Memorandum

Date: February 4, 2022

To: Jessica Lobedan and Amy Cole, City of Hayward

From: Elaine de Coligny, EdeColigny Consulting LLC

Re: **Planning Considerations for a City of Hayward Safe Parking Program**

Background: The City of Hayward Community Services Division secured the services of EdeColigny Consulting to provide and initial planning scope for launching a Safe Parking Program, called for in Strategy 2.2 of the *Let's House Hayward!* Plan, adopted by the City in July of 2021. This memo outlines the design decisions for staff to consider in crafting an RFP and/or contracting with an operator.

In developing these recommendations, the consultant reviewed Safe Parking RFPs from the City of Santa Rosa and San Jose; and the websites of a ½ dozen safe parking programs ranging in size and type from the very large and structured, such as the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's program to more informal and grassroots, such as the Interfaith Council of Alameda County's Safe Car Park Program. Smart Practices for Safe Parking: A Nationwide Review of Safe Parking Programs for People Sheltering in Vehicles, (McElwain, Schiele, and Waheed for the Center for Homeless Inquiries, April 2021) organized its assessment of 19 existing programs into an extremely useful framework for planning and is referenced often in this memo.

The Smart Practices authors identified three broad types of program models:

- Umbrella Organization Programs— generally more formal, often formed by city/county management and operated under COC guidelines, can be one or more sites
- Composite Programs—features multiple safe parking locations with a central or shared service location, can be municipally or privately funded
- Independent Operator Programs—typically small, community-based and not government funded

According to this analysis Hayward's program will fall into the Umbrella Organization Program. There are elements of Composite and Independent Operator models that may be relevant to Hayward's design and are discussed where applicable.

Planning Questions for Program/RFP Development: Answers to the planning questions below could be determined at a staff level with consultant support, and could also include elements of community input, such as conducting key stakeholder interviews and/or focus groups. The intent of the planning process would be to develop an RFP that is clear about the must haves in operations and outcomes, while inviting creative approaches to meeting expectations. For example, the City may be open to a variety of proposals as to how the contractor intends to manage security at the site. It may not be flexible on the data collection requirements or outcomes expected.

<u>Size of the Program</u>

Resources and need are key drivers of determining the size of a Safe Parking program. Since Hayward has not yet identified the budget for the program, exploring how need could inform planning parameters is one place to start. The *Let's House Hayward* Plan notes nearly half of the city's unsheltered population are living in vehicles or RV's. The 2019 Point-In-Time Count estimated Hayward had 370 unsheltered people, approximately 185 of whom were living in their vehicles. That number is unlikely to have gone down since the last homeless count. Santa Rosa with an unsheltered count of just over 1,000 issued an RFP for a program expected to provide about 50 point-in-time safe parking slots. The publicly funded programs reviewed by the consultant ranged in size from 21 to 101 parking spaces in one or more locations. In the <u>Smart Practices</u> study the multiplier for number of parking spaces to number of vehicles served per year varied widely, from just over 1 vehicle per space/year to 2.5. If Hayward wanted to provide safe parking for all vehicle dwellers over the course of the year, a program providing 150-200 parking spaces could reasonably be assumed to meet the need indicated by the 2019 PIT Count. A program of that size would most certainly require multiple sites. Starting with a smaller number of spaces with a scalable program design may be a more manageable approach.

<u>Site(s) Location and Improvements</u>

1. Will the City identify and secure the property(ies) or will it expect the program operator to?
   Options range from using municipally own properties, usually parking lots, that are underutilized or only in need during business hours. Parking lots connected to houses of worship are another common option because they are not needed all days of the week. Spaces can be leased or provided in-kind. The city will need to determine whether it pays property operating costs such as rent and liability insurance or if it provides the operator funds to do so.
2. What factors beyond availability and cost will influence site selection?
   The location within a community has significant impacts on a program's ability to start operations, who the program can serve, and the desirability for parkers. (<u>Smart Practices</u> p. 31). The authors note that smaller sites can enhance a sense of community and trust between campers and reduce opposition from neighbors. Sites near schools or playgrounds are more appealing to families. Industrial sites might work better for larger RVs, but remote sites can be prohibitive if they increase travel distance and thereby cost to get to work and services.
3. What improvements/amenities will be offered at the site and who pays to install/provide them? Examples to consider:
   - Fencing—will the parking lot need to be fenced and lockable
   - Porta Potties and hand washing stations
   - Access to wifi and electricity
   - On-site Showers and laundry
   - On-site kitchen facilities
4. Does the city want just one site or multiple sites?
5. Will it remain in the same location, or will it rotate between sites, like CAREavan of Union City does?

<u>Security and Operations</u>

6. Will the program be accessible 24 hours or only overnight?
7. How will the safety and security of the parkers and neighbor be assured?
   Many of the programs reviewed in <u>Smart Practices</u> started with paid security, either firms or contractor staff on site and reduced their investment in that area, because the need was not there. Several programs used on-call or drop by security staff or supported self-monitoring by parkers. Paid

staff were more expensive and more palatable to program neighbors, but sites without paid security did not have more problems with safety or criminal activity according to the authors.

