

Vancouver Homelessness Plan

Establishment of Supportive Campsites

VANCOUVER
CITY HALL



August 2, 2021

Vancouver City Council Workshop

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Presentation Overview

- Review goals and prior policy direction
- Update on outreach, operator and equipment options
- Council action needed to establish Supportive Campsites
- Location criteria
- Occupant themed camps
- Next steps / questions / discussion

Target Workshop Outcomes

- Council discussion and direction regarding:
 - Campsite placement guidelines and administrative methods of permitting and
 - Approach to amending unlawful camping regulations
 - Themed campsites

Supportive Campsite Goals and Direction

Supportive Campsites needed to address urgent safety, livability, ecological, social justice, and public health concerns, including:

- Increase in adverse mental/behavioral/physical health symptoms among those living unsheltered including average 25 deaths per year
- Increased solid waste, biohazardous material, and illegal dumping at unsanctioned encampments

Supportive Campsite Goals and Direction

May 24, 2021 Workshop

- Broad community engagement is essential
- Supportive Campsites are a temporary pilot as the City and County work with community partners to increase the supply of shelter and housing
- Locations should be modest, well-managed, used as means to connect occupants with needed services
- Structures needed onsite to facilitate connection to services

Tonight: Outline details and Council action needed for implementation

Community Feedback on Supportive Campsites

- Feedback from multiple platforms
- Majority supportive
 - Significant desire for creation of low-barrier employment opportunities, healthcare services, and community building opportunities on-site
 - Several requests/suggestions for showers, restrooms, laundry
 - In favor of camp concept, but outside of town
- Not Supportive
 - Prefer enforcement
 - Taxpayers should not be responsible for
 - Will draw more homelessness in
 - In favor of camp concept, but outside of town

Potential Operators

- RFP released in June w/ July 14 deadline
- RFP deadline extended to August 11
- Widely representative RFP Review Committee to include:
 - Lived experience with homelessness
 - Law enforcement
 - Neighborhood representative (Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance)
 - Youth
 - BIPOC

Supportive Campsite Overview

- Approx. 20 individual camps per site, depending on location (20-40 people)
- Fenced for privacy and safety needs of residents
- Supported by nonprofit mgmt., sanitation/hygiene services, Talkin' Trash, HART, outreach and other service providers
- Trailer on site for meeting/appointment space and storage
- Nonprofit to employ camp resident to assist with daily operations and mgmt.
- Number of camps needed is a moving target

Supportive Campsite Equipment Options

- Open with tents
- Touring/reviewing multiple alternative shelter options
 - “Tiny home”/small temporary structures
 - Shipping container units
- Shower/restroom and laundry trailers
- Camp kitchen options
- Trailer/other structure for office/appointment space

Council action to allow Supportive Campsites

Amend Vancouver Municipal Code Chapter 8.22 to:

- Allow camping and storage of personal property 24 hours daily in designated locations.
- Prohibit camping outright within narrowly drawn 'camping impact areas' in the immediate vicinity of Supportive Campsites and other ecologically sensitive areas.
- Affirm Constitutional justification for themed camps.

Supportive Campsite Location Criteria

Staff proposes that Supportive Campsites be dispersed throughout the City at administratively selected sites in accordance with Council-approved placement guidelines. Administrative approval by either:

- Right-of-way use permits issued under VMC 11.60.060 on City-owned rights-of-way, or
- Temporary Use Permits issued under VMC 20.885 when outside of the public right-of-way.

