



CITY OF ITHACA
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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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To: Planning and Economic Development Committee of Council
From: Lisa Nicholas, Director of Planning & Development on Behalf of the Working Group for Unsanctioned Encampments
Date: August 10, 2023
Re: Comments received on the Draft Pilot Administrative Policy

At the June 23rd PEDC meeting, the Committee agreed to circulate the draft policy for comments. The policy was circulated to a wide audience including City, Town and County departments and legislative bodies, homeless and housing service providers, volunteer organizations, and others. The Committee sought input on all aspects of the policy and was particularly interested in receiving feedback on the following areas:

1. Use of the word enforcement (alternatives are administration, implementation and response or response protocol)
2. Alternatives to the 6 -step protocol described in B(4) of the policy. Should a police response be used? If not, what other steps should be taken to achieve voluntary compliance?
3. Should the policy include amber zones? Is so, what lands should be included?

As of 8/10/23 we received responses from 45 individuals and/or organizations. The compiled comments are attached for your reference, and I encourage all to read them carefully. Some responses are from multiple individuals, including one petition with 59 signatories from the residents of Nate’s Floral Estates, notes from a meeting of West End Neighborhood residents and business held on 7/27/23 and multiple comments from individual Continuum of Care staff. As would be expected, the responses vary greatly in length and content and contain multiple comments. There are numerous creative, thoughtful, and informed responses both to the policy as well as the broader challenge of providing services and housing to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Of the comments that directly answered the questions asked, the results are below. In the tables, ‘comment’ refers to any mention of the questions within a larger response. Note that individual staff comments from the Continuum of Care are not counted but are available in the attached document.

Should the word enforcement be used?	# of Comments
Total number of comments	9
Use of enforcement is appropriate	8
A different word should be used	1

Responses to the Six Step Protocol	# of Comments
Total number of comments	25
Protocol too long	7
Protocol too complex/ unclear/ problematic /incomplete	8
Police response/involvement in relocation is appropriate	8
Police response/involvement in relocation is not appropriate	2

Response to Land Classification and Location of Zones	# of Comments
Total number of comments	37
Amber zone problematic/needs clarification	13
Negundo Woods (SW Natural Area) should be a red zone	10
Camping should not be allowed on any City land	4
Green Zone should be located elsewhere	3
Green zone boundary should be smaller (buffer for Nate's Floral Estates)	7*

*Petition from residents of Nate's Floral Estate is counted as one comment. Several residents submitted the same comment individually.

There were several other recurring themes, including many comments stating the urgent need for more services and housing. Again, I encourage all to read the comments themselves rather than relying on my synopsis.

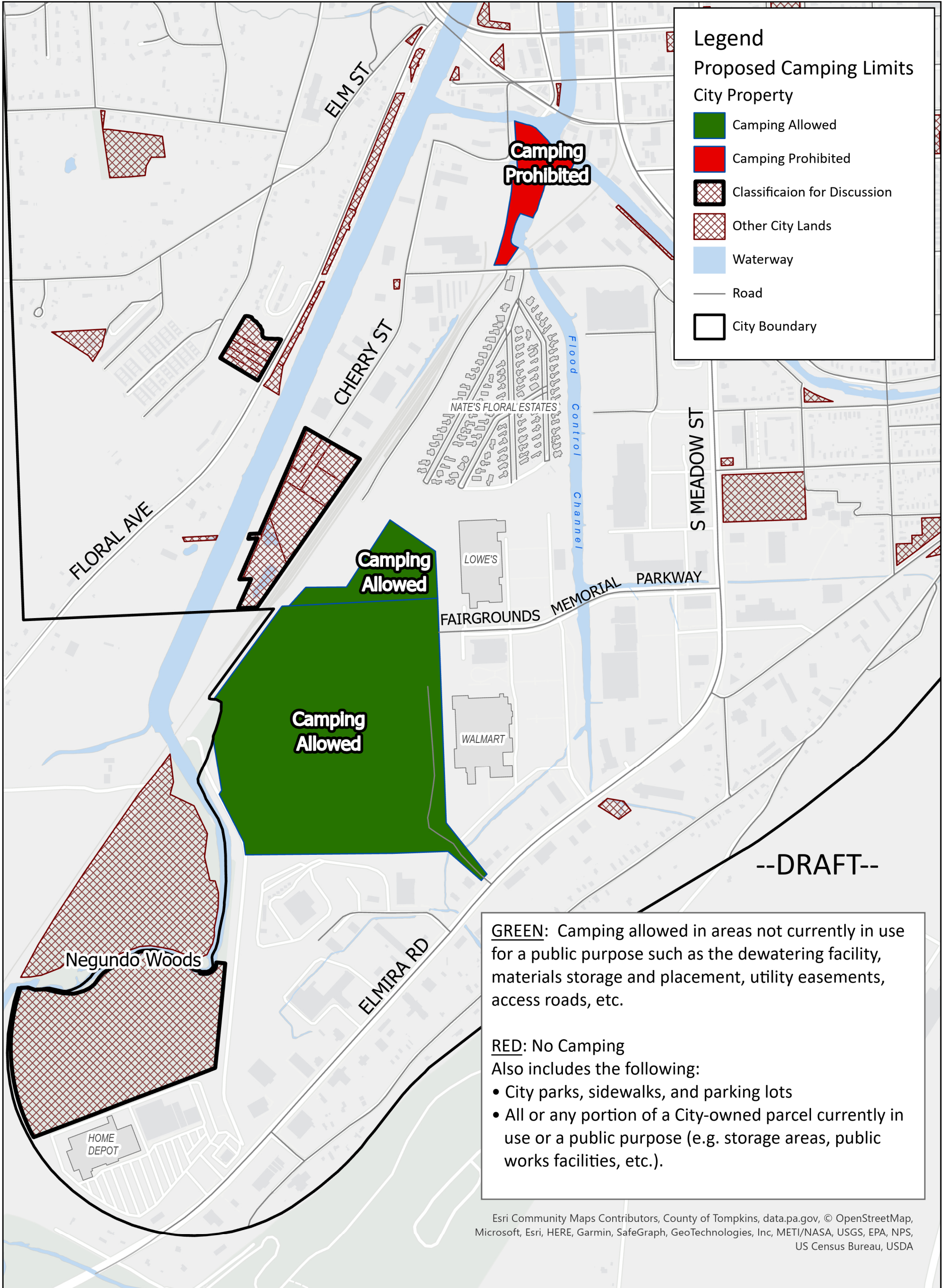
Any comment received after 8/10/23 will be available at the link below and updated regularly before the meeting. <https://www.cityofithaca.org/DocumentCenter/Index/1608>

The Working Group hopes that the Committee can have a productive discussion at the August 16th meeting and decide if the policy will move forward with amendments based on the comments received.

Please feel free to contact me at lnicholas@cityofithaca.org with any questions prior to the meeting.

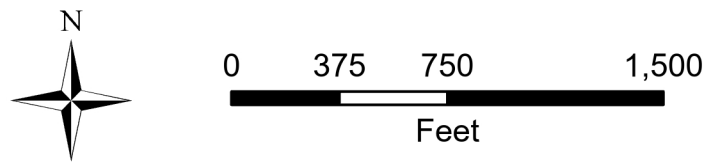
Proposed Camping Limits on City Property

Draft as of June 16, 2023



--DRAFT--

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NY State Plane, Central GRS 80 Datum
Data Source: Tompkins County, City of Ithaca, 2023
Map Prepared by: GIS Program, City of Ithaca, NY, 09 August 2023

From: Armstrong

Subject: Shut down Jungle

Hello

In response to the article linked below, I wrote the following on the Fall Creek listserv and hope that my opinion can be added to the Common Council's consideration of what to do with the Jungle. Please accept this as a submission to that meeting. Many thanks

<https://ithacacrime.com/local-elected-officials-tour-jungle-encampment-1/>

Time to shut it down. I have had two bikes stolen and found there. That's trivial compared to the violent crime there, but it is still significant disregard for people's property. To burn them just to watch them burn sickens me.

Drugs and violent crime and theft and terribly unsafe and unsanitary conditions. We are better than this as a community and we must get people into real homes with real support to reach for better lives.

Armstrong

From:Bageant

Subject: Comments on Draft Encampment Policy

I am writing to share some comments on the draft encampment policy. I'm attaching a map for orientation of the specific area I'm concerned about, as well as some comments from earlier this year that may not have made it to you. I have had many conversations with those copied here over the years on this topic and appreciate how complicated it is. We have had many interactions with campers near our house over the years—some pleasant interactions and some difficult ones—and we are sensitive to the systemic nature of the issue and appreciate the City's efforts.

Before my detailed comments, I wanted to share some broader questions I have that I have not seen addressed in the several meetings I've attended, or in the policy itself:

- Does the City have the authority to implement land use policy on land located in the Town of Ithaca?
- What happens if the implicit use of a parcel designated as an Amber Zone (camping prohibited, but not enforced) does not align with Town land use policy which as I understand it does not allow camping in that area?
- To what extent are the various enforcement mechanisms that involve City resources applicable to land outside of the City? Is it possible that the policy would be functionally unenforceable outside of the City?

My main concern is about the Amber Zone, particularly on the parcel located in the Town of Ithaca, sometimes known as Nagundo Woods. Half of it is in the City and half of it is in the Town. I'm attaching a map to orient you. This parcel is very close to where I live, and me and my partner walk there every day and we are very in tune with what is happening on it. It is something of an overflow site for the Southwest Park encampments, so we expect there to be real impacts of the City policy in this area.

I appreciate that criteria for enforcement in the Amber Zone were included in the most recent draft of the

policy. I can attest that every long-term encampment in the area near our house has violated multiple items in the criteria listed (most notably: large quantities of garbage, debris, salvage materials or waste; bonfires and uncontrolled fires; hard wall structures; cutting down trees). With shorter term camping, the consistent challenge is garbage. I have significant doubts about the City, Town and County's ability to mitigate any of these issues on this parcel, due both to access and coordination issues.

Access is very difficult. In my experience law enforcement has no idea where this parcel is. Earlier this year I called TCSO because I could hear someone being assaulted there and TCSO "drove by" and "didn't see anything". There is no way to "drive by" this parcel. Other times that TCSO or the State Police have responded to calls from our neighborhood about that area, we have walked them back there ourselves. I'm unsure of whether other emergency services are aware of this parcel, but even if they were, there is no vehicle access to the places people camp. In addition to the usual potential emergencies in this area (e.g. fires, health crises), there are a large number of dead and standing ash trees on this parcel that have been falling down whenever it is windy. Last week we came across an abandoned tent with a downed tree right next to it.

Because part of this parcel is owned by the City, but located in the Town, it can be difficult to coordinate efforts related to encampments. Me and my neighbors have tried to coordinate assistance with garbage cleanup in the past and ultimately failed, cleaning up some very large encampments ourselves with the use of our County legislator's personal vehicle to haul away trash. It has often felt like nobody wants to take responsibility for this particular space and I believe the designation as an Amber Zone will support that attitude.

I suspect that the designation of the Nagundo Woods parcel as an Amber Zone will create a de-facto Green Zone, perhaps inhabited by individuals who are not comfortable with any behavioral requirements or contact with City personnel implicitly or explicitly associated with the currently proposed Green Zone. Nagundo Woods is the next closest area from the proposed Green Zone.

Lastly, I'm sure you know that the eventual Black Diamond Trail will go through this area on both sides of the river, per the current plans. I imagine that the trail will add another entity (NY State Parks) to the existing coordination challenges. I can also envision concern about encampments adjacent to the trail from trail users. On the other hand, I think the trail will improve emergency access to the area which, if camping ends up happening, is a good thing.

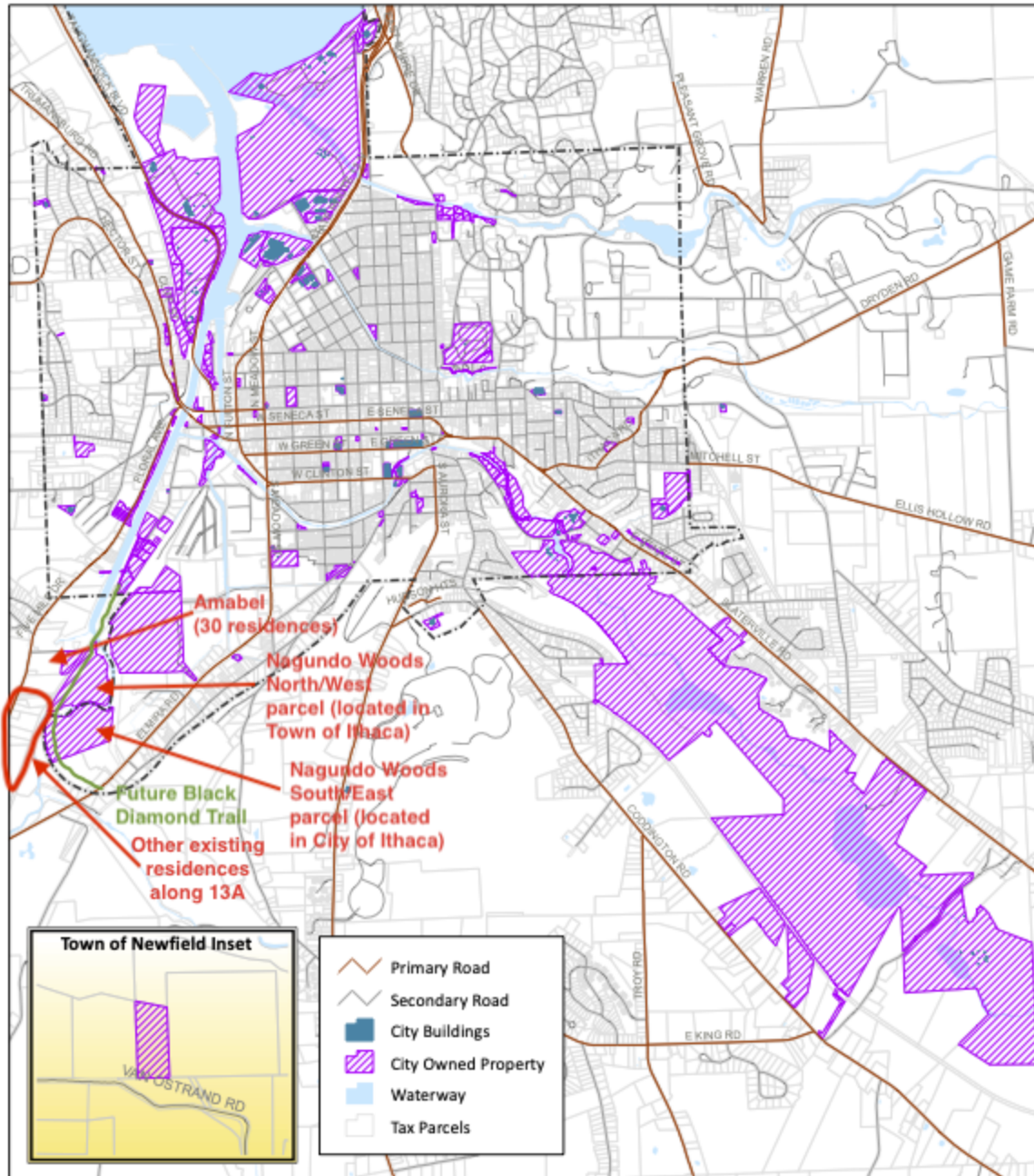
I won't pretend I have a perfect solution, but I wanted to raise the above concerns. One idea I had was to make the south/east side of the river a Green Zone and the north/west side a Red Zone for the following reasons:

- The south/east side, behind the former Buffalo Wild Wings, has better potential for emergency access from Rt. 13.
- The south/east side has already borne the brunt of environmental impacts to date because we have consistently cleaned up only the north/west side of the river over the years.
- The south/east side is farther from existing and future neighborhoods. In addition to those of us living along 13A already, and the Amabel neighborhood with 30 residences, there is a large lot adjacent to Amabel that I expect to go up for sale and development in the next several years.
- This will channel campers to a more accessible area (though may not solve the coordination issues if intervention is required in the Red Zone).

