



Agenda Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

File Code No. 660.04

# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** June 10, 2008  
**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers  
**FROM:** Transportation Division, Public Works Department  
**SUBJECT:** Recreational Vehicle Safe Parking Program Update

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council receive an update from the New Beginnings Counseling Center regarding the operation of its Recreational Vehicle Safe Parking Program.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### Background

On April 24, 2007, Council approved an expansion of the Recreational Vehicle (RV) Safe Parking Program, operated by New Beginnings Counseling Center (NBCC) in the City's parking lots. The RV Safe Parking Program has been in operation in the Carrillo Commuter Lot pursuant to a license agreement since August 2005. The expanded program added three additional spaces at the Carrillo Commuter Lot, three new spaces at the Garden Street Visitor Center Lot (one-year provisional for use by families only), and three new spaces at the Cota Commuter Lot (one-year provisional). One of the provisions of the agreement was for NBCC to present a status report to the Downtown Parking Committee and Harbor Commission in March or April of 2008, and to the Council by June of 2008.

On August 21, 2007, Council approved the allocation of \$36,420 from the General Fund reserves to the Downtown Parking Program for contract services with NBCC for the operation of the RV Safe Parking Program. The \$36,420 was established based on NBCC's requirement to issue permits and provide the necessary case management and monitoring for the expansion of RV overnight parking in City lots, and the RV parking in the C-M and M-1 zones.

On October 18, 2007, the City and NBCC executed a new license agreement that extended the established program criteria to the two City parking lots added to the program, specified how the new funds would be used, and included the one-year provisional requirements for the two new lots.

### Current Status

With the new funding, NBCC hired an RV Parking Specialist (Specialist). The Specialist has been issuing permits to all new program participants. Specifically, the Specialist has been conducting participant screening and selection, vehicle inspections, issuance and review of permits, lot placement, lot acquisitions, site orientations and reviews, daily RV check-in and check-out, case management, liaison with City staff, providing weekly reports, weekly supervision, and referrals to community resources and public relations. The new Specialist has been assisting with the resolution of disputes between individuals, program participants, citizens, and business owners.

For the three City parking lots, the Specialist has been providing supervision of program participants during parking hours, 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., as many days per week as necessary, in order to ensure compliance with program regulations and the specific requirements for parking in City lots, as required by the license agreement.

The City has been paying NBCC for the monitoring of the three City parking lots, and has carried the cost of the \$220 for each parking permit issued for non-City parking lots, not to exceed \$36,420 for Fiscal Year 2008. Permit issuing costs include screening applicants, completing the application process, determining client eligibility, completing the background check, determining site suitability for the applicant, and placing the applicant at the site. Compliance costs include making sure the client utilizes the permit, is following program rules, is compatible with the site, and posts their permit on their windshield daily.

Since September 2007, NBCC has placed 32 clients in the three City parking lots. Currently, 19 of the 20 City spaces are being used. NBCC has also placed 73 clients in the County Administration lot, churches and non-profit parking lots. They have reported that the church and non-profit parking lots continue to operate at capacity (41 spaces).

NBCC has approached many businesses in the C-M/M-1 zone to participate in the safe parking program. Five businesses have agreed to join the program. Currently, three individuals have elected to take advantage of the program in the C-M/M-1 zones.

NBCC has successfully provided the services required to ensure compliance with all of the City's requirements for use of its parking lots, and has allowed for permit issuance services in the non-City lots. NBCC's efforts have been successful, with no complaints being received from the public or from the Police Department. According to monitoring logs submitted by City staff and the NBCC Specialist, NBCC's clients have been parking in the City lots according to the posted times and have not burdened City staff with any additional work.

On March 13, 2008, NBCC gave the Downtown Parking Committee (DPC) an update on the program. The DPC voted to continue their support of NBCC's use of the City's parking lots, with the understanding that this use continues to be a significant contribution to the program. The DPC also recommended that the funding for the

administration and monitoring of the RV Safe Parking Program continues to be provided by the General Fund.

On March 20, 2008, the Harbor Commission received an update on the RV Safe Parking Program. Their only concern centered on whether more RV's would be permitted to park in the Garden Street Lot. Staff assured the Harbor Commission that, at this time, the City would continue to allow only three RV's maximum to park overnight in the Garden Street Lot.