Supportive Campsite Location Criteria

Right-of-way use permits issued under VMC 11.60.060 on City-owned rights-of-way:

- Are administratively reviewed by Public Works
- Require SEPA review and compliance
- Supportive Campsites with anticipated duration of 1 – 3 years would require a Type D (longer term use) right-of-way permit

Supportive Campsite Location Criteria

Temporary Use Permits issued under VMC 20.885 allow for uses on land situated outside of the public right-of-way:

- Administratively approved by Planning Official
- Require SEPA review and compliance
- Generally permitted in higher-density residential and mixed-use commercial zones: R-2, R-4, R-6, R-9, R-18, R-22, R-30, R-35, CC, CG, CX, WX, MX, RGX

Supportive Campsite Location Criteria

(Recommended) Council-approved placement guidelines:

- Disperse Supportive Campsites equitably throughout the City
- Avoid areas with heightened economic vulnerability
- Ensure ADA accessibility to and within Supportive Campsites
- Give preference to sites within 0.5 miles of public transit
- Comply with all applicable SEPA requirements

Council Discussion / Feedback

| Administrative staff approval of specific sites through either of the following: | Council-approved placement guidelines: |
|---|--|
| Right-of-way use permits issued under VMC 11.60.060 on City-owned rights-of-way | Disperse equitably throughout the City |
| | Avoid areas of economic vulnerability |
| | Ensure ADA accessibility to / within camps |
| Temporary Use Permits issued under VMC 20.885 when outside of the public right-of-way | Locate within 0.5 miles of public transit |
| | Comply with all applicable SEPA requirements |

Camping Impact Areas

Cities cannot prohibit camping in all public places at all times unless there is adequate access to temporary shelter.



"Naturally, our holding does not cover individuals who *do* have access to temporary shelter, whether because they have the means to pay for it or because it is realistically available to them for free, but who choose not to use it. Nor do we suggest that a jurisdiction with insufficient shelter can *never* criminalize the act of sleeping outside...at particular times or in particular locations..."

(Martin v. City of Boise)

Camping Impact Areas

Staff Recommends adding 24-hour prohibitions against unlawful camping “in particular locations” near City-approved Supportive Campsites and areas that are most ecologically sensitive:



- Within 1000 feet of Supportive Campsites
- On all wastewater, water station and stormwater facility properties; and
- Within 200 feet of the Columbia River, Vancouver Lake, Burton Channel, Burnt Bridge Creek, Peterson Channel, Fisher's Creek.

Camping Impact Areas

Staff Recommendations for 24-hour sensitive ecological areas:



- Camping Impact Areas to be posted with signage.
- 200-foot buffers are consistent with environmental health standards and provide adequate alternative public land accessible for camping between 9:30pm-6:30am.*

(*Also, exemption process for nighttime workers to be added.)

Council Discussion / Feedback

| Addition of Camping Impact Areas | Proposed Location of Camping Impact Areas |
|--|---|
| <u>Question</u> : Generally agree with approach from policymaker standpoint? | 1000' feet of City-approved Supportive Campsites |
| <u>Question</u> : Calculated to reduced impacts to appropriate designated areas? | Wastewater, water station and stormwater facility properties |
| <u>Reminder</u> : Must not be overly broad or no viable options will remain for those without means to adequate shelter. | 200' of Columbia River, Vancouver Lake Burton Channel, Peterson Channel, Fisher's Creek, Burnt Bridge Creek |

Themed Supportive Campsites



When programs or services made available to different people on the basis of sex, or family status those differentiations must be accomplished for a purpose, and in a manner, that passes Constitutional scrutiny:

The U.S. Constitution requires that sex-based distinctions:

1. Be drawn in response to an exceedingly persuasive purpose coupled with statistical (rather than anecdotal) information;
2. Serve an important government objective; and
3. Be substantially related to achieving those objectives.

Themed Supportive Campsites

Possible themes for consideration:

- Single-occupant female
- Families with children
- LGBTQ

Council Discussion / Feedback

| Themed Camps |
|------------------------|
| Single-occupant female |
| Families with children |
| LGTBQ |

Immediate Next Steps

- **Ordinance changes** establishing Supported Campsites and prohibiting camping in designated areas
 - September 13, 2021: First Reading
 - September 20, 2021: Public Hearing
 - Ordinance effective date 30 days after adoption
- **Supportive Campsite** operator and equipment contracts
- **Community Court** program
- **Follow-up Workshop** to discuss bridge shelter options

Questions and Discussion

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