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Stakeholder Success Measures of a Safe Parking Pilot Program for Individuals Sheltering in Vehicles

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Abstract

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MPA, California State University, East Bay at Hayward, 2001

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Professional Administrative Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

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Abstract

The Safe Parking Pilot Program was a crisis response to the recent increase in vehicular

homelessness in a Northern Californian city. The city identified issues of unsheltered

individuals due to the increase housing cost and unaffordable housing. The city partnered

with faith-based organizations to provide safe locations for individuals sheltering in

vehicles. The current research aimed to evaluate benchmarks and metrics to measure the

safe parking pilot program. The purpose of the study was to help the city leaders and the

key stakeholders identify measures of success and how they might improve the program

in one Northern Californian city. Semistructured interview data from the 12 key

respondent stakeholders were collected and analyzed using qualitative method. The data

were coded and managed using NVivo software. Participants included program leaders,

program coordinators at the city, and police officers that provided security for the

program. Data indicated that each stakeholder had unstated metrics to measure the

program's success. The common theme found among the stakeholders was the lack of

formal benchmarks to measure success. Program utilization, growth of volunteers, and

ability to move unhoused vehicle dwellers to temporary and permanent housing were

among the themes developed from the data. The safe parking program should develop

benchmarks for rehousing rates, lengths of stay, and service engagement with all

stakeholders. The engagement of internal and external stakeholders allows positive social

change through clear indicators of success for multiple stakeholders.

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Dedication

I dedicated this work to my husband, children, brothers, other family members and friends who provided support, encouragement, and unconditional love throughout this journey. I appreciate you all greatly. I could not have made it this far without your continued support.

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I thank my husband for his continued support and encouragement. He helped to keep me focused. Your edits, insights and critiques were immensely valuable throughout this journey. I will forever remain grateful. I also thank my late senior brother, who have paved way for me to be where I am today. I will never forget you.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Problem

As affordable housing vanishes, many cities have faced increasing homelessness. Our County, was one of the counties that saw a substantial increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness between 2017 and 2019, driven by an increase in the number of unsheltered people. Zeitlin (2019) indicated that high rents lost, limited housing supply, and cumbersome temporary shelter processes contribute to the growing population of homeless in individuals and families. McElwain et al., (2021) added that nearly three dozen communities struggling to assist their unsheltered and sheltered homeless populations developed safe parking programs. The safe parking programs aimed to meet the needs of people living in their vehicles recognize that safety and basic physiological needs are the foundation of psychological stability. These programs offered secure places for people sheltering in vehicles to park and sleep in their vehicles overnight while using a range of social services to facilitate rapid transition to permanent housing (McElwain et al., 2021). McElwain et. al. (2021) cited that Santa Barbara's New Beginnings Counselling Center (SBNBCC), was one of many other successful programs created in 2004 in response to the vehicular homelessness crisis. Information in the city's websites indicated that the city adopted a safe parking program as one of its many programs to help address homelessness. The program was designed as a safe transitional space for individuals living in vehicles to stay while transitioning to permanent housing. The program also provided people living in vehicles a chance to meet their basic psychological needs (Kenrick et al., 2010).

According to PPIC Statewide Survey (2020), pandemic-related shutdowns and rising housing costs worsened California's homelessness crisis. Deaths among people without homes continue to rise, college students living in their cars, and encampment communities continue to grow in the state. The survey showed there was agreement across partisan groups that homelessness was a big problem in California (67% of Democrats, 64% of Republicans, and 68% of Independents). However, when cities set up programs like a safe parking pilot program to address homelessness, some people developed a "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) attitude (Gibson, 200). The city addressed vehicle dwellers' homelessness through the Safe Parking Pilot Program.

Background of Client Organization

The client organization was a city in northern California. The city continues to enjoy a growing population. The city is home to various innovative companies, including over 1,700 high-tech, life science, and clean technology firms and over 3,600 small businesses. It is located at the heart of Silicon Valley, making it the ideal place for people to live and work.

Information from city records showed that the city is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the Bay Area, with 49% of residents being born outside the United States and 63.2% speaking a language other than English at home. Many of its residents are highly educated, with high-paying jobs in various business sectors. According to city websites, WalletHub ranked the city as the second-best city to raise a family in America in 2021. Unfortunately, economic issues like financial setbacks such as job loss, increase in rent, or illness can lead to a loss of housing and homelessness. The rising cost of living

and stagnant wages have also contributed to housing inability in California and increased

unsheltered adults and families relying on their vehicles as a place to live and sleep

(McElwain et al., 2021).

On June 15, 2021, City Council adopted an ordinance to allow safe parking at

community-based host sites such as religious facilities and nonprofit organizations. The

safe parking program was developed to serve single adults and couples seeking safety

and consistency, seniors who cannot afford rent, working adults who are forced into

homelessness due to lost employment, and women fleeing domestic violence. The safe

parking program is a helpful resource for the homeless services network, from law

enforcement outreach to case management engagement. It provides a foundational

community to meet parkers' basic needs. The program was not intended to be a

permanent solution for those experiencing homelessness; rather, a safe parking program

intended to offer stability so that the program participants can work towards finding

reliable and safe permanent housing. The city had three safe parking programs to provide

designated secure parking areas for unhoused individuals living in their vehicle: a private

host site program, a sanctioned parking program, and a city-operated safe parking site

program. Each host site received a permit through the Community Development Agency,

demonstrating that they meet development and operational standards.

According to internal records and website information, safe parking program was

a collaborative effort between the city, community partners, and various faith-based

organizations. The organizations agreed to host the program participants in their

respective parking lots on a rotational basis. The rotational aspect of the program means

that the organizations, volunteers, and participants will be at different host sites every month. Their internal records shows that host sites' permits are valid for 1 year from the time they are granted. However, a site does not have to host for 12 months and can determine how often it can host vehicles. The city Human Service Department's job is to connect with other organizations that may be interested in becoming safe parking host sites or supporting the program through donations. For example, a vehicle repair fund can support those living in their vehicles, which may assist with obtaining critical licensing and registration documents or performing essential car maintenance.

City records showed that the private host site program was modeled by a faith-based temporary shelters permit process that City Council adopted in 2018. According to safe parking program city manager, the city developed a partnership with faith-based organizations to allow a limited number of operable vehicles to park within these organization's existing parking lots. The host program allowed faith-based sites to provide safe parking sites for vehicle dwellers to stay and transition to a permanent house. Internal records indicated that a sanctioned parking program temporarily designated existing areas as "sanctioned safe parking areas." This could be re-striping existing on-street parking spaces within industrial or commercial areas and designing some parking spaces within city parks or other lands as determined to be appropriate by the City Council. The city records showed that a sanctioned parking program provided service to individuals where they currently parked to allow them to transition into permanent housing. At the same time, a city-operated safe parking site program provided comprehensive wraparound services to individuals in a site managed by the city. The site

was designed to provide basic facilities and wraparound services to all participants to transition to permanent housing. The program open 24/7 to allow participants to focus on job finding and other assistance to help them get on their feet.

City referral sources for the safe parking program's participants were Supportive Service Agency in the city such as city police, human services agency, case managers, and host sites operators. The program manager explained that people who get priority referrals includes people 62 years and older, or in a family unit, people employed or enrolled in school within the city, families with minor children, and adults 18 + (single or coupled up). The participants must be affiliated with the city, have previous house ownership, employment or school enrollment, family ties, physical or mental health services, and individuals enrolled in a support services program.

