

From: [Kate Haug](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Cc: adrienne@sonomavillages.org
Subject: Alternative SAVS Safe Parking Site - Public Comment 11/30/21 Council Meeting
Date: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 8:19:12 AM
Attachments: [Screen Shot 2021-06-17 at 7.58.23 PM.png](#)
[Screen Shot 2021-08-29 at 5.49.10 PM.png](#)

Dear Council Members,

I am writing about the SAVS Safe Parking proposal. 425 Morris Street, the proposed location, is inappropriate for our community as it is next to organizations which primarily serve children and families, near a popular trailhead, and on a floodplain.

In addition, Sebastopol is in a budget deficit (see attached graphic) and does not have the funds to responsibly pay for any costs this project might cost the citizens of Sebastopol. Sebastopol lost crucial revenue when the Sebastopol Inn was converted via Homekey to PSH. We also sponsor Park Village (serving 85 people) and Safe Parking at a local church. Currently, we have more beds for transients in downtown than we do for tourists. We have no beds for tourists.

Michael Gause, Ending Homelessness Manager Sonoma County Community Development Commission, has confirmed that funds must be spent by 9/2022. As the funding for this project seems extremely limited and short term (ending 9/2022), it appears that Sebastopol residents will be financially liable when SAVS runs out of money.

Use SAVS Funds to Create a Managed Morris Street

Given the fact that these are short term monies, this money could go a lot further and achieve its goal of transition campers into permanent housing if the RV campers were allowed to stay in their current location on Morris Street and Laguna Parkway with the same Case Management, security services and sanitation services found in the current SAVS proposal.

By keeping residents in place on Morris Street and Laguna Parkway, you minimize COVID spread, which is part of the funding mandate.

Morris Street is a Camp without Case Management and Security

The Council and SAVS are already running a semi-sanctioned homeless encampment on Morris Street with port-o-potties and garbage pickup. Adrienne Lauby's public statement at the 9/21/21 Council Meeting "Your activities on Morris, your putting up the Port-A-Potties, allowing people to basically be there in some kind of permittable, legalized way, has made a huge, huge difference." and attached SAVS social media post from August 24, 2021 show that Council and SAVS have already been working to support RV campers on Morris Street.

The City spent \$50,000 last year on sanitation for Morris Street and received a grant for more additional funding for Morris Street sanitation this year. Why not just make it official for 6 months during the period of this temporary funding?

Only Move People Once

What is the point of moving all these people and then having to move them again in 9-12 months? It will take an extraordinary amount of effort and time to move people into a temporary camp. What is the purpose of this when the goal is to move them into permanent housing? It makes much more sense to focus effort on case management, job training, job placement and housing placement. Why make RV dwellers have the trauma of moving twice? Why make the extra work of moving people twice? Why incur the extra expense when the real focus should be on services?

Clarity of Purpose and Timeline

If the purpose is to find these people permanent housing and to clear Morris Street, could SAVS use the funds to provide case management, sanitation, security, and rental assistance on Morris Street? The ability to use extra funds for rental assistance could expedite the process of locating permanent housing for these individuals.

If the City gave a 6 month notice to vacate to the RV dwellers and SAVS used the CoC funds for case management, security and sanitation with the added bonus of rental assistance, the Morris Street RV dwellers have a better chance of finding permanent housing than if they are moved onto the site at 425 Morris Street. SAVS would have money to apply toward rental assistance in a permanent location.

By giving a 6 month Notice to Vacate and funding a specific timeline, it is clear that the funding is temporary and that the site is temporary. There is no confusion to the general public, to the RV dwellers or to SAVS as this is clearly a temporary program with a specific goal.

The timeline would be:

1. Immediately implement Citywide RV Permit Parking except for Morris Street and Laguna Parkway. Citywide parking rules must be established prior so that people who refuse service and shelter can't simply move their vehicles to other locations within City Limits.
2. Give Morris Street and Laguna Parkway RV dwellers 6 month Notice to Vacate with SAVS Case Management and housing information.
3. Implement SAVS funded and organized outreach, Case Management security, sanitation, food, medical and social services program.

