



SEBASTOPOL POLICE DEPARTMENT

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*Greg DeVore
Acting Chief of Police*

Departmental Memorandum

To: Larry McLaughlin, City Manager
From: Greg DeVore, Acting Chief of Police #370
Date: July 30, 2020
Re: Current state of homeless/transient vehicles on Morris Street

This memorandum is to update the City Manager and City Council on the current state of homeless/transient vehicles on Morris Street.

As you are all aware, Morris Street over the last several years has become a location for our transient population to use for parking and living in their vehicles. The number of vehicles on Morris Street that are being lived in is always in fluctuation. The causes for the fluctuation vary from the economy, season of the year and mainly with the enforcement of laws.

During the flood of February 2019, the transient population was forced to leave Morris Street as it was under water for a period of days. During the year after the flood the transient vehicle population remained fairly low, about 5 to 7 vehicles. Since approximately February of 2020 we have seen a large increase in the number of transient vehicles on Morris Street. There was an even larger increase in the number of transient vehicles starting about a month ago when the city provided restroom and handwash facilities to the area.

The current count for transient vehicles on Morris Street is as follows:

RVs = 7

Trailers (living type, not hauling) = 7

Cars/Suvs/trucks (either being lived in or associated with the RVs) = 12

Vans (being lived in) = 3

Currently there are 29 vehicles on Morris Street being used by our transient population. If you drive on Morris Street you will see that most of the available parking is being used by these vehicles leaving very few spots for the public to use.

Also, with these vehicles comes the issues of sanitary conditions and property storage. It is not uncommon to see these vehicles, the RVs and trailers, with leaking septic and grey water tanks. I personally walked Morris Street yesterday and was hit with the overwhelming odor of these leaking tanks. The owners of these vehicles are known to store their personal property, such as bikes, generators, boxes and such, on the sidewalks or the areas next to their vehicles.

In the last few months, the police department has drastically cut back on our parking enforcement on Morris Street, now only enforcing state vehicle code requirements for registration. The police department still, and will always, respond to calls for service pertaining to medical calls and possible criminal activity.

For the past six months, the police department has averaged towing only one trailer or RV a month for being unregistered or abandoned (dumped/gutted RVs and trailers). About once a month, we go through Morris Street and issue parking citations for unregistered vehicles. We conducted this process yesterday and cited 6 vehicles for being unregistered, one being unregistered since 2018. We continue to reach out to the citizens residing in these vehicles, but usually find they will not communicate with us, by not answering the doors when we knock.

It is not uncommon for the police department to receive complaints from citizens, wanting to walk the area, or neighboring businesses, in regards to these transient issues on Morris Street.

The police department understands the current social and legal issues associated with this topic and welcomes any input and direction from the council.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. DeVore #370". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the number "#370" written in a slightly different style at the end.

Greg DeVore
Acting Chief of Police