Information in the city websites described the requirements for operators and participants in the safe parking program. The standard operation time for the safe parking program was 10 hours a day. Only operatable vehicles, recreational vehicles (RVs), and vans with a permit from the site operator may park at the site. No more than 20 inhabitant vehicles can park on a single site. Participants are expected to sign expectations and participants' agreement, outlining adhering, and committing to a plan of transition from the safe parking program into stable housing. The participants sign a liability waiver that releases the host site and city of damages to the participant or their property and a statement of responsibilities and rules that defines rules and the process for violations and appeals. The City screening for participants includes a valid CA driver's license, current insurance, and registration (a 45-day grace period may be granted on a case-by-case

basis). The vehicles must be able to drive on and off-site daily, be owner-occupied and have a sex registry search and confirmation from the local police department.

Background of the Problem

According to January 30, 2019, Alameda County Point in Time Count, the city homelessness jumped by 27% from 479 in 2017 to 608 in 2019. The city ranked third highest in the County in the number of homeless people. Fifty percent of the city's unsheltered homeless population were vehicular dwellers, Alameda County Point in Time Count (January 30, 2019). The unsheltered population experienced a 266% increase between 2017 and 2019. For these people, their vehicles become their homes. Unfortunately, they faced many obstacles to finding a safe and legal place to park overnight. They faced the risk of parking citations, break-ins, and unsanitary living conditions (Alameda County, 2019).

In 2018, the city council approved several strategies to confront homelessness, especially vehicular homelessness. According to city records, the safe parking program was one of the programs launched on January 31, 2022, to provide a safe transitional space for residents experiencing vehicular homelessness to park overnight. The Safe parking program provides safe and secure places for vehicle dwellers to park and sleep. It also reduces the number of people living illegally in a vehicle on city streets, decreases enforcement actions and resulting legal costs to homeless individuals, and provides resources to secure permanent housing and economic stability.

The pilot program had the capacity for 15 passenger vehicles. The participants must work with social providers to support their search for stable housing. Only

individuals 18 years and above were permitted to enroll in the program. The participants

signed agreement forms outlining program rules. The gap in the program at this time is

stakeholders' inability to define how success will be measured.

Problem Statement

The problem for the city leadership was a lack of clear and shared understanding

of indicators of success in the safe parking pilot program. The leaders and critical actors

in the Safe Parking pilot program were unclear on precise definition of success. While

programs like the Housing Navigation Center (HNC), which started in 2020, have helped

the city address homelessness, the city's vehicle dwellers population continues to grow.

Affordable housing was vanishing in the county due to the increased population and lack

of employment. The affordable housing crisis exacerbated the homelessness crisis in

California. Many people who could no longer afford or find stable housing were forced to

spend their nights sleeping in vehicles. That drove the number of the unsheltered

homeless population up. In January of 2021, about 50% of the unsheltered homeless

population in the city were living in their vehicle- an increase of 266% between 2017 and

2019 (Alameda Point in Count, 2021). The rapid increase in rental housing costs has

forced many low-income wage earners out of the housing market. One in five of the

nation's students who identified as experiencing homelessness was estimated to reside in

California (Burns et al., 2021).

The January 2018 survey conducted by Alameda County across the cities within

the county showed that 73% of respondents in the cities believed that homelessness was

increasing due to rising costs and decreased availability of jobs, and a disappearing safety

net. The result showed that cities were less likely to invest their funds in transitional and permanent supportive housing. The survey indicated no consistent structure for guiding homelessness work. The survey also found that the homelessness problems in the Bay Area were unique. The best practices found in cities outside the Bay Area may not be practical in the cities across the Bay Area because of practical challenges like lack of available land for development and infrastructure challenges. Research from National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP, 2019) indicated that 30%–50% of unhoused individuals in West Coast cities now utilize their vehicles as primary source of shelter. This has led to increased numbers of communities turning towards criminalizing overnight parking to solve the issue (NLCHP, 2019; Mitchell, 1997). Lee et al. (2010) added that contributions to sociologists and social scientists since the mids-1990s differentiate among the types of homelessness, provide demographic estimates, show how being homelessness affects person's life chances and coping strategies. The city started the safe parking pilot program to address these problems. It sought a clear and shared understanding of indicators of success among the leaders and critical actors in the program.

The benchmarks for measuring success in the safe parking pilot program do not exist. In this professional administrative study, I assisted the city in identifying key benchmarks that would help the stakeholders define a successful, safe parking program. I hoped my work would assist the city and would provide more information in advancing knowledge in a safe parking program to tackle growing vehicular homelessness in Bay Area communities.

Purpose of the Study

In this professional administrative study, I explored and examined the attitudes of operators of the city's safe parking pilot program to identify smart practices to measure short- and long-term success in the program in other to provide policy recommendations to the city. This study was designed to provide understanding of how a safe parking pilot program can provide a safe parking environment and supportive services to homeless communities that live in their vehicles without causing negative issues to the host community in the city. I explored the attitude of stakeholders on what they consider a successful, safe parking program. Since this was a new program with limited benchmarks for measuring success, I collected data, interviewed stakeholders to explore their definition of success and present recommendations to the policyholders.

The academic literature on safe parking programs was limited (McElwain et al., 2021). Therefore, to understand the context of safe parking programs in this study, I concentrated on more general homelessness services and the features that overlapped with safe parking programs. The benchmarks from other homeless supportive services guided my work as I collected data and interviewed participants. In this study, I reviewed the literature available on safe parking programs and studied safe parking programs offered by other cities to identify best practices that impact outcomes.

Research Question

This study intended to answer the following closely related research questions to understand the attitudes of stakeholders on the safe parking program in the city:

- RQ1. What were the benchmarks and metrics for measuring the short- and long-term success of a safe parking program for stakeholders?

- RQ2. What would be the ideal population for a safe parking program?

- RQ3. How can a safe parking program mitigate negative issues for the neighboring community while providing essential services to vehicle dwellers?

Answers to these questions guided the city and critical stakeholders in setting the right safe parking programs for vehicle dwellers. The findings of this study could help the managers, coordinators and police officials work collaboratively with critical stakeholders in providing supportive services to unhoused vehicle dwellers as they transition to permanent housing.

Nature of the Administrative Study

In this qualitative study, I conducted a semi-structured interview with the stakeholders, the program coordinators, and police officers to identify innovative practices that would produce the best outcome for the stakeholders. In addition to structural interviews, I examined data available on safe parking programs in the city and other neighboring cities in the county to identify smart practices within their programs. I analyzed the data to determine the program model that impacts outcomes and leads to smart practices, and the funding sources and program stability that can impact program longevity and service level (McElwain et al., 2021). I also examined their eligibility requirements because it could impact the community input and may limit program limitations on an individual level. Using semi-structured interview questions, I

interviewed stakeholders of the programs and organized their answers to find common themes that impacted the program input and output. The stakeholders include a faith-based organization operating the safe parking program, the police officers enforcing the laws, program managers, and policymakers coordinating the program for the city.

