

[PARK-N-SLEEP Sites Homeless Solution for the City Mayor](#)

Homeless Solution Alternative for the City Mayor and City Government.

Issues and Conditions:

Homeless Conditions:

For a variety of reasons, people find themselves in homeless conditions. Solicited donations to homeless citizens are sometimes used to rent hotel rooms to escape unforgiving weather. To support other critical needs and objectives, homeless citizens need a reliable and secure place to sleep, especially overnight. Otherwise, family, employment, health, emotional states and overall functionality will be at further risk.

Traditional City Issues & Strategy:

Cities often find themselves unable to sustain the shelter needs of the homeless population, primarily due to financial constraints.

City management tries to implement policies best for traditional and homeless residents, but it is difficult to achieve a mix that accommodates both. Cities usually offer some form of shelters. However, availabilities are temporary and not guaranteed. Often city policies are against loitering, panhandling, sleeping in public or in cars. It is clear that cities need alternate homeless strategies to satisfy the interests of city management, business/residential entities and the homeless population.

Policy Proposal:

Minimum Requirements:

One vacant lot, portable restroom facilities and one on-duty staff person is required to establish a minimum Park-N-Sleep site. The lot is to be enclosed by a wall or fence suitable for security and privacy. Although there would be an emergency exit, there would be only one authorized entry and exit point which is monitored by an on-duty staff person. Those needing a place to sleep would drive to the gate entrance, be greeted by the on-duty staff, directed to the site rules clearly posted, provided with a vehicle pass for display and then allowed to park and sleep overnight.

Optional Modifications and Considerations:

Access can be more comprehensive with the presentation of valid identification and filling out a registration form to include names and ages of all car guests, vehicle identification data, anticipated number of nights as guests and a certification that all rules are understood and potential penalties for violations.

Parking spaces could be numbered to designate reserved areas. Pavement markings could outline traffic, entrance and exit pathways.

Park-N-Sleep sites could make available window covers, eye-blinders, earplugs and other coverings to filter out occasional disruptions. Do-Not-Disturb signs for each car would discourage disturbing guests who desire privacy. Transactions could be free, loan, rent or purchase.

More formal sites could provide official mailing addresses to guests, using mailboxes or personalized mail baskets for mail administration. Decision-makers must not underestimate this policy to satisfy employment eligibility requirements.

Homeless services paraphernalia, resources and contact phone numbers could be readily available as handouts.

Suggested Site Rules:

Prohibited:

- Unmonitored children under 18 years of age.
- Horn blowing, loud music, excessive revving of engines / disruptive noises.
- Headlights Hi/Lo beam. (Assumes safe external lighting for driver safety.)
- Pets.
- Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, guns, knives and other weapons. (strictly enforced by local law.)
- Unlocked doors.
- Cooking.
- Sexual activity or Indecent exposure.
- Tampering with cars or property of others.
- Littering and improper food disposal.
- Flat tires. (noncritical – recommended for general appearances and morale.)
- Unofficial visits.
- Disregarding Do-Not-Disturb signs on guest cars. (except emergencies.)

General courtesy should be practiced at all times.

PARK-N-SLEEP assumes no liability for property or personal damages incurred on the premises.

Vehicles, properties and guests are subject to search for contraband while on the premises.

Guests are subject to DUI sobriety and other testing.

Violators are subject to temporary or permanent revocation of guest privileges and legal prosecution.

Site Selection:

Park-N-Sleep locations should be free from excess environmental noises, lights and odors that would impair proper sleep. Location selection should also consider proximity to needed storage facilities and bus routes, especially for guests who do not drive. Ideally, the site would be near affordable food establishments and YMCA, YWCA or other affordable gyms for showering privileges. Selection should also consider average commute times to the most common work subdivisions.

To avoid typical community objections, site should not be within or adjacent to established residential communities.

Obstacles Expected:

Rigid City Management Philosophy:

City management may initially dismiss the idea of authorizing its citizens to sleep in their cars. PARK-N-SLEEP is a compromise between continuing homeless policies that simply do not work and allowing unlimited sleeping in cars citywide. The PARK-N-SLEEP program can provide all interested homeless citizens a shelter from the environment under controlled conditions and at predetermined locations. Thus, management of homeless citizens will be greatly facilitated.

The PARK-N-SLEEP program should not be delayed because policy-makers devise the many scenarios against it, while having no superior alternative to substitute in its place.

City Code:

Relevant codes that restrict sleeping in cars should be modified to accommodate city controlled PARK-N-SLEEP sites.

