

Safe Parking – Safe Shelter Pilot Program FAQs for Potential Providers and County Staff

What is Safe Parking and Safe Shelter?

A program that would provide safe, temporary shelter sites that accommodate vehicles (Safe Parking), or tents, cabins, or other approved structures (Safe Shelter) for people who are experiencing homelessness while they seek permanent housing.

How is Safe Parking – Safe Shelter different from traditional shelters?

Traditional emergency shelters serve those experiencing homelessness in buildings rather than in vehicles or temporary shelter units. The permanent structures in traditional shelters are subject to building codes.

Who can operate a Safe Parking or Safe Shelter pilot?

Under this Pilot Program, a government agency, religious entity, or non-profit organization (the Provider) may operate a Safe Parking–Safe Shelter site. Any organization or private party may contribute, lease their land, or otherwise partner with the Provider for services.

Where is a Pilot site allowed?

In inland areas, a Safe Parking or Safe Shelter site may be permitted on parcels zoned ML – Limited Industrial, C-1 – Neighborhood Commercial, C-2 – Community Commercial, C-3 – Industrial Commercial, MU-1 – Mixed Use (Urban), MU-2 – Mixed Use (Rural), or R-3 – Residential Multiple Family. AG - Agriculture General parcels near essential services may be eligible.

How do I find the zoning for my parcel?

Go to the County's [desktop webGIS](#), or [mobile webGIS](#) application and type your 9-digit Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) or address in the search box at upper left. Click inside the parcel boundary and scroll down to the field *Zoning with Combining Zones* which will show the zoning designation. For more information about the zones, click on the abbreviation and go to the Principal Zones tables in Chapter 3, Coastal, or Chapter 4, Inland.

What services are required at the site?

The site must have sanitary facilities including toilet and hand-washing; shower facilities or access to showers; garbage containers and trash disposal services; access to a telephone for use by participants; access to charging equipment for devices; and secure storage for personal items.

Can the Pilot sites be on public land or private land?

Either public or private land may be used. Sites that are owned or leased by a public entity have significant operational advantages, like immunity from certain types of liability, suspension of CEQA, and suspension of certain laws and regulations.

Is there a limit on how many sites are allowed in the County?

The Pilot Program allows for a total of ten sites countywide.

How long will the Pilot Program operate?

The Pilot Program runs for 18 months from the time it became effective. That is July 7, 2022 for the Inland Program, and the date of certification for the Coastal Program.

What happens at the end of the Pilot Program, after eighteen months?

The Board of Supervisors may choose to extend specific zoning clearance certificates for operating sites. Otherwise, the Program expires.

When will Provider's staff be present at the sites?

Staff must be present during all open hours.

What happens if the site becomes a nuisance?

The Director may initiate proceedings to revoke the zoning clearance certificate for a Safe Parking – Safe Shelter site if it becomes a nuisance. Revocation requires notice and a hearing.

Who enforces the Management Plan?

The County may enforce the Management Plan, which must be up to date and on file with the Planning Department.

How long can people stay at the Pilot sites?

Six months. Some Pilot types allow the Provider to extend a participant's term after review.

Why can't the shelters be permanent?

The Safe Parking-Safe Shelter Pilot is designed under the state's Emergency Shelter law, which is defined as temporary shelter.

What about RVs?

The Provider determines whether the site can allow RVs based on site factors, the level of service provided, staffing, and the organization's resources. If

allowed, RVs must be operational (able to drive on and off the site under their own power).

Will the Safe Parking-Safe Shelter Sites have ADA access?

Yes.

How are complaints handled?

The Provider designates a contact person, and maintains a neighborhood outreach plan with periodic meetings. Complaints are reported to the County monthly.

Can Safe Parking or Safe Shelter sites be on private land?

Yes, anyone can provide land for a Safe Parking or Safe Shelter site if it meet site requirements. However, the Provider must be a government agency, religious entity, or non-profit organization.

If my site is correctly zoned, how do I get a zoning clearance certificate?

Apply for a zoning clearance certificate with the Planning Department. You will need:

- A Plot Plan of the site.
- A written management plan; three Model Management Plans are available through Planning and Building.
- A *Department Approval Letter* from the Division of Environmental Health verifying an approved method of providing sanitation to the site.
- Review and meet the operating standards and requirements in the Pilot ordinance.

Where do I get a *Department Approval Letter* from the Division of Environmental Health?

You can use a Request for Service Form from the Division's Documents and Forms page on their website at: <https://humboldt.gov/730/Land-Use-Program-Documents-and-Forms>.

What is in the Plot Plan?

An example Plot Plan is available at the Planning Department and on the website (Safe Parking-Safe Shelter Plot Plan). The Plot Plan for a proposed site should contain all the elements that apply to that site. For example, if there is no stream, skip the stream buffer element. Pages 2-5 of that document list general site requirements and requirements for each of the three management plans.

What is Housing First?

Housing First is a philosophy and an evidence-based State mandate that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, and includes best practices like making services voluntary; harm reduction philosophy; no withholding of services for sobriety, substance addiction, or lack of money; and low barrier strategies like accommodating pets, partners, and possessions. Even though Safe Parking and Safe Shelter are temporary solutions intended to meet the immediate needs when permanent housing is unavailable, services can still be provided using these best practices.

How are basic health and safety regulations ensured for Pilot sites?

Safe Parking and Safe Shelter providers must adhere to multiple layers of State and Federal regulations if they are funded through grant. If no grant funds are used, all other zoning, building, and health and safety codes still apply.

How is Safe Parking or Safe Shelter different from informal camps?

Pilot sites have a Provider who operates through a management plan and maintains Host-Participant agreements, has on-site staff, provides sanitation and trash collection, and connects participants with a larger system of services to help them transition to permanent housing.

Who makes the Management Plan?

Providers make the Management Plan using one of the three Model Plans available through the Planning Department and on the website.

What are the Management Plan types and how are they different?

The three Management Plans are The Low Barrier Model, Village Model, and Minimal Requirements Model. Try this to a pdf that [compares the three plans](#).

Can a Safe Parking or Safe Shelter Pilot lose its zoning clearance permit?

Yes. Revocation could occur if a Pilot site is not in compliance with laws or the objective standards of the Pilot ordinance; or if a program poses harm to the health and safety of its participants or the community, or to coastal resources; or if it constitutes a nuisance as defined in Section 351-3 of the Humboldt County Code.

Are Safe Parking or Safe Shelter sites allowed on parcels zoned AG (general agriculture)?

Safe Parking and Safe Shelter can be permitted on an AG parcel located within one mile of services needed for sustainable living.

How are participants selected for the Pilot sites?

The Management Plans include a written procedure for participant intake and selection, a written participant agreement, and procedures for periodic reviews, extensions, and removals.

Can parking lots or unpaved areas be Pilot sites?

Yes, either, if all the site requirements and development standards are met.

Can existing buildings be used as Safe Parking or Safe Shelter sites?

Existing buildings used as emergency shelter for people experiencing homelessness would be Emergency Shelters under the County's code. Safe Parking and Safe Shelter encompass sheltering in vehicles, tents, or other temporary shelter types.