4.

June 30, 2022 clear Morris Street of any remaining vehicles.

Focus on Services Not Site

The current SAVS budget could remain with \$315,420 in operating costs with the remaining \$52,580 going toward rental assistance. Of course the budget could be modified to give more toward rental assistance, especially as a reduced time frame to December 2021 through June 2022 would require less in operational costs.

If these case management services were provided, it would serve the same function in terms of transitioning people into permanent housing. The sanitation would be the same and security would help mitigate the consistent complaints by neighboring businesses, residents and cultural institutions.

The same flood and fire plans could be put into place. In fact, it might be easier to tow vehicles from Morris Street than the 425 Morris Street site.

Managed Morris Street Saves Time and Money

As there is no site preparation and no expense on temporary structures, administering Case Management on Morris Street saves money on these disposal expenses. In addition, there would only be one site clean up - the clean up of Morris Street after the June 30, 2022 date.

At this point there would be the clean up of Morris Street in January 2022 and then the clean up of 425 Morris Street in November 2022. There would not be the wasted expense of fencing, site grading, and other temporary amenities.

If towing is involved, there would only be one time towing fees. If you have to tow the same vehicle twice, you are doubling your towing expenses. This would limit the time and expense associated with site preparation performed by City Staff that is being paid for by the citizens and taxpayers of Sebastopol.

In addition, it will save time as SAVS and the City of Sebastopol don't have to move people twice. SAVS and the City of Sebastopol do not have to spend time preparing a site. SAVS can immediately be able to start delivering Case Management, outreach, security, enhanced sanitation, medical and social services without having to wait for the site to open.

Similar Circumstances

As there are no sobriety requirements for the proposed site, there is a negligible difference between people staying on the street and moving a half a block away.

In addition, RV Village campers can move freely in and out of the camp and receive visitors. This freedom of movement and the ability to have autonomous visitors is exactly the same on Morris Street.

Attrition and Case Management

All RV campers would be given notice to vacate and information on Case Management and free social services. Some will accept and some will decline. This would be true with the RV Village. For those who accept, SAVS could start immediately working with them to make the transition into work, permanent housing, appropriate medical and social services. Unlike a forced move to a temporary site, those who resist service might have more time to accept service over the 6 month period prior to the new parking restrictions and vacating of the street.

Some campers will simply leave the site once Case Management and Security is put into place. Their open spaces should be secured and could be used by SAVS to provide more services - more port-o-potties, dumpsters, or portable showers.

Security, Case Management to Mitigate Neighborhood Impact

With active outreach and Case Management by SAVS and regular security, documented, ongoing complaints regarding blocked, non-ADA compliant sidewalks, fire danger, drug trafficking, and trash would be mitigated from the start of SAVS work until the parking restrictions are implemented.

A Managed Morris Street is Preferable to 425 Morris Street

In addition, 425 Morris Street is a terrible location as it impacts vital community organizations, schools, Little League, the Laguna and institutions that focus on serving children, youth and their families. 425 Morris Street is in a floodplain. There is no advantage of this location over a managed Morris Street and in fact, a managed Morris Street might be preferable than impacting the Cultural Center, the Youth Park, the Little League Field and Wischemann Hall as we emerge from COVID and people resume their normal activities of events and classes.

Excellent Application of SAVS Functional Experience

SAVS has never managed or operated a facility of the type they are proposing. They do have experience doing street outreach. It seems that letting the RV dwellers remain on the street with a notice to vacate in 6 months (which matches the funding timeline of 9/2022), case management, sanitation and security with the added bonus of rental assistance, that would be a better match for SAVS expertise.

In addition, if this is successful, it could be a model which SAVS could apply to other situations of this nature. It would be a powerful example of how providing consistent, professional case management can help people transition into shelter and services.

