those most in need of housing and support intervention) score of PEH living in RVs was 8.4. The score means that PEH living in RVs are higher acuity individuals in need of permanent housing. However, most individuals in the vehicular homeless population have some source of income, either General Relief, Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance and can pay partially for rent in the appropriate housing program. The VHOP team also noted that a significant number of people living in the RVs were undocumented and refused housing out of fear of being deported and having identities shared with government agencies.

In addition, in the absence of safe parking locations for RVs with the appropriate supportive services, an underground economy has emerged. RVs are cycled back into the community from tow-yards. These RVs are bought sometimes without the necessary documentation, rented to PEH and used to run an underground economy in which PEH are physically abused and threatened. Owners of some RVs have become in reality slum lords as they abuse their tenants with physical threats, beatings, burning of RVs, and more. It is critical for the County's teams to prioritize and address the hot spots across the County where crime and exploitation have increased, with a particular focus on the unincorporated communities.

It is therefore appropriate to update the 2018 report and its recommendations given the County's updated priorities and COVID-19 economic recovery goals in order to address RV encampments strategically and thoughtfully while at the same time improving the quality of life for all of our constituents

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Instruct the Executive Director of the Chief Executive Office's (CEO) Homeless Initiative (HI), in collaboration with the Directors of the Department of Public Works (DPW), Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Regional Planning (DRP), Department of Mental Health (DMH), and the Department of Health Services (DHS), and in coordination with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), the St. Joseph Vehicular Homeless Outreach Program (VHOP), and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), to evaluate and update the June 28, 2018 Report for Sustainable Solutions to Assist Homeless People Living in Recreational Vehicles (RV) and report back to the Board of Supervisors (Board) in writing within 60 days. The updated report should include but not be limited to:
 - a. The number of RVs that have been illegally obtained, that have missing plates or Vehicle Identification Numbers, whose owners cannot be identified, or that are deemed hazardous and unsafe. The costs to tow and dismantle these RVs should be included in the report.

- b. Identify hot spot areas in or around RV encampments where within the past 24 months, an increase in crime has been documented or increased criminal activity has been reported.
 - c. Identify hot spot RV encampment areas within 500 feet of schools.
 - d. An inventory of parking restrictions currently in place in all hot spot RV encampment areas identified above, an assessment of parking enforcement efforts at these locations, and identification of resources needed to improve parking enforcement efforts.
 - e. Recommendations to update County towing vendors to ensure compliance against the lien sale of hazardous RVs by lienholders for low-value RVs (valued at \$500 or less) per California Vehicle Code section 22669.
2. Direct the CEO to collaborate with the Directors of DPW, DRP, DMH, and DPH, and the Sheriff, to identify existing and new resources to support a Countywide RV encampment program to implement recommendations from directive 1, prioritizing hot spots, schools, RV removal and dismantling, and piloting Safe RV Parking sites.

I FURTHER MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Instruct the Director of DPW to report back in writing within 90 days on best practices from across the state that leverage parking regulations to reduce re-population of RVs in hot spot areas and around schools.
2. Instruct the CEO - Real Estate Division to identify County parcels that can be used as off-site parking locations to assist PEH living in RV and report back in writing in 90 days the locations in each Supervisorial District.
3. Request LASD to report back in writing in 90 days on the best practices from across the State regarding outreach strategies and parking enforcement for PEH living in RV and identify the resources necessary to implement the best practices.
4. Instruct the Director of DPH to report back in writing in 90 days on the best practices from across the State regarding the sustainable solutions for proper

disposal of waste to assist PEH living in RV, including mobile disposal of RV waste.

5. Instruct the Director of the CEO – HI to report back in writing in 90 days on the best practices from across the State regarding sustainable solutions to assist PEH living in RV.

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