Thanks for considering my comments as you move forward with this policy. I am always happy to share more about our experience or answer any questions you might have at any point.

Best,

City of Ithaca Owned Property, 2019



0 400 800 Feet



NY State Plane, Central GRS 80 Datum
Map Source: Tompkins County Digital Planimetric Map 1991-2023
Data Source: Tompkins County Property Assessment, 2019
Map Prepared by: GIS Program, City of Ithaca, NY, June 2023

From: Luks and Bouche

Re: Comments for the Draft Pilot Administrative Policy - Unsanctioned encampments on First Ward residents are asked to provide feedback on the draft document outlining the Pilot Administrative Policy for Unsanctioned Encampments on City Property. In particular, we are asked to respond to three issues:

1. Use of the word enforcement (alternatives are administration, implementation and response or response protocol)
2. Alternatives to the 6 -step protocol described in B(4) of the policy. Should a police response be used? If not, what other steps should be taken to achieve voluntary compliance?
3. Should the policy include amber zones? If so, what lands should be included?

Observations

In order to respond to the specific issues cited, there are broader problems with the framing of these issues that need to be addressed:

- In the May 17, 2023 meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, the following problem was brought to the fore:

"Several residents... made it clear that if the police are going to be involved in kicking unhoused people off property where camping will no longer be permitted under threat of arrest, that is the definition of criminalizing homelessness."

https://www.ithaca.com/news/ithaca/residents-confront-city-officials-over-encampment-enforcement-12lans/article_a6106e32-fa69-11ed-atb3-9bf0f654b6d9.html

In response, this draft unequivocally states that homelessness is not a crime. However, it is confusing to read that there is a "citywide prohibition on camping" but that Green Zones are sites "where camping is temporarily allowed," Amber Zones where camping is "prohibited but with a lower priority for enforcement," and Red Zones where camping is "strictly prohibited."

If prohibition is citywide, would that not necessitate full "engagement" of Law Enforcement agents? If prohibition is the legal status for camping on public lands, what is the legal basis or rationale for these Zones, especially beyond a trial period?

- The draft goes to lengths to minimize police involvement as part of an effort to decriminalize camping, and by extension, homelessness. Two points of procedure are key:
 - "In no case is a physical 'sweep' of encampments authorized by this policy." In place of "sweeps," the proposal outlines a "week-by-week," 6-step protocol for repeatedly seeking compliance, ending, if necessary, in the issuance of a Police Citation to "appear in court and answer an alleged violation charge."

The difference between this kind of citation and an arrest is that this "does not require an individual to be booked, fingerprinted, or risk detention. A less formal term for a citation is an 'appearance ticket.'"

In conjunction with these protocols is an overarching process of tracking and administration: "Each step in the process shall be logged into the Shared Encampment Incidents Database ... a database that tracks unauthorized encampments and the steps taken to bring the campsite into compliance."

While upholding the intentions of decriminalization, this process is long, cumbersome, and without accountability and/or incentive on the part of "violators" to comply. Further, the tracking seems to be a bureaucratic process for bringing errant campsites into compliance but without concrete outcomes of bringing individuals closer to getting housed. This gives the appearance of a framework for shuffling unsheltered people around.

- It is wonderful to know how fast- "a coalition of approximately 15-20 professionals and volunteers who work in **a** coordinated fashion to address the needs of unsheltered and vulnerable persons in Tompkins County by building trusting relationships and providing access to resources and services to meet basic needs."

Building trusting relationships between vulnerable people and the varied professionals who work with them is of the utmost importance. There is no mention, though, of what practices might be existent or formulated to help unhoused people gain agency in voluntarily complying with policies, keeping encampments safe for people and the environment, and becoming partners in their movement towards greater security. If there are such practices, these should be factored into the framework.

THOUGHTS/ SUGGESTIONS

Reframe the Framework

Instead of titling the project, Encampment Policy Framework, the scope could be broadened in order to define a System of Homeless Management, based on the tracking *and assisting* of people experiencing homelessness, a system based more explicitly and dynamically on care.

A starting point for formulating such a policy could be derived from the following:

"Five years ago, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the city of Boise, Idaho, could not stop people from sleeping outside if there was nowhere else for them to sleep. Doing so, the court suggested, would criminalize homeless people. *The right to sleep outside only exists*, the court ruled, *if there is no shelter space available.*" [Emphasis added]

<https://www.nyl.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2023/05/21/new-york-city-has-a-right-to-shelter--but-will-it-establish-a-right-to-sleep-outside->

Given this angle, the City could remove the citywide prohibition and replace it with a tiered system of *support*. Something like the following:

City Policy for Homeless Care

LOCATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES:					
Red Zone Public Land	Amber Zone Public Land	Green Zone Public Land	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Permanent affordable housing
No Camping	Camping	Encampment			
	Most rudimentary form of transitional and seasonal housing-no support services	Rudimentary form of transitional and seasonal housing with basic support services. (Services should be listed)	Temporary shelter with support services	Longer-term housing with fuller support services	
<p>Should Amber Zones be included? For a pilot project, the answer would seem to be yes, as they provide a helpful transitional space in the spectrum of care, especially given the City's constraints on budget and resources.</p> <p>N.B Where feasible, the entranceways to the actual Zones should be posted with identifying signage.</p>					
<p>EXPECTATIONS FOR COMPLIANCE IN AMBER AND GREEN ZONES:</p> <p>The City's expectations for individuals camping in these Zones should be listed, and these expectations should include dos, along with don'ts. How might individuals participate in helping each other and helping to keep camping sites safe and compliant so that they do not initiate a process of relocation, which, in turn, will help them in gaining more secure housing?</p>					
<p>CONSEQUENCES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE IN RED, AMBER AND GREEN ZONES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Since camping in Red Zones is prohibited, the consequence should be same-day relocation and support. - For Amber and Green Zones, a protocol with steps leading to relocation and varying levels of support could be formulated. 					

Rename headings in Section 6

Change the title from Enforcement to **Implementation**.

A. Replace Enforcement Prioritization with **Prioritization for Relocation**

B. Replace Enforcement Protocol with **Administration of Relocation**

B4: Replace Enforcement Protocols with **Relocation Protocols**

Since physical 'sweeps' of encampments are precluded in this system, it might be helpful to understand what makes a sweep illegal:

"A lawsuit filed by ACLU-WA claims that the City of Seattle illegally seizes and *destroys* the homes and property of people who are unhoused *without an opportunity to be heard, or a meaningful way to reclaim any property that was not destroyed*. [Emphasis added.]

<https://www.aclu-wa.org/st01y/encampment-sweeps-what-they-are-and-harm-they-cause%C2%AO#:~:text=A%20sweep%2C%20sometimes%20referred%20to,their%20property%20from%20that%20area.>

What is needed, then, is a set of practices that does not destroy property and that provides the opportunity to be heard *and* to reclaim property.

Here are the fairly simple protocols used in NYC as response to a report of a homeless encampment on public land. A modified version could be adopted for **same-day relocation** for emergencies or camping in Red Zones. (In the context of Ithaca, officers and ESOT professionals would replace officers from the local precinct and DHS):

"Officers from your local police precinct will respond... They will inspect the location... and refer their findings to the Department of Homeless Services (DHS).

DHS will work to assess and address the condition with city agency partners, such as the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and the Parks Department.

Throughout the process, DHS will engage with the individuals at the site to offer services and support, including protecting and safekeeping* any valuable belongings."

<https://portal.311.nyc.gov/article/?kanumber=KA-02253>

* Analogous to the protocols for having a car towed, perhaps as a way of safekeeping an individual's belongings, as well as for engendering motivation and accountability for a possible court appearance, a pound could be established and, during the process of relocation, an officer, along with ESOT professionals, could respectfully itemize, bag, and transport belongings to the pound, labelled with the person's name and identifying information. This data would also be included in the Shared Encampment Incidents Database. The individual would then need to appear in court not only to answer the charge (an opportunity to be heard) but to also retrieve their belongings.

For relocation from Amber and Green Zones, if there is no space available in a more secure form of housing, a longer process of relocation and assistance could be articulated.

From: Buechel

Subject: Comment for Common Council re: Land Use at Homeless Encampment

I support building homes for the homeless who don't choose that dangerous lifestyle. I support treatment for mental health & physical health. Many people on the edge of being homeless are put in that situation by one injury, illness, or job being eliminated. Let's be humane; let's be part of the solution.

Buechel

From: Bulatek

Subject: Re: Statement from Nate's residents regarding land use for encampments

Same document attached with just a change to the date in the footer. No more names added.
Thanks,

Attached this time is a statement with 59 names of residents of Nate's Floral Estates. I am sure there would have been even more had people been home or replied to my voice and email messages. In any case, please read the statement carefully and please consider how the **decision to have a Green Zone abutted to our property will continue to affect our lives.**

As I talked to the residents here, several have told me about clearly homeless people breaking through our back fence (which we continuously repair) or just climbing over our fence from the area behind Lowes. As you know, there are people currently camping in that area. And I have heard stories of attempted and successful theft (even of a dog) that have happened over the past two weeks. **We need your help please.**

Contact me if you have any followup questions or need any clarifications.

Thank you for all that you do,
Best regards,
Bulatek

Proposed homeless policy

Carpenter

My assumption is that you really don't especially care about what the public has to say, but I will go ahead and try to communicate anyway. You are proposing an hour long meeting for a public discussion of a complex policy on a real hot button issue. You are inviting ,specifically, a large number of people who have been significantly impacted by this problem for a number of years, and are allocating 30 minutes for the responses from these people to your,admittedly , rather hesitantly proposed policy. Really ? Sadly,you can't hear the irony in my voice as I say that. I own a property on Cherry street whose tenets have been harassed for years- breakins, theft, drug use on the entry steps, etc. I will likely lose them as a tenant when their lease is up, partially because of this. I spent a year in meetings with city council members (the same ones running this meeting) and others with the TIDES groups talking in circles about solutions and rejecting any possible ones that did not fit their particular understanding of how issues like thysis need to be dealt with. Is this half hour "comment period" ,followed ,no doubt, by another year of hemming and hawing, really the best you have to offer? There have been private citizens, some with the resources to truly have an impact on this, who have offered to help. As far as I know, they have not been brought into the actual development phase of this policy. Yes ,I know government does not typically work this way. It needs to.

Carpenter

From:Carter

Subject: comments on camping bans policy

I am writing as an Ithaca resident to provide requested feedback about the proposed pilot policy related to unhoused encampments in the city. It is my understanding that you are specifically seeking feedback on the portions that bring up police involvement, so that is my focus.

It is my opinion that police involvement in such a policy should be nonexistent. The unhoused are people who deserve care and respect, and whether the police involvement involves citations, fines, or violence, these vulnerable individuals will be much more negatively affected than most any group who might be similarly policed. This is unfair and wrong. Additionally, while lobbying groups have effectively limited data collection on people killed by police, it is estimated that something like 50% of people killed by police are disabled (per a report by the Ruderman Foundation). People with disabilities are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness. "Point-in-time counts (i.e., counts of the people in a community experiencing homelessness on a single night) suggest that nearly one quarter of individuals experiencing homelessness have a disability, including physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, as well as mental health and/or substance abuse disorders." (naccho.org) Creating policy that increases interaction between police and disabled people is dangerous.

My recommendation would be to focus on housing solutions rather than seeking to keep the unhoused out of sight, which seems to be the primary goal of this policy.

Thank you for reading.

Best,
Carter

Comments on the Draft Pilot Policy generated by the Working Group for Unsanctioned Encampments

Tompkins Environmental Management Council (TCEMC)

We appreciate that this rational plan draws from other models and emphasizes human rights.

As well, it is prudent to designate specific places in which camping will be allowed on lands owned by the City of Ithaca.

TCEMC wishes to emphasize three issues:

- 1) Protection of natural and water resources. This point is made in your presentation (p. 14 of the document). We would add the following:
 - a) Because we are facing a dramatic loss of biodiversity throughout the United States and the world, every municipality must make concerted efforts to be part of the solution. City-owned lands are the place to begin. “Sacrifice zones” or further degrading lands can no longer be part of the equation. We must move beyond that type of thinking. Instead, the City can enhance green spaces and consider planting “food forests,” which can improve mental health and address food shortages. Active and beneficial land use should be prioritized rather than considering it unused or sacrificed.
 - b) Our waterways lead to our lake, the source of drinking water for many, a significant tourist attraction, and the home to many aquatic organisms.

Encampments in the past have generated waste and polluted the waterways. This must not continue. Pollution in the waterways from every source is a problem for us all.

Any plan by the City should include protection of the waterways from trash, sewage, or other refuse.

