



CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department

DATE: February 27, 2017

TO: Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

FROM: Michael A. Fuller, Public Works Director
Bob Kass, Transportation Manager

SUBJECT: RV Waste Disposal Options

At Council's direction, Public Works has conducted additional analysis of siting, construction, and operational issues associated with developing a public RV sanitary waste disposal facility that would provide an environmentally responsible local option for RV residents to dispose of their gray and black wastewater. Internally, staff's review included gathering input from Planning, Building, Fire/Environmental Protection, Police, Traffic Engineering, Community Services, and Public Services. Staff also contacted the City of Palo Alto, Santa Clara County Parks, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and private septic and portable restroom companies in order to assess the full range of options for providing an RV waste dump facility in Mountain View.

General Siting Considerations

To best meet the need of existing Mountain View residents living in vehicles, a sanitary waste disposal facility would ideally be located as close as possible to the existing concentration of RVs. Because residents living in RVs are somewhat dispersed throughout the City and are relatively mobile, this is not really feasible, so overall site accessibility along with neighborhood compatibility has been identified as the primary criteria for successful site selection.

While the primary intent of the RV sanitary waste disposal facility is to serve the existing Mountain View RV resident population, it should be noted that over time, a Mountain View facility would likely attract pass-by and neighboring community users, due to the lack of available public RV dump facilities in the surrounding area and the dissemination of information regarding a legal RV dumping location in Mountain View.

Facility Requirements

An RV dump station would need to comply with all applicable building and zoning requirements, including accessibility standards for vehicles and users. Due to the nature of the use, an RV dump facility would require a connection to the sanitary sewer system and a wastewater discharge permit, and would be subject to quarterly monitoring (sampling and testing) as a condition of the permit. The RV dump station would also need to include a water supply (potable or nonpotable) for flushing of holding tanks. Staff would recommend including garbage and recycling containers for disposal of trash, recyclables, and other solid waste as a convenience to users. Other potential site amenities would be the inclusion of lighting, a security system (to discourage illicit dumping of hazardous materials), and potentially, an emergency communications system.

To minimize impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and adjacent traffic, a site should also provide adequate off-road queueing space for a minimum of two to three vehicles. Figures 1 through 3 provide examples of RV dump facilities and amenities.

General Operational Issues

The predominant model for RV dump facilities is self-service. Santa Clara County Parks operates self-service RV dump facilities at Coyote Lake, Mt. Madonna, and Sanborn County Parks. A fee of \$15 is charged for public use by RVs not occupying a reserved campsite. Many California State Parks also have self-serve facilities. A number of states also maintain self-service dump stations at highway rest areas.

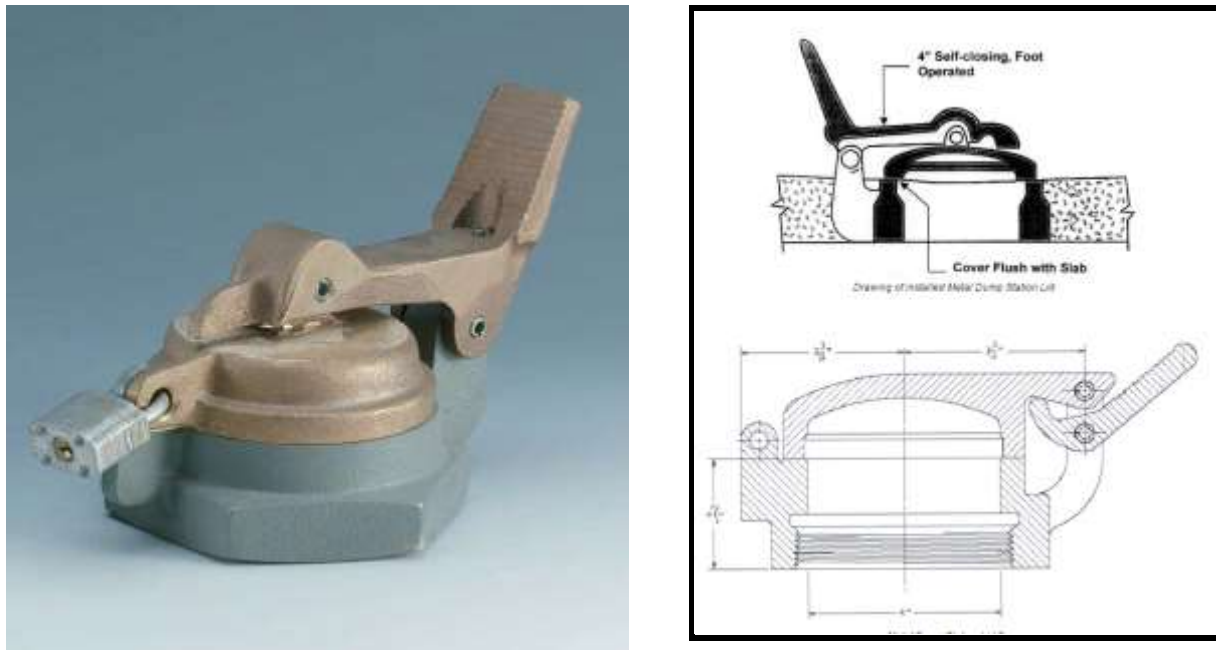
Figure 1 – Dump Station with Waste Disposal and Water Towers in Raised Concrete Pad



Figure 2 – Dump Station with At-Grade Sewer Connection



Figure 3—Dump Stations Locking Hatch Cover and Construction Detail



Another consideration for the City for any facility would be hours of operation. A 24/7 facility would provide the maximum benefit for the range of RV residents, including those that work during regular business hours. However, access during the evening or nighttime, depending on the location, could prove to be disruptive to adjacent uses. If a facility is developed, the City should approach hours of operation cautiously, with input from the users and neighbors to set hours that would best meet their needs.

