November 2, 2026

Lenné Dedman
Seattle City Clerk
600 4th Avenue, 3rd Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Ms. Dedman:

Under my authority in Article IV, Section 12 of the Seattle City Charter, I have vetoed Council Bill 121283, which would create a new Recreational Vehicle (RV) permit program.

CB 121283 creates a new permit program for owners of motor homes and travel trailers and was passed by Council. This is an attempt to help unsheltered Seattleites living in motor homes and address the neighborhood and safety impacts of the long-term presence of people living in motor homes, campers, and other vehicles on city streets.

The Council and I share many of the same goals — we want to support unsheltered people in every neighborhood in our city to find paths to shelter and housing. We want to ensure public space, including right of way, is available to everyone, and we want to address quality-of-life and public safety challenges associated with RVs and unsheltered homelessness. I share the frustrations of residents and business owners around this very important issue, and I am committed to working alongside my colleagues on the Seattle City Council to find solutions.

I appreciate Councilmember Strauss's leadership on this issue, and I have signed four of the five recently passed pieces of legislation related to vehicle residency, including CB 121279 which expands the authority of the Director of the Department of Finance and Administrative Services to sign leases and open safe lots, safe storage, and other resources faster for people who live in their vehicles. I also appreciate the Council's partnership in my shelter acceleration initiative and in maintaining funding for two safe lots in the 2027-2028 proposed budget, anticipated to provide space for 182 vehicle residents.

I am unable to support CB 121283 due to a number of concerns, including, as I have noted before:

- The challenges with conducting and using a one-time census of registered vehicle owners, including the complexity and cost of a citywide census that captures all residents living in RVs at a point in time, and the potential impacts on future vehicle residents who are not counted in the one-time census.
- Legal considerations for requiring documentation of RV ownership, any process that allows for immediate impoundment or no-notice seizure and mitigating the risks of selective enforcement.
- Costs and administrative requirements of long-term storage of relinquished RVs.
- The risks that permit non-compliance could increase unsheltered homelessness.

- Practical enforcement issues related to towing vehicles that are occupied and increased reliance on SPD to implement a program that has high likelihood of legal liability and personal injury.
- Administrative complexity, including development of interdepartmental IT systems, hiring additional City staff to administer the permit program, and enforcing permit requirements.

Tomorrow I will issue an Executive Order directing my office and City Departments to immediately deploy 2026 funding for resident vehicle outreach and the successful opening and rapid use of two RV safe lots, and establish a cross-departmental and community work group to rapidly identify improvements and/or barriers to effectively using existing laws and programs to successfully engage with vehicle residents, improve conditions in Seattle Rights of Way, and address problematic conditions and behaviors associated with some RVs.

I urge the Council to continue to partner with my administration to prioritize those strategies that expand safe parking capacity, increase outreach resources, and reduce criminal and nuisance activity.

As mayor, it is my responsibility to ensure that City policies and programs are implementable, a cost-effective use of public resources, and have a reasonable likelihood of achieving their stated goals.

I am vetoing this bill today because I am concerned that the permit program outlined in CB 121283 does not meet this threshold, and I want to give the Council an opportunity to consider an alternative pathway.

Whatever the outcome, I remain deeply committed to working with the Seattle City Council to improve quality of life for all residents and find solutions to our homelessness and public safety challenges.

Sincerely,



Katie B. Wilson
Mayor of Seattle