- 2) Flooding Risk. As we well know, warmer air holds more moisture and extreme rain events are becoming more common and problematic as our climate changes. Keeping this in mind, if one overlays the map presented in this document with the flooding risk faced by the City of Ithaca, problems soon become apparent. (See the [FEMA flood risk map](#) and [RiskFactor](#) from First Street Foundation.)

Although the City hopes to address the flooding risk by creating higher walls on channels, those do not yet exist and, in any case, they may fail.

- a) Will the people camping in the designated areas be safe in the case of flooding? Are they at greater risk because they are living in particular areas? Will people be educated about the risks of flooding and what to do if one occurs? How will they be rescued should that be needed?

- 3) Risk from excessive heat.

[Ready.gov](#) regularly provides updated information about how residents can cope with excessive heat. [NOAA](#) provides information about the increase in the risk of excessive heat. We in the Northeast have the humidity as an additional factor, described as “real feel.” This creates risks beyond what those in dry climates face.

Will those living in encampments be able to cope with excessive heat? What measures will be offered to address this?

We thank you for considering these important environmental and climatic points.

Sincerely,

Darfler
on behalf of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council

From: Dietz

Subject: Encampment Policy Feedback

Good morning,

To begin with I would like to thank the members of the task force that I know have put a good deal of time into the proposed Encampment Policy. It reflects the fact that the City recognizes need to endeavor to bring some modicum of control over a situation that has been virtually ignored for many, many years. Like any policy this one will not make everyone happy and, while it is not perfect, it is a beginning and we have to start somewhere.

I will also take a moment to push back to the people that will label this, among other things, an attempt to criminalize homelessness. Homelessness isn't a crime, but breaking the law is. We live in a civilized society and as such agree to live by the laws that govern us. We raise our children to understand that there are always repercussions for their bad/unacceptable behavior and we should have the same expectations of the adults living in the encampments. The proposed policy creates guidelines and strives to establish where camping is acceptable and where it is not. I won't belabor this point but a policy that does not include consequences for non-compliance of that policy is pointless.

Moving on to the specifics of the policy I would offer the following feedback.

- 1) There is no point to having an amber zone option. There should be places where people can camp (green zones) and everywhere else is unacceptable (red zone). The reasoning behind having amber zones is flawed; it creates ambiguity in the policy that doesn't need to be there. If individuals can just move from one amber zone to another if they are told they need to move on we cannot effectively address the issue of providing the services needed to improve their circumstances. In a defined, presumably better controlled, area outreach workers would ideally feel safer and, in turn, be more effective.
- 2) While I understand and appreciate the fact that the enforcement policy laid out in the policy is an effort to approach the issue with a gentler touch, it frankly seems like it gives too many chances before real action is taken. Minimally, I would remove the Third Site Visit from the policy, and make the Police Verbal Notice happen after the Second Site Visit.
- 3) If the current proposed green zone behind Lowe's and Walmart ends up being the actual location for the green zone I would hope that a more significant buffer between that zone and Nate's Floral Estates would be established. Having attended the meeting a week ago held by Cynthia and George it is obvious the residents there are angry, and rightfully so. They have been dealing with the

encampment issues for years with virtually no one helping them. Their frustration and bitterness is palpable. They feel unheard and, worse, unprotected and that has to be addressed in some significant manner.

Thank you for letting me add my voice the conversation. Again, I am very grateful for these efforts.

Dietz

From: EINSTEIN

Subject: Homelessness project

Lisa:

How many homeless folks or residents of the “jungle” serve on your committee? Certainly, they can give you feedback too.

Einstein

From: F

Subject: Feedback on homeless policy

Way too little, way too late. The city and county have chosen to ignore the voices of those who work with this population, ignore the voices of the population themselves, and allowed a violent criminal enterprise to operate in the jungle resulting in the actually homeless often not even being in the jungle but scattered all over in remote areas. Ask DSS why years back they stated the homeless numbers were temporary (clearly they weren't) and then you begin the right path to effectively address the issue. Ask why OTDA says no other county in the State has DSS issues like Tompkins County does.

Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

Firth

Thank you for including me in this communication. Clearly, a lot of good work and thought have been put into this policy. I understand that there will be a meeting on July 27th, which, unfortunately, I will not be able to attend. Therefore, I would like to offer my comments here.

Based on my observations, the homeless population in the vicinity of our business is mainly a result of addiction and mental illness. While homelessness itself is not a crime, the use and distribution of illegal drugs are criminal activities, and we have witnessed a significant amount of such activities occurring in our area and on our property, as I have previously communicated to you in letters.

In my opinion, the city should enforce public camping laws, laws regarding drug dealing and drug use, and provide addicts with rehabilitation through the various services available in our county as an alternative to incarceration. I agree that we need to provide shelter and/or a safe place to camp with sanitary facilities for this population, but in return, the city should require them to accept rehab/psychiatric care to help them get back on track with their lives.

I have read through the document and have a few additional comments:

- I could not find the definition of a compliant campsite anywhere in the document. Perhaps the bullets on page 3 under the amber zone were intended to partly define a compliant campsite? The definition of a compliant campsite should be included in the definitions section 9.
- I do not agree that there should be amber zones. There should only be red and green zones. Introducing amber zones leads to confusion in enforcement and policy, and increases the possibility of environmental contamination.
- I do not have a problem with the word "enforcement," and I agree that the police should be involved in enforcing the policy if the outreach workers are unable to do so.
- How does the public inform the city about an incident if the police are not going to be used initially in the enforcement protocol? Will there be a hotline for the public to call? Is there adequate staffing of outreach workers to immediately investigate an incident?

From: Fischer

Subject: comments about the Unsanctioned Encampment policy

Thank you very much for taking comments about the City of Ithaca homeless encampment policy. I recently moved to the Town of Ithaca from Enfield. My comments are specific to Negundo Woods. I became familiar with Negundo Woods back in the 1990's when I lived on Spencer Road in the City of Ithaca and had standing in a lawsuit opposing the building of a Walmart where Home Depot now stands.

Negundo Woods is a designated Unique Natural Area, UNA-153. Therefore, it should be considered part of the Red Zone. The woods has already been degraded by people cutting and trampling vegetation and dumping trash. I see encampments there now, and they should be removed. Furthermore, flooding is likely to become worse and this area is an important flood zone. Please refer to Unique Natural Area Inventory (rev. 2000) for more details of Negundo Woods' designation as a Unique Natural Area.

We all recognize that homelessness is an issue that is not going away, and that people need to be cared for with respect and flexibility. Allowing people live or camp in Negundo Woods is not caring for people; and it is definitely not caring for Negundo Woods. Please include it in the Red Zone of the proposed policy.

Thank you again for taking my comments and for being very credibly thorough.

Sincerely,

Fischer

From: Gatson

Sent: Monday, August 7, 2023 5:48 PM

Subject: RE: Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation CoC Feedback

Thank you for circulating the pilot encampment policy framework to the Continuum of Care for review. Attached is CoC staff and CoC Governance feedback on the policy. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need for clarification. The Continuum of Care (CoC) is dedicated to ending unsheltered homelessness and would love to be a collaborative partner in any future consideration of encampment spaces by the city council.

Best,

Gatson

CoC Housing Specialist

Coordinated Entry Lead

Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County

To whom it may concern:

The Continuum of Care operates in Tompkins County as a cross-sector collaborative planning body working to advance the vision that Homelessness in Tompkins County should be rare, brief and one-time. Membership is voluntary and open to the public. CoC members engage in planning, resource allocation, information sharing and relationship building. CoC members drive the priorities of our local CoC.

Human Services Coalition is the lead agency of the CoC, which comes with a specific set of responsibilities and expectations from HUD and receives planning . The responsibilities include conducting an annual local funding competition and compiling and submitting the results of the local competition along with a community-wide application for funding to HUD, Monitoring data entered into Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) including submitting data reports which are accessed by federal decision makers as part of the budget process, managing the coordinated entry system which maintains a real-time by-name list of people experiencing homelessness, and conducting the annual Point in Time Count. HUD directs CoC lead agencies to foster local systems aligned with national priorities including integrity to a Housing First framework, promoting racial equity within the homeless response system and using data and evidence to guide decision making.

In this document the staff of the CoC Liddy Bargar (she/her) and Simone Gatson (they/them) are providing feedback for the City of Ithaca's land-use policy as developed by the City of Ithaca's "Unsanctioned Encampment Working Group". The feedback contained here is formed based on the staff's expertise and local working knowledge of the homeless response system and after careful analysis of leading practices, evidence based interventions and trusted data sources. The CoC has also sought out support and resources from our regional representative of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) as well as other leading experts.

The CoC staff acknowledges that this is a complicated and nuanced issue and recognizes the careful way in which the working group has proceeded in the development of the land-use policy. We also are aware that both the working group and the full common council feel a strong and growing sense of urgency to act quickly to mitigate the visibility of unsheltered homelessness and reduce the number of constituent complaints related to the issue of unsheltered homelessness. The homeless response system has been raising the alarm for years about the growing numbers of people experiencing homelessness while attempting to serve people with housing and support in an under-resourced, housing poor system that is fraught with barriers and challenges. Homelessness is a community issue and a reflection of our overall health as a community. Implementing a land-use policy as a tool to move people from one unsheltered location to another at best has no effect on the issue of unsheltered homelessness and at worst actively harms the individuals experiencing homelessness. People will still be living outdoors and will still be subject to all the same systemic barriers with the addition of new possible legal or other consequences based on the enforcement mechanism identified in the policy.

CoC Staff Feedback on the Pilot Encampment Policy Framework

- The specific city policy that bans camping overall is missing from the final policy. **The City's existing prohibition against camping should be cited in this policy regarding enforcement, otherwise the legal standing for ticketing is unclear** (general).
- **Allegations regarding the impact of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the environment and public safety should be studied and enumerated, not assumed.** This policy includes statements about unauthorized campsites "creating challenges related to human waste, garbage, exposure to communicable diseases, exposure to violence and other human health concerns" without actually citing any evidence of these assumptions. **Future policies to address these concerns should address meeting the needs these concerns present (e.g. providing access to waste management services) rather than stigmatizing the mechanism people are using to shelter themselves** (page 1).
- The policy should clearly state what the negative impacts of camping are, and whose competing needs the policy is balancing (page 1).
- The policy states that "homelessness is not a crime", but requires police to issue appearance tickets if people do not voluntarily move the camp where they are living to the green zone. **A citation creates an unrealistic financial obligation and can easily lead to the issuance of a warrant if people fail to make required court dates or pay their fines.** This criminalizes certain experiences of homelessness for people who are trying to survive outdoors in the midst of a housing shortage (page 1).
- The policy states that it plans to treat persons experiencing homelessness with respect, dignity, and compassion, but **focuses on moving people to one location instead of helping people to meet their basic needs with dignity** (page 1).
- **It is unethical to force people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to relocate for the sole purpose of making their camps less visible.** Moving people from one unsheltered location to another is an unacceptable option if we are committed to treating people experiencing homelessness with respect, dignity, and compassion. **Any attempts at relocation should only be to an available shelter or housing option** (page 2).
- Compliance-based rules are a distraction from safety and pathways to housing. **Consideration and maintenance of this policy will take needed energy, time, and financial resources from already short-staffed human services and public safety sectors into increasing the length of time that people continue to be unhoused. That same energy and time could be applied to exiting people into sustainable housing options where people can get their basic needs met so that the city doesn't have to supplement outdoor locations with showers and bathrooms** (page 2 "Maximize use of interventions seeking voluntary compliance with the policy").
- **Please clarify what active spoils disposal means.** Where is this happening? Could the DPW opt to position an active spoils disposal in the green zone? **This policy should consider limitations on DPW activities in the green zone in consideration of the health and well-being of the people who will be forced to relocate there** (page 2).

- **Do not change the enforcement language.** If the city is seeking voluntary compliance with the policy the policy should seek to be less vague, not more. Most of the people living outside have one or more disabilities. This policy should use simple language that can be understood by all people with disabilities (page 2)
- The policy, as well as **verbal and written notices should also be accessible to people who use screen readers and/or are hard of hearing** (page 2)
- While a campsite is defined, **camping should also be defined.** If someone is sleeping on the sidewalk without a shelter, is that considered camping? What if they are sitting on the sidewalk or on a stoop? **It is important to be very specific, especially with a policy that has a complaint-based mechanism for neighborhood vigilantism.**
- Instead of prioritizing land management and enforcement resources to keep lands in Red Zones free from encampments, the city should invest those resources in a Housing First approach to ending homelessness (page 2). **Every \$10 invested in Housing First has been found to save societal costs totaling \$21.74. The investment doubles itself in savings for taxpayers, and it is irresponsible to use city funds in a way that is proven to be more expensive and ineffective** (see citation: https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Housing-First-Fact-Sheet_Aug-2022.pdf). **As a real-time example of this, the CoC has permanently housed 110 people through Coordinated Entry in the time that the city has been considering this land use policy (October 2022 to today, August 7th 2023).**
- The policy states that “Any areas under active City use for public or municipal functions including but not limited to parks, road rights-of-way, sidewalks and adjacent tree lawns, multi-use trail corridors, The Commons, and public parking” will be classified in the Red Zone. **This is not shown on the map included and is misleading. Please update the map attached to show the actual impact of this policy on city land use** (page 2).
- The policy states that “camping is not allowed in the amber zone”, then contradicts itself. If camping is not allowed, it will technically be a red zone at some point when enforcement is prioritized. **Say explicitly if civil, safe, and sanitary camping IS allowed in the amber zone. If it is not, be honest** (page 3).
- One of the factors for city intervention in the amber zone is quantities of garbage, debris, salvage materials, or waste. **The city should provide people with a way to manage their waste instead of expecting them to be able to meet this basic need with no other options for waste management** (page 3).
- One of the factors for city intervention in the amber zone is the presence of a bonfire or uncontrolled fires. **This could encourage nearby individuals to set fires in order to trigger enforcement, and should be taken out of the policy.** Otherwise, how will this be enforced? Who will decide when a fire is in or out of control, and does this also apply to their housed neighbors? (page 3)
- One of the factors for city intervention in the amber zone is verified reports or observable evidence of violence or criminal activity other than camping. **This seems to leave the city liable for a discrimination claim. Who is verifying reports of criminal activity before law enforcement is called to respond?** (page 3)
- Complaint-based enforcement mechanisms create a power imbalance between housed people and unhoused people. A complaint based mechanism assumes that the callers

are able to tell through observation that a person is unhoused and camping in a certain area and empowers callers to expect a response from the enforcement agency.