I sought literature to review using keywords on homelessness and safe parking programs coordinated in other cities to identify best practices in their programs. Most of the interviews were conducted face to face, using a protective face mask. Some were conducted using phone calls when a face-to-face meeting was not appropriate. The stakeholders' perspectives aided in building and understanding the input and output results of the safe parking program. The information gathered was analyzed to determine what had worked for other cities and what to avoid in order to make the programs successful. The result of the information was summarized and presented to city officials in executive summary format.

Significance of the Study

This study was aimed at providing the city with objective recommendations on the benchmarks for measuring the success of the safe parking program. The study provided stakeholders with the best practices in a safe parking program to help them improve the program objectives. The study provided stakeholders with a better understanding on their attitudes on how a safe parking program could help mitigate any negative issues for the neighboring community while providing essential services to vehicle dwellers.

This professional study provided stakeholders with practical tools to manage homelessness while helping vehicle dwellers transition into permanent housing. This study helped present a positive change to vehicle dwellers and the community. It also contributed to public administration on homelessness management.

Summary

In Section 1, I identified the problem faced by the city in implementing its safe parking pilot program. The city also lacked understanding of how to measure the success in addressing the crisis created by its unsheltered individuals living in their vehicles as they transition into permanent housing. The city also needed to know how to prevent lawlessness in the communities where unsheltered vehicle dwellers reside. I also outlined the purpose of this study to the city and how the study helped them and other cities experiencing homelessness find benchmarks and metrics for measuring success in the program. I also identified the nature and significance of my administrative study to the field of homelessness about safe parking programs and the potential for broad application of the study to the field of homelessness.

In Section 2, I discuss the works of literature relevant to the safe parking program as it applied to the challenges facing the city in implementing its Safe Parking Program. I also delineate my roles and responsibilities through the conduct of this study.

Section 2: Conceptual Approach and Background

In this section, I examine conceptual models and frameworks within existing research on which I framed the study. I discuss the target organization's background and my role as the researcher in addressing the city's administrative issue in their quest to contain homelessness in the city. The city established a safe parking pilot program to reduce the city's vehicle homelessness crisis. However, there was a lack of clear understanding of the indicators of success in the safe parking program. In this study, I explored and examined the safe parking program in the city to identify smart practices and provided policymakers with recommendations on how success can be determined. The study was also designed to show how the program can provide a safe parking environment and supportive services to homeless vehicular dwellers without causing negative issues to the host community. In keeping with these facts, I interviewed stakeholders of the program and collected and analyzed data on the safe parking program and answered the following questions:

- RQ1. What were the benchmarks and metrics for measuring success in the program?

- RQ2. What was the ideal population for safe parking program?

- RQ3. How can the program mitigate any negative issues while providing essential services to vehicle dwellers?

The information and data collected from the structural interviews was analyzed, and a recommendation presented to the city in an executive summary.

Concept Framework

There was limited academic and localized literature on safe parking programs. To understand the concept of the safe parking program, I focused on general homeless services and the features that overlap with the safe parking program (McElwain et al., 2021). That allowed me to use the benchmarks from other homeless supportive services to address my study.

The conceptual frameworks that support this study include stakeholder theory, which was initially developed by Freeman (1984) and gained importance through the works of Clarkson (1994, 1995), Donaldson and Preston (1995), and Mitchell et al. (1992). Mitchell et al. (1992) suggested that organizations should heed the needs, interests, and influence of those affected by their policies. The interest, needs, and the influence of the faith-based organization that runs the program, the city police force that enforce the law, the community where the vehicles dwellers was housed, and the needs and interest of vehicle dwellers who they were trying to serve must be considered when making a strategic decision such as a safe parking program.

The needs and interests of individuals living in their vehicles differ from habitually homeless individuals living outdoors (Wakin, 2005). Vehicle dwellers face unique social and economic challenges different from chronically homeless individuals living outdoors (McElwain et al., 2021). People sheltering in their vehicles may maintain work and community ties not afforded to those living on the street by maintaining access to minimal shelter. Therefore, protecting them from citations, towing, and impoundment

fees that increase instability and threaten their community ties is necessary so that they may get help transitioning to permanent housing (Mitchell, 1997).

Faith-based organizations and other nonprofit organizations run safe parking programs to provide a space and basic hygiene amenities for vehicle dwellers to park overnight without the risk of citation. Organizations that operate the program secured designated safe parking lots and spaces where they connect participants to social services to help them get back on their feet. The organizations that provide safe parking for vehicle dwellers help them achieve stability and focus their attention on more advanced needs (Kenrick et al., 2010). The safe parking lots allowed individuals living in their vehicles a whole night of sleep and a sense of stability to engage in their next goal. By maintaining access to minimal shelter, individuals sheltering in their vehicles may maintain work and community ties not afforded to individuals living on the street. However, the criminalization of vehicle dwellings exposes people to citation, towing, or impounding fees that increase instability and threaten those ties (Mitchell, 1997). According to McElwain et al. (2021), the safe parking program maintained by Alameda County in 2020 assisted roughly 50 persons and has an average rehousing rate above 50%.

The city proposed three safe parking programs: a private host site, sanctioned parking, and a city-operated safe parking site program.

Key Terms

The *stakeholders* were interest groups that possessed the power to influence the city's decisions. These included the faith-based organizations whose needs, interests, and

influence the city must pay attention to. Clients were vehicle dwellers afflicted with homelessness. These stakeholders play important roles as advocates, sponsors, partners, and agents of change (Ipsos MORI, 2009). The city must pay attention to their needs and interests as well. The city must also pay attention to the needs of host communities whose properties and living standards are affected by safe parking programs.

Private host sites were safe parking lots operated by faith-based organizations. Sanctioned *Parking Lots* were private locations where individuals currently park their cars. Private individuals receive a permit from City to park their car within regulated times. The city's operated parking sites were sites owned by the city. *The umbrella organization model* was a safe parking program managed by a parent organization that contracts the services to an independent body. Parent organizations screen the client and assign them to best match lot and service providers. The composite program model was made of a hybrid of an umbrella model and independent model. They feature multiple safe parking locations with shared service locations. *Independent Operator Models* were safe parking programs operated by an independent organizations like faith-based organizations or other agencies.

Relevance to Public Organizations

Homelessness continues to be a challenging issue for cities in California. In 2018, California Senate Bill 850 established the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP), which allocated $500 million in one-time block grants to assist localities across California in improving their response to the homeless crisis (McElwain et al., 2021). HEAP was designed to provide flexibility in managing homeless crisis in the city. It

allowed cities to be creative in expanding and experimenting with new services. The city

took advantage of HEAP and partnered with Bay Area Community Services (BACS) to

operate a drop-in wellness center to provide services to homeless people. The city also

established a mobile evaluation team to provide services to homeless people with mental

health issues. In addition to the above, the city also allocated resources for the bi-weekly

cleanup of homeless encampments and secure rooms at a former motel for temporary

shelter. Internal Records showed that the city started a temporary Housing Navigation

Center for homeless adults. Despite all these, the city saw the number of individuals

living in their vehicles increase by 266% between 2017 and 2019. The number of people

residing in RVs shot up by 450%, while the number of people living in their cars or vans

increased by 144% within the same period.

