


CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

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POLICY ANALYSIS REPORT

To: Supervisor Safai
From: Budget and Legislative Analyst's Office 
Date: February 24, 2020
Re: Estimates for Opening an Additional Vehicle Triage Center

SUMMARY OF REQUESTED ACTION

Your office requested that the Budget and Legislative Analyst (1) analyze the operating and capital costs of the current Vehicle Triage Center at 2340 San Jose Avenue, (2) estimate the costs of opening an additional Vehicle Triage Center, and (3) provide cost estimates for certain facility and service enhancements.

For further information about this report, contact Severin Campbell at the Budget and Legislative Analyst's Office.

Executive Summary

The Department of Homelessness & Supportive Housing has operated a Vehicle Triage Center Pilot Program at 2340 San Jose Avenue since December 2019. To analyze the costs of providing an additional Vehicle Triage Center, we reviewed fiscal data and service contracts from the Departments of Homelessness & Supportive Housing and Public Works to understand the capital and operating costs of the existing Vehicle Triage Center located at 2340 San Jose Avenue.

Based on our review, the estimated costs to open an additional Vehicle Triage Center range from \$3.2 million to \$6.1 million, depending on the size of the site and amount of capital improvements necessary to make the site ready. Optional additional services would increase those costs. Table A below summarizes our cost estimates with a site equal in size to 2340 San Jose Avenue (1x), two times the size (2x), and three times the size (3x).

Table A: Summary of Estimated Costs for Additional Vehicle Triage Center

Costs	1x	2x	3x
Service Staff	\$1,262,152	\$1,656,039	\$2,105,205
Non-Personnel	\$1,459,867	\$2,078,331	\$2,695,795
Total Operating Costs	\$2,722,018	\$3,734,370	\$4,801,000
Capital & One-time Costs	\$551,459	\$946,228	\$1,300,630
Total Estimated Costs for Additional VTC	\$3,273,477	\$4,680,598	\$6,101,630
Optional Additional Services	\$736,098	\$1,227,080	\$1,468,061
Total Estimated Costs for Additional Site with Optional Additional Services	\$4,009,576	\$5,907,678	\$7,569,691

Source: BLA Analysis

Project staff: Nicolas Menard, Severin Campbell

Estimated Costs of Opening an Additional Vehicle Triage Center

According to Section 119.2 of the Administrative Code, a Vehicle Triage Center is defined as a location where vehicular homeless may park and sleep in their vehicles while they are assessed for services and housing. A Safe Overnight Parking Lot is a location where vehicular homeless may park and sleep in their vehicles and receive case management and other social services. The Department of Homelessness & Supportive Housing has operated a Vehicle Triage Center at 2340 San Jose Avenue since December 2019. The lot is approximately 30,750 square feet and has the capacity for approximately 30 vehicles, including up to 15 recreational vehicles. The site is a San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) parking lot next to the Balboa Park BART station that is planned to be developed into affordable housing.

To analyze the costs of providing an additional Vehicle Triage Center, we reviewed fiscal data and service contracts from the Departments of Homelessness & Supportive Housing and Public Works to understand the capital and operating costs of the existing Vehicle Triage Center located at 2340 San Jose Avenue. We also consulted with the Real Estate Division to understand the universe of potential additional sites that could be used for this purpose. Based on the existing known costs, we developed estimates of additional sites that were of equal size to the existing site, double the size, and triple the size.

Capital & One-Time Costs

Table 1 below shows the estimated capital and one-time costs of developing a Vehicle Triage Center for a site equal to the Vehicle Triage Center (1x), a site double that size (2x), and a site triple that size (3x).

Table 1: Estimated Capital & One-Time Costs

Capital & One-time Costs	1x	2x	3x
Site work	\$296,046	\$592,092	\$888,138
Project delivery	\$202,837	\$283,972	\$324,539
Office trailer & furniture	\$22,822	\$22,822	\$22,822
Fencing & privacy screen	\$4,563	\$9,126	\$13,689
Canopy	\$899	\$1,798	\$2,697
Security equipment	\$10,561	\$21,122	\$31,683
Permits	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$11,000
Signage	\$531	\$797	\$1,062
First Aid	\$4,200	\$4,500	\$5,000
Total, Capital Costs	\$551,459	\$946,228	\$1,300,630

Sources: BLA Analysis

Note: "Site work" refers to construction and "project delivery" refers to construction management and other soft costs.

As shown above, the estimated costs of developing an additional site range from approximately \$550,000 to \$1.3 million, depending on the size of the lot. Actual capital and one-time costs will vary based on site conditions. According to the Real Estate Division, like the existing Vehicle Triage Center at 2340 San Jose Avenue, many of the potential additional sites are also parking lots, though certain sites would require additional construction work, including demolition, which would increase the capital and one-time costs shown above.

Non-Personnel Operating Costs

Table 2 below shows the estimated non-personnel operating costs to operate the Vehicle Triage Center based on the size of the site.