Complaint mechanisms in which people can register “quality of life” or other concerns related to homelessness are a slippery slope and people may feel empowered to make regular and unwarranted complaints and could lead to vigilantism. This is especially concerning for its potential effect on the BIPOC community at large as complaint based mechanisms are known to disproportionately negatively impact black and brown people.

- One of the factors for city intervention in the amber zone is **restriction of authorized construction or maintenance activities. Please be more specific as to what this means** (page 3).
- One of the factors for city intervention in the amber zone is damage to the natural environment, including cutting down of trees. **There should be a study done regarding how sensitive the natural environment in city areas is, and whether cutting down small wetland trees, for example, constitutes an urgent environmental emergency that warrants the societal costs associated with displacing someone from their camp** (page 3).
- Civil, safe, and sanitary is heavily coded language. Who decides what is civil, safe and sanitary? A housed person's definition of these words could be very different than a person living outdoors' definition. **The civil/safe/sanitary language makes an assumption that we have a culturally shared understanding of these words which I would argue we do not.** What does sanitary look like if a person doesn't have access to basic plumbing? What is safe for a person who sleeps outdoors without a lock on their door? **What is civil for a person who is stigmatized?**
- The policy states that The City reserves the right to seek immediate closure and/or removal of any campsite on City property in the event of an emergency or hazard condition. **What city entity is responsible for determining the threshold of an emergency or hazard condition? They should be factored into the touches of this plan if a site review is necessary to determine these conditions** (page 3).
- The enforcement prioritization section of this policy includes **“emergency condition and obstruction campsites”, while campsites are defined, this additional classification of campsite as well as the process for determination of an emergency/obstruction should be clearly identified in this policy** (page 4).
- The policy states that “The preferred approach to enforcement is for outreach workers to visit the unauthorized encampment and successfully convince the camper to voluntarily relocate to housing, shelter or an authorized camping location without any involvement by City staff or law enforcement personnel”. How many outreach worker positions are fully funded by the city? **This policy will take capacity away from outreach workers' work to help individuals navigate their shelter and housing options and instead shift their priority to enforcing compliance-based rules. This is the opposite of best practice regarding housing first and trauma-informed safety, and steers already low capacity resources in a way that is more expensive and less effective in ending homelessness** (page 4).

- **Will the city provide funds for trauma-informed training and skills development for outreach workers?** This is an important consideration, especially for outreach workers who are new to this manner of compliance-focused outreach (page 4).
- The policy states that “the general approach to enforce this policy is to repeatedly seek voluntary compliance prior to consideration of escalated enforcement mechanisms”. **This could be considered harassment and the city should be careful of leaving itself liable for lawsuits from people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, or repeated attempts to seek voluntary compliance for people who appear to be camping, but are not** (page 4).
- The policy states that “In no case is a physical “sweep” of encampments authorized by this policy.” **While this is great in theory, without a definition of the word “sweep”, it lacks authenticity** (page 4).
- **The shared encampment incident database is a communication nightmare and a drain on resources that are already overcapacity.** What financial resources is the city going to bring to support this database? **Has the city considered the cost of the software, licenses, staff trainings, data monitoring, hardware, and staff time needed to add and track information in this database in a timely manner?** (page 4)
- The policy should state the purpose of the shared encampment incident database. **What happens when people do not consent to having their personally identifying information (PII) shared in this format? What protections do people have over their own information?** (page 4)
- **How will the city protect the information and PII of people who are living in camps because they are fleeing domestic violence (DV)? How will the city conduct background checks for people who have access to this database, and how will the results of those checks impact the staffing available to respond to calls and track data related to this policy?** Please consider this information carefully. Keeping a safe location safe is critical to the health and well-being of individuals and families who are fleeing domestic violence, and our county is resource poor when it comes to beds and financial support for DV survivors. **There are very few places for people to feasibly go to flee violence, especially at the hands of their partners or relatives.** (page 4)
- **City and County taxpayers deserve a cost analysis** of how much money this policy will cost to support between the cost of the database and salary costs for stakeholders involved. (page 4)
- In a case where a campsite is located within a Red Zone that is also actively managed by dedicated City staff, **will the city be funding and organizing training (de-escalation, trauma-informed care) for city staff who are providing these notices?** (page 4)
- For the series of site visits and notices in the policy, **how will the city keep track of who is who when people often do not have IDs or sleep in the same space each night? This could also leave the city open to a discrimination suit. Do people have a right to the information that city staff, police, and outreach workers are keeping to identify them and issue citations?** (page 5)
- The brief summary provided on the first site visit should be in plain language and be easily understandable for people who are hard of hearing, use screen readers, or have

learning disabilities. **There should be environmental markings of where the green/red zones start and end so that it is clear to people who may not have access to phones or a way to keep maps/notices dry.** The camps look different on the ground than they do in city maps. (page 5)

- Regarding the second site visit and subsequent “no camping” signs posted, **“no camping” is not exactly correct or clear instruction about subsequent actions that need to take place.** Will these signs literally just say no camping? What other information could they have to be more clear about the actions you would like people to take? How will you let people know where they can camp? **Who will be responsible for marking the environment and making green/red zones clear? How will that information be integrated into written notices?** (page 5)
- What happens at the third site visit if the sign is still there from the second? What if someone seems to not have returned to that site? Does this proceed to the police verbal notice? (page 5)
- **How is the city planning to address trash and abandoned campsites? If the city is not, why are campsites listed as a public health concern if the policy does not address waste management and trash disposal? Why doesn’t this policy respond to trash being dumped in the encampments by people who are housed and have access to vehicles?** This is part of the reason that a site study is important. (page 5)
- The Ithaca Police Department is already short staffed, which is causing a public safety crisis throughout the city. This policy should not take more of their hours away to enforce this policy. **If the city still insists on this, how will the city financially supplement the cost of additional work hours and/or overtime?** (page 5)
- **How will the city be financially supplementing the additional labor of the teams of outreach workers in the encampments?** How much money will this cost taxpayers? (page 5)
- The policy states that “the preferred people to conduct site visits are teams of outreach workers. If they are unable or unwilling to make site visits, the City’s Homeless Outreach Coordinator, or their designee, in conjunction with another City or County employee familiar with the site in question, is authorized to conduct site visits if they feel safe making the site visit.” **People who are untrained should not be allowed to make contact and provide notices to this population that is often traumatized and in crisis. This could also exacerbate the city’s liability to a harassment suit if untrained city staff are repeatedly visiting camps as an enforcement mechanism.** (page 5)
- In regards to #7, Coordination with other Municipalities, this policy should establish a **countywide group to investigate and recommend actions to reduce the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, including reducing barriers to access the emergency shelter.** Members could include City, County, CoC and others. (page 5)
- The policy states that “The City shall regularly review of this [typo] pilot policy for revision and improvement”. **There should be a more specific timeline for review. Biannually? Annually? The city should be accountable to stakeholders to make sure the policy actually works as intended to address concerns listed on page 1.** (page 5)

- **The policy states that “the ESOT is not an enforcement entity”, but they are used for enforcement in the policy.** This should be clarified. (page 6)
- The policy states that an emergency condition- that could instigate enforcement in an Amber Zone- includes situations where “the environment and/or the lack of sanitation facilities results in human solid or liquid waste being discharged therein”. **The city response should be to provide people with a way to meet those basic needs with dignity, not to move them around.** (page 6)
- **Has there been a formal land survey or other study that determines the amount of land suitable for camping exists within the green zone? Much of the area is marsh and/or otherwise unsuitable for camping. Do we know how much of the green zone is considered habitable?**

1. Use of the word enforcement (alternatives are administration, implementation and response or response protocol)

The word enforcement is the appropriate word. Using a different word doesn't change the intent of the policy. The policy should be able to be read and understood by the people who are the most impacted which include people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

2. Alternatives to the 6 -step protocol described in B(4) of the policy. Should a police response be used? If not, what other steps should be taken to achieve voluntary compliance?

The 6 step protocol seems incredibly complicated and like a logistical nightmare that will require careful monitoring by staff for whom this is an explicit part of their job. This can't be an add-on to an existing position or something that is the responsibility of a group of stakeholders. Communication between outreach workers, city staff and first responders is difficult and in order to have integrity to the protocol all the stakeholders need to commit to adhering to it and to regular communication. In order to achieve voluntary relocation, consider enhancing the green zone with resources such as showers and toilets, warm/cool space, lighting, flood mitigation and trash removal services in advance of relocating people there.

The use of police and increasing sanctions or citations is counter to the goal of treating people with dignity nor is it effective at stabilizing people who are living outdoors. A citation is essentially a fine which is counter intuitive when using it as a sanction with an extremely low income population. The maximum penalty for trespassing is 15 days in jail. An arrest or jail stay is destabilizing and does not contribute to a person having any additional access to housing. It is an expensive solution for the community and leaves people in a worse position.

3. Should the policy include amber zones? Is so, what lands should be included?

The amber zone is the most problematic component of the proposal. The amber zone is too vague and ill-defined in this policy. Can people camp there if they are not creating an

environmental or other disturbance? Who decides and how? If the goal is to centralize all people who live outdoors to a single area consider removal of the amber zone.

The document below contains feedback from the Governing Body of the Continuum of Care regarding the Pilot Encampment Policy Framework. The CoC Governance Committee includes representatives from human services planning, outreach workers, youth with lived experience of homelessness, directors of emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing resources, Tompkins County administrators, and others. Governance members gave feedback from their own professional and lived experiences with the homeless response system in the City of Ithaca. Feedback was collected anonymously. None of the opinions expressed below reflect the viewpoint of any one agency, organization, or not-for-profit in our Continuum of Care, and committee members did not consult staff before responding to the survey.

Q1 How could this policy impact the homeless response system's ability to serve people living in unsheltered locations?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Theoretically the green zone would be a "one stop shop" for everyone needing services, however due to existing tensions between people I doubt that people would be willing to move to the same area which would lead to more people moving to areas further away thus making it harder for outreach workers to connect with those in need of services.	8/7/2023 2:18 PM
2	In order to fully understand this question, unsheltered or formerly unsheltered individuals in Ithaca need to be consulted before the final policy is approved. If we want to treat unsheltered people with dignity, their voices need to be heard when crafting policy that impacts their lives.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
3	Folks who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness have spoken to me about their feelings regarding City's policies: they feel that being rounded up into one area feels like a concentration camp from World War II. They imagine an area that is fenced in as if it were a jail yard. The people whom are experiencing homelessness are concerned about how they will be treated as human beings. One concern from a service provider perspective is that people will spread out to camp and stay in places further spread out from the current, more centrally-located area. This would make folks harder to find to engage with and provide services for. The hygiene provision of bathrooms, showers, and hand-washing stations could definitely be an advantage to the homeless response system: I know the shelter gets inundated by folks who need to use showers etc. By increasing showers and hygiene stations, we can decrease the spread of viral/bacterial pathogens and increase the health and wellness of the people we serve. IN regards to serving people living in unsheltered locations, not everyone will feel comfortable in a fenced-in area that has been identified on a map.	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
4	It could result in lower trust	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
5	The potential to create an adversarial relationship with those being served because of enforcement, displacement, and disenfranchisement. On a positive note, there is a potential to better serve individuals because of the plan to include necessities i.e., drinkable water/ hygiene etcetera at the location	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
6	This policy relies heavily on the Enhanced Outreach Team for implementation, particularly with regard to acting as "enforcement" for persons living in unauthorized encampment areas. This could put a strain on these staff due to creating expectations that they can somehow convince people to move. This may also strain their relationships with persons living in the homeless encampment as EOT may now be perceived differently thereby increasing safety risks.	8/3/2023 1:48 PM
7	Overall, this plan is much better than any of the other ones before this. I am relieved that outreach will be giving warnings and that police are a last resort. I would encourage expanding the green zone to Cherry street (the area that got cleared out a couple years back) for more high-risk individuals that need to be closer to resources. I am also somewhat concerned about definitions for emergency/hazard situations worth intervening on, as all unsheltered homelessness is inherently high risk, and many of those risks are taken to ensure survival. For example, many residents heat their encampments with propane or other heat sources that are high-risk for fires, however, they will freeze to death without it. In fact, an encampment without a heat source is inherently high risk as well. I wish there was more in this about providing resources (such as safe heat sources and clean water sources) rather than putting the burden of determining safety on outreach.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Q2 How could this policy impact safety for people living in unsheltered situations and their neighbors?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Putting people who are consistently in survival mode into a smaller location where everyone does not get along can cause consistent negative interactions between people, people getting injured, and/or create a bigger divide. There is also the aspect that if someone is escaping a DV situation from one encampment site to another and now due to the policy they are not able to do so because the other area is a red zone then that leaves the person experiencing DV at a higher risk. (this is also given that the DV shelter around the area do not have space and they might not be THA eligible so they have no other option)	8/7/2023 2:18 PM
2	The continual use of the word "enforcement" and the possibility of police involvement is unacceptable. Although the plan states that homelessness is not a crime, including these measures works against this mission.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
3	Increases public health safety (by providing bathrooms and showers). Could potentially create feelings of safety for campers who feel vulnerable. Could also decrease safety: if everyone is crowded into one "green" area, what with all the different issues, personalities, substances, mental health challenges . . . I am concerned folks will get in fights with each other and hurt each other. Folks need to be able to get away from people who are bothering them, and having everyone in one green zone could limit that sense of safety and freedom to escape an abusive situation.	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
4	At first glance it seems it would help preserve safety	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
5	Creating a larger number of people to live in close proximity to one another could create issues i.e., more conflict, and a groupthink mentality that leads to disorderly conduct. Enforcement of the NO Zone could lead to harmful interactions with law enforcement.	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
6	This policy could create tensions between people living in encampment sites, in particular between those who are complying with the city's policy and those who are not. Such tensions have the risk of escalating into violence.	8/3/2023 1:48 PM
7	I generally dislike the idea of keeping homelessness out of sight and out of mind, even if it disturbs the neighbors. Unsheltered homelessness is and should be disturbing to witness, but I think a better solution would be to provide resources for people camping and extend Code Blue to year-round and reform the shelter system. Most people will take shelter when offered, especially in extreme weather. There has been a history of the land in the inlet being designated to the poorest of the poor since Ithaca was first colonized in the 1790s, and there has been attempts to police it and hide it from the public eye since Simeon Dewitt and the earliest police force before Ithaca was Ithaca, The Moral Society, which acted as judge, jury, and executor for those went to the bars and brothels of the area (I've done a lot of research on this at the historical society and am a huge nerd about it). All of that is to say, I don't think condensing the area/community and allowing the rest of the community to pretend they do not exist could perpetuate the historical legacy of neglecting the population culturally and resource-wise/politically.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Q3 How could this policy impact people's ability to meet their basic needs with dignity while sleeping in unsheltered situations?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	If people that have ongoing tensions between are put into a small area next to each other then they will most likely not sleep. I often hear about people who do not sleep at night because they are afraid someone will steal their belongings or someone who they are running from will come after them.	8/7/2023 2:18 PM
2	The constant threat of retaliation given the implementation of amber and red zones will cultivate a climate of unease. Fostering this environment is antithetical for dignity of unsheltered populations.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
3	If there are really showers, toilets and running water, that would be a huge plus for the health of our clients. By providing showers ect., people will use them (some might try to take them apart). For the folks that feel comfortable in the green zone, that will be very beneficial. What about clients who are deterred by this formalization/enforcement? This will push them out of the area to places further away, thus impacting their access to basic needs.	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
4	I'm not sure how it could be worse. With good oversight it could preserve dignity This is where things get difficult—again loss of trust	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
5	There is the potential to improve the ability to provide essential services and meet needs given the city's official support for a designated homeless encampment and planned support services.	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
6	If there are increases in safety risks result for EOT or persons living in encampments, the ability to meet the needs of persons sleeping in unsheltered situations will likely be reduced.	8/3/2023 1:48 PM
7	Unsheltered individuals select where they camp for a variety of reasons, particularly proximity to resources or alternatively seclusion, sometimes for social or legal reasons. The red zone is the closest to a clean water source, for instance. Additionally, I have come across severely disabled homeless individuals who camped in what is now the red zone because it was the only place they could physically make it to. There is cultural and historical significance to "The Wall" and Jungle 1 since Ithaca was originally settled up until it was dubbed the red zone. In particular, there have been members of the homeless community who have died in that inlet or on the wall or otherwise been memorialized on that land. I know the housed family of one woman still come throw flowers into the inlet off the wall on her birthday every year. Will that be allowed? I would suggest expanding the amber zones to at least the end of Cherry Street for those that need to be physically closer to resources, and Jungle 3 behind Home Depot/Negundo Woods for those who want or already have more permanent residencies by preference, or just a need for solitude.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Q4 How could this policy impact relationship building among and with service providers who are providing outreach to unsheltered spaces?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The city's preferred approach to have outreach workers be the enforcement would not work for me. As an outreach worker my job is to create a relationship with someone and then be able to work on any social issues they may be facing whether that be housing, access to food, access to healthcare, etc. it is not my job to tell them where they can and cannot camp, if asked my opinion I could potentially share with them the city's preference but that is if it is safe and comfortable for the person I am working with.	8/7/2023 2:18 PM
2	This policy may undo years of work of service providers cultivating relationships with unsheltered people as the new enforcement policy will re-instill distrust that service providers have worked tirelessly to change.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
3	As an outreach worker, I am worried that campers will associate me with the laws of enforcement and the camping policies and zoning, and that it will change my relationship with my clients. Also, for those who don't want to stay in the green zone will still need to be seen, however they may go to outskirts to be able to camp in peace.	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
4	It might be more difficult but not impossible	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
5	This presents the biggest challenge for me. A large segment, in my opinion, will resent being told where to go, being forced to leave areas, and are generally not the go-along to get a long type. Some will be reluctant and resent being told to go to an officially designated area out of a general mistrust or anti-authority/establishment mindset.	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
6	As noted above, this policy may put a strain on relationship of EOT with persons living in unsheltered spaces due to changes in expectations and perceptions of EOT members. It may also create tensions between EOT members based on who is and isn't willing to abide by this policy and/or continue to risk going into unauthorized encampment areas.	8/3/2023 1:48 PM
7	I am glad service providers will be giving the warnings and enforcement (even though I don't really like that word) rather than police.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Q5 If you have lived experience of homelessness, how do you feel about this policy? Please indicate whether you have lived experience of unsheltered homelessness.

