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PROJECT HOMELESS

Seattle council passes permit plan to limit homeless people living in RVs



KEVIN CLARK / THE SEATTLE TIMES

RVs are parked along Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Seattle on Wednesday. A program approved by the city council, but not yet signed by the mayor, would require those wishing to live in RVs on city streets to eventually give up their vehicles and enter a homeless shelter.

By STEPHANNIE STOKES
Seattle Times
Project Homeless reporter

A new permit program intended to eventually eliminate people living in RVs in Seattle passed the City Council on Tuesday, bringing significantly stricter rules and penalties for people living in large vehicles, if signed. The majority who supported the six pieces of legislation — which all passed by at least a margin of 6-3 — said it was a

starting point to address the persistent issue of people living in RVs and outlined a pathway for them to get into shelter, despite concerns from some that it will cost the city several million to administer in a tight budget year and could push more people onto the street. “Our current system is failing, and doing nothing is not an option,” said Councilmember Dan Strauss, who developed the legislative package while taking inspi-

ration from efforts elsewhere in the country. The bills now await the signature of Mayor Katie Wilson, whose team has expressed concerns about the cost of administering the RV program and the consequences for people who may lose their vehicles. A September study from the University of Washington, using data collected for the federal government in January, estimated 1,484 people live in vehicles in

Seattle. However, it found most were in small vehicles and the number of those in RVs and other oversized vehicles had declined, estimated now to total about 377 people. The new rules would allow people living in RVs to park for only two hours at a time in all of the city and prohibit any parking overnight, a change from current rules that allow RVs to park for 72 hours in industrial areas. To
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Mayor proposes overhaul of city’s outreach efforts to those living on street

By STEPHANNIE STOKES
AND NICHOLAS DESHAIS
Seattle Times staff reporters

An outreach model that housed nearly 90% of people living outside in Pioneer Square earlier this year will be used across Seattle, Mayor Katie Wilson said Wednesday. Her plan, contingent on a related effort to build up the city’s stock of shelter units, is the latest effort by a first-year mayor to get control of a complex issue that has foiled a string of Seattle mayors before her — as well as cities across the nation. Wilson said she recognized the factors that could upend her plan

— from local opposition to the global economy — but said a coordinated effort among the city, businesses and service providers was a combination that she believed would finally work to house the thousands of people who sleep outside in the city. “For years, mayors and their teams have come and gone, but the moral outrage and homelessness in one of the wealthiest cities and richest countries in the world has only worsened,” she said. “Homelessness is not a natural occurrence. It is a policy failure.” Wilson delivered few details. She declined to share where the



KAREN DUCEY / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson, pictured last month, wants to revive and expand a program that worked during this summer’s World Cup to provide shelter for homeless people in Pioneer Square.

model would first be replicated, or how much the plan would cost the city in total. But with an array of City Council members, business leaders and service providers
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Russia approves talks with U.S., Kyiv on war

UKRAINE | Peace negotiations could resume next month, Kremlin says.

The Associated Press

Russia agreed Wednesday to resume three-way negotiations next month with Washington and Kyiv aimed at ending the war in Ukraine, a Kremlin official said, potentially setting up the first such talks since February. Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed “in principle” to restart the talks after Nov. 10, Putin’s foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov said after a meeting in St. Petersburg between the Russian leader and U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff. The talks will focus on “building a security system for Russia and Ukraine after the conflict ends,” Ushakov said. Witkoff’s talks with Putin about Moscow’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine took place as U.S. President Donald Trump presses Kyiv to make a deal that stops the fighting. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he supported the push from Washington to restart talks swiftly. “The agenda is clear: to end the war, bring peace closer, and, as I
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AMERICAN
prisoner
held by
Russia freed
> A3

Candidates trade barbs in \$1M state Supreme Court race

By LAUREN GIRGIS
Seattle Times staff reporter

In what is shaping up to be one of the most expensive state Supreme Court races in Washington history, two judges with lengthy résumés are locked in a hotly contested campaign for the judiciary. This year will be particularly consequential for the high court, with five of nine seats on the ballot after a suite of departures. And while judicial races are non-partisan in the state, political interests — and the money that comes with them — are playing a role. The tension has come to a head in the race for Position 4, where the candidates have raised just over \$1 million combined. King County Superior Court Judge Sean O’Donnell has accused his opponent of bringing politics into the race, a charge that Court of Appeals Judge Ian Birk described as a superficial double standard. The tiff garnered unusual attention for what are, typically,
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As worries about kratom spread, state lawmakers consider ban

By JOSEPH O’SULLIVAN
AND ANN DUAN
Seattle Times staff reporters

Washington lawmakers will look at regulating the herbal drug kratom and its synthetic versions, after some cities in the state have moved to ban sales. It’s the latest dance in the spotlight for an unregulated substance that the U.S. Drug Enforcement

Administration tried to broadly restrict a decade ago, before reversing course after outcry from its proponents. The kratom leaf comes from a tropical evergreen tree found in Southeast Asia and contains two psychoactive ingredients: mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine. Consuming kratom in low doses can produce a stimulant effect,

according to the DEA. At higher doses, it can act as a sedative, leading to psychotic symptoms and dependence. People use kratom to relieve pain and anxiety or to help them sleep, while others who are dependent on opioids have used it as an alternative to drugs such as fentanyl, according to the Addictions, Drug and Alcohol Institute at the University

of Washington. “Kratom may be easier to get than prescription medicines,” according to the Mayo Clinic. “But it carries its own risk of addiction.” Officials say new synthetic versions are more dangerous and that calls to poison control centers have spiked. In March, the U.S. Centers for
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