

RV parking restriction & refuge permit program

Problem statement: the growth of people living in their vehicles parked on the streets of San Francisco is a tragedy and a challenge for the City. For the SFMTA, it presents two principal challenges: (1) complaints and requests for regulation from housed residents, business owners, employees and elected officials on streets where people live in vehicles, and (2) stymies transportation and curbside management projects that may impact people who live in their vehicles. We cannot continue to do nothing and postpone implementation of projects that are necessary to enhance curbside access and mobility.

Goal: Equitable management of public right-of-way for parking and curbside access and other policy-coherent uses without unsheltering vulnerable people

Method: Within 9 months, register everyone living in a shelter vehicle and within X years, transition all registered participants, who are still in San Francisco, into conventional housing with the following key component:

- Citywide restriction on shelter vehicles
- Time-limited permit program for participating shelter vehicles

Shelter vehicle parking restriction citywide

- Define “shelter vehicle” = class of large vehicles built for, or adapted to, dwelling
- May not park a shelter vehicle on a city street for more than 24 hours or between 3:00am and 6:00am; parking the shelter vehicle in another location within the city within the 24-hour period on a city street is a violation of this section.
- [Towable offense](#) (after three citations/warnings)
- Applies on every street in SF; refuge permit exempts vehicle
- Becomes enforceable 18 months after the end of the 9-month registration period

Shelter vehicle emergency refuge permit

- Exempts permitted vehicle from shelter vehicle parking restriction
 - Otherwise required to adhere to all other parking/curbside regulations
- Issued and administered by HSH / HSA (not SFMTA)
- Occupant must connect with HSH, commit to entering safe parking site when space becomes available, commit to housing track, commit to good neighbor practices
 - Otherwise, no exemption from shelter vehicle restriction, best to move along
 - (Adequacy/quality of shelter offer? How many offers declined before permit void?)
- City will spend 9 months engaging and logging RVs and registering their dwellers before RV restriction goes into effect
- After 9 months, registration closes – new shelter vehicles coming to SF are not eligible for exemption (closed set of eligible shelter vehicles, those “resident” in SF as of Date X)
- Permitted vehicles’ license plates logged for ongoing reference
 - Integrate into PCO handhelds or otherwise make easy to check
 - Provide permit log access to SFPD and GGNRA rangers and RPD rangers etc
- Permit expires after 18 months
 - Emergency accommodation, not a permanent residency arrangement

Questions/loose ends

Visitor RV permit (if necessary)

- For visitors, short-term (5 days?), non-renewable for six months/one year
- Associated with a housed resident (like RPP visitor but not dependent on RPP)
- If you own an RV and store it on the street, you'll need to find a lot or barn

Repeal [Police Code Art 1.1](#) (or add “notwithstanding” escape for refuge permit)

Hard to enforce (misdemeanor), legally tenuous, morally awkward, unhelpful

Can permit-registered RVs move around SF, or do they have to stay put?

Some movement necessary for street cleaning

Some de-concentration could be beneficial in places, but best not to impose the problem on new locations, to the extent feasible

Define sanctioned streets for permitted vehicles? Or leave where they are?

With RV restriction operating, displacement into new areas should be greatly reduced – leave RVs where they are (near jobs and services) and prioritize shrinking the biggest encampments, vs moving them to new streets with all the turmoil that would bring

Permit-registered RVs still subject to all other parking rules & regs

Won't address people living in sedans, oversized commercial vehicles

RV dwellers/ sedan dwellers/ big commercial vehicles – three similar but different issues, best to treat them separately (revisit and tighten [Sec 7.2.84](#); evaluate sedan-dweller situation after RV restriction runs for a while, may not need new parking rules vs HSH focus)

Participation commitment to qualify for permit? Adequacy of shelter offer? How many offers declined before permit is void?

RVs (“sick” or otherwise) need to be taken off the street to keep them from being re-inhabited, complications come from rental or murky ownership/registration – RV/bus/van dwellers often don't own the vehicle they're living in, don't hold registration, may be renting from someone (or “My buddy gave it to me in Idaho”)


RV buyback program? RV dwellers are understandably reluctant to surrender their one big asset and one “stable” refuge

Fix-it fund (already in HSH budget & practice) to help get vehicles fit and safe and registered and get folks moving (Homeward Bound or otherwise)

- Engagement with neighboring cities (enforcement/leadership/planning/etc)
- Data
 - Participation accounts
 - HSH/HSA to lead
 - Coordinate with City Hall and supporting agencies the info collected in accounts
 - Goal: measurable reduction of participants through existing and new opportunities
 - Homeward bound

- SF affordable housing
 - Tiny homes
 - Safe Parking Site (NOTE—this also has a time limit)
 - other
- Rollout
 - Registration options
 - In the field, through routine engagement
 - Online
 - On-site (11 SVN, 49 SVN?)

As always, this program depends on adequate supply of off-street “safe parking” and/or supportive/healthy housing – can’t move folks off the street if there’s no place to offer them

- Concern—Reluctance to be registered with government, language barriers
- Add another regulation that we cannot enforce?
- MTA will not administer, who/how do we make progress vs do nothing/status quo
- Political will & timing 

Other California cities/localities with OV/RV parking restrictions

Pacifica

Geary et al. v. City of Pacifica

[ACLU summary](#) (links to court docs)

Pacifica Tribune – [“Hearing on RV parking ban yields more research as judge finds flaws”](#) (6/1/21)

City of Pacifica [Oversize Vehicles Parking](#) page (with links to [FAQ](#) and maps and permit application)

Mountain View

Navarro et al. v. City of Mountain View

[ACLU summary](#) (links to court docs)

City of Mountain View: [Oversized Vehicle Restrictions on Narrow Streets](#)

City of Mountain View: [Parking Restrictions Map](#)

Sebastapol

City of Sebastopol: [RV Parking Ordinance](#)

SF Chronicle – [Fight over homeless living in RVs prompts extreme ban in this Bay Area city, lawsuit alleges](#) (10/26/22)

[ACLU summary](#)

Berkeley

Berkeleyside – [Berkeley parking law will force RV dwellers to move on](#) (11/18/21)

Daily Californian – [Berkeley City Council repeals prohibition of overnight RV parking, campers](#) (9/15/22)

Los Angeles

LA Times – [Los Angeles lifts moratorium on towing RVs, pledges to move problem campers](#) (4/7/22)