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I have lived experience of homelessness, but not unsheltered homelessness. It makes me extremely uncomfortable that the voices of unsheltered individuals have not been specifically sought out. I hate the use of the word "enforcement" and the possibility of police intervention, which works against the purported goal of not criminalizing homelessness.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
2	I have lived experience of unsheltered homelessness. I would feel nervous about this policy if I were still living this way. I would feel that I was being round up for slaughtering or scrutiny and I would not feel comfortable.	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
3	I don't have lived experience	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
4	N/A	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
5	I do have lived experience of youth homelessness related to my sexual orientation, however, I was couch surfing and not unsheltered. I have however spent a lot of time in the jungle as a peer and advocate, formally and informally.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Q6 If you have provided direct service to people living in unsheltered situations, have they expressed any feedback about the proposed policy?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Most people that I have talked to have NO CLUE that this is even a policy. Our homeless community has not been made aware of big changes that could impact their safety and the location of their camp.	8/7/2023 2:18 PM
2	Yes, I provide direct service, and yes they have feedback--they have reported that it sounds like a concentration camp. They feel as if they are being policed but not actually helped by the way the pilot program sounds. None of them seemed interested to move or adhere to the arbitrary zoning areas.	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
3	Too long ago!	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
4	N/A	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
5	I am no longer a DSP and a lot of my experience was informal/mutual aid, but I do know that the Wall/Jungle 1/Red Zone was a place of logistical and sentimental value to a lot of people that I really cared about. Many of them are deceased or incarcerated, some of them moved on to PSH, but it was a social center to congregate.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Q7 What are some other steps or policies (not included in this land use policy) that the city could implement to improve conditions in the encampments and neighboring areas?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Bring the feedback of our unhoused population to the table and have it count when constructing a policy.	8/7/2023 2:18 PM
2	Increasing Permanent Supportive Housing in Tompkins County and working with service providers to increase resources for non-punitive services is necessary to ensure that unsheltered individuals are provided legitimate, safe alternatives to their current living conditions.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
3	-make the camps like a parkground with actual firepits and structures, bathroom, potable water, lean-tos, insulated cabins. -interview everyone that lives down there. -many women go there because they don't feel safe in the shelter, so having a woman-only shelter would be very helpful. The advocacy center does this but is limited to woman in recovery/sobriety. We need housing for the mothers and daughters who are living unhoused as well. -more "one cabin" units--give people some space! -installing housing first approach	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
4	Showers and restrooms	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
5	Be flexible and ready to change. The framework's rationale is sound but real-world implementation will highlight the stress points. Make sure someone(s) is paying attention, recognizing issues as soon as possible, and making the necessary adjustments to the plan. Think of it a as starting point and evolving plan that will need to be adjusted based on experience.	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
6	Implement some type of regularly scheduled (e.g. monthly) clean-up of encampment sites that engages persons living there so they feel like they are part of the process in ensuring their health and safety and in a way that feels respectful.	8/3/2023 1:48 PM
7	Expand the green/amber zones to accomidate for a variety of unsheltered homeless needs. Also a lot of the fires out there are intentionally set on someone's camp as an act of retribution ("jungle justice") and you will get people who need more options of where to camp because they will keep getting "burnt out". Also expand code blue to year-round and reform/expand the emergency shelter system.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Q8 What resources/tools do you think would be required to successfully implement this policy?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Lack of policy intervention completely is necessary to ensure that this policy will have any positive impact, if at all. Outreach to local neighbors and other community members to ensure that the goals of lack of police intervention and education on unsheltered populations is necessary to ensure that community members do not work against the goals of dignity and respect for all unsheltered individuals.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
2	-You will need PEERS and feedback from people with lived experience. -Effective showers/bathroom/wash and consistency in keeping them clean. -single person cabins for the antisocial personalities and the bipolar population could be profoundly useful in lowering escalation. -a female only area -another shelter with no strings attached (no dss) -safety equipment -let's set up a medical tent! -Narcan boxes installed throughout to remind people of overdose prevention and provide the needed tool to save a life. A more robust food cupboard pantry.	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
3	Training for all "enforcers"	8/3/2023 10:24 PM
4	Designated transportation assistance like a van that goes from A to B at certain times. Especially in the morning for those trying to hold a job, get to appointments, whatever. Put a food truck that serves meals on certain days and times at the encampment. Local philanthropists can fund it! WiFi?	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
5	I'm really curious about what will happen if a person fails to appear for a citation. There are a lot of individuals with active warrants/criminal records/justice system trauma or other barriers to attending court or attempting to avoid police interaction in general.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

Anything else you would like to add?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 2

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Once again, please do not involve law enforcement in any aspect of this plan. Law enforcement have continually harmed the unsheltered population, and their express participation in working with unsheltered communities is nothing less than violent.	8/7/2023 11:52 AM
2	Please interview people with lived experience. Please consider housing first options. Please consider the PCHO (person-Centered Housing Options). Please consider a way to house sex offenders and other folks who have been banned from typical housing or sanctioned from certain housing financial resources (i.e. s8 sanctions, DSS sanctions). Believe outreach workers. Let's find a way to meet the needs of other forms of homelessness besides unsheltered camping. <3	8/7/2023 11:37 AM
3	I would vote yes, but I am skeptical of the plan's likelihood of success. It seems like moving the "problem" to a different location primarily serves the goals of residents, businesses, and politicians in the NO zone, but rather naïvely assumes cooperation from the unsheltered and creates a high potential for unintended consequences in new locations. I think back to the Commons redesign and the goal of opening the Commons up to have fewer people "hanging out" on the Commons and it just pushed the problems to Dewitt Park and the Library but that may be considered a success- not sure. The unsheltered are a diverse group and no one answer will resolve the myriad of issues that people face.	8/3/2023 3:44 PM
4	Businesses and community leaders are likely going to unreasonably expect EOT members to enforce or solve these problems that beyond their abilities.	8/3/2023 1:48 PM
5	It's better than previously suggested plans. Just expand the green/amber zones to accommodate for a wider variety of unsheltered needs, still let people at least mourn and gather at the wall even if they cant camp there, and push to expand code blue/reform and expand St Johns.	8/1/2023 11:05 PM

From: Graseck

Subject: Draft encampment policy feedback

I am writing to provide my feedback on the city's plan for encampments. I live on West Hill in the town of Ithaca.

My feedback centers on the proposal of amber zones along the recreational trail on Floral Avenue and possibly up Elm St. near residential areas. People live there, walk their dogs there, go running there – myself included. Seeing that whole stretch of Floral as an amber zone is concerning, as are the plots of amber-designated land peppered throughout West Hill near homes and a school.

These plans have the real possibility of negatively affecting people's quality of life, as well as their safety and security. It is inappropriate, to put it mildly, to tacitly allow "camping" in those areas. We have as much right to safety and a clean, peaceful, beautiful neighborhood as anyone in other neighborhoods in the city that don't appear to be targeted for amber zones. I won't name names.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the "amber zones" on the residential streets of West Hill and along the recreational trail on Floral Avenue. Surely there is a better way to address the needs of the houseless residents of Ithaca.

Thank you for reading,

Graseck

From: Hanson

Subject: Comments on draft homeless encampment policy

Hi,

As a brand new Ithaca resident, I'm not sure how much my opinion is worth, but I figured I'd reach out and get my comment in right before the deadline!

My first impression of the policy is an overwhelmingly positive one - providing safe spaces for unhoused people to camp is a great first step. And providing basic hygiene and sanitation services sounds like a fantastic idea.

I know you've received several comments already from my fellow residents of the new Amabel neighborhood off Floral Ave, expressing concerns about encampments in the nearby Negundo woods, one of the areas classified for discussion. Some folks have expressed concern about environmental protection of the woods and the inlet; these are legitimate concerns, but ones that I suspect could apply similarly to *any* possible location for a homeless encampment on state-owned land.

Though environmental concerns are important and I hope they'll be taken into account by someone more knowledgeable than myself, my personal concerns are more for the safety and well-being of the *people*. On that front, here are a few concerns I have:

1. According to the Ithaca Voice, the current green zone is 66 acres. According to the [Cornell Daily Sun](#), there are estimated to be only about 60 homeless people in Ithaca, so that's quite a bit of space already reserved - especially considering that not all without homes will be camping there!
2. We've all seen many well-meaning plans to "help the homeless" die quickly when they encounter the harsh complexities of reality. Allowing 66 acres of encampments already seems an intimidatingly ambitious plan. The larger the area over which the encampments are spread, the harder it will be to safely and cost-efficiently provide services.
3. Access to the Negundo woods, particularly the north area, is partially through a residential zone, which is much more likely to create conflict with locals than lands accessed through a more commercial area, such as the green zone behind Walmart.
4. The Negundo woods are a floodplain - I don't know what this means on such a highly controlled stretch of water as the inlet, but I know that Acer negundo trees commonly grow in areas subject to frequent flooding, which certainly sounds like a safety issue.

For the above reasons, I support limiting camping in the woods. *If* it can be established that

flooding there is unlikely, and *if* there is evidence that the existing green zone isn't big enough to safely accomodate everyone who would use it, only then could I see a compelling argument to make the south part of the woods (between the Home Depot and the inlet, which can be safely accessed) into a yellow zone.

Thanks for considering this,

Hanson

From: Herkowitz

Subject: response to City land use policy

Respect Dignity and Compassion.

All good with me. I would appreciate that those who would surround my neighborhood with yellow and green zones, no "enforcement" and expect me to live in a dangerous situation that they would not choose or allow for themselves afford me respect, dignity and compassion. At 75 years of age I do not appreciate being lectured to about being "neighborly to unhoused neighbors" who are publicly urinating, screaming, shooting drugs, shooting guns, stealing and degrading the area I live in. If anyone hasn't visited the encampments and has the expectation that it's my job to take this on, I suggest you go visit. If you haven't seen it you don't know what you are talking about. It took a police escort for a group of Common Council reps to walk through what I have to contend with day and night. And they were scared. No police escort for the people who live and work on the West End. I think those people who are concerned about enforcement of laws should consider taking on a few folks in your backyard. If you haven't seen it, you don't know what you are talking about. I am not a heartless person because I want to live in a safe environment.

Herkowitz

From: Herkowitz

Subject: response to City proposed land use

Six steps?

Cut that in half. Six steps puts additional stain on outreach workers and dilutes the purpose of a land use policy. Set a boundary and mean it. Help people move. Be kind. Do it in 3 steps and do it.

