

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Dear Councilmembers, I strongly oppose 23-0194 in its current form, which leads with and emphasizes restricting oversized vehicle parking, only secondarily addresses safe parking, and implies that safe parking should be located in remote areas far from residential or commercial uses—in other words, areas that lack and are distant from services and amenities and are most likely at least unpleasant or even dangerous. I live in Venice, where I frequently encounter RVs and large vans that people are living in. I have walked past such vehicles scores of times, and have occasionally chatted with the residents. Some are friendly, others would rather be left alone. Some are tidy and even clean up the whole area they're camping in, others let trash accumulate or collect a lot of items on the sidewalk. Some are quiet, others are rowdy. In other words, there are all kinds of people—a lot like my housed neighbors. I have never felt scared or threatened, in fact I have faced more aggression and hostility from housed neighbors than I ever have from neighbors living in vehicles. I haven't talked to anyone for whom living in a vehicle is a first choice, though they are making the best of it. We do not have enough shelter spaces, let alone permanent housing, for these folks. Making it impossible for them to live in their vehicles, or pushing them to some other unfamiliar neighborhood, and quite likely to one neighborhood after another, is inhumane. It will cut them off from services and social networks, disrupt their lives, and make them less safe. And some councilmembers want to do this because these people are a "nuisance", because they smell bad (we'd all smell bad if we had nowhere to bathe), because some of them have mental health or substance abuse problems (treat the problems, don't just push them somewhere else), because people have vague fears about them? For shame! Instead of making it easy to push these folks out, we should be expanding Safe Parking ALL OVER THE CITY so they can be safer and can more conveniently get services, while remaining close to places they are familiar with. I am a member of the CD11 Coalition for Human Rights, which has provided a list of parking lots appropriate for safe parking, which can be found here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BQ10GAydhaL_Unk5EmDNML87Pr2rpg3v/view . I urge the Council to choose a humane solution, not one that tries to push our homelessness problem "out of sight" at the expense of those experiencing it. Chris Tilly, Venice Homeowner since 2009