

## Safe Parking Strategy

The Safe Parking Host Site Pilot Program is one of many programs the Fremont City Council has recently adopted to help address homelessness in the City of Fremont. The Program is designed as a safe, transitional space for individuals living in their vehicle. The program is a rotational model, with faith-based organizations across the City hosting individuals or couples on their site for one month before rotating to the next site.

### Program History:

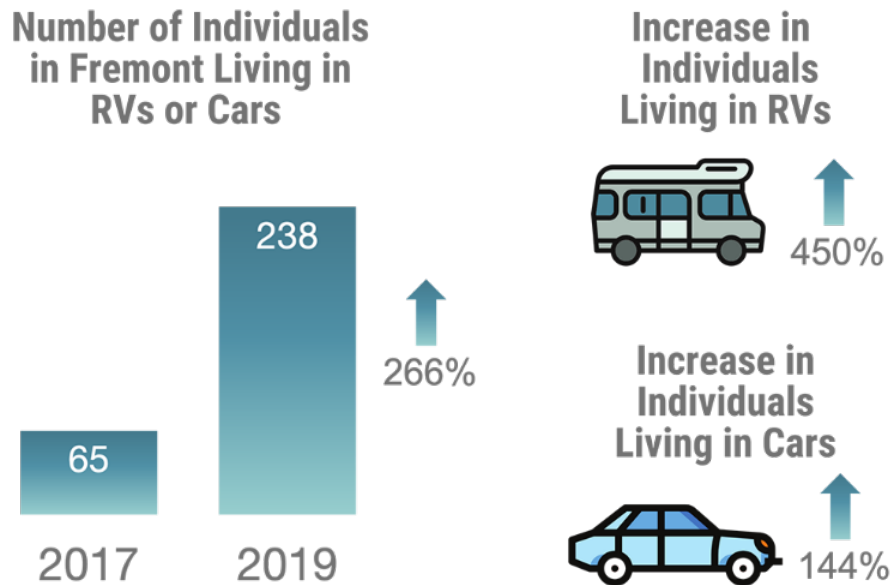
- May 13, 2021 - The City's Planning Commission considered an ordinance to allow safe parking at private host sites, such as religious facilities and community nonprofits. The proposed text amendments would create a ministerial permitting process through which community-based organizations and religious facilities could provide overnight safe parking at their owned or leased property for up to 20 vehicles.
- June 15, 2021 - **The Fremont City Council voted to adopt an ordinance to allow safe parking at community-based host sites, such as religious facilities and nonprofits.** Ordinance information is available online in the City's [Staff Report](#). The ordinance creates a City permitting process by which community organizations can apply to become a "safe parking host site" and host unhoused people in parking lots at their properties. The ordinance contains specific standards that all host sites must follow in order to ensure that participants receive adequate services and that sites have minimal impacts on nearby neighbors.
- July 20, 2021 - **The Fremont City Council approved the program design for a new Safe Parking Host Site program.** The approved materials included procedures for screening and intake of participants, as well as additional details for how City staff will support organizations in becoming safe parking host sites through assisting with the provision of temporary facilities, site coordination, and social services. **The approved program details are available online in the City's [Staff Report](#).**
- The Safe Parking Host Sites program will be a collaborative effort between the City and community partners. **The City's Human Services Department is interested in connecting with organizations who may be interested in becoming a Safe Parking Host Site or supporting the program through other donations—for example, through a Vehicle Repair Fund to support those living in their vehicles who may need assistance with obtaining critical licensing and registration documents or performing basic car maintenance. If your organization is interested in learning more about these opportunities, please contact City staff by [email](#).**

### The Next Step in Addressing Homelessness in Fremont

The opening of the City of Fremont's new [Housing Navigation Center](#) in September 2020 was a significant step forward in addressing homelessness in the Fremont community. Now that the Navigation Center is operational and at capacity, the City is prioritizing the development of programs that serve a different portion of the homeless population: people living in vehicles.

According to the [2019 Alameda County Point-in-Time Count](#), approximately 50% of Fremont's unsheltered homeless population—about 238 individuals—is currently living in a recreational vehicle (RV) or passenger car. The total number of people living in vehicles in Fremont increased by 266% between 2017 and 2019. The number

of persons residing in RVs increased by 450%, while the number of persons residing in cars or vans increased by 144%.