Precedent of Action

In March 2021, the City of Santa Rosa cleared a similar RV encampment by implementing a similar process. Of course using SAVS to do focused case management would hopefully result in 100% housing placement. Here's the article on the Industrial Drive encampment: <https://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/news/santa-rosa-clears-industrial-drive-homeless-encampment/>

Benefit to Citizens, Small Businesses and City Budget

The City would not have to bear the expense of site preparation and would not be liable for the continued support of RV dwellers if SAVS is not able to locate permanent housing.

The additional liability to the citizens of Sebastopol if SAVS is not able to locate housing for people after they are moved to the proposed site would be financially significant. It seems at that point, given Martin v. Boise, the citizens of Sebastopol would be liable for funding the site until housing was located. Frankly, Sebastopol cannot afford this cost.

When the City gives an extremely long Notice to Vacate timeline and intensive Case Management, medical and social services and offerings of alternative housing, the City will have fulfilled their Martin v. Boise obligation and will not be open to lawsuits.

Focus on the Opportunity to Transition to Permanent Housing and Employment

If we focus this opportunity on truly transitioning people from the street to permanent housing, these funds would be of real help to these individuals. If we end up just moving them to another location, a half-block away, the Citizens end up with more financial liability and the problem is not solved; we merely move it next to vital community resources and onto a floodplain.

There is a labor shortage. If SAVS can help people find employment, they could have 3-4 months of managed living on Morris Street while they are working. This work history along with rental assistance, could help them secure permanent housing.

SAVS could work with people to use their other government benefits such as veterans, disability, social security to find housing. By employing rental assistance funds, it is more likely that housing could be secured.

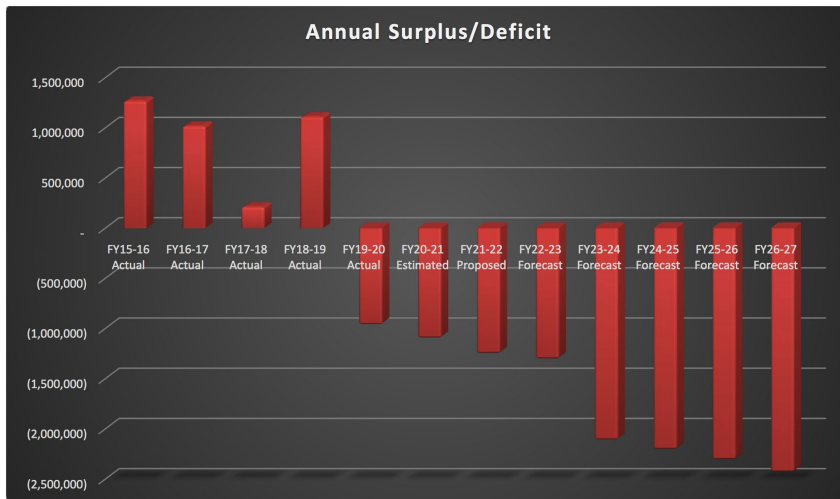
The citizens and small businesses of Sebastopol cannot afford to be obligated to fund this site now or in the future. In addition, the site is not appropriate for our community, especially our children and families.


As a resident and voter in Sebastopol, I would like to see citywide RV permit parking instituted immediately, except for Morris Street and Laguna Parkway, where illegal RV campers would be given a 6 month Notice to Vacate. By using the CoC funds, SAVS could

be awarded a contract to create a "Managed Morris Street," providing outreach case management, rental assistance, sanitation service and security.

I hope you will consider this idea as I believe it provides tremendous benefit to the unhoused, to Sebastopol's citizens and small businesses, and to SAVS.

Best,
Kate Haug



 **SAVS-SonomaVillages**
August 24 at 10:32 PM · 🌐

Today, the SAVS outreach workers worked at Morris Street with some of our new best friends, Sally and [Keary Sorenson](#). The trash was getting out of hand. Bless you Sally & Keary for helping out in Sebastopol. It's out of your usual area. And kudos to Cheryl and Andrea for showing up. The entire job was 6 hours!

We go the extra mile here because the City of Sebastopol has done so much to help the residents of Morris St. stay stable and safe. What a role model this is!!