Security Intervention:

Programs of this nature are not immune from incidents. Sites must have clearly established staff policies and protocols for police, fire and medical intervention. Sites should consider audio and video recordings of all areas. Roving security staff should be considered, especially if all property cannot be easily seen by the gate staff.

Multi-Use:

Depending on the site size and intent for usage, guests could be limited to noncommercial transportation vehicles. Otherwise, larger sites could have special areas for large trucks, RVs and Trailers. The separate area will ensure a minimum peace and availability for regular guests.

Limited car ownership, availability and driving privileges:

Some homeless individuals have neither cars nor current driver licenses. Therefore, car donations to the Park-N-Post program will enable anyone to sleep at the site. If donated cars are in short supply or for other prudent reasons, PARK-N-SLEEP may choose to prevent donated cars to be driven. Then, the drive or axle systems of donated cars should be disabled to prevent movement. Recipients of donated cars will have access to entry, exit and ignition for heating and cooling purposes. Cities need not delay implementing minimal PARK-N-SLEEP programs in order to accommodate car donations.

The on-duty or security staff will have duplicate keys for all donated cars at all times. Good heating and air conditioning systems would be preferred over aesthetic appearances of donated cars. Qualified local automotive repair specialists could be encouraged to volunteer to perform regular maintenance in exchange for tax breaks.

The optional donated, immobilized cars will require regular intervention for gas and maintenance. Donated cars do bear added expenses and risks, thus they may be deemed unsuitable for some city PARK-N-SLEEP programs.

Guest Safety:

To help protect guests and property, all car doors are required to be locked at all times while guests are in or away from their cars.

Those sleeping while running heat could provide a window opening of a minimum prescribed size to prevent carbon monoxide issues. PARK-N-SLEEP sites can provide mandatory, properly-sized inserts into car windows as evidence of sufficient ventilation. To retain maximum heat, one alternate approach is to use portable carbon monoxide detectors within the compartment of each car. While private car owners would be responsible for their own energy expenses, this policy option would increase city energy expenses for guests using donated cars. Policy could be adapted to disallow running engines of donated cars or all cars at the site. In doing so, guests would rely exclusively on sufficient blankets and clothing for warmth.

More developed sites should strive for an optimum layout compromise between maximum site capacity and distances among parked vehicles. While close, adjacent parking spaces will maximize capacity, it would also increase accidental door-to-car contacts, damages and sleep interruptions due to insufficient minimum space between vehicles. Parking space layouts should incorporate side buffer zones between cars to reduce these occurrences. Likewise, front buffer zones would reduce accidental fender-bumper contacts.

Parents With Children:

It is generally accepted that living in a car is not an environment for children. Accordingly, all registrations with children are immediately referred to local social services system intervention to find suitable shelter arrangements. If after exhausting every resource, no suitable place is found, then the PARK-N-SLEEP site becomes their best option for temporary sleep and safety until an improved family environment becomes available. The site is preferred to the alternative

of parking in unknown and dangerous areas with children. Parents must monitor all children under their care at all times for their safety, according to site policy.

Drug Users:

A zero tolerance drug possession and use policy must be fully enforced while on PARK-N-SLEEP sites as a prerequisite for all guests. Site drug behavior will rapidly degrade the intended use and relative enjoyment of PARK-N-SLEEP sites. On-duty staff must be trained to report all known or suspected drug activity to police. Verified or voluntary admission of drug addictions should be referred according to local protocols for services and appropriate medical and other professional interventions.

Restrictive Qualifications Requirements:

The goal is to ensure that essentially any adult agreeing to the site terms can obtain rest at the site. Because the reasons for homeless status are varied, data such as income, employment, cause of homelessness or previous residency may be collected but should not be considered for qualification.

City Mayors and PARK-N-SLEEP Management:

The goal is not to place an excessive burden on city finances and resources. Minimum sites could offer limited hours to enable only overnight sleep. Note that this plan would not accommodate those working alternate hours and unfortunately would be unavailable for this limited time PARK-N-SLEEP service.

To reduce or possibly eliminate city budgeting concerns, city government should consider local PARK-N-SLEEP sponsorships and donations from individuals, businesses and goodwill organizations. Land may be donated by philanthropic organizations and individuals, as providing a path to sheltering those in need is a very noble cause. Likewise, many individuals will search their hearts and will be eager to donate their unused cars, knowing that their gifts will provide much needed shelters for others. A comprehensive search may reveal that state or federal funds could be considered for this program under emergency relief, social need, research or other essential services.

