



Kate Harrison  
Councilmember, District 4

CONSENT CALENDAR

June 6, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Harrison

Subject: Referring \$15,000 to the June 2023 Budget Process for a City Recreational Vehicle Pump-Out Station

RECOMMENDATION

Refer \$15,000 to the June 2023 Budget Process in Measure P funds for City recreational vehicle pump-out station, including minimal staffing costs, liability, maintenance, and replacement costs to allow individuals to discharge effluent waste directly into the City's sewer system.

CURRENT SITUATION, EFFECTS, AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

This budget referral is being submitted to the June Budget Process to fund a Policy Committee item currently before the Budget Committee. The Homeless Services Panel of Experts recommended that the City “develop a waste management plan to be implemented for RVs currently on the streets” in response to the closure of the Grayson St. SPARK shelter. Staff also issued a companion report stating: “[s]taff do not disagree with the spirit of the Homeless Services Panel of Experts recommendation to...develop a management plan to be implemented for RVs currently on the streets...we recommend sending this request to the Budget and Finance Committee for consideration in the budget process.”<sup>1</sup> As detailed in the background section below, this item reflects a long legislative history by the Mayor and Council in advocating for a permanent waste pump station, including approval of an allocation in the 2020-21 budget year that was forestalled because of the need to address emergency COVID-relief programs.

It is in the public interest to implement this recommendation expeditiously to prevent effluent from entering watersheds and provide vehicle dwellers urgent and basic human services.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation for RV Lot and Waste Management on Streets for RVs, <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/legislative-body-meeting-agendas/2023-05-16%20Agenda%20Packet%20-%20Budget.pdf>. See also Companion Report to Recommendation for RV Lot and Waste Management on Streets for RVs.

**BACKGROUND**

On February 28, 2019 the City Manager's office submitted an item to Council entitled "Referral Response: Managing Recreational Vehicle (RV) Parking" outlining options to facilitate recreational vehicle waste dumping/pumping.<sup>2</sup> Staff noted in their response that they had "learned of a pump station option which could be installed for approximately \$11,000, which would allow individuals to discharge directly into the City's sewer system," for approximately 100 RVs per week with minimal to no staffing costs. They also noted that the City has capacity within its sewer system for additional waste.<sup>3</sup> The charge for dumping the sewage by East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) is calculated in proportion to the amount of fresh water used to clean and refill the tank.

Subsequently, the Mayor included \$15,000 for the pump-out facility in his FY 2020-2021 budget noting: "[w]e will also be providing \$15,000 to a recreational vehicle mobile pump-out to make sure that any sewage is properly disposed of instead of entering our creeks and Bay." His budget responded to a budget referral from Councilmembers Davila and Harrison 2019 entitled: "Short-term referral to City Manager and budget referral for creation of a 'vehicle dweller program' in Berkeley."<sup>4</sup> The City did not implement the mobile pump-out program.

However, in 2022 Rebuilding Together began managing a time limited six-week free RV pump-out trial program at the Grayson St. shelter. The program provided access to urgent basic human needs with approximately 3.5 pump-outs per week for a total of 21 vehicle dwellers, and the station likely prevented many gallons of effluent from entering watersheds such as our creeks, Aquatic Park and the Bay. Uptake during the trial was relatively limited due to the impending closure of the Grayson St. shelter. The trial also featured a mobile tank solution to assist inoperable vehicles. EBMUD provided access to sewer drains no cost with a permit for environmental mitigation. A fixed site as envisioned by this item would help facilitate easy disposal of any mobile tanks. The

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<sup>2</sup> On September 25, 2018, City Council approved a recommendation to "Refer to the City Manager to look into how other cities use permitting to manage RV parking..." On December 11, 2018 the City Council approved a recommendation to "Refer to the City Manager to establish a recreational vehicle waste discharge facility on City property and equitable administrative fee program, including consideration of method of pump out, cost, locations, and capacity, and refer costs associated with the facility to the FY 2020/21 Budget Process." See Paul Buddenhagen, Deputy City Manager, "Referral Responses: Managing Recreational Vehicle (RV)," February 28, 2019, <https://records.cityofberkeley.info/PublicAccess/api/Document/AXPchO9%C3%89LXUoVput35boN%C3%89D7pl%C3%891pCTgOP2Co5VkjvcPoiwHCaDjzPhJIRBotX5cdWEBTJK%C3%89FHycp8ckEsLZ7CQ%3D/>.

<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> Councilmembers Cheryl Davila and Kate Harrison, "Short-term referral to City Manager and budget referral for creation of a "vehicle dweller program" in Berkeley," April 2, 2019, <https://records.cityofberkeley.info/PublicAccess/api/Document/AYMbvLHwd8GrqSd%C3%89DemZVY2aP9xRTlo9FZ5GjFKyy08nQNbO%C3%89ZkjiMI9k%C3%891VqS0ZS8xGf7TRvn%C3%89JNvcS6GwOn%C3%891n0%3D/>.

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Pump-Out Station

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Marin Sanitary Service already operates such a station, which includes a fresh water hose to clean out and refill tanks.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

\$15,000 in Measure P funds.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

A dedicated pump-out would make sure that any effluent is properly disposed of instead of entering our creeks and Bay.

CONTACT PERSON

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