



All Home Policy Statement on Vehicle Residency Solutions

The All Home Strategic Plan provides a framework for this policy statement on vehicle residency.

Guiding Principles that guide the policy statement offered below:

- Prioritize those whose health and safety are most vulnerable
- Move people into housing first, and employment fast, progressively engaging in services
- Utilize data-driven assessment of needs and outcomes to drive policy and investments

Strategy that guides the policy statement below:

- **2.1.B:** Increase support and community education for crisis response needs, including interim survival mechanisms such as encampments, safe parking programs, and daytime/ hygiene services that bring people out of the elements and create pathways to housing.

About Vehicle Residency in King County:

- ❖ Throughout the United States, particularly along the west coast, more people are living in their vehicles.
- ❖ This year, about 1,600 people living in about 800 vehicles were counted in King County on one night in January. It is very difficult to count how many people are living in their vehicles due to vehicle mobility, desire of residents to “hide”, and difficulty for counters to discern if someone is living in a vehicle.
- ❖ People are living in their vehicles in neighborhoods in cities and towns throughout King County.
- ❖ Living in a vehicle, particularly RVs or vans, can be a temporary solution to rising housing costs, job loss, medical crisis, or family crisis.
- ❖ Living in vehicles can also be unsafe, worsen the health of inhabitants, and expensive, due to maintenance costs, fees, and fines.
- ❖ In urban and suburban settings, “vehicle residents” are parking on public streets adjacent to private businesses and homes, creating neighborhood concerns and disagreements.

Community Support for People Living in Vehicles:

- ❖ Like other people experiencing homelessness, vehicle residents will either find housing on their own or will need support finding and securing housing. Unlike other people experiencing homelessness, some vehicle residents do not consider themselves homeless.
- ❖ Some vehicle residents seek out services on their own, and some are isolated from services, particularly if the vehicle is not operable or gas money is not handy.
- ❖ Police departments, parks staff, social services outreach workers, and volunteers are interacting with vehicle residents daily in cities and towns across King County.
- ❖ In Seattle, social services outreach workers (funded by City of Seattle) reach out to people living in vehicles to connect them to services, housing, and safe lots. In other parts of the county, there is very minimal social services outreach. In Seattle and in other parts of the county, a small number of volunteers provide informal outreach.
- ❖ In most of Seattle and throughout King County, the police department (and parking enforcement) is the primary point of contact with vehicle residents. Many interactions are in response to citizen complaints.

Vision Statement

People living in vehicles collectively constitute a significant population of King County residents experiencing homelessness. They are human beings, not criminals, facing distinct and unique life circumstances. They need safe and legal places to park, access to resources, and support to transition to housing. They should be treated humanely and compassionately, with coordinated services wherever possible.

Solutions

1. City Administrators (and Community/Human Services Departments)
 - Fund programs to outreach to people living in vehicles. Funding could come from existing public safety or human services budgets, philanthropy or corporate donations, or general fund.
 - Review cost-effectiveness of safe lots for housing placement and retention
 - Align contracts with outreach teams to emphasize stabilization and connection to housing
 - Provide access to hygiene services, waste removal, and public health
 - Review and amend policies and practices that increase cycle of involvement in criminal justice system, including review of Seattle University analysis to be released in Spring 2016.
2. Police and Parking Enforcement:
 - Provide clear information to vehicle residents about what is legal and illegal, and where housing, treatment, employment, and other services can be found.
 - Use a community policing approach to engaging with people living in vehicles, and set expectations for enforcement of laws.
 - Provide clear information to neighbors about what is legal and illegal. Neighbors observing criminal activity by anyone (including those living in cars) should feel their police are responsive.
 - Coordinate with service providers to reduce criminal justice involvement and support positive outcomes, such as the LEAD operational workgroup example.
3. Social Services Providers (outreach and others)
 - Include outreach to vehicle residents as part of normal service delivery, as 1/3 unsheltered homeless are living in vehicles
 - Align outreach efforts to ensure access to primary and behavioral health services
 - Emphasize stabilization and connection to housing using Coordinated Entry
 - Raise flexible funding to be used to support vehicle residents to keep vehicles street legal and compliant with local ordinances
 - Utilize provider-owned property to host vehicle residents
4. All Home and Partners
 - Connect coordinated entry and existing diversion and navigation funds to vehicle residents
 - Development of tools to help congregations, businesses, cities, and providers to support vehicle residents
 - Development of tools to help service providers and other partners work more efficiently with existing safe parking programs, including celebration of successes
 - Awareness building targeted to vehicle residents, businesses, congregations, and residents
 - Regular stakeholder meetings of all who work with vehicle residents
 - Review data and continue to adapt recommendations

5. Businesses, Congregations, and volunteers

- Identify, access and connect new congregations and businesses to opportunities for to host vehicles in their on-site parking lots
- Create a flexible fund to be used for supporting stability and housing placement

Resources

- Graham Pruss' research on vehicle residency from 2012:
http://clerk.seattle.gov/~public/meetingrecords/2012/hhshc20120926_8a.pdf
- All Home (CEH) Crisis Response Planning recommendations from 2014:<http://allhomekc.org/resources-for-providers/>;
- City of Seattle Emergency Task Force on Unsheltered Homelessness from 2015:
<http://murray.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Emergency-Task-Force-On-Unsheltered-Homelessness-Recommendations-to-Mayor-Murray.pdf>;
- Seattle University resource website on Vehicle Residency for congregations:
<http://faithandfamilyhomelessness.com/safe-parking-programs/>

We will soon add resources and links to the www.allhomekc.org website.