　　　　Like many urban counties, the county shares many characteristics that contributed

to the increase in homelessness. The county faced rising rent costs, increasing shortfalls

in affordable housing, and a declining safety net for people facing hard times. According

to Alameda County Homeless Count and Survey Report, the 2017 homeless census and

survey showed that 39% of people were experiencing homelessness for the first time, and

nearly 60% have experienced homelessness for at least a year. The county's

homelessness rate was higher than the State of California cities (30 per 10,000 residents).

　　　　The county passed A1 Housing Bond to raise money to tackle homelessness. The

bond was raising $580 million for housing aid, and $425 million is going to housing for

low-income and vulnerable populations (Alameda County Community Development

Agency, 2016). A survey of a community-based organization conducted by Alameda

County in 2018 indicated that such organizations could serve more people experiencing homelessness. However, they needed more funding from the government. Alameda County budgeted over $63 million in homelessness assistance in 2016-2017. About 44% of the money went to permanent supportive housing, while only 21% went to transitional housing and rapid rehousing.

Although there was extensive literature on homelessness, the literature review on safe parking programs was limited. Existing research on safe parking programs consists of several reports on practices, program models, and outcomes (McElwain et al., 2021). How communities perceive homelessness as a problem often influences possible policy options and can push for enforcement over support services (NLCHP, 2019). Those who have advocated for homeless people have emphasized treating them with empathy and dignity (Gawthrop, 2005, p. 246). Those who favored supportive service interventions fell short of ideas often due to fragmented networks and limited resources (NLCHP, 2019). Flower et al. (2019) promoted a complex system approach to consider prevention, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. However, rising living costs and stagnant wages increase housing instability, which pushes the population of unsheltered adults and families in the Bay Area. To bring down the population of unsheltered vehicle dwellers, the city started a safe parking pilot program in 2022 (City Websites).

Organization Background and Context

As the fourth largest city in the San Francisco Bay Area with an increasing housing affordability index, its unsheltered population experienced a 266% increase between 2017 and 2019 (Alameda County Point in Time Count January 31, 2019.) About

238 individuals lived in an RV or passenger car in 2018, a 450% increase from 2017 to 2019. The number of people living in cars or vans increased by 144% within the same period. The major factor driving this increase at the time was a rapid increase in rental housing costs, forcing many low-income wage earners out of the housing market. A survey conducted by city staff found that approximately 70% of those living in a vehicle in the city also had a permanent home before becoming homeless.

At the direction of City Counsel, on April 17, 2018, city developed strategies for addressing the homelessness problem. These strategies included but were not limited to Housing Navigator Center (HNC), Islander Temporary Shelter (ITS), and Clean Start Mobile Hygiene Unit Program (CSHUP). HNC provided an average of six months of housing, basic needs, outreach services, health and wellness services, and intensive case management to homeless individuals. ITS was a 70-unit motel the city converted into a 128-unit affordable housing development to provide temporary shelter for unhoused individuals. Clean Start Mobile Hygiene Unit Program was a 51-foot truck and trailer fitted with two full bathrooms with showers, washers, and dryers to provide services to unhoused communities.

The severity of California's homelessness crisis led to varied of policy at the state level to address the need of state's homeless individuals. In 2019, California Assembly Bill 891passed the Assembly and State Senate to require cities with populations over 330,000 to develop safe parking programs and utilize public property for programs where possible (Bill Text – AB-891, 2019). McElwain et al. (2021) added that Governor Newsom vetoed the bill, but it brought attention to relatively new safe parking service

model. Despite all these efforts, the city population of vehicular homelessness continues to grow. The city started three safe parking pilot programs to address vehicular homelessness: Private Host Site, Sanctioned Parking in Place, and City Operated Safe Parking Site. The safe parking program was designed to provide people living in their vehicles with a designated secure place to park and have access to health and safety amenities.

However, there were few benchmarks for measuring a successful, safe parking program. The city lacked a clear understanding of measuring success in the program. This study explored stakeholders' attitudes to determine what constitutes a successful, safe parking program and how the program could mitigate any negative issues in the neighboring communities while providing essential services to vehicle dwellers.

Role of the DPA Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researcher plays significant role in data collection which allow themes and findings to emerge through careful analysis (Barrett & Twycross, 2009). My goal is to evaluate the city's safe parking pilot program by analyzing data obtained through interviews and internal records. As a resident of the of the city since 1997, I watched the city population, and the homeless population grew. I have no relationship with the employees at the city or any of the stakeholders. However, having lived in the city for over 20 years, I was familiar with issues of homelessness but not that of unsheltered vehicle dwellers. My motivation for the study of homelessness came from a demonstration in 2019 when some people demonstrated against a homeless camp the city was trying to establish close to the primary school. Since then, I have wondered how

the city solved the problem. My motivation was to provide the city an outside perspective in evaluating the attitude of stakeholders in what constitutes a successful, safe parking pilot program. The result of the research could help the city evaluate its safe parking program.

I conducted an in-depth analysis of the safe parking program practiced by other cities and compared their programs with that of the city's program and provided smart practices to the city. The fact that I live in the city where the study took place could pose a potential bias, but I tackled this by focusing on the attitude of the stakeholders that work on the program, not on the city itself, as I am a resident of the city. I also inform the readers the biases, assumptions, and my qualification as a researcher. The only possible ethical issue was the privacy of interview participants. I minimized the issue by using nonpersonal identification to identify all the participants.

Summary

In Section 2, I discussed the literature that contributed to the field of homelessness and would be contributing to my conceptual framework for the Safe Parking Program. I used smart practices found in other homelessness programs to guide my study in safe parking program. I also pointed out that city did not clearly define what success would look like in the safe parking pilot program. Literature on safe parking programs did not adequately address the benchmarks for measuring success in the program. In Section 3, I identify data collection methods and analysis I used to address the research questions. I also addressed the source of evidence and the participants in the study. I then recommended ways to measure success of safe parking program.

Section 3: Data Collection Process and Analysis

The city's lack of clear understanding of the benchmarks for measuring success in their safe parking program was the motivating factor for this study. The purpose of the study was to explore the attitude of stakeholders toward what they consider a successful, safe parking program and to provide recommendation to the city. In this study, I explored how the city can offer a safe parking environment and supportive services to homeless communities that live in their vehicles without causing negative issues to the host communities. The study analyzed the existing safe parking program data maintained by the city and reviewed other homeless programs to provide recommendations to the city's policymakers. This section addresses the alignment between the research question and the methodology. I also identify the sources of the evidence and describe the study's research methods.

Research Questions

The introduction of a safe parking pilot program created a unique problem for the city. They lacked a clear understanding of the benchmarks for measuring success in the safe parking program. This study explored the stakeholders' attitude toward what is considered a successful, safe parking program and provide policy recommendations to policymakers in the city. Due to minimal literature on benchmarks for measuring success in the program, I reviewed the city's safe parking program and other broader homeless services to provide context on how the safe parking program can successfully support vehicle dwellers towards stable housing.