Herkowitz

From: Herkowitz

Subject: response to City land use proposal

"Enforcement" as a word or policy is a debate? Is it a debate in any other place in the City of Ithaca? Is it a debate in Cayuga Heights? What misguided influences are informing this? The police have enough on their hands (everyone likes to complain about the police until they are mugged, raped, robbed, etc) without this being a question. Of course we want uniform enforcement of the law throughout the City. The idea that zero accountability is somehow a part of harm reduction is misinformed and a part of the problem.

Herkowitz

From: Herkowitz

Subject: response to City proposed land use policy

I notice the only ideas for the use of City land for camping are in the West End, particularly the land around Nate's Floral Estates. The West End is already under stress from the chronic criminality and violence from the addition of and tenancy of Arthaus. There are no sidewalks, adding more stress. Nate's Floral Estates is a mobile home park for seniors, primarily occupied by older women. I recommend that the City consider other locations for camping that don't further endanger the older women, including myself, that live in the well established community that is at Nate's Floral Estates. I have repeatedly suggested the golf course or another location be considered. How about Sunset Park, for instance? Does that seem silly? Why are those areas any less a consideration than the area around the trailer park? Might it be that the 'trailer park' is a devalued area and the City has devalued the importance of the quality of life for those who live there?

Herkowitz

From: Herkowitz

Subject: response to City land use proposal

Zones

Yellow Zones. they should not be in the plan. They dilute the purpose of having a policy. They will make the work of outreach workers more difficult. They will only serve to spread the encampments and defeat the purpose of having a policy at all.

Green zone Cut that in half, making a large area separating Nate's Floral Estates from camping. Nate's is vulnerable to fire spreading, vandalism, trespassing, home invasion, assault, burglary, destruction of property and harassment as it is, all of which have happened and more. The area that abuts Nate's is difficult for emergency services to reach and will reduce the effectiveness of having a Green zone. It will allow criminals to privacy and make the entire Green zone potentially more dangerous.

Herkowitz

From: Herkowitz

Subject: comment on City land use proposal

Homelessness is not a crime.

Right. And:

Rape, murder, burglary, sex trafficking, sexual assault, shooting, stabbing, battery, coercion, meth manufacture and sales, destruction of environment, destruction of property, home invasion, arson, other drug sales, menacing, unleashed biting dogs, public urination, public BM, trespassing, mugging, jumping in front of moving vehicles, et al. are all crimes. All happening in and around the encampments.

Some people are in need of homes, want homes, are mentally stable enough to take responsibility to have a home and make good use of having a home and services. For them, "housing first" makes total sense. Outreach workers can help these people.

Some people are only interested in living as they are: addicted to drugs and don't want to stop, addicted to criminal behavior (yes. It's a real thing) and don't want to stop, feel entitled to doing whatever they wish at anyone's expense and don't want to stop, too mentally ill to stop unless they are in a controlled environment.

Outreach workers are in danger with these people. So are homeless people. So are law enforcement, fire fighters, business owners, employees and the rest of the community.

Until there is a distinction made by land use policy makers between homelessness (not a crime) and people committing crime because that is their way of life, we can expect increased violence. Because existing laws are not being enforced /applied uniformly throughout the City the rule of law is compromised. This has already eroded the norms and quality of neighborhoods throughout the City. There has to be accountability and expectations that the norm, living within the law, will be required in the encampments.

Herkowitz

From: Holmes

Cc: Black

Subject: County statement on City's Sanctioned Encampment Policy

Attached please find a statement from the County regarding your request for input on the draft unsanctioned encampment policy. Please distribute to the Mayor and Common Council at your convenience.

Perhaps this could be included in the agenda for the August 16 meeting where the discussion will continue?

Best,
Lisa

Holmes

From: Holycross

Subject: Comments on City of Ithaca's Pilot Administrative Policy on Unsanctioned Encampment on City Property

I am writing to provide comments on the City of Ithaca's Pilot Administrative Policy on Unsanctioned Encampment on City Property. I have been a resident of Ithaca since 2020 and became a West Hill homeowner in 2022. My comments on the Unsanctioned Encampment Policy can be broken into four parts.

1. General sanctioning of any camping on city property: I feel strongly that the City of Ithaca should not formally permit camping on any city grounds. Ithaca should learn from the examples set by other cities who have previously permitted the development of unsanctioned encampments but have recently reverted course. For instance, Portland (<https://www.opb.org/article/2023/06/07/portland-oregon-approves-ban-daytime-street-camping-homeless/>), San Diego (<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/homelessness/story/2023-06-13/city-council-hears-controversial-homeless-encampment-ban-proposal>) and Oakland (<https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/oakland-homeless-mayor-sheng-thao-encampments-18161423.php>) all previously permitted unsanctioned camping but have severely limited or banned it in recent weeks after years of disastrous outcomes. Numerous reports and on-the-ground interviews with inhabitants of encampments (e.g., <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/29/us/portland-oregon-fentanyl-homeless.html>) in the US Northwest and West have demonstrated that encampments grow when cities decide to either explicitly allow camping on public property or choose not to enforce existing camping bans. It seems logical that by officially sanctioning camping on city property in Ithaca, it will make existing and new encampments in the city more appealing places to stay and visit. Ithaca should expect its issues with the houseless population to increase, not decrease, by allowing camping on city property. The rate of serious crime associated with the "Jungle" appears to be increasing in recent times (including, for instance, the disappearance of Thomas Rath), raising major concerns about the safety of these encampments for both the houseless population and city residents living in surrounding areas. *Why would the city officially sanction an encampment that already has clear issues with both petty and major crime?*

2. Proposed location of encampments: West End residents have disproportionately shouldered the impacts of unsanctioned encampments in Ithaca. Unsanctioned encampments on the West End increases residents' exposure to violence, waste, fire hazard, drug use, and other health concerns. The presence of these camps impedes development opportunities and stymies our property values relative to other parts of the city. I am greatly

disheartened to see the City of Ithaca is proposing to ratify a policy that would permit camping on any city property and am particularly displeased to see that all areas where camping may be permitted fall on Ithaca's West End. The area where camping will be sanctioned (and is currently allowed with negligible enforcement) directly abuts Nate's Floral Estates, a residential zone. Proposed "amber zones" where enforcement against unsanctioned camps will be limited or nonexistent extend deep into West End residential areas, including my own street—Chestnut St. The designation of the area between Floral Ave and Chestnut St as an amber zone is unacceptable. This area is home to multigenerational families including my own. Young children should not have to face the violence, waste, drug use, human suffering and other health hazards associated with unsanctioned encampments every time they walk out of their door in their neighborhood. The map of City of Ithaca Owned Property (2019) clearly demonstrates that city property is not disproportionately concentrated in Ithaca's West End, yet all proposed sanctioned encampments and amber zones are in the West End. *Why does the city feel that West End residents should disproportionately bear the impacts of homeless encampments in Ithaca?*

City of Ithaca's Pilot Administrative Policy on Unsanctioned Encampment on City Property is clearly not equitable for all city residents.

3. Policy enforcement: The current situation in the "Jungle" makes it clear that the proposed enforcement policies in the plan are insufficient to manage both sanctioned and unsanctioned camping. This August 2nd article in the Ithaca Voice (<https://ithacavoice.org/2023/08/west-end-community-airs-concerns-about-citys-plan-to-manage-homeless-encampments/>) quotes the Homeless Crisis Alleviation Coordinator for Second Wind Cottages as saying that outreach workers have stopped conducting walkthroughs of the current encampments in the Jungle due to safety concerns. Given that outreach workers have expressed *in the press* that they no longer feel comfortable visiting current encampments, why is the city's preferred approach that outreach workers manage issues with unauthorized camping in Ithaca? This does not seem like a feasible approach given the apparent safety issues. The early involvement of police seems warranted given outreach workers' hesitancy to visit current encampments in Ithaca. Additionally, the proposed enforcement protocol is woefully insufficient to stop unauthorized camping. It should not take six visits before a police citation is issued for unauthorized camping. A citation and police action should be taken during the second visit to an unauthorized campsite. After a third check on an unauthorized site, a plan to house the person(s) in temporary or permanent housing should be made.

4. Critical information missing from the policy:

- The pilot plan does not include any policy that would prohibit or penalize people from simply moving their campsite from one authorized location to the next after a citation is issued. This seems like a major oversight in the pilot plan.
- The pilot program states that "in no case is a physical "sweep" of encampments authorized by this policy". What does that mean? The policy fails to recognize that there is a difference between a "sweep" and the removal of one or two sites from an encampment as necessary.
- What will the frequency of checks be once a camper on an unauthorized site is identified? The policy states six "minimum week-by-week steps". A minimum of six weeks seems like a long time to let an unauthorized encampment fester on public or private property.

In summary, I do not believe that "sanctioned" camping on city property is a concept Ithaca should be experimenting with. It is not beneficial for City of Ithaca residents, and in the long term it is not beneficial for those experiencing homelessness. The distribution of proposed campsites and the city's enforcement plan raise major issues about equity and feasibility. The city's money and efforts would be better spent on the development of centrally located structural housing where people can stay temporarily [e.g., shelter, motel or Second Wind Cottages style housing, not by building TIDES-like structures in existing encampments] while accessing resources to help them move into permanent housing.

Signed,

From: Hughes

Subject: Re: Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

To City of Ithaca,

Thanks for sending me the info below on the encampment proposals. To me, the language used in the final draft doesn't matter so much; seems like it's of more importance to the folks you're trying to help. If there's a choice of words and a type of enforcement for implementation that gets more buy-in from the unhoused community, I'm all for it.

I may be naive in saying this, but there will be a point early on where the city's intent and willingness to follow through is going to be challenged by a few members of the homeless community, and it's probably going to fall to the police to at least signal seriousness of intent and get across the idea that the city is going to be fair but is also going to have boundaries. That's just part of being good neighbors and dealing with conflicts before they escalate, no matter the income level of the people involved.

You're on the right track with all of this, because it's going to set in motion a series of events whose knock-on effects will likely be a big positive. Simply giving people a place to clean up, meet with counselors and receive mail puts them on the path to being somewhere better in their lives than they are now. Given the sad fact that not enough people here want to employ the simple solution to homelessness- which is getting people under a roof, any roof- this is clearly the next best alternative.

Hughes

From: Morrell

Subject:

Hello. My name is Morrell. I am a long long time resident in the jungle. In fact I am first then a guy called Ozy. The rest that are here are new. But some came out here when Mayor Syvante took office. He was the one that pushed to give people needles. This town didn't have the drugs it has now before he took office. By giving out needles and saying it's harm reduction is a bold face lie. It might be harm reduction for the addict but is it for whoever steps on the needle because the addict chose to throw their needle on the ground when they got done with it. What do they care it's not like they need to exchange it like they are supposed to be doing. They don't need them cause they know the person giving them out will give one addict a box of a hundred. Oh did I say no exchange. I have been picking up the ones I see and there again I'm a recovering addict myself I'm only one needle away from using again. I might have 21 years clean. You need to make needles illegal again and the ones that were using them send to a rehab to get cleaned up. The make all weapons illegal in the homeless encampment. I have never seen so many people carry weapons as the young generation that is down here. They have zero respect for anyone. The old jungle crew used to police our own. If someone was being a trouble maker everyone would take a vote and if everyone was in favor of throwing the person out we did and they didn't come back. If someone wanted to live down here they had to be invited. As much as you all think your helping you really aren't. In fact you will have more problems cause now you are pushing everyone together. We don't get along now and then by closing sites and pushing everyone behind Lowes and Walmart will only get temures flared up and then the fights start or worse stabbing and what ever else the jungle has

seen lately..... As far as the job I will be happy to fill the position. I have been here 30 years I know the area

From: F

Subject: Feedback on homeless policy

Way too little, way too late. The city and county have chosen to ignore the voices of those who work with this population, ignore the voices of the population themselves, and allowed a violent criminal enterprise to operate in the jungle resulting in the actually homeless often not even being in the jungle but scattered all over in remote areas. Ask DSS why years back they stated the homeless numbers were temporary (clearly they weren't) and then you begin the right path to effectively address the issue. Ask why OTDA says no other county in the State has DSS issues like Tompkins County does.

Nate's Tenants' Statement on the
Pilot Administrative Policy
Unsanctioned Encampments on City Property

This statement is made in response to the draft "Pilot Administrative Policy – Unsanctioned Encampments on City Property" dated 06/15/23.

The people whose names appear below, including myself, are senior residents of Nate's Floral Estates and have a serious concern regarding the planned Green Zone proximity to the southwestern corner of our residential community. Over the years we have endured trespassing, theft, physical assault, trash (including needles and shopping carts), and vandalism.

With a full understanding that all homeless people are not criminals, and with an appreciation of the designation of the city property just north of Nate's as a Red Zone, we ask, for the sake of the safety and security, that the Common Council help resolve these issues by:

- 1) Creating a buffer between the planned Green Zone, from the southern edge of Nate's Floral Estates to the northern edge of the dewatering site, by designating this area as a Red Zone.
- 2) Creating a path from the remaining Green Zone behind Walmart that would allow people to travel in a northerly direction, thus bypassing the Nate's property.

Bulatek (author)	Augustine	Eastman
Bulatek	Baker	Eastman Howe
Sidle	Jacobs	Merilanti
Sidle	Swenson	Merilanti
Herkowitz	Hoffman	Robbins
Wells	Vavra	Robbins
Raza	Fergus	Hamilton
Hendrickson	Rogers	Kotzer
Fenner	Sledziona	McMullen
Fenner	Slattery	Phillips
Hix	Haring	Halton
Skillin, Jr.	Cain	Halton
Mahon	Cain	Tierney
Mahon	Sprague	Parker
Slattery	Sprague	

Nate's Tenants' Statement on the
Pilot Administrative Policy
Unsanctioned Encampments on City Property
dated 06/15/23

Kouf
Herman
Firenze
Troy
Clements

Harding
Herman
Fuller
Huff
Fenner

Hendrickson
Firenze
Fuller
O'Conner

From: Nutter

Subject: Proposed encampment policy

The City ban on camping on, for instance, park land should be enforced, which is why the term enforcement should be used. A designated land use - such as a ball field - should not be required in order for the camping ban to be in effect. Natural areas that don't have a designated use should not be subjected to trampling and garbage.

The protocol appears designed to be cumbersome and ineffective by requiring multiple weekly visits, all of which can be ignored. Can a protocol be written which would result in red zones being cleared in days rather than perhaps no result after weeks?

There should not be "amber zones" because that would indicate the City will not even enforce the proposed protocol.