Staffing of an RV dump site would minimize the possibility for illicit dumping. Assuming the site was staffed 18 hours per week (4 hours per day on weekends and 2 hours per day on weekdays), at an hourly part-time rate equivalent to that of a Building Attendant, the cost of staffing would be approximately \$18,000 to \$20,000 annually.

Some regular maintenance and cleaning of the site would also be required and would have some ongoing impact on the City. Depending on the usage, cleaning could be required weekly or more frequently, with some expectation that nonregular “emergency” maintenance and cleaning would be required.

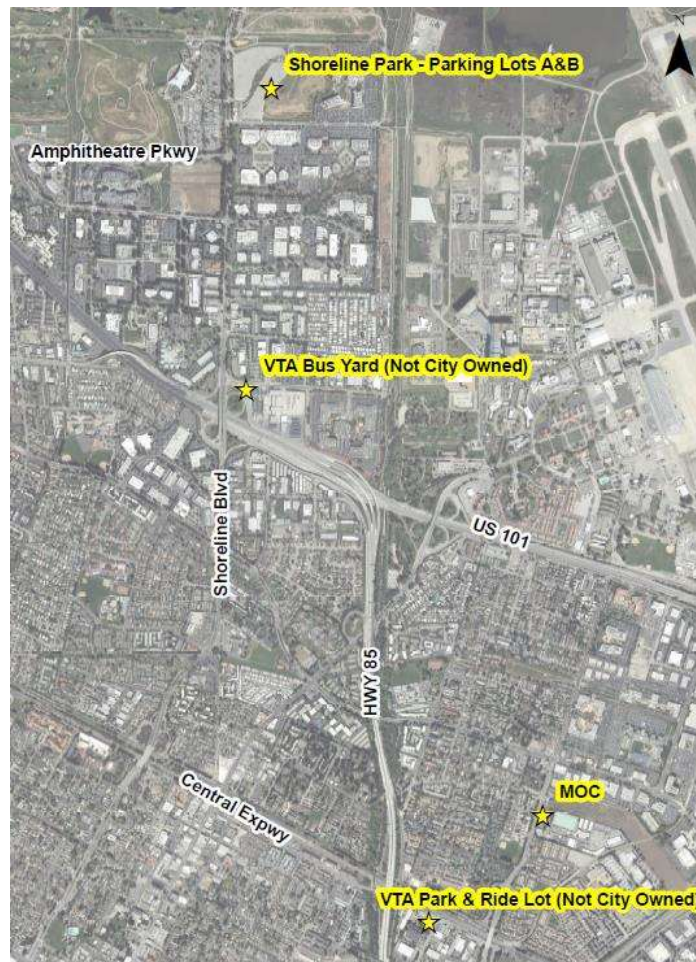
Potential Locations

Staff conducted a review of potential sites for a dump station (see Figure 4). Given the high cost of land in Mountain View, staff limited its site review to publicly owned properties. Additionally, sites in residential areas or sites not easily accessible from major arterials were not considered. Other locations that were considered but rejected

due to conflicts with existing uses included the parking lots at both Cuesta Park and Rengstorff Parks. Potential City-owned sites include the area in front of the Municipal Operations Center (MOC) on Whisman Road and the Shoreline A/B parking lots between Fire Station 5 and the Dog Park. Other publicly owned sites include the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus yard near the intersection of La Avenida and Shoreline Boulevard, and the Park and Ride lot at Evelyn Avenue and Pioneer Way. Staff has not contacted VTA to see if there is any potential interest in locating an RV waste dump station on either of the VTA-owned sites.

Potential issues with any site include attracting RVs to an area where they do not currently frequent, illicit dumping when the station is closed, and other issues such as noise and litter that may occur where RVs congregate. Staff has not conducted community outreach for any particular site, though neighborhood outreach is recommended if a site is selected for additional consideration.

Figure 4 – Potential Locations for RV Dump Facility



Municipal Operations Center (MOC) Option

Staff performed a preliminary evaluation of a location in front of the MOC on Whisman Road. This location would require paving some of the area north of the public sandbag self-fill site north of the Police dorms, and possibly modify the signalized intersection of Gladys Avenue and Whisman Road to incorporate driveway access (see Figure 6). Sufficient space would be required to prevent queuing of vehicles onto Whisman Road and to retain sandbag-filling activities. Staff has reviewed the initial project cost estimate of \$250,000 for an RV waste dump facility at the MOC provided to the Council in October 2016. Given the potential need for parking lot expansion and intersection modifications, which were not initially identified in the October 2016 estimate, this cost estimate may still be reasonable; however, it is possible that with in-house design and project management, the total project costs could be under \$200,000.

