

City axes plans for safe parking area

BY TIM TRAINOR
Redmond Spokesman

Dozens of residents told Redmond city councilors that they felt blindsided by plans to use property in north Redmond as a place for people to live overnight in their vehicles.

A week later, the city said it will not pursue plans to turn the property into secure, safe park-

ing for the homeless.

On August 29, nearly a week after a packed city council meeting, the city and the church that operates the safe parking program announced they had "withdrawn the city-owned property near NW 19th and NW Pershall Way."

A follow-up discussion of the site, planned for Sept. 6, has

been canceled.

City manager Keith Witcosky said at the Tuesday, August 23 council meeting that crews would "stop everything" at the city-owned, juniper-studded property at the north end of Dry Canyon.

The decision came after more than 90 minutes of public testimony from a standing-room-

only crowd that packed council chambers.

That testimony was split. Neighbors of the proposed site argued against it, citing a lack of transparency about the project and their concerns about increased crime and decreased property values.

Yet numerous people, most of whom volunteer for the project

with Mountainview Fellowship Church, argued the safe parking program has been successful at reducing homelessness in Redmond. They argued that safeguards are in place to keep participants in the parking program safe, as well as those living nearby.

The program allows people to live for up to 90 days in RVs

or vehicles, as long as they agree to a code of conduct and work to find more secure long-term housing. While using safe parking, participants cannot use drugs or alcohol and must work with a case manager.

Mountainview Fellowship, located at 1435 SW 35th Street, has hosted the program in its

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The Redmond safe parking program

What it is • Location and rules • Guidelines and requirements

BY NICK ROSENBERGER
Redmond Spokesman

Emotions were on full display August 23 as attendees crowded into the Redmond city council chambers to voice their support or their concerns surrounding the Redmond Safe Parking Program.

Some were scared to the point of tears about the program expanding into their neighborhood; others were adamantly supportive of the program and its potential for success.

WHAT IS THE REDMOND SAFE PARKING PROGRAM?

The program allows people struggling with homelessness to temporarily park their vehicles — anything from RVs to passenger cars — and sleep at designated sites in Redmond. Currently, the program has two locations in the city; one at Mountainview Fellowship Church, 1475 SW 35th St and the second at VFW Post 4108, 491 SW Veterans Way.

The city council meeting August 23 focused on expanding the program to a third site, this



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

The previously-proposed location for the safe parking program in north Redmond. City officials said Aug. 29 that the location will not be used for the overnight parking program.

one north of the Dry Canyon near 19th and Pershall.

The pilot program began last October after the city council approved \$50,000 from Red-

mond's ARPA funding budget — funds coming from the federal government's American Rescue Plan Act.

Rick Russell, pastor of Moun-

tainview Fellowship Church and organizer of the program, has fundraised an additional \$500,000 for the program.

Since its inception, Russell said

about 12 people have used the Redmond Safe Parking Program. Most, Russell said, moved on from the program to find stable housing or a more permanent

place for their RVs, such as a family member's private property. A few others moved on to less stable living arrangements, he noted.

The program is not for people working through mental health or addiction issues or long-term homelessness. It explicitly bans drugs and alcohol at the site.

Instead, the parking program is for people who are experiencing temporary homelessness and want help.

"When people get stabilized they can begin to think and plan longer term," Russell said. "That stability really becomes a launch pad for people to move toward greater stability in their lives, and that's what this program does."

Among the current users at the safe parking program, one works as a contractor and has no stable place to live, so he drives to the site each night to sleep in his car. Another is a former electrician who owned property in Eagle Crest until a brain injury stopped him from being able to earn a living.

Russell said nearly half of the program's participants have been employed. According to Russell, they commute to work just like everyone else and are tired when they get home — just like everyone else.

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PHOTOS



High flying

MX13 jump to benefit Central Oregon Veterans, A9

REDMOND

School district strategizes about safety

BY LEO BAUDHUIN
Redmond Spokesman

Get your backpacks ready — the first day of school is just around the corner.

The Redmond School District is back in session after Labor Day. Superintendent Charan Cline and his team said they have been hard at work to ensure that the return to learning is a safe one. Feedback Cline heard from parents, students

and community members this summer made it clear that school safety was a top concern going into the 2022-2023 school year.

"The Redmond School District's First Priority is the safety of its students and staff members," the district wrote in a safety and security handout. "Given the increase in school related violence, we continually strive to improve the safety of the educational envi-

ronment."

The district divided its protocols and resources into three main areas: preventative, operational and physical security.

PROMOTING PREVENTION

"The first thing we want people to understand is we're not immune to violence here," Cline said. "It could happen at any time."

The district's preventative mea-

sures work to mitigate that risk.

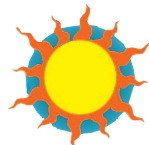
The student threat assessment system is one of those. The program comes into play when a student makes some sort of violent threat — either against themselves or others. School officials sit down with parents to review the threat and to assess the likelihood of harm before figuring out how best to intervene.

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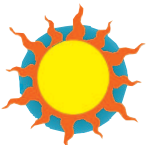
TUESDAY
Sunny
91/53



WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy
95/57



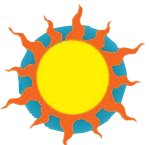
THURSDAY
Partly cloudy
97/58



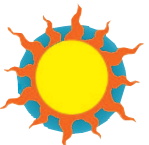
FRIDAY
Sunny
97/56



SATURDAY
Partly cloudy
94/54



SUNDAY
Sunny
91/56



MONDAY
Sunny
91/56

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