Therefore, to understand the context of the safe parking program, this study concentrated on more general homelessness services and their features that overlapped with the safe parking program. Using the data collected, I answered the study's following practice-focused questions:

1. What were the benchmarks and metrics for measuring the success of a safe parking program for the stakeholders?

2. How can safe parking mitigate any negative issues for the neighboring community while providing essential services to vehicle dwellers

3. What would be the ideal population for a safe parking program?

Sources of Evidence

This qualitative study was designed to explore the experience of stakeholders of a city in Northern California. I used public and internal data from the County and city to identify homeless demographic changes over time and how that had contributed to implementation a safe parking program. I used the city's internal data to identify the types of safe parking programs the city runs and the stakeholders in the programs. I used county and city Point in Time counts and statistics to identify changes in vehicular homelessness in the city. The participants were the stakeholders in the program: the program managers, host sites coordinators, and city police officers that enforced rules and regulations for the program. The participants were identified and interviewed to determine their attitudes on what would constitute a successful program. Using internal city information, I identified the safe parking programs and contacted the program leaders to participate in a semistructured interview. Semistructured interview was

designed to ask more open-ended questions to identify familiar terms on what stakeholders consider a successful program and to find the benchmarks and metrics for measuring the program's success. Stakeholders were interviewed to determine how a safe parking program can mitigate any negative issues for the community while providing essential services to vehicle dwellers. The interview determined the relationship between the evidence and the purpose of the study.

The relationship surrounding each source and the purpose of this study assisted in understanding the benchmarks the city can use to understand what constitutes a successful, safe parking program. I used the safe parking logic model developed by McElwain et al. (2021) to show the connection between program design and activities about expected returns. For example, funding sources can impact program longevity and services level. Rules and eligibility requests could be impacted by community input but may limit utilization and program impact on the individual.

Participants

Collecting data through interviews with participants is a characteristic of many qualitative studies (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). I identified 16 participants through city records for the study. Twelve participants agreed to be interviewed and four opted out. I interviewed five program coordinators from faith-based organizations and five program managers from the city. According to Walden University, when conducting a study, having a diverse group of participants brings value and validity to research work. The participants for this study came from diverse and professional background. They included program managers, program coordinators, and police officers that enforced, and

maintained rules and regulations at the program sites. The city leaders managing the

program were identified and interviewed. The city has four faith-based operators that

provide their site with a safe parking program. I interviewed the leaders of these

operators and social service providers that provided support services to vehicle dwellers.

I also interviewed two city police officials that monitor the program. These people were

identified and interviewed to determine what they consider a successful program. Since

the population of program managers was small, their names were obtained through

records provided by the city. The city safe parking pilot program was designed to help

vehicle dwellers transition to stable housing. Participants were contacted using program

management records and city records for a short interview. The interview was conducted

using face-to-face meetings and telephone, depending on the availability of participants.

A protective mask was used during face-to-face interviews. The interview lasted for 30 to

60 minutes. A follow-up interview was needed to narrow down the answers. Because of

the few safe parking pilot programs, the city has, I was not expecting a large sample size.

Data Control Procedures

I conducted one-on-one interviews using semistructured questions (see Appendix)

with participants to explore their attitudes towards the critical research questions. Semi-

structured questions allowed me to ask open ended questions to the participants. In

addition, I used semistructured interview questions to interview city leaders, program

managers, coordinators, and law enforcement officers.

Interview questions were open-ended to allow participants to explore their

thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes regarding what they consider metrics needed to

measure success in the program. The interview was recorded with the permission of every participant. All data were stored in a password-protected folder on my personal computer and would be destroyed after completion of the program. I kept notes to allow a follow-up question. I asked the participants' permission for a follow-up interview to clarify information until themes developed. Every participant's interview lasted 30 to 60 minutes. City leaders' interviews lasted more than 30 minutes. I followed on one to clarify some information. The time scheduled was adequate to provide me enough information. Two of the participants were very reluctant but managed to finish the interview. Four of the 16 selected participants opted out of interviews.

Data Analysis

In this qualitative case study, I collected program information containing types of safe parking pilot programs and their sites. The documents also included all the stakeholders in the program and the locations of the sites they managed. Data collected contained the names of program coordinators from the faith-based organization, the names of the city's program managers and police officers, and the number of participants in each site. The data also explained the initial requirements from the City Council before they approved the safe parking program.

The documents reviewed allowed me to know the key stakeholders. I was able to determine the important stakeholders for the interview, the location of their sites, and the rules and regulations on the sites. Using NVivo software (Version 12), I performed a content analysis of the documents to find the types of safe parking pilot programs and the number of participants in each site. I identified the patterns and frequencies of phrases

occurring in the documents reviewed. Using the patterns, frequencies, and words in the documents helped me determine the theme in the reviewed documents. Unfortunately, this was time-consuming. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the semistructured interview conducted with the critical stakeholders to develop a theme and pattern in the answers provided by interview participants. A combination of inductive and deductive analysis was used in labeling the data. The result of the interview was transcribed and coded using NVivo software.

Data Protection

The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) practices for participant protection was designed to safeguard the identity, responses, and data collection throughout this research. The data were screened, typed, and saved in Microsoft, secured with password protection in a flash drive. Semistructured interviews were conducted, face -to-face except in two occasions when scheduling was difficult phone interview was used. Protective mask was used during face-to-face interview. All information was secured on a password-protected flash drive and coded to ensure the security of all the participants.

Incentives

This study was entirely voluntary. Everyone's decisions were respected whether or not they chose to be in the study. However, the benefits of the study allowed participants to voice their thoughts and perceptions regarding the safe parking program. The study aimed to provide research and recommendations on how the safe parking program can improve to serve the needs of community members sheltering in the

vehicles. There were no formal incentives for the participants because they have two options for the interviews. They have choice of face to face or phone interview.

Consent Process Agreement

Upon the approval and permission to proceed to the final study by Institutional Review Board (IRB), a detailed and thorough explanation of the data collection process and consent form were sent to participants for their acceptance and return, indicating their intention to participate. The Walden University IRB approval number is "08-16-22-1038415" for this study. Participation was voluntary with termination clause and confidentiality agreement was also secured.

Semistructured Interview Privacy

A common approach in qualitative research is the semistructured interview, were core elements of the phenomenon being studies are explicitly asked about by the interviewer (Barrett & Twycross, 2018, p. 63). As indicated by Barrett and Twycross, a well-designed semistructured interview captures key areas while still flexibility for participants to bring their own personality and perspective to the discussion. The semistructured interviews were an effective method for data collection because I wanted to collect qualitative or open-ended data to explore participant's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about a particular topic or program. This format allowed more context and understanding of the situation that helped me understand why a practice works well (Doody & Noonan, 2013; Doringer,2020). Semistructured interviews were held face to face or by phone at approximately 7 p.m. to ensure punctuality and consistency. The interview was one on one in a secluded room. The participant was informed when the

recording started and end. The participants used nick names or names that masked their real names. Confidentiality was strictly maintained.

There were measures for the participant to choose to withdraw from the interview process for personal reasons. There was a verbal and written form to honor such requests. To ensure this study's validity, the data from all the stakeholders were essential for a successful study. However, individuals could be excused at any time without negatively affecting the study.

City approved my study via a signed agreement. As a requirement, all guidelines regarding my study followed the Walden IRB process. My study was approved by my committee and the city. The city agreed to work with me, a student researcher at Walden University, to evaluate the Safe Parking Pilot Program the city coordinates. The program was developed to provide sheltering places to allow community members to transition into housing from living in their vehicles. The participants were adults 18 years and above. The participants were single adults and couples seeking safety and consistency, the seniors who cannot afford to rent, adults working to increase their income to make rent, and women fleeing domestic violence (Internal City Record).

