

Added Shelter Capacity Triggers Change in Encampment Policy

Effective September 2, 2022, City Reverts to Pre-Pandemic Enforcement Policy

SANTA FE, August 30, 2022 — Starting September 2, the City will no longer deprioritize the clearing of encampments. Anyone camping on City property will be directed to available shelters, and camps will be cleared in the order in which they are reported, subject to staff and contractor capacity.

The City recognizes the need to address a proliferation of unsanctioned camping and has been working with partners on solutions. As of September 2, Pete's Place will close the Women's Summer Safe Haven and open the Seasonal Overnight Shelter to men and women, which normally happens in mid-October. The widespread availability of vaccinations and the receding COVID risk also enable this transition.

Park ranger positions have been created to enforce the no camping ordinance and connect unsheltered people to resources. More additions to staff are being proposed to address the need for more communication and enforcement. Outreach workers have been notified of the change and have been informing unsheltered individuals that the no camping policy will be enforced.

The City is no longer exploring a sanctioned encampment at the Midtown site; other solutions will be discussed at a Town Hall round-table discussion on Tuesday. Reservations for that event are now closed.

To report encampments: Residents may utilize the City's CRM Public Dashboard (santafenm.gov/report_a_problem).

Additional Efforts

The city has been working on creating more non-congregate shelter options and continues to explore models like Safe Outdoor Spaces.

Kyra Ochoa, Director of the Community Health and Safety Department, says: "It's imperative that we find real solutions to unsheltered camping that both protect the quality of life in all our neighborhoods *and* connect people living out of doors with shelter and housing that meet their needs."

Background

Based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, during the pandemic Mayor Webber issued a series of Emergency Proclamations that, among other actions designed to protect the public from the spread of COVID, deprioritized the enforcement of the ordinance prohibiting encampments on city property. The policy directed staff to avoid clearing encampments when those staying in them were

not violating environmental and public health regulations, because enforcement increased health risks for a vulnerable population and those they came into contact with, and made it more difficult for outreach workers to find and connect unsheltered people to services.