

Agenda item 6. B.

Dear Planning Commission Commissioners,

For the following reasons we ask that the Planning Commission explore all possible ways to allow a well-managed add Safe Parking program as an allowable use on private church property. It may be added to the following codes: 17.21.020 and 17.21.030. And yet, it may well be that is already and allowable use, since it is not stated that it cannot be done. Either way, we need you help to for all the following reasons:

We were in a severe housing crisis before COVID, and with this pandemic a 45% increase in homelessness is expected (approximately 250,000 new homeless people in the US). Many churches are willing to address this crisis by having affordable housing built on their property and some are also willing to offer their parking lots for Safe Parking programs, whereby those experiencing homelessness that live in their cars, can safely park while being on the path to getting permanently housed, have access to bathrooms, case management and with professional security. This will not only provide a sense of safety, but also assure orderliness and assurance for neighbors.

It is estimated that 20% of those experiencing homelessness live in their cars. That means that potentially 100 homeless neighbors in Pasadena stay in their cars, but they are not safe. That includes some women and children. They lack good rest from the fear of being harassed, fined, arrested, and victimized. They lack access to restroom facilities. Many have jobs but do not earn enough to live indoors.

Right now, it is our understanding that sleeping in a car is not a permissible use in Pasadena. This can be changed with a very a simple addition to the code to allow this use. Right now, shelters are allowed on church sites, but not sleeping on cars. You can legally sleep on the sidewalks it seems that in Pasadena but not yet in cars. This seems incongruous and can easily be changed.

LA county allows safe parking and has 25 sites. Let's follow the County's compassionate land use by giving churches the opportunity to accomplish their mission to serve those most in need. Such as at St. Mary's Church in Korea Town. Santa Barbara's New Beginnings Safe Parking program has housed over 1,000 people in the past 16 years. They have 24 site, 136 cars, 154 people. During this time there has not be a single reported incident. This program has won awards and is a model we are seeking to emulate. Please help us to make that happen.

Thank you!!

Betty McWilliams: Executive Director, Foothill Unity Center located in Monrovia and Pasadena

Carol Daley: Co-Founder, Foothills Kitchen, Monrovia,

Tom Petersmeyer: Retired banker, financial advisor, fundraiser, Montrose

Wendy McGrail: Board member, Temple City Homeless Coalition, Temple City

Jill Shook: Executive Director, Making Housing & Community Happen, Pasadena