



## What is a Safe Place to Park?

Safe Place to Park is a proposed program that if it moves forward, would be a parking area for locally employed people who spend the night in their vehicles, providing a safe, legal space to sleep, necessary amenities, and connections to appropriate supportive services. This program is being offered as a **temporary** strategy while housing developments are being built. The cost of operations of the program may be grant-funded through the Arizona Department of Housing for up to two years.

## Why is it needed?

Local housing conditions are as follows:

- As of 2020, there is a shortfall of 1260 affordable housing units in Sedona
- Short-term-rentals make up more than 16% of Sedona housing stock
- The average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$2,150
- There has been a 50% increase in home prices since 2020
- There is a lack of affordable housing for the workforce
- Building new affordable units takes time
- Many local employees do not have housing. They sleep in their vehicles and struggle to find a safe, legal space to park at night.

## What are the goals of the project?

Housing is the goal. More specifically, as it states in the namesake: the short-term goal is providing a safe, legal place for our working homeless to park. The long-term goal is placing people in permanent housing. Participants will be the first to know of workforce housing as it's built. Connections to services will help participants receive help with housing and other necessary support to prevent a decline into homelessness. If it moves forward, the program will help us count this largely hidden population to better inform housing needs and to inform participants as housing becomes available. The program will reduce impacts on law enforcement because it will provide a legal place to park, rather than utilizing local streets, neighborhoods and parks.

## Will it be a homeless encampment?

No. What is proposed is an overnight parking area, open only during the nighttime hours. Participants will drive in nightly and drive out daily, taking all their belongings with them. **No encampments, no set up, no tents are allowed.** The program is for people with operable motor vehicles. If it moves forward, the site will remain closed and locked during daytime hours.

## Who are the people that will potentially use the program?

The program is designed specifically for those who work locally and use a motor vehicle as their primary shelter. Other programs are available for indigent, mentally ill, and street homeless, but not this program. Some of the people who will use this program include employees we interact with each day, like: Restaurant Servers, Spa Attendants, Hotel/Hospitality employees, Grocery Store Cashiers, Teachers and other School employees, City employees, Jeep Tour Drivers and other Outdoor Adventure Guides, Coffee Shop Baristas, and Retail Store Clerks. **All participants will be required to have an existing connection to Sedona (see below) before being admitted** and must sign and adhere to a Code of Conduct and follow all rules.

Acceptable forms of proof of Sedona employment and exceptions are as follows:

1. A pay statement from an employer with a physical address within the Sedona City limits dated within the past 30 days.



2. Alternatives such as an employer verification letter, tax returns, 1099's and W-2's will be accepted if a verbal confirmation of current employment cannot be obtained from the employer by calling a publicly available number.
3. Self-employed people can be accepted if their business is registered to a Sedona address and their name is on the business license.
4. **Any other self-employed people, and those who cannot be employed because they are retired or disabled have to demonstrate a verifiable connection to Sedona with one of the following documents:** an Arizona Driver License, State ID, or vehicle registration showing a Sedona physical address and not issued in 2024 or later.
5. Remote/gig workers or anyone else who cannot provide the required documents, but who claim to live in Sedona, will be referred to the Housing Department for a review panel decision. The review panel will make a determination of eligibility within 7 days.

### Would this be offered to employees who work late hours?

Arrangements can be made for late arrivals; however the site would not remain open during the day.

### When would people be able to start parking here?

This program has not been scheduled to open. A referendum is on the November 2024 ballot to determine if Sedona residents approve the zoning change that will allow its operation at the Cultural Park site. **City Council has paused the program, pending election results.**

### If the referendum doesn't pass, will the City just open it anyway?

If the referendum doesn't pass, the site that has been identified at the Cultural Park will not be able to be used. City Council would need to then decide if they want to identify other sites, or simply not implement the program at this time.

### Why is it proposed at the Cultural Park?

The 40-acre, City-owned Cultural Park will be undergoing a master planning process for redevelopment. While uses for the underutilized land are being planned, the Safe Place to Park would inhabit a 5-acre parcel situated in the southwest corner of the property and is not visible from SR89A or any home. There would be a minimal footprint because none of the "infrastructure" will be paved or permanent. The program would utilize preexisting dirt parking areas.

### How would the site be managed?

If the project moves forward, Verde Valley Homeless Coalition (VVHC) trained staff will manage the site during all hours of operation. Site staff will perform check-in, tracking, security and safety duties, ensuring the smooth and safe operation of the site. Local emergency service agencies like Sedona Police and Fire Departments have been consulted. Safety recommendations have been incorporated into the operation plan. Verde Valley Homeless Coalition will be under the oversight of City staff and will provide regular reporting metrics to the City of Sedona and to HUD's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). VVHC will connect participants to supportive services, as appropriate.

### Are restrooms and shower facilities planned?

Yes. Portable shower trailers and portable restrooms will be on-site, including ADA-compliant units. Showers and trailers will be available during hours of operation only and will remain locked during daytime hours. These facilities will reduce impacts on public facilities, local businesses, residents, and the national forest.



### **What are the safety measures planned?**

Planned safety measures include full time site management, on-site security, recording/tracking participant IDs and parking space locations, dissemination of Fire Evacuation and Extreme Weather plans, and sexual offender compliance checks. Showers/restrooms will be closed and locked during daytime hours. No program participants will be onsite during the day. Wayfinding signage, solar bollard lighting, and compacted walkways for safety will be provided. ADA- compliant parking spaces, restrooms and showers will be provided.

### **What would the hours of operation be?**

If it moves forward, Safe Place to Park will be open between the hours of 4pm – 8am.

### **What about pets?**

Pets would be allowed but leash laws do apply. Participants are required to clean up after their pets. Trash receptacles would be available for use.