Semistructured Interviews

The semistructured interviews were conducted with an open framework, allowing focused, conversational, and two-way communication. The participants selected for the interviews process came from stakeholders of the city found from internal data. The questions focused on the success measures of a safe parking program. Initially face to

face interview was planned, but some participants requested phone interviews. Data collected were safeguarded with a password protected in the flash drive.

The initial consent for this study was granted from the city and my Walden committee members. The semistructured interview was designed to ensure the integrity of the research questions, effective and consistent communication, and transparency among the committee members and all the participants. The semistructured interview combined the element of structured and unstructured interviews and allowed advantages of comparable, reliable data and flexibility to ask follow-up questions. Semistructured interview also ensured the integrity of the research questions, effective and consistent communication, and transparency among the committee members and all the participants

The following steps were conducted to ensure the integrity of evidence:

1. An invitation was sent to all participants individually through email to protect their privacy.

2. The detailed instructions were provided to all the participants, including time, date, and topic. Participants had the opportunity to express their thoughts and perceptions about the organization.

3. The agenda was distributed to all the participants regarding the event's planning.

4. There was a thematic framework beforehand to keep both the interviewer and participants on task, avoiding distractions while encouraging two-way communications.

5. The semistructured interview introduced details and richness due to their more open-ended nature. Participants were informed beforehand that they might be asked to clarify, elaborate, or rephrase their answers if necessary.

The semistructured interview questions for the study are as follows:

1. If you know them, what current benchmarks and metrics are used to measure the success of safe parking program?

2. Do you have means to determine the short and long-term of success of the program?

3. What types of services do safe parking programs provide to unhouse individuals to move them to stable housing successfully?

4. How does the safe parking program fit in with other homeless services in your community?

5. Can you describe any specific benchmark your program must meet to maintain funding?

6. Have there been any security incidents or complaints from parkers staying at the safe parking program site?

7. What are the safe parking program's most significant challenges from your perspective?

8. How has the program been perceived by the community?

9. Has there been any community opposition and or / community support?

Summary

Section 3 discussed the lack of clear understanding of the benchmarks and metrics for measuring success in the safe parking program as the problem Tri-City faced. The section also restated the purpose of the study and the source of evidence for the study. Practical-focused questions needed to be introduced to address the problem faced by the city. The NVivo qualitative data analysis software was used to document, transcribe, code, and analyze the data collected through semistructured interviews. The data collection followed the guidelines and policies sustained by Walden University.

Section 4: Data Evaluation and Recommendation

The purpose of this qualitative study, as described in previous sections, was to explore the attitudes of stakeholders on how they measure success in safe parking program in other to provide policy recommendations to the city on how a safe parking program can provide a safe parking environment as well as supportive services to the homeless community that lives in their vehicles without causing negative issues to the host community. The safe parking pilot program was a new program introduced by the city to manage the growing problem of unhoused vehicle dwellers, but there was a lack of benchmarks and metrics to measure success because of the limited literature on the safe parking program. Thus, the problem I sought to address in this study was the lack of clear understanding of what benchmark and metrics the stakeholders will use to measure success in the safe parking pilot program administered by stakeholders and coordinated by the city.

The city had three types of safe parking programs in four locations. The faith-based organizations that operate these programs are managed by program managers at the city human resources department. The evidence for this project came from semistructured interviews conducted with 12 stakeholders working and managing the program. I collected the program coordinators' names and each site's location from program managers in the city. I had planned to interview up to 16 stakeholders for this project. Four people opted out, and 12 stakeholders agreed to the interview. Stakeholders have diverse expectations and perceptions of what success was expected to look like. The reduction of the number of interviewees from 16 to 12 did not have any material impact

on the results because the city had only four sites operated by five program coordinators and managed by program managers. Therefore, 12 interviewees were enough to reach a saturation point. I interviewed five people from host sites, five from the city, and two police officers who oversaw the project's security. The city managers and police officers seemed highly enthusiastic and excited to participate in the interview process. The big boss and the overall city manager were amiable and told me to contact them for any questions or clarification. At the same time, the coordinators from host sites were less enthusiastic. Scheduling them for interviews was challenging. However, two host site coordinators provided valuable data for my study.

Data were collected through semistructured interview questions conducted face to face, using a protective mask, and phone when possible. The collected voice data was recorded and stored in a password-protected voice recorder. The data were then imported into NVivo software for analysis, coding, and classification until a thematic form was obtained.

The face-to-face semistructured interview allowed for more context and understanding of stakeholder thinking as they operate the program. I used nine semistructured interview questions to give each stakeholder opportunities to air their understanding of each of the nine questions designed to explore their attitude on how success can be measured. Each stakeholder was asked the same questions and allowed to expand on each question as they saw fit. The findings were analyzed, and several themes emerged.

Emergent Themes

As I analyzed the data collected from the interviews, several themes became evident. None of the stakeholders had predetermined benchmarks to measure the success of the safe parking pilot program. They all valued volunteerism and increased participation of faith-based volunteers and parkers. Program coordinators, law enforcement officers, and city program managers all emphasized the importance of program utilization and connection of parkers to supportive services to prepare them for transition to stable housing. Another theme evidenced in the data was the hospitality of coordinators and the safety of parkers and the neighboring community hosting them to minimize the impact of negative perceptions of the program. Program managers at the city also emphasized parkers' needs assessment to connect parkers to city and county support services to move them to affordable housing quickly. One of the essential themes in the mind of program managers at the city of Northern California was an increase in the awareness of the safe parking program and the supporting service to all homeless people living in encampments with the hope that it will help in the depopulation of homeless encampments. The findings are organized according to the semistructured questions below.

Findings and Implications

The first question I posed to all the stakeholders was what determined the benchmarks and metrics they used to measure success in the program. Their answers were as wide as their interest in the program. Police officers were clear in their unstated benchmarks. Their interest was public safety and program utilization. One office

explained, "The benchmarks we are looking at, especially through the public safety lens," are "crime reports in the participating sites, and then surrounding neighborhoods." He also had program utilization and a positive impact on the community very high on his mind. Program coordinators from faith-based organizations shared police officers' interest in program utilization and a positive impact on the community. However, they emphasized "volunteerism and hospitality" as the most crucial measure of success. "To the extent our volunteers feel like they are playing a meaningful role in helping unhoused people have a meaningful life, it will be good for the participants and our congregation." The program managers at the city have similar but slightly different interests with the police officers and program coordinators at the faith-based organization. They believed program utilization and growth were essential, but their ultimate goal was to move unhoused vehicle dwellers to more stable housing. To get that accomplished, they needed more participants in the program and more faith-based organizations to participate in the program. One program manager remarked, "We think that the program's success" depends on "if we are getting more people into the program, and we are helping them through their difficult period, that is a success," and the long term would be connecting people with something more stable.

The success of the safe parking program would be in the city's ability to manage the stakeholders' competing interests (Mitchell et al., 1992). The interest of police officers, program coordinators, city managers, and the neighborhood where sites were located should be addressed by the city, and so is the interest of parkers. Vehicle dwellers face unique social and economic challenges different from chronically homeless

individuals living outdoors (McElwain et al., 2021). These competing interests were more evident in their answers to the second semistructured question.