A potential issue unique to this site includes the possibility of attracting RVs to the adjacent residential neighborhood for convenient access to the RV waste dump facility. Police and Fire Department staff have also expressed concerns about noise and other impacts to the adjacent dorms as well as proximity to the active, live fire training facility that would occur with a waste dump facility at this MOC location.

**Figure 5 – Potential MOC RV Dump Site Location –
View from Whisman Road Looking East**



**Figure 6—Conceptual Site Plan for RV Dump Site
Adjacent to Whisman Road MOC**



Shoreline Amphitheatre Parking Lots A/B

Although a thorough site analysis has not been performed, another possible location would be the Shoreline Amphitheatre A/B parking lots, potentially in the northwest corner adjacent to the Dog Park. Potential issues with this site include attracting RVs to an area where they do not currently frequent, travel distance from existing RV locations, traffic congestion getting to/from the site, constrained use during concert season, and potential disturbance to nearby Fire Station No. 5. The cost to develop an RV waste disposal facility at the Shoreline site could potentially be less expensive than the Whisman Road location, as no traffic signal modifications or site expansion would be necessary.

Palo Alto Wastewater Treatment Plant Option

Palo Alto's Wastewater Treatment Plant used to allow septic haulers to dump sewage into a manhole adjacent to (but outside) the Treatment Plant. The facility was closed some time ago because of sewage overflow issues and generally uncontrolled access to the dump site and sanitary sewer system. Septic haulers are now required to come on to the plant premises during regular operating hours. The Palo Alto facility was not designed for or intended for use by RVs. Palo Alto further indicated that due to Treatment Plant operational issues, including staffing and vehicle circulation, they are unable to accommodate RV waste dumping at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Potential Funding Partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Water District

One of the primary benefits of a municipal RV sanitary dump station would be to provide an environmentally appropriate local option for RV residents to dispose of their black water and gray water waste, reducing the potential for the discharge of untreated contaminants into the storm drain system and subsequently into protected creeks and other bodies of water. Because of these beneficial environmental attributes, staff has explored the potential for partnering with the Santa Clara Valley Water District in the development of an RV sanitary dump station. Water District staff has indicated that there may be some potential for partnering and/or grants available through the District's Pollution Prevention Partnerships and Grants program, potentially structured as a pilot program to address issues associated with homelessness and protection of surface waterways. While Water District funding is by no means guaranteed, should the City decide to proceed with an RV sanitary dump station, staff would explore partnering or grant opportunities with the Water District in more detail.

Mobile Waste Disposal Options

Staff contacted a number of septic tank and portable toilet service companies to explore mobile waste options. With one exception, there was limited interest in providing direct service to the RVs due to the complexity of servicing these units in-place. The one company that was willing to provide this service indicated that it would require a minimum of 20 RVs serviced per visit, at a cost of \$50 per RV (\$1,000/visit minimum) to provide direct on-site service to RVs. A less-expensive alternative that this same company could also provide would be to stage a mobile unit at a fixed location where RVs would come for disposal of waste. Under this option, the cost would be \$360 for a two-hour weekday service or \$540 for a four-hour weekend service, plus \$30 per RV serviced. Cost-share potential with RV owners might exist to reduce the costs of this service. This option could be implemented quickly and would provide data on the use

of a disposal site prior to making a significant long-term investment in a permanent location.

Alternatives

1. Construct a Municipal RV Waste Dump Facility. Should the City Council direct staff to advance the construction option, staff would develop a project for incorporation in the upcoming Capital Improvement Program. Staff would recommend carrying both the MOC and the Shoreline site options through a more detailed alternatives analysis, which would allow for public and neighborhood outreach and input. Outreach to the RV residents would also be conducted in parallel with site evaluation. Staff would return to the Council at a future date with a preferred alternative before proceeding to final design and construction. Recommendations regarding hours of operation, staffing, and any user fees would be brought forward in conjunction with the preferred site recommendation.
2. Pilot RV Waste Disposal Program. Staff would obtain proposals from interested vendors to provide RV waste disposal services for a limited period of time in order to test RV resident demand and usage of a municipal service. Should Council wish to pursue this option, staff would recommend a three-month trial be conducted (six weeks at each site). The City would conduct public notification of the neighboring property owners and residents at each site, and outreach to the RV residents regarding the hours of operation of the facility. Issues and complaints would be monitored and a report would be provided back to Council at the end of the trial with data on usage, costs, and any associated issues or complaints along with a recommendation regarding any permanent facility.
3. Collect More Information. The Council could defer a decision on either a permanent or a pilot facility until more information is collected by the City's Outreach Worker on the needs of RV residents and the demand for a facility. Once information has been collected on the number of residents that would use a facility, the frequency of use, and any operating parameters (e.g., hours of operation, cost-sharing ability, location constraints), staff would return to the Council with a more specific recommendation.