City officials should not dismiss the efficiency gained and cost reduced by using the sites as one-spot screening and delivery locations for homelessness related duties by local social services departments. This will actually reduce time and fuel expenses related to identifying and serving the homeless population.

Mayors and city council representatives may habitually desire “business as usual” homeless policies. The topic may be politically sensitive. What is unrealized are the many eligible voters who would be very grateful for their improved daily conditions due to this new city program.

Remember that while citizens may lose their homes, they often have cars. A suitable, secure parking site could be just what they need for now.

City Management may consider an open community hearing to obtain a consensus of all affected parties, which includes the local homeless population.

Contingencies should be considered for full capacity demand. If the current lot becomes full, the staff should call or provide phone numbers to alternate PARK-N-SLEEP sites within the city or nearby cities. To ensure fairness, reservations should be disallowed as a policy. Space should be provided as available.

For long-term management, city governments should consider awarding contracts based on bid and experience to run their PARK-N-SLEEP programs.

Basic background checks for outstanding warrants may be a component of pre-admissions policy. However, these administrative efforts should be organized not to delay delivery of same-day benefits. State driver license and vehicle license plate checks may be sufficient initial entry criteria.

Policy makers must always remember the central goal of battling and eradicating homelessness within the city. So, potential fee-related products and policies must not impede access to the PARK-N-SLEEP program in any way.

Negative Perceptions and Objections:

Resistance exists when there is something to lose. Entities will resist PARK-N-SLEEP sites because they may organize unwelcomed groups of citizens within perceived safety boundaries. Concerned residents and businesses will evaluate both benefits and risks. Unfortunately, improving the lives of many homeless citizens alone will not be a sufficient motivator for many communities.

Perimeter gates or walls will control entry and exit, protect guests and provide barriers such that citizens outside will see and hear minimal activity from inside.

Concessions may be given if site guests routinely volunteer time and services to the local community. Site guests could provide value to every community. Examples include neighborhood cleanup, painting and preservation. Some will even have specialized skills to offer. A successful public relations campaign can help manage perceptions and responses.

Entities objecting to this proposal or otherwise finding it to be unfeasible are very likely to already have a secure place to exist and to sleep at night. Proper justice will be given to this proposal only by perceiving it through the eyes and experiences of those homeless citizens who are actually living on the streets. While some entities believe sleeping in cars to be uncivilized, those in need will find it to be an essential leap forward. So it is a matter of perspective and life experience. Ultimately, in the absence of a superior plan that sustains all homeless citizens, PARK-N-SLEEP becomes the most feasible, effective and morally correct action.

Capacity and Expansion Limitations:

The capacity to provide for every interested homeless entity is limited only by the availability of feasible land and the number of donated automobiles to accommodate those not owning cars within the city.

PARK-N-SLEEP Adaptability Challenges:

This proposal is actually a general template designed to be modified according to local needs and inspirations. Many varieties of PARK-N-SLEEP programs are possible to meet the needs of government, residential, business and homeless entities.

Vision:

This proposal is designed for cities requiring a fast, effective and sustainable plan for many homeless citizens. As difficult as one may imagine, this program may provide improved, long-term conditions for many. After giving full consideration and contemplation to this proposal, one will realize the potential for PARK-N-SLEEP programs to end “on-the-street” homelessness within any city at relatively low or zero cost to government.

It is speculation that city management may have the opportunity to possibly reclassify citizens at PARK-N-SLEEP sites as an improved status compared to “on the street” homeless citizens. While they would not be living in traditional homes, they also would not be “on the street.” They would be in a program that gives them the opportunity to sustain some degree of normality by having a fixed location to exist, rest and enjoy increased privacy. This policy supports further progress for positive individual self-esteem, optimism, employment eligibility, family stability, social bonds and contemplations for the future.

From The Author:

If your city is rampant with unresolved homeless conditions, please ensure that your city mayor and city council body have considered this proposal. You may choose to formally and publicly address your city government to establish an exploration committee and then to bring this alternative to a vote.

Although the author envisions many large cities adopting some form of the PARK-N-SLEEP program nationally and perhaps globally, much personal appreciation would be felt if at least one program was seriously attempted and valuable feedback was provided on this site for other cities to consider. Please register and provide any comments regarding any known PARK-N-SLEEP related site efforts, successes or obstacles.

...May many without traditional homes discover new peace and safety.

<http://humanitytest.org/blog/park-n-sleep-sites-homeless-solution-for-the-city-mayor>