When stakeholders were asked about their short-term and long-term determinants of success in the program, the city managers listed utilization of the program measured by the number of participants and awareness of the program at other homeless encampments as a short-term goal. As one city manager put it, "We want folks to know about it. If it is not being utilized, we want people at homeless encampments to be aware of the program." Program managers at the city also indicated that one of their short-term goals is getting people into 6 months rotational program and maintaining "our faith-based partnerships to continue to provide host site location." The long-term determinant of success for city managers was more toward participant outcomes. "So, people being connected to public benefits, housing, medical care, those are things that we would like to see this program evolve into and go beyond creating partnerships and go deeper into service," one of the city managers said.

When the same question was posed to faith-based program coordinators, they listed several benchmarks. "The ultimate one is getting participants connected to resources they may need that help to stabilize their lives." "The short-term objective is to try to get people who are homeless to get them reconnected to community and a sense of community." Churches are essential in offering participants a welcoming and supportive environment to give them a sense of belonging. That allowed the parkers "to get a good night's sleep and not be sleeping with one eye open in an unsafe situation." "We want people to know that the program exists so that when they are ready, they can look for the

program," explained one of the respondents. The city's job here was to merge all these interests to give the program a good chance of success. The interest of all stakeholders must be addressed (Mitchell et al., 1992) and Clarkson (1995).

One of the long-term goals common to all stakeholders is the ability to maximize the utilization of every site. Every site is designed to have a maximum of 15 vehicles. Research indicated that stakeholders would like to scale up the number of participants in each site to the maximum number of vehicles allowed. Some stakeholders would like the city to purchase or take up a lease on more oversized parking lots used for the safe parking program. Each participant needs to be assigned to a case manager who will be responsible for their care until they can be housed.

When stakeholders were asked what type of services the safe parking pilot program provided unhoused individuals to move them into stable housing successfully, their answers showed competing interests among the stakeholders. The city managers' interests were broad compared to program coordinators at faith-based organizations. The city managers believed that since the long-term goal of the safe parking pilot program is to move participants out of homelessness into housing, the best way to accomplish that is to provide wraparound services to participants to help prepare them for permanent or temporary housing. Connecting participants with social workers and the Human Service Department at the city to direct them to the city and other county programs were high on the city managers' list. Social workers provide them with need assessment, one city manager explained, "so that we can identify some options for them on how they can get connected to benefits so that when housing opportunity comes up," it will be affordable.

"Getting documentation in place has become a critical aspect of the program" (e.g., driver's license, registration, and insurance). Social workers and clinicians assigned to them provide them with family resources needed to connect them where they can get coordinated entry assessment and resources to prepare them for permanent housing. The one-stop shop will help stabilize their lives and provide them with a supportive environment that will allow them to get a good night's sleep as they work out of homelessness. The safe parking program complements other homeless programs offered by the city to help move the unhoused individual into temporary or permanent housing. This is a vehicle-based version of the homeless shelter. It is a crisis response to unhoused vehicular dwellers to give them access to a verse network of services provided to other unhoused communities. It fits well with other homeless programs because it provides unhoused vehicle dwellers the opportunity to stay safe in their cars at night and access programs that help move them out of homelessness into housing. Program coordinators at faith-based organizations' answers to the services the safe parking pilot program provides to parkers to help move them to stable housing successfully were essential services. One program coordinator summed up their goal: "Well, ideally, a safe parking program has services that meet the participants' basic needs." Faith-based organizations were primarily interested in providing basic day-to-day needs.

Question 5 asked stakeholders to describe any benchmarks the program must meet to maintain funding. All those interviewed indicated that the only benchmark the city council required from the program managers to maintain funding is that the participants in the program must keep their car registration and car insurance current.

"We made certain promises to our city council to authorize the program. They wanted to make sure that people were licensed. So, we are working on ensuring those things are in place." Their cars must be motorable so the participants can move out of the parking lot during the day and return at night. The requirement that participants vehicles stay operational and have current registration and insurance so that they can drive their cars in and out of safe parking place. One program coordinator maintained "is becoming a drain on the vehicle and finances of participant that does not have a job."

Regarding the biggest challenges facing the safe parking program, city managers acknowledged that focusing on operatable passenger vehicles was a challenge. "People have to leave every day or go to a different site every month. "That can be a drain on the vehicle and on funds to cover fuel," maintained one of the city managers.

Interpretation of Findings

Data collected throughout the interview indicated that Safe Parking Pilot Program was a crisis response to the growth in unhoused vehicle dwellers throughout the city to give the participants a place to sleep safely at night and to connect them during the day to a diverse network of programs available to help move unhoused individuals to temporary or permanent housing. The research showed that the stakeholders who run the program did not clearly understand the benchmarks and metrics to measure success in the program because the literature is limited.

The interview results showed that while the safe parking program is a new introduction to the variety of programs case managers use in managing homeless crises, the outcome is still geared toward moving unhoused vehicles dwellers out of their

vehicles to temporary or permanent housing. The result showed that though there were no stated benchmarks and metrics initially for measuring success in the program, each stakeholder has unstated metrics for measuring success. These metrics include site utilization, increased participation by faith-based organizations, and, most importantly, moving unhoused vehicle dwellers out of their vehicles to temporary or permanent housing.

Limitations

One of the unanticipated limitations of this study was the impact of COVID-19 on interview scheduling. Initially, the stakeholders were reluctant to schedule an interview. After several attempts, the issue was resolved. I lost 2 weeks, and two stakeholders refused to be interviewed. Another unexpected problem was learning the NVivo software used to code and analyze the data. Learning to code, categorize, and analyze the data took much time.

The study is limited to four safe parking pilot programs maintained by the city. The pilot program has existed for less than one year since January 1, 2022. The semistructured interview with 12 stakeholders with limited knowledge of the safe parking program may not provide complete information to be used elsewhere outside the city. However, the data collected reflected the attitude of the program's stakeholders. Twelve participants in the interview reflect most of the program coordinators and program managers that run the entire program.

Implications Resulting from the Findings

Stabilizing and rehousing individuals experiencing homelessness is the goal of any program established to service the homeless population. The success of the city's safe parking pilot programs depends on how the city engages and manages the interests of all the stakeholders involved in the program. Research shows that faith-based program coordinators' interests are very narrow- geared toward the basic needs of parkers. In contrast, the interest of city managers is broad, geared toward the overall interest of all the city residents. The interests of parkers and neighboring communities are also different. The program managers' interest in the host site was always on the participants. "Are they getting their needs met by us as much as we can?" "And are they happy at the end of the month?" asked one of the program coordinators at the faith-based organization. While the consensus of the city managers was, "are we moving people off the street into affordable housing" thereby making the city parks and streets free of homelessness for everyone to enjoy.

Therefore, the effectiveness of this program depends on how the city manages all the stakeholders' interests (Ipos Mori, 2009). "The community and stakeholder context for safe parking programs can shut or help them flourish" (McElwain et al., 2021). The city should have essential benchmarks and metrics agreed upon by all the stakeholders to evaluate the program's success. This study highlights the attitude of stakeholders on essential benchmarks and metrics needed to evaluate the safe parking program. McElwain et al. (2021) maintained that directing the focus and conduct of program managers in performing self-evaluation to determine if they are on track toward

achieving safe parking pilot goals. This study suggests that the city and other stakeholders operating safe parking programs integrate social services that will help refer parkers to all programs that can connect them with their immediate needs. Strong relationships and early involvement with law enforcement could also help minimize negative impacts within the neighboring communities. In their work, McElwain et al. (2021) suggested that personal relationship with social services and law enforcement was foundational in recruiting, improving safety, and minimizing the negative impact on the community. Police officers will more likely refer unhoused vehicle dwellers to safe parking programs than issue citations. Management of stakeholders' interests will help minimize the challenges in the program.

