



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title: Vehicle Camping Ordinance

Preferred Agenda: January 10, 2023

Submitted By: Blair Larsen, Community & Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Kelcey Young, City Manager

Type of Action: Resolution ____ Motion X Roll Call ____ Other ____

Relevant Code/Policy: SHMC 10.08 Stopping, Standing, and Parking

Towards Council Goal: Aspiration I: Desirable Community; Goal 3.2: Community Safety

Attachments: Ordinance Bill No. 2 for 2023 Vehicle Camping

Purpose of this RCA:

The purpose of this RCA is to request approval and first reading of a proposed ordinance regulating vehicle camping within the City.

Background/Context:

A recent influx of vehicle camping within the City has resulted in increased complaints and safety concerns, leading Staff to research options for improving the current situation through ordinance changes and enforcement.

The City currently has no ordinance prohibiting vehicle camping. When on public property or within public rights-of-way, vehicle camping is permitted if it complies with parking regulations.

Much like camping in public rights-of-way, vehicle camping has increased in recent years, and the City is constrained by recent 9th Circuit Court decisions (Martin v. Boise and Blake v. Grants Pass) that protect the right of homeless individuals to occupy public places. At the same time, vehicle camping inherently impacts public health and safety. The City cannot prohibit anyone from vehicle camping; however, it can pass time, place, and manner restrictions on the practice.

Staff propose the attached ordinance, which restricts vehicle camping to the Police Department parking lot, between the hours of 9 pm and 8 am. Staff believe that this ordinance complies with the 9th Circuit's rulings, while also addressing the valid safety concerns of Sweet Home residents. As this is an active problem affecting public health and safety, Staff have included an expediency clause in the ordinance.

The Challenge/Problem:

How does the City address the safety concerns of its residents regarding vehicle camping, while still accommodating its homeless population and complying with 9th Circuit Court decisions?

Stakeholders:

- Sweet Home Residents – Residents deserve safe neighborhoods and parks. Unsheltered residents deserve a safe place to park and occupy their vehicles.
- Sweet Home City Council – The City Council is responsible for enacting parking ordinances and regulations that meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Issues and Financial Impacts:

This ordinance involves no financial impact to the City.

Elements of a Stable Solution:

A stable solution includes the setting of reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on vehicle camping.

Options:

1. Do Nothing – If the Council chooses to do nothing, then vehicle camping will continue as currently allowed under City Code.
2. Motion to conduct a first reading of the proposed ordinance as presented – If the voting is unanimous, a second reading, by title only, may take place during the same meeting.
3. Motion to conduct a first reading of the proposed ordinance with changes – The Council may make changes to the proposed ordinance. If the voting is unanimous, a second reading, by title only, may take place during the same meeting.
4. Direct Staff to research other ways to accomplish the same goals.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends option 2: Motion to conduct a first reading of the proposed ordinance as presented.