The City has experienced RV issues in the community, and staff has been working on developing solutions to the concerns that include the assistance from New Beginnings. Recently, staff installed No RV parking signs around Alice Keck Park, Alameda Park and Ortega Park. Staff was able to make a traffic safety finding to support the enforcement of this parking restriction. Staff was prepared to install time limit parking in the Calle Cesar Chavez/Montecito Street area; however, staff received complaints from businesses and residents on other streets in the area and determined that time limit parking on these blocks will move the concern to adjacent streets. Staff from the Police Department, City Attorney's Office and Public Works Department met to discuss possible solutions to the concern associated with multiple RVs parking in the neighborhoods. The consensus was that the best approach would be the implementation of permit parking in the C-M/M-1 zones and explore height restrictions around schools and in residential areas. The City Attorney's Office is looking into height restrictions, and Public Works staff will be moving forward with the establishment of permit parking areas.

### **FISCAL/BUDGET IMPACT**

New Beginnings has requested \$43,700 for the continuation of their service for the entire fiscal year. Staff recommends the continuance of the contractual services with NBCC in the amount of \$43,700 to support the RV Safe Parking Program for the following specific services:

- Issuance of permits to RV dwellers for overnight parking in all parking lots (churches, non-profit organizations, properties within the C-M and M-1 designated areas and within City lots); and
- Increased night-time monitoring for compliance of rules by RV dwellers parking in City lots.

A General Fund allocation to the Downtown Parking Program for the NBCC contract has been incorporated in the proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget.

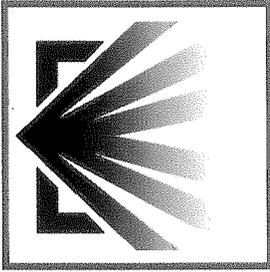
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**ATTACHMENT:** New Beginnings Update

**PREPARED BY:** Browning Allen, Transportation Manager/VEG/mb

**SUBMITTED BY:** Paul Casey, Acting Public Works Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office



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May 5, 2008

Mr. Browning Allen  
City of Santa Barbara  
620 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101

Dear Mr. Allen,

In accordance with our contract with the City of Santa Barbara, please accept this six month report regarding the work of our RV Safe Parking Project.

**Overview**

New Beginnings operates a RV Safe Parking Project as part of its Homeless Outreach Program. The program operated for 4 years before receiving funding from the City of Santa Barbara in September, 2007 to expand its operation at three City lots and businesses on the lower eastside of Santa Barbara.

There are three city lots currently being utilized to place vehicles overnight. The Carrillo/Castillo commuter lot had its capacity increased from 5 to 8 spaces and has been fully utilized for the past six months. When the Cota lot was added three spaces became available. They have been fully utilized during the past six months. The Garden/Cabrillo lot was added and was allocated three spaces as well with the stipulation that only families could be placed there. Since there has not been as great a demand from families, this lot has been used sporadically during the past six months.

We have made major advances in offering the program to businesses on the eastside. You may recall that the City agreement called for one vehicle per business parking lot. The area this encompasses is roughly from Garden to just before Milpas, the 101 Freeway to just below Haley. When this program was approved, we approached the Chamber of Commerce and attended their Executive Committee's luncheon. From that meeting we received a unanimous vote of support for this program.

With this endorsement we have offered the program to several businesses and to date three have signed agreements to open their parking lots to our clients as night watch persons. Involving businesses is an educational process that we are actively engaged in.

While we respond to any requests for assistance throughout the City, our mandate has been to attend to the issue of people living in RV's in the downtown corridor. That has been our focus although we did respond to assist the city when the issue of RV's in the Alice Keck Park area was raised. Our staff made our program available to those folks as well.

New Beginnings Counseling Center is a non-profit community organization

While the overall goal of this program is to place people in permanent housing we recognize that many of them prefer to stay in their vehicles. Where necessary we offer loans to these individuals to prevent them from becoming homeless.