The City land between Malone & Taber Streets used to be a place where people could walk or bike safely and directly between the West End and the commercial area of Wegmans etc. for shopping and employment. Then this land was taken over by encampments. Then the encampments and their vast garbage were removed. Twice. Now this "red zone" is not occupied, but a fence and no trespassing sign also prevent even benign walking and biking through here by people who do not break laws or leave trash. Pedestrians and bike riders must go three times as far, traveling along roads lacking sidewalks and with much of the pavement so uneven and poorly patched that biking is uncomfortable. Can this path please be re-opened? Must we have fences everywhere in order to prevent illegal camping?

What about the garbage? People have left behind so much garbage - food containers, soggy clothing & bedding, the remains of tarps or tents, even a pile of over 2 dozen gas canisters - all in an area where camping is supposedly red-zone prohibited. That's just what can be seen without touching it. Who knows what filth, broken glass, or dirty needles are deeper? It's still there now. This proposed policy will not prevent squatters from coming back, it won't oust them if they do, and I don't see anything about having the folks who brought the garbage take responsibility for it and clean it up. Who will clean it up? It's hard work bending over and picking up all the trash and soggy materials, hauling out the stuff that other people brought in during many trips then abandoned. I've done some cleanup, but it's more than I can do, and I'd like the City to stop people from trashing our public land and to help get the garbage out.

Nutter

Allen, MD and Oh, MD

Amabel Community Resident

Department of Planning and Development

City of Ithaca, NY

Dear Director,

Subject: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Policy on Unsanctioned Encampments in Negundo Woods

I write to you as a resident of the Amabel community in Ithaca (<https://www.amabel.org>), expressing our concerns about the proposed policy to address the challenges of the unhoused population in the city, particularly as it pertains to Negundo Woods. Our community, which has blossomed in less than two years, is home to many newcomers to Ithaca, and its proximity to Negundo Woods presents significant challenges and concerns under the proposed policy.

Amabel, comprised of 30 homes, is unique for a variety of reasons:

1. **Demography:** Many of our residents are seniors, above the age of 65, who chose this serene location post-retirement for the peace it promised. Many have come here from other parts of the country.
2. **Relocation for Nature:** A significant number of us were drawn to this neighborhood primarily for its proximity to nature. The future inauguration of the Black Diamond path through Negundo Woods was a pivotal factor in our decision to move to this area.
3. **Ecological Significance:** Negundo Woods, designated as a Southwest Nature Area, is adjacent to the Cayuga Inlet, a critical habitat for species such as rainbow trout and lampreys. Any encampments near this area may introduce pollution and illegal fishing, jeopardizing the ecological balance of this habitat, which falls under the Finger Lakes Tributaries Regulations.

With the above in mind, we express the following concerns:

1. **Access and Proximity:** The two primary paved access points to Negundo Woods - Inlet Rd and Amabel Rd, are alarmingly close to our homes. Any foot traffic to potential encampments would invariably pass most of our homes, situated within just 20 feet of these roads.

2. **Safety and Security:** An encampment in such close proximity raises genuine worries about crime, potential violence, drug use/trafficking and sanitation issues, which could jeopardize the well-being of our residents, especially the elderly.

3. **Future Developments:** Our concerns aren't limited to the present. The prospect of the Black Diamond project could be hindered if the woods were populated by unsanctioned encampments.

Considering the unique nature of our community, the ecological significance of the adjoining areas, and our concerns for safety and future developments, we earnestly request the Negundo Woods area be designated as a 'red' zone, indicating a no-camping designation. Such a decision would preserve the tranquility of our neighborhood, protect the critical ecological zones, and ensure the smooth execution of future projects that promise to enhance the area's attractiveness.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns and trust that the well-being of residents and the ecological sanctity of our beautiful city will guide your decisions.

Sincerely,

Allen, MD and Oh, MD

From: Petrina

Subject: Re: Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

Just a few thoughts on the Encampments Policy...

I read the NYT articles this weekend on encampments in Portland OR and Berkeley CA. By contrast, this draft Ithaca policy seems to offer solutions to both the homeless population, neighbors, and the city. Thank you for working to create this policy.

A few small suggestions:

- On page 3, under the last bullet point of B. Amber Zone - you may want to include language about protecting waterways. Something like "...including cutting down trees and polluting natural waterways/wetlands."
- the second suggestion/question is one you're probably already thinking about - what happens if continued citation doesn't work to bring an encampment into compliance? Is that covered by the city reserving the right of removal? Is it worth indicating a number of citations which would be cause for removal? Or better to keep it open ended.

Thanks again for your work on this, Lisa.

Petrina

encampment policy

roof

To the working group setting policy for homeless encampment,

I have read the proposal and I disagree with the entire premise and proposed solution.

The issues the city is having with the encampments will not change. In fact they will get worse as the

word spreads that Ithaca is a cool place to be homeless and set up

tents..... I have already heard this from these folks.

I have property and a business that is being affected by this situation. It is damaging my retail operation.

My staff is continually removing trash, shopping carts and dirty needles from our property and under the Buffalo street Bridge

where folks have decided to "hang out".

The only sensible solution, if the city really wants to help, is to provide ONE building with all the amenities mentioned

in the proposal and house these folks there. Then the police and concerned citizens and organizations currently involved can contain their time and efforts to one protected location.

If the people in need won't comply, then with police assistance they must be escorted out of Tompkins county.

I suggest to Find a building such as the old Morse Chain property on south hill (just an example) and move the encampment folks and any other people needing a roof over

their heads to one place and make only this one place a "1/2 way" home where they can be safe/clean, get the necessary treatments, and rest until they find another solution.

I also suggest having the national guard to help facilitate since this is now a nationwide problem.

From: Rosner

Subject: Homelessness and Community Safety

To Whom It May Concern:

I have lived in the city of Ithaca for over thirty years, and during those three decades, I have observed with sadness and horror, the burgeoning number of homeless people residing in illegal, makeshift encampments throughout the city. Mostly these folks burrow away in city land behind shopping plazas like Walmart, and are hidden from public view, causing little if any concern for most city residents and business owners. But now and then, and increasingly more often, members of this disenfranchised community spill out into our parks and sidewalks, our store parking lots, and even in our backyards. There has been an alarming rise in break-ins and robberies in residential homes and in small downtown businesses, including The Mary Durham Boutique, run by The Women's Opportunity Center, one of our beloved and respected nonprofit organizations, which provides invaluable support services for women in need.

I spent my career teaching in a New York State Correctional

Facility, dedicating myself to helping people who were convicted of felony crimes, often stemming from drug addiction, poverty, and mental illness. Many of my students were undomiciled, sleeping (when not incarcerated) in the streets, or in drug infested shelters, or in abandoned cars and buildings.

I felt (and still feel) an abundance of sympathy and compassion for these individuals, and I worked tirelessly for many decades to help them improve their lives through education.

While it is indeed not a crime to be homeless, or to be drug addicted, for that matter, the undeniable truth is that our growing homeless population, many of whom are also drug addicted, do commit crimes that directly impact our community, harm the environment, and put residents and small businesses in danger.

I read through the proposed City of Ithaca Pilot Administrative Policy - Unsanctioned Encampments on City Land.

The proposal discusses a complicated and lengthy, and ineffective procedure for keeping homeless individuals from trespassing on land that could harmfully impact the community.

The idea of shying away from enforcement, and possibly not even using the word “enforcement,” is not what I expect from my city government. We have laws for a reason, laws that all residents must abide by, and for the safety of everyone, we must expect these laws to be enforced. No trespassing should mean just that: No Trespassing. Without enforcement, the law is ineffective and useless.

According to the proposal, people camping illegally would be given six chances, over at least six days, to leave an illegally

occupied site. This is simply ridiculous and unfair. If I were to commit a property violation, such as vegetation growing over my sidewalk, I am given zero chances to comply with the law.

The City must enforce its policies and laws consistently. One notice of warning is acceptable and humane. More than that is simply irresponsible.

According to the policy, Illegal campsites in parks are not permitted to be cleared of homeless intruders for at least 24 hours. That is quite simply unacceptable. Parks belong to everyone! The presence of an illegal campsite in a park would effectively stop me, or a class of daycare children, or any of my neighbors from being able to enjoy that public resource.

I understand that the issues of homelessness are complicated. However, I believe the city needs to be mindful and responsible to all its residents when implementing policy that will keep our city safe for everyone who lives and works here.

Sincerely,
Rosner

From: Schoeps

Subject: The Jungle and Beyond - Input to Draft Policy

Hope you are doing well! Must have been some challenge working on this policy... as the expression goes like herding cats.

Don't know if you or the staff is tuned into some of the neighborhood listservs in light of everything you have to do. I've pulled some posts from the FCNA listserv and pasted them in below.

My take is the green zone is (should be) purposed to serve as a model for homeless camping. Is Red, Yellow, Green necessary? Seems anyone not in the green zone needs to transition to the green zone once developed according to building guidelines for such a campground 'zone'.

Would love to have seen more requirements called out as you do for other land use zones, in this case the requirements for campsite housing.

We have a city land use policy regarding camping that applies to everyone and it's simple: No camping is allowed on City owned land.

We have no hesitation to regulate folks that violate that policy... There is of course a major difference. The campground is purposed as a form of housing. For those that don't have any other.

This campground isn't recreation for the homeless, it is home. That's where it gets sticky because there is no one organization that delivers systemic process/programming to address the 50-150 campers who happen to be homeless at any one time.

Who will take responsibility for the operations and supervising the campground, the campsites? Who will be the lead agency/organization?

Why not position this policy more intentionally in context of entry point housing? There is no way that near term such housing can be eliminated. If ever we will be able to do so

considering how long it takes to address affordable housing needs. Would it make sense to specify what any development on a property designated as a 'campground' would require, e.g., designated campsites, minimal water, toilet and wash facilities for this zoning?

Could existing public and private campground policies offer additional perspective? Could lessons be learned from the various public and private campgrounds/sites be helpful?

Would it make sense to emphasize even more that you're providing a land use and its development policy. By itself it cannot address the needs of the specific population being addressed. The policy as you know, will not make the issues go away without systemic integrated human services support that such a population requires to successfully transition from campground housing to alternative shelter and stable housing.

Emails to FCNA - Jungle Housing and Beyond

The solution to homelessness isn't the land use policy. Is it needed? Yes - as part of addressing the issue.

The proposed Green Zone is land similar to the land where Nate's Floral Garden is located - where in the past mobile home parks were allowed to be built. Land that's right next to the railroad. That is marginal land; in Nate's case built on a dump site. The type of land that municipalities used to and some still do, zone for mobile home parks often next to an industrial zone.

Call out the land use policy for what it is supposed to be: Land for a City Campsite specifically providing temporary camp type housing for a portion of our homeless population because no other housing solution is available until a systemic housing and support process is put in place that is uniform across the County not just the City.

Why not proclaim it as park land and fix it up so that the Green Zone starts out minimally as a basic real campsite: open space campground; fire pits; portable water; minimally portable toilet facilities and wash facilities; maintained like any other parkland - mowed like all the park recreational facilities; 25-40 campsites with individual site ground cover to put up a tent or similar temporary shelter.

This could be built/set up and operational in thirty to forty-five days (at least by the private sector if the approval process didn't take what it takes for other development months, years. Once built, *the dead moose on the table of course is who will provide daily, weekly, monthly operational support - the staff - to manage it as a campsite? A campsite with special needs...* Build it and they will come... Maybe. Build it and only when the campground is complete and operational support services are in place would folks be transitioned from the Jungle to what might be called Camp Transition. A camp with common sense rules and regulations for camping. A campground that is entry point to housing beyond a 'tent'.

Pipe dream? Alternative reality? Certainly, a do-able alternative.

The draft *Pilot Administrative Policy - Unsanctioned Encampments Policy on City Property* is no more than city land use policy specific to a small segment of the population. At best it says you can live here on this designated piece of land temporarily but does not address what if anything the City will do to assist transitioning to shelter and stable housing.

The issue you and others on this listserv care about is found on page 1 of the pilot document: "*Following adoption of a City policy regarding unsanctioned encampments on City-owned property, the working group will recommend an appropriate City role and **actions to assist unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness transition to shelter and stable housing.***" (Bold/Underlined - mine; see after cover letter page 1 - [draft package](#))

What if we started with thinking about camping sites on City property for anyone? With all of the state parks nearby such a proposal would fall on deaf ears. If there weren't any state parks nearby would we consider camping in City Parks? How would we treat people who wanted to camp in our parks irrespective of their status or living circumstances?

Wouldn't we set expectations for what campers could/should expect in the form of rules and regulations for camping and what would these look like? What do [rules and regulations](#) look like, e.g., in NYS parks? Suppose we started with these? How would these be different for a camper who happens to be homeless, who does not have the resources that campers who are vacationing have?

Dear readers, before you immediately dismiss the rules and regulations under "Camping" what changes/deletions/additional provisions would you make to enable a homeless camper to be able to stay on a campsite? Does the section on Campfires make sense? Does the General Behavior section make sense? My point is that these rules and regulations give us food for thought and action as to what expectations should be in place for camping that is temporary housing. How are rules and regulations regulated in parks? With park rangers - a form of outreach persons? I imagine only if crimes such as battery, theft, rape, etc., were committed then police would be called in.

Why wouldn't we want to start with the assumption that the homeless campers are like any other campers visiting a park willing to live by a set of rules and regulations in exchange for being able to camp there. Breaking these rules specific to camping would have consequences, as last resort eviction? And breaking laws that are criminal in nature would also have consequences as they would for every resident in the City.

There is very little in the draft policy as to development requirements for the site in terms of how it is to be configured and managed. Will it be configured at all similar to a private or public campground with defined sites, with access to toilets/showers and water, with a minimum shelter such as found on places like the Appalachian trail to complement what the camper has? Will that be part of the follow-up after adoption of the policy?

Is there anything in the camp rules and regulations other than what is reasonable to expect?

Whether homeless or not a camper is still a camper. The difference is "*Following adoption of a City policy regarding unsanctioned encampments on City-owned property, the working group will recommend an appropriate City role and **actions to assist unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness transition to shelter and stable housing.***"

Too bad the name of the policy wasn't simply Encampment Policy on City Property - "no camping is allowed on City property except as part of homeless transitioning as described below..."

Best, Schoeps

From: Schwartz

Subject: Re: Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

I just realized yesterday was the 7th and I missed the deadline, my apologies. I will keep this concise.