Table 2: Non-Personnel Operating Costs

Non-Personnel Cost	1x	2x	3x
Laundry/Showers	\$138,223	\$207,335	\$276,446
Bathrooms	\$7,425	\$14,850	\$22,275
Potable Water	\$10,750	\$16,125	\$21,500
Trash Disposal	\$12,899	\$22,967	\$32,034
Electricity	\$357,528	\$536,292	\$715,056
Propane Gas	\$695,442	\$1,043,163	\$1,390,884
Blackwater disposal (15 RVs)	\$237,600	\$237,600	\$237,600
Subtotal, Facility	\$1,459,867	\$2,078,331	\$2,695,795

Source: BLA Analysis

As shown above, the costs to operate the facilities at a Vehicle Triage Center are approximately \$1.5 million to \$2.7 million, depending on the size of the site. Laundry and shower facilities are provided by mobile facilities several times per week. Bathrooms are “porta-potty” design. The costs assume that blackwater disposal (waste disposal) is provided for 15 recreational vehicles, regardless of site size.

Service Staff Costs

Table 3 below shows the costs to provide services to the Vehicle Triage Centers based on the size of the site.

Table 3: Service Staff Costs

Staff	1x	2x	3x
NP Program Director	\$9,734	\$9,734	\$9,734
NP Site Supervisor	\$54,080	\$54,080	\$54,080
NP Parking Lot Practitioner	\$250,120	\$288,600	\$327,080
NP HOT Case Manager	\$78,000	\$156,000	\$234,000
NP HOT Outreach Worker	\$156,000	\$234,000	\$312,000
NP HOT Supervisor	\$28,618	\$57,236	\$85,854
NP Fringe Benefits (38%)	\$219,090	\$303,867	\$388,644
NP Indirect cost recovery (15%)	\$119,346	\$165,528	\$211,709
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist	\$39,831	\$79,661	\$159,323
Security (unarmed) 24x7	\$307,332	\$307,332	\$307,332
Subtotal, Staff	\$1,262,152	\$1,656,039	\$2,089,757

Source: BLA Analysis

Note: “NP” refers to non-profit provider staff. “HOT” refers to the Homeless Outreach Team, a contracted service, that visits clients on-site but is not stationed there. The Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist is a City position; costs are for salaries and fringe benefits. The costs for security guards are salary and fringe benefits for 24/7 contracted security guard services.

As shown above, the estimated cost of service staff for a Vehicle Triage Center ranges from \$1.3 million to \$2.1 million, depending on the number of clients served. These cost estimates assume non-profit organizations provide on-site staff to manage and supervise the lot and provide visiting outreach and case management through the Homeless Outreach Team.

Optional Additional Services for Vehicle Triage Center

Table 4 below shows the costs of additional optional services that could be provided on-site based on the size of the site.

Table 4: Additional Optional Services & Enhancements

Optional Services	1x	2x	3x
Ongoing Costs			
Coordinated Entry Staff	\$150,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Problem Solving Staff	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Water & Snacks	\$2,013	\$4,025	\$6,038
Meals	\$95,995	\$191,990	\$287,985
<i>Subtotal, Ongoing Costs</i>	<i>\$348,008</i>	<i>\$696,015</i>	<i>\$794,023</i>
One-time Costs			
Trailer for Additional Staff	\$22,822	\$22,822	\$22,822
Bathroom trailer(s)	\$142,974	\$285,948	\$428,922
Shower Trailer	\$222,295	\$222,295	\$222,295
<i>Subtotal, One-time Costs</i>	<i>\$388,091</i>	<i>\$531,065</i>	<i>\$674,039</i>
Subtotal, Optional	\$736,098	\$1,227,080	\$1,468,061

Source: BLA Analysis

As shown above, the cost of additional service staff and services to enhance the on-site experience range from \$348,008 to \$794,023 in potential ongoing costs and \$388,091 to \$674,039 in potential one-time costs. The cost estimates do not include additional permit costs and other one-time costs that would be necessary for certain services, such as preparing and consuming meals, nor do they include the cost of installing additional utilities to support on-site trailer bathrooms and showers.

None of the additional optional services or site enhancements are currently recommended by the Department of Homelessness & Supportive Housing, which is still evaluating service model options for future Vehicle Triage Centers.

Summary of Potential New Costs

Table 5 below shows the combined costs from Tables 1 - 4 above, including capital and one-time costs, non-personnel costs, service staff costs, and optional additional service costs. As shown below, the estimated costs to open an additional Vehicle Triage Center range from \$3.2 million to \$6.1 million, depending on the size of the site and amount of capital improvements necessary to make the site ready.

Table 5: Summary of Estimated Costs

Costs	1x	2x	3x
Service Staff	\$1,262,152	\$1,656,039	\$2,105,205
Non-Personnel	\$1,459,867	\$2,078,331	\$2,695,795
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