The city's interest is ensuring all the applicants are screened to make sure participant has current insurance, registration, and motorable car and are not registered as sex offender conflict with the interest of a faith-based organization whose interest is always to register and service everyone that comes into their site. The services provided by the city to safe parking program were comprehensive, but they must meet stringent requirements. This requirement created financial hardship for parkers. The churches offered maintenance checks and cash to parkers to helped in keeping their cars motorable and their licenses and registration current. These challenges could be minimized if all stakeholders knew and standardized proper benchmarks and metrics to guide the program. Bryson (2011) indicated that benchmarks are important mechanism to help safe parking programs direct their focus and conduct self-evaluation to determine if they are on track toward achieving goal. According to the author, without benchmarking and

specific measures for success, safe parking program will have difficulty determining what resources and input to contribute achieving better for parkers and other resources for program displayed in the logical model. Other source added that benchmarks identified can be standardized to improve rehousing rate. The potential implication of positive change in the homeless management and safe parking program could be significant, especial for the city in Northern California.

Recommendations

The safe parking program is a subset of the programs used by the city to address challenges faced by unhoused vehicle dwellers and individuals living in homeless shelters and encampments. Therefore, city managers and other stakeholders running the program need to be clear on the benchmarks and metrics they will use to evaluate its success. Currently, program coordinators from the faith-based organization and program managers and police officers in the city have different unstated benchmarks to measure their success in the program. There should be standardized metrics known and used by each stakeholder to evaluate the program's overall success.

Most of the benchmarks the faith-based organization uses are usually geared toward volunteerism and hospitality provided to participants. Their interests are mostly geared toward participants' comfort and well-being. They want the program to grow so that more people can be taken out of homeless encampments and out of the street to a safe place where they can manage their life better. Police officers' interest is primarily in public safety. They want parkers and their neighbors to live in peace and safety. While the program managers at the city may want the same metrics program coordinators and

police officers want, their overall interest is to manage competing community interests while addressing the crisis created by the growth of unhoused vehicle dwellers that is creating the issue in the city streets and parks. Therefore, the metrics they use must address the overall homeless issues while maintaining the requirements set by the city council when they authorized the safe parking program.

The council required every participant to maintain current car registration, driver's license, and insurance before they are allowed into the program. Program managers' unstated metrics to measure the success of the safe parking program are reducing the population of unhoused vehicle dwellers and reducing homelessness in the city. To accomplish this, they need more volunteers from faith-based organizations and other organizations that can offer their space for the program. Since stabilizing and rehousing unhoused vehicle dwellers is the program's ultimate goal, the city of Northern California should have standardized benchmarks that every safe parking site must use to measure the rehousing rate at each safe parking place. This will help set up a mechanism to direct their focus on self-evaluation.

Summary

Data collected through semistructured interviews showed that though the city does not currently have official benchmarks and metrics the stakeholders can use to measure the success of the safe parking pilot program, they nevertheless have unofficial metrics they use as they operate the program. For the program to be successful, the safe parking pilot program must be able to help unhoused vehicle dwellers find a safe place to park their cars and sleep safely as they connect themselves to the network of services

provided by the city to help transition unhoused vehicles dwellers to temporally or permanent housing. Since stabilizing and rehousing unhoused vehicle dwellers is the ultimate goal of a safe parking pilot program, the city should have standardized benchmarks and metrics every stakeholder can use to measure the rehousing rate to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. Standardizing metrics will help set up a mechanism to direct stakeholders' focus on self-evaluation for program improvement. In the following section, I discuss how the deliverable would be provided to city managers and other interviewees in the executive summary.

Section 5: Dissemination Plan

In this study, I interviewed stakeholders who coordinated and managed the safe parking pilot program in the city of Northern California to explore their attitudes on what metrics they use in measuring the success of the safe parking program. The responses from the semistructured interview data provided guidance and recommendations that city officials and stakeholders should follow to create policies, procedures, and guidelines on the benchmarks and metrics needed by all the stakeholders to measure success in the safe parking pilot program. The policies, procedures, and guidelines developed from the recommendations will keep stakeholders regularly informed and can increase transparency and clarify the safe parking program intention during evaluation. The guidelines developed from the recommendation will help strengthen the relationship between all stakeholders and the community where the parkers reside. It will help the program flourish if the city develops measurable benchmarks showing rehousing rates, length of stay, and service engagement with participants and all the stakeholders.

With the results of this study, I would like to create an executive summary in line with the Walden professional administrative study checklist. The executive summary will summarize the standard benchmarks needed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of safe parking programs to help the city focus on essential metrics that will improve the program's overall success. All the program managers, city managers, host site coordination, and police officers interviewed are entitled to receive a copy of the executive summary. The executive summary will be delivered to each stakeholder interviewed at their site or office.

Conclusion

This study addressed the safe parking pilot program started by the city in January of 2022, to address the explosion of homelessness in the city caused by the increase in the population of unhoused vehicle dwellers staying in city streets and public parks. The program was a collaborative effort between the city, community partners, and various faith-based organizations to address the increase in unhoused vehicular homelessness. It provides a foundational community where unhoused vehicular dwellers can receive helpful resources from the homeless services network, law enforcement outreach to case management engagement to prepare them for temporary to permanent housing. This temporary crisis management program complements other homeless programs and addresses the overall homelessness issue in the city.

The program coordinators are the faith-based leaders who volunteer to run the program. They are essential stakeholders in the program. Their job is needed to provide the basic needs of the parkers. For the program to work, city managers should listen and attend to their interests and needs. The program managers play important roles as advocates, partners, and change agents. They work in a complex environment, deal with various audiences, and serve as the city's eyes to the program. They are responsible for incorporating the safe parking pilot program with other homeless services to reduce overall homelessness in the city. At the same time, law enforcement officers are very important stakeholders in the program. They serve the city and neighboring communities by monitoring the safety of everyone involved. Since the parkers are primarily young adults with families, who have lost their housing due to unfortunate reasons, the city must

have reasonable benchmarks to make sure they are serving the right population and are giving them services to move them from safe parking to permanent housing.

Standardized benchmarks and metrics will help the city monitor the progress of the safe parking pilot program and help them self-evaluate and assess the program. If successfully implemented, the study can help reduce homelessness in the city and produce a social change in the homeless population.

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Appendix: Initial Semi-structured Interview Questions

Semistructured interview questions as follows:

1. If you know them, what current benchmarks and metrics are used to measure the success of safe parking program?

2. Do you have means to determine the short and long-term of success of the program?

3. What types of services do safe parking programs provide to unhouse individuals to move them to stable housing successfully?

4. How does the safe parking program fit in with other homeless services in your community?

5. Can you describe any specific benchmark your program must meet to maintain funding?

6. Have there been any security incidents or complaints from parkers staying at the safe parking program site?

7. What are the safe parking program's most significant challenges from your perspective?

8. How has the program been perceived by the community?

9. Has there been any community opposition and or / community support?