### **Number of Participants**

Since September, 2007, 32 unduplicated clients have been placed at the three City lots in downtown Santa Barbara. Currently, 19 of the 20 spaces available in city lots are being utilized. Another 73 have been served at the County lot and the churches/non-profit parking facilities. The private church and non-profit lots continue to be at capacity with 41 people currently being served. Many of the people in these lots work in the downtown area during the day or are living on fixed incomes as a result of personal disabilities. Per our contract with the city, during the first four months of operation, our outreach worker, Nancy Kapp, went to each lot morning and night seven days a week to monitor the clients' activities. Since January she has visited the sites four days a week. She has been very successful in developing strong personal relationships with these clients and has been able to assist them in a myriad of ways including helping them find housing, jobs and social service assistance. For instance, two of her previous clients who were occupying the Carrillo/Castillo Lot are now housed. Several clients have been able to go on job interviews and others were accepted in programs that fulfill their needs. Also some participants were able to sustain housing with our help. This program is a needed stepping stone for our clients to find stability, communication and compassion. Once they are in the program we can guide them into the right direction.

During this six month period, we have been successful in placing 20 into permanent housing or substance abuse treatment programs.

With the expansion of the RV Safe Parking Project into the CM and M1 zone Nancy Kapp began a program to invite local businesses to join the program. The arrangement centered around utilizing people in vehicles to serve as security on the premises at night exchange for a parking space so the homeless individual could feel secure as well. Many businesses were approached and with the support and endorsement of the Chamber of Commerce, some businesses (5) agreed to join the program. Unfortunately, homeless individuals have preferred to stay in the private lots and have the company of others. To date, three individuals have elected to stay overnight in the CM and M1 businesses and currently one of them is making use of this opportunity. As homeless people are persuaded to move their vehicles away from city streets on the lower eastside of Santa Barbara, we are hopeful that more will show an interest in business parking at which time we will approach more businesses to participate in the program.

### **Number of Complaints**

From September 1, 2007 through February 29, 2008 New Beginnings has received no complaints of any kind from neighbors around the lots or the general citizenry. Our relationship with the farmer's market staff remains cordial and there have no incidents where clients have overstayed their visits or caused any problems with the Saturday morning market.

In late 2007 we were informed that some neighbors in the Alice Keck Park area had complained to the City about RV parking on City streets. Although this area had not been one we had focused our outreach efforts previously, we spent several weeks going to that location and offering the people staying in vehicles to make use of our program. We have continued during the six month period to drive by and make contact with the many people living in RV's who park in the Montecito Street, De La Guerra area on the lower eastside. We continue to respond to reports of homeless people who are living in vehicles in other areas of Santa Barbara and Goleta as well.

We respond to these inquiries by making a drive by visit, making personal contact when possible with the people and leaving a flyer about our program. We estimate that 15 people have accepted our invitation and joined the program through this outreach approach.

NEW BEGINNINGS COUNSELING CENTER: a non-profit community organization

When this program was initiated there were concerns that there would continue to be a problem with RV's parking in the Cabrillo area. It appears that the ban for overnight parking has been successful. Although we allow parking in the Garden Street/Cabrillo lot this has not caused the confusion that we once feared.

### **Funding**

New Beginnings was awarded a grant of \$36,420 for the ten month period between September 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Given the success of this program we would be interested in continuing it for the next fiscal year, July, 2008-June, 2009. We are requesting an extension of the contract at the current monthly rate, an annual amount of \$43,700.

New Beginnings receives funding for our Homeless Outreach Program from a variety of sources. Government entities, private foundations and community donors support our work. We continue to pursue support from all of these sources to continue our operations.

### **Future Plans**

Even with the success of our program we recognize that there are a large number of RV's that part in the lower eastside area. Despite our invitations to join the program, individuals prefer the freedom of coming and going as they please and they continue to park on the street. Perhaps the City Parking Department, the Restorative Policing Program and our staff should spend some time collaborating to develop some new approaches. We could either encourage people more effectively or consider using parking tickets to force people to enroll in the RV Safe Parking Program.

We are pleased with the success of the program so far and look forward to working with the Downtown Parking Commission, the Waterfront Commission and the City Council in effectively dealing with the issue of recreational vehicles.

Sincerely,

Gary G. Linker, Ph.D.  
Executive Director