While many forces are driving these trends, one major factor is the rapid increase in rental housing costs which has forced many low-income wage earners out of the housing market. Recent surveys by City staff found that approximately 70% of those living in vehicles in Fremont also last had a permanent home address in Fremont.

### Safe Parking: A Crisis Response

The idea of “safe parking” is to provide people living in their vehicles with a designated place to park that is secure and provides access to health and safety amenities. Some amenities that are commonly provided in safe parking areas include: water, sewage disposal, waste collection, power hook-ups, security, restrooms, access to showers and laundry, assistance with vehicle repair and licensing, and health and housing assistance.

### Amenities Commonly Provided in Safe Parking Areas



Safe parking is a crisis response to recent increases in vehicular homelessness. Safe parking lots are not intended to be a permanent housing solution for those experiencing homelessness; rather, safe parking is intended to offer stability so that program participants can work towards finding reliable and safe permanent housing.

In order to develop a Safe Parking Strategy for Fremont, City staff has researched program models and conducted outreach to stakeholders. Staff spoke with the operators of safe parking programs around the Bay Area to better understand how different sites in the region are organized and operated. A summary of some safe parking programs that staff has researched is available in this [Safe Parking Success Stories Handout](#).

## Safe Parking Strategy

On February 16, 2021, City staff presented their [proposed Safe Parking Strategy](#) to the Fremont City Council. The proposed Strategy consists of three programs to provide designated secure parking areas in Fremont for unhoused people living in their vehicles:

1

### Private Host Site Program

1. A **private host site program** to allow faith-based sites to provide safe parking. Modeled by the Faith-Based Temporary Shelters permit process that the Council adopted in 2018, staff proposes to develop a partnership with faith-based organizations to allow a limited number of operable vehicles to park within these organizations' existing parking lots. Each host site would need to receive a permit through the Community Development Department demonstrating that they meet development and operational standards. The program would be limited to operable RVs and cars. Participants living in vehicles would need to go through a screening process and be assigned to a specific host site. All host sites would commit to offering safe parking seven nights a week to reduce the movement required by people living in their cars and develop stronger relationships between safe parking participants and host organizations.

2

### Sanctioned Parking Program

2. A **sanctioned parking program** that provides services where people are currently parked. Staff proposes temporarily designating certain existing areas in Fremont as "sanctioned safe parking areas." This could include re-striping existing on-street parking spaces within industrial or commercial areas, converting excess City right-of-way into parking areas, designating some parking spaces within City parks, or using undeveloped, underutilized, or other lands as determined to be appropriate by the Council. The City would provide basic amenities, including restrooms, hand-washing stations, and dumpsters at these sites. People living in vehicles would be given a permit to park in these areas. All participants would be required to sign a "good neighbor agreement" requiring them to abide by certain standards (no hoarding, place garbage in dumpster, etc.). The sanctioned safe parking areas would aim to attract people away from more dangerous and/or difficult-to-manage encampment areas to minimize impacts on

neighbors and the environment and to make it easier for the City to provide services to those living in vehicles.

3

### City-Operated Safe Parking Site Program

3. A **City-operated safe parking site program** with comprehensive wrap-around services. Another approach to safe parking would be for the City to develop its own safe parking site and, over time, potentially develop several sites. The safe parking site would provide basic facilities as well as wrap-around services to all participants. The lot would be open to both operable and non-operable vehicles of all types, with a capacity of approximately 30 to 50 vehicles at a time. It would be open 24/7 so that program participants can focus on finding jobs, employment, or other assistance to get back on their feet.

Staff has identified that the combination of these three programs would most effectively serve the many different types of vehicular habitation situations (operable and non-operable, RVs and cars, etc.).

### Safe Parking Host Sites Ordinance Moving Forward

At the Fremont City Council meeting on February 16, 2021, the Council directed staff to proceed immediately with developing a private host site program and to return to the Council at a later date with additional information about the other proposed programs. The host sites ordinance was adopted by the Council on June 15, 2021 and will go into effect in mid-July. To view the ordinance, please view the City's [Staff Report](#).

City staff are also moving forward with developing a program to support organizations in becoming safe parking host sites through assisting with the provision of temporary facilities, site coordination, and social services. Staff will be finalizing information about this program, including procedures for screening and intake of participants, and returning to City Council for their input later this summer.