8. If the site does not have shower and laundry facilities, how will access to those things be assured?

This question was solved multiple ways from bringing mobile shower units on-site weekly through partnerships between the municipality and the mobile shower program or between the contractor and the shower program. Parkers were also allowed to use nearby drop-in centers or the YMCA. These arrangements may require MOUs and or funding. If the service is being leveraged, it is important to be aware of whether capacity is being added or shifted away from other unsheltered people.

9. How will food/meals be provided?

Food can also be addressed through agreements with other service groups and/or volunteers to deliver food to the site or accept referrals from it. The city can determine whether food provision will be an allowable expense or expect it to be leveraged.

10. What will be required of the vehicles/drivers to use the facilities?

Nearly all programs required that the vehicle be operational, with proof of insurance, and current registration. Some programs were able to help with minor repairs and registration to reduce the impact of the requirement. One of the independent operators provided operators with notice that the State required them to be insured without requiring proof of insurance, which was cost prohibitive for some parkers.

Very few programs reviewed served RVs, but a few had lots set up to accommodate them.

Eligible and Prioritized Population, outreach and referrals

11. Has the City identified eligible and prioritized populations for the program?

Eligibility and prioritization varied among programs reviewed in Smart Practices. Programs set up by municipalities frequently had residency requirements, though those were defined differently. Many programs had criminal background checks that excluded sex offenders and those convicted of violent crimes, but not all programs excluded those populations from every lot. In bigger programs, like LAHSA's there were lots that could accommodate persons with those records. Composite programs would often take any unsheltered homeless person living in their vehicles then match them to an appropriate lot for their household type, such as a family placed in a lot near a children's playground. Prioritization when used was by demographic group—older adults, families with young children, vets. The consultant did not find a case of programs that used a vulnerability tool, such as the VI-SPDAT to determine entrance, though staff at Umbrella and Composite models often conducted the Coordinated Entry Assessment when working with parkers.

12. Who will be the sources of referral to the program?

211, Street Outreach and Law Enforcement were the most common sources of referral to the program. Several programs were set up for self-referral through an on-line portal or published phone number. Screenings and enrollment were done by the program, either the municipality or the contractor. Coordinated Entry access points did not appear to serve in a screening or intake role for Safe Parking Programs, though services staff did conduct assessments and referrals to the community queue for program participants. Some programs described Law Enforcement handing out referrals to the Safe Parking program rather than a citation for illegal camping.

13. Will outreach be a required or leveraged element of the Safe Parking Program?

Umbrella and composite programs often had operators who also ran street outreach or drop-in centers in their community and took responsibility for actively recruiting participants for the program.

<u>Program Purpose, Services and Outcomes</u>

14. What is the primary purpose of the program?

    The authors of <u>Smart Practices</u> note; "If the focus is placing parkers into stable housing, everything a program does, from the intake process to social service contracting, should be to meet that goal. If stability is the core goal, community building should come first." (p. 34). Most of the umbrella program reviewed were aligned with their Continuums of Care and Housing First practices so their programs were designed to get parkers into temporary or permanent housing. Sometimes this translated into screening for that intention during program entry. Only households interested in moving indoors were enrolled in the program. Composite and Independent Operators were more likely to focus on community and trust building with and between the parkers.

15. What support services will be required for the operator to provide, and will they be funded in the contract or leveraged from other sources?

    In general, even programs that inquired about a parker's desire to obtain housing during intake maintained the Housing First principle of voluntary service participation. Umbrella and composite programs offered case management on-site or at a program hub. The city will want to determine how flexible it wants to be on the levels and location of services to be provided. It is a best practice to reduce the distance and cost of accessing case management by providing services at the parking site or very nearby. The authors noted that programs that referred parkers to other social services providers had comparable housing outcomes to those that provided on-site services directly, but at a lower overall cost.

16. What performance outcomes will be measured?

    The umbrella programs reviewed in <u>Smart Practices </u>did track exits to temporary or permanent housing and had a median rate of 40%. Other potential measures for the city to track and benchmark are length of time from program enrollment to exit to housing, increases in income and enrollment in benefits, which would be consistent with the CoC's Results Based Accountability measures. What is harder to measure but was frequently reported to researchers is increasing the safety and stability of program participants.

17. Will the operator be required to use HMIS?

    This consultant and the authors of <u>Smart Practices</u> recommend that Safe Parking Programs be required to participate in HMIS and the CoC.

<u>Stakeholder Engagement</u>

18. What level of stakeholder engagement will be expected of the contractor, and how will the city support positive relationships with neighbors, businesses, and Law Enforcement?

    Addressing community fears and strong law enforcement relationships emerged as important themes for program success. The city of San Jose required responders to its RFP to submit a good neighbor plan. City staff and elected leaders will have a role to play in informing and reassuring the public.

Next Steps: This memo was intended to lay out an initial set of planning considerations that would go into setting the Safe Parking Program requirements and budget then developing the RFP. Should the city desire, further consulting support could be used to:
1.   facilitate the exploration of these questions with staff and a broader set of stakeholders
2.   draft the RFP and staff the release, bidders' conference, and proposal review
3.   support contract negotiations with the selected provider(s)

EdeColigny Consulting would be happy to discuss these options with you and to answer any questions you have about the content of this memo.