

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Richard Meyers, City Manager

SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR USE OF PUBLIC LANDS BY INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

DATE: October 19, 2022

### Background

City staff has spent several hours reviewing lands owned and managed by the City to prepare the following draft plan to manage the use of public lands by those experiencing homelessness. The review of properties included an evaluation of the safety of the property, level of fire danger, existing uses, ability to monitor the site, proximity to services and improvements on the site. All public lands were evaluated and considered. The properties are listed but the camping location may not include the entire property. The term "camping" is used in this draft Management Plan to include, sleeping, lying, and staying warm and dry.

The Hwy 99 Emergency Shelter site is up and occupied by individuals from Cottage Grove. As of today the shelter site is not full. Currently, men, women and couples are residing at the shelter. As a part of the outreach, Carry It Forward conducted an assessment and determined whether the individual is eligible to access the shelter facility. The shelter is open only to Cottage Grove community members. Individuals with certain criminal convictions or backgrounds are also not eligible to go to the Emergency Shelter. Under the case law and statutes these individuals are still allowed to camp on public land if they cannot access the shelter.

Currently, Carry It Forward has identified about 8 individuals that are not eligible to use the emergency shelter because they have are not identified as a Cottage Grove community member through a documented use of other services or relationships within the community.

With the availability of the Emergency Shelter, overnight camping program, and street camping for vehicles, the City can establish some reasonable conditions on the use of other public lands for camping.

Staff discussed and prepared the following Management Plan for the use of public lands by those experiencing homelessness for your consideration. The Management Plan establishes three levels of use of the properties.

**Level 1:** The following sites were identified as the first sites to be used for camping. The sites would allow 24 hours/day access. The park hours would not apply to the park or portion of the

park that is opened for use. One site would be opened and available with additional site(s) opened as needed. Staff would, with the assistance of Carry It Forward or other organizations, monitor the users of the sites to determine if the individuals have needs that can be met while at the location and to monitor for compliance with rules. Other park rules will continue to apply.

**Sites:**

**Warming Shelter site.** Camping would be allowed only inside the fence. Park hours would be enforced on all the area outside the fence, in Trailhead Park and on the Row River Trail. The site would have running water, electricity, port-a-potties, handwash stations and trash cans. 10' x 10' sites would be marked within the site for camping. Items would be limited to the 10' x 10' space. This location would be opened now for those that are ineligible to be at the Hwy 99 Emergency Shelter.

**Douglas Property.** The southern 100 foot portion of the property would be fenced and opened for camping when the Warming Shelter site is near capacity. The only services available on the site will be porta-a-potties, handwash stations and trash cans. Those items would not be placed on the property until the Warming Shelter site is nearing capacity. Until this site is opened it will be off limits. The remaining 222 feet of the property to the north would be off limits. Camping or any other use would be prohibited.

Both of these sites have easy visibility for monitoring by both Public Safety staff as well as Public Works crews.

**Riverside Park.** The northernmost 250 feet would be designated for camping after the Warming Shelter and Douglas properties near capacity. There would be no fence but a clear delineation would be made for where camping would be allowed. The park hours would apply to this park until the site is opened for camping. The only services available on the site will be port-a-potties, handwash stations and trash cans. No camping would be allowed in the remaining 390 feet of the park. Park hours would apply to the remaining portion of the park.

**Level 2:** These public lands would be unavailable for camping until the above three sites are nearing capacity. Park hours would apply to parks in this level until the park or portion is opened for camping. The property opened for camping will be determined at the time of need. The order of the list does not indicate any priority. Port-a-potties, handwash stations and trash cans will be placed prior to opening. Specific locations on the property will be identified for the camps. Typically the entire property will not be identified as open for camping.

Row River Nature Park (only available for possible use November – April unless dry weather)

North Regional Park (only available for possible use November – April unless dry weather)

Gateway Park

Silk Creek Park

Whiteman Park

City Hall Park

Community Center lot

Haskell Park  
Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Water Treatment Plant

**Level 3:** These locations are the last to be considered and would only be used in extreme situations. Park hours would apply to these parks (including the parking lots) unless a special event permit is issued for an event. Many of these locations are specific-use parks or property, are property leased to another organization, have playground equipment, etc. No camping would be allowed at these sites unless an extreme condition existed. The specific property or portion of property opened for camping will be determined at the time of need. At that time park hours would not apply to the property or portion of the property opened for camping use.

All-America City Square  
Bohemia Park  
Chambers Bridge Park  
Coiner Park  
Fort Harrison Park  
Kelly Field  
Masonic Park  
Row River Trail  
Skate Park  
Sunrise Ridge Park – (not public land yet)  
Stewart Orchard Park  
Trailhead Park  
River Road Dog Park  
Lulu's Dog Park  
Triangle Park  
Westend Park  
Willamette Greenway  
Benny Hubbell Park  
Prospector Park  
Veteran Park  
Middlefield Golf Course  
Downtown Parking lots  
Industrial park lots (owned by City)  
Water Reservoir sites  
BMX Track

In all the above levels the camping site would be open for 24 hour/day camping (sleeping, lying, and staying warm and dry). Staff considered operating a dusk to dawn facility, but we do not have the capacity to manage opening and closing such a site every day.


This draft management plan for use of public lands by individuals experiencing homelessness is for the Council to consider as a reasonably objective approach to management of our public spaces. After your review and consideration staff will make the needed logistical adjustments to the City Code and adopt the document to implement the management plan.

Recommendation

That the Council review the draft Management Plan for the Use of Public Lands by Individuals Experiencing Homelessness. After consideration by the City Council staff will modify the plan and prepare adopting documents to implement the plan.

Cost

No Cost



Richard Meyers, City Manager