Here is our feedback:

1. Yes, enforcement is appropriate. The PD doesn't want to be overly involved or heavy handed, but people need to know there is potential consequences of not adhering to this ordinance. That alone should help prevent us from having to take enforcement action.
2. Police presence should be used only after all other forms of notice and outreach have occurred (involvement of social services, outreach, nonprofits, medical, written notice etc)
3. Hard no vote for the amber zones! This will be equally confusing for community members, police officers, attorneys, judges etc.
4. How will the City "log" notices to people in red zones? This seems problematic logistically, possibly making enforcement unrealistic.
5. Our hope is that people are moved from "Red Zones" just as the De-watering site was cleared. IPD had very little involvement. 1 officer had to speak with 1 person, who ended up moving. No enforcement taken.
6. Tammy Baker should help designate "Red Zones". Let's move people from the easiest places first, then work on the places where people will be more resistive to moving from last.
7. Longevity needs to be carefully thought of. 10 or so years ago, "Jungle 1" behind Agway, which is RR and City property, was cleared of all debris and people. This lasted a

couple years and now has completely been re-established. Whatever we do should be able to be sustained indefinitely!

Thanks,

Schwartz

From: Shea

Subject: City plan for encampment

Hi Lisa,

I'm a longtime resident of Ithaca, came from Auburn to raise my daughter here, better environment, more opportunities 1977. She is now a lawyer in the Public interest. I think we need to shrink the footprint of the Green zone. I understand the homeless population has tripled in the last year or 2. Pls see "Seattle is Dying" u tube cautionary tale for us..

As a resident I see people on bikes toting carts, one of which were stolen from Ithaca Community [Gardens.At](#) Floral Ave garden, someone stole our solar batteries. I see people under the influence near Purity on Fri. nite, no shoes on in stocking ft, what?. Lets face it, there is a certain element of these folks that are like pirates.

WE have a real problem here!!;m for police inforcement of criminal behavior & protect our vital green spaces which are for public use. I don't want camps spread thru-out the City. The Public Health issues alone in the JUNGLE are cring worthy, those will spread along with same issues that plague the jungle, That's not camping, that's squatting.. any well intentioned ammendments are vandalized by a certain few.

I did my internship @ Red Cross Emergency Shelter just before David Malcom was mudedred. If some of the people setting policies have ever been the victims of violence, maybe they would'nt be so eager to foster the growth of a criminal class. Provide services for the needy & those seeking housing & a decent life. Discourage the sociopathic behavior. Thank you Lisa. Shea

From: Spaulding

Subject: Jungle

To be honest with you and whom this may get to.

I have No idea of Why that camp was allowed to start in the first place?? If the city had done something back then it wouldn't be the issue it is now!

I believe the most of the people there don't want or have any desire to live with rules of society that the rest of us live with.

Some of the people there have mental health issues. Why hasn't this issue been dealt with?They should be some place to help them even when they dont want to. They are not ready to be main streamed into society! Some of them there get hooked on drugs. Another problem!Drugs is another issue that hasn't been dealt with there!

I know some of the people there just can't afford to rent someplace for many various issues mostly I believe to the high cost of living here.

I don't have the training or education to know how to deal with this situation. Somebody in this area should! I think it's time to deal with the problem and stop thinking it'll take care of itself!

Spaulding

From: Sprague

Subject: Jungle

I am writing to share my perspective and concerns regarding the proposed plan to address the Jungle. As discussed in the Ithaca Voice article there has been an increase in homelessness since the pandemic. In October of 2020 the case management program was cut at TCMH. This program focused on the most vulnerable county populations including homeless and those struggling with mental illness. This program was vital to the community in assisting homeless in accessing shelter and long term housing as well as maintaining mental health services. The programs that replaced TCMH Case Management (Care Cord) are unable to assist individuals at the necessary level . Both have constant turnover, restrictions around services and one is not even in this county. The missing component in addressing the homeless is addressing the gaps in mental health care and assistance navigating the complicated Human Services world. I believe the goal is to build trust, hope and pride in individuals while assisting them in obtaining and maintaining long-term housing not spending taxpayers money on making things more complicated.

Thank you for your time and feel free to contact me.

Sincerely

Sprague

From: St. John

Subject: Jungle

I believe the money that is the city gets from TAX PAYERS should be used for road improvement projects. It may sound cold but, the homeless will not treat anything you give them with respect and it will look the same in 6 months time.

From: Talley

Subject: Feedback on Pilot Policy on Unsanctioned Encampments

Thanks for requesting feedback & input from residents on the draft policy for encampments. My input is specific to Negundo Woods.

Negundo Woods is a wetland area & still designated, as far as I know, a Natural Area on the Ithaca Master Plan. Please don't change that. It's important for wildlife, birds, insects, marine life & our overall water quality.

In addition, as you know, the Black Diamond Trail, important to locals & visitors alike, is projected to go through the Woods to connect the bridge now being built over the channel to Buttermilk Falls & eventually to Robert Treman Park. Again, this BDT connection is very important for our city & area. The Trail is widely known for its beauty & safe, restful passage.

Considering just these two points, it is implausible to me & seems completely inappropriate for the Woods to be designated as an amber zone. Camping in Negundo Woods should not be a "lower priority for enforcement." Camping must be "strictly prohibited" (red). There's too much at risk. Please work to make sure we safeguard these Woods as this critical encampment issue is further explored.

Thank you
Best Regards,
Talley

Comments on the Draft Pilot Policy generated by the Working Group for Unsanctioned Encampments

Tompkins Environmental Management Council (TCEMC)

We appreciate that this rational plan draws from other models and emphasizes human rights.

As well, it is prudent to designate specific places in which camping will be allowed on lands owned by the City of Ithaca.

TCEMC wishes to emphasize three issues:

- 1) Protection of natural and water resources. This point is made in your presentation (p. 14 of the document). We would add the following:
 - a) Because we are facing a dramatic loss of biodiversity throughout the United States and the world, every municipality must make concerted efforts to be part of the solution. City-owned lands are the place to begin. “Sacrifice zones” or further degrading lands can no longer be part of the equation. We must move beyond that type of thinking. Instead, the City can enhance green spaces and consider planting “food forests,” which can improve mental health and address food shortages. Active and beneficial land use should be prioritized rather than considering it unused or sacrificed.
 - b) Our waterways lead to our lake, the source of drinking water for many, a significant tourist attraction, and the home to many aquatic organisms.

Encampments in the past have generated waste and polluted the waterways. This must not continue. Pollution in the waterways from every source is a problem for us all.

Any plan by the City should include protection of the waterways from trash, sewage, or other refuse.

- 2) Flooding Risk. As we well know, warmer air holds more moisture and extreme rain events are becoming more common and problematic as our climate changes. Keeping this in mind, if one overlays the map presented in this document with the flooding risk faced by the City of Ithaca, problems soon become apparent. (See the [FEMA flood risk map](#) and [RiskFactor](#) from First Street Foundation.)

Although the City hopes to address the flooding risk by creating higher walls on channels, those do not yet exist and, in any case, they may fail.

- a) Will the people camping in the designated areas be safe in the case of flooding? Are they at greater risk because they are living in particular areas? Will people be educated about the risks of flooding and what to do if one occurs? How will they be rescued should that be needed?

- 3) Risk from excessive heat.

[Ready.gov](#) regularly provides updated information about how residents can cope with excessive heat. [NOAA](#) provides information about the increase in the risk of excessive heat. We in the Northeast have the humidity as an additional factor, described as “real feel.” This creates risks beyond what those in dry climates face.

Will those living in encampments be able to cope with excessive heat? What measures will be offered to address this?

We thank you for considering these important environmental and climatic points.

Sincerely,

Darfler
on behalf of the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council



Legislature

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August 4, 2023

To: City of Ithaca Mayor, Common Council, Department of Planning & Economic Development

Re: Tompkins County Statement Regarding the City of Ithaca Pilot Administrative Policy –
Unsanctioned Encampments on City Land

The County's interest in providing this statement is to clearly outline the County's role in addressing homelessness in our community and our commitment to a productive ongoing partnership with the City of Ithaca.

The City of Ithaca's draft policy on unsanctioned encampments on City land represents one piece of the complex puzzle of addressing the issue of homelessness. Tompkins County appreciates the City of Ithaca's stated commitments to addressing unsanctioned encampments with a respectful approach that balances neighborhood concerns, responds to criminal activity when necessary, and delivers resources to those in need in order to prevent and respond to homelessness. The County recognizes that in some cases enforcement or response to issues occurring on City land may be necessary when there are public safety or health concerns.

As to the prompts for input and comment, Legislators and appropriate County staff are empowered to provide feedback directly to the City. Tompkins County will continue to make staff available for comment and partnership at the City's request.

Tompkins County has a longstanding mandate and interest in addressing homelessness through social services, housing supports, and other collaborative efforts. Tompkins County Administration will continue to coordinate efforts with the support of the Legislature. The county's ongoing activities and commitments are to:

- Provide social services and emergency assistance for those in need and seeking shelter
- Contract with providers for shelter beds and identification of additional strategies for increasing shelter bed supply
- Provide mental health and addiction treatment services through Tompkins County Whole Health and partner agencies
- Administer Code Blue emergency shelter availability during the cold weather season
- Support law enforcement investigations into criminal activity and collaborate with other agencies for crime prevention and response under the purview of the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office
- Engage with community partners to explore additional collaborative approaches to reduce unsheltered homelessness
- Consider alternative to law enforcement approaches for issues such as mental health crises as outlined in the Reimagining Public Safety collaborative plans
- Support some outreach worker programs designed to connect with individuals in need and offer a compassionate connection to available resources
- Fund sponsored agencies in the community who assist people in need by delivering housing services, health and human services, access to healthy food, legal aid, and other programmatic areas





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- Act as a convener of local leaders and groups addressing these issues
- Advocate for resources at the State and federal level as appropriate

While homelessness is first and foremost a housing issue, Tompkins County recognizes that there are many intersecting issues facing individuals experiencing homelessness as well as the community of neighbors, support systems, and law enforcement.

In the absence of enough housing to get everyone in need a bed, providing resources and working to ensure the safety of residents are laudable goals for local governments. We thank Common Council, the Mayor's Office, and City staff for your work on this draft policy and look forward to continuing to work with you to support getting unhoused people into appropriate housing situations when they are ready, and to surround people in need with resources and connections to stabilize and ultimately thrive.

Black
Chairwoman, Tompkins County Legislature



From: McDonald

Subject: County staff comments: Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

Attached please find County staff comments on the Pilot Encampment Policy Framework. We've gathered input from the County's Homeless Services Coordinator, the Department of Planning and Sustainability, and the Department of Social Services into one document for your convenience and appreciate you sharing the draft document with us.

Thank you,
McDonald

McDonald *Deputy
Commissioner
Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability*

Subject: Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

Subject: Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

Please find attached a Draft Pilot Policy that was presented to the Planning & Economic Development Committee of Common Council at their June 21st meeting. The policy was drafted by the ~~Working Group for Unsanctioned Encampments, whose charge is stated at the top of the document.~~

The Committee is seeking input on all aspects of the policy and is particularly interested in receiving feedback on the following areas (highlighted in yellow in the attached document):

1. Use of the word enforcement (alternatives are administration, implementation and response or response protocol)
2. Alternatives to the 6 -step protocol described in B(4) of the policy. Should a police response be used? If not, what other steps should be taken to achieve voluntary compliance?
3. Should the policy include amber zones? If so, what lands should be included?

From: Kruppa

Subject: Encampment plan comments

Good afternoon,

Tompkins County Whole Health submits this email in response to a solicitation for comments on the proposed encampment plan. We fully support and appreciate the City's effort to find solutions to this very difficult situation. We are ready to partner in any way that may be helpful. Our comments are meant to provide our perspective and not serve as barriers. The attached document from our Environmental Health Division is meant as a guide to the many places our regulations are impacted by both the current and proposed situations. We have deferred acting out of deference to the efforts to find collaborative solutions. We are providing the citations of Public Health Law and the Sanitary Code so the workgroup and city attorney can be aware of the intersections. When it is appropriate, we will be ready to discuss your plans and how we can make recommendations to achieve compliance.

Below are some more general comments on the proposed plan.

1. Develop clear safety guidelines for when Enhanced Street Outreach Workers and the City's Homeless Outreach Coordinator will not respond - It is vaguely written in the current version "when they don't feel safe". Outreach workers from different organizations/even different staff in the same organization may have a different comfort level on what "feels safe". Are the expectations different for volunteers?
2. Clarify what happens when law enforcement issues a citation and the individual fails to appear in court. A clear protocol will be needed to respond to those few who do not relocate. If law enforcement is expected to do something, then it should be clear what they will be asked to do. It is also unclear how much time lapses between each outreach effort. Is the timeline different based on priority (emergency condition, red zone or amber zone)?
3. Expand evaluation section - how will success be measured?

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. We look forward to continued collaboration as the process moves forward.

Thanks

Kruppa, MPA, MPH
Commissioner

Tompkins County Whole Health



**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
DIVISION**

The Tompkins County Sanitary Code (TCSC) begins with several references from Article 3 of the Public Health Law of the State of New York describing sections that outline the authority and force of law given to local boards of health and county sanitary codes. The following two excerpts are relevant to the enforcement of the City of Ithaca's Unsanctioned Encampments on City Land pilot policy:

Section 348 provides:

The provisions of the sanitary code of a county or part-county health district shall have the force and effect of law. Any non-compliance or non-conformance with any provision of such sanitary code or of a rule or regulation duly made thereunder shall constitute a violation punishable by a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars or by imprisonment for not more than fifteen days or by both such fine and imprisonment. Certified copies of the sanitary code of a county or part-county health district shall be received in evidence in all courts and proceedings in the state.

Section 1308, Public Health Law:

Powers and duties of local boards of health. It shall be the duty of local boards of health to enforce the public health law, the state sanitary code and local sanitary codes whether promulgated by the county or any of the political subdivisions within said county.

A local board of health is hereby authorized to make an ex parte application for a temporary restraining order and upon sufficient proof to satisfy it, the court may grant such an order, where there is a violation within the jurisdiction of the local board of health which requires immediate relief.

The Unsanctioned Encampments on City Land pilot policy does appear to sanction certain activities that are not in conformance with the following Articles or subdivisions of the Tompkins County Sanitary Code. The following items referenced will or may apply:

ARTICLE I
Definitions and General Provisions

§ S-1.01. Title. [Amended 5-9-2000¹]

The rules and regulations herein contained shall constitute and comprise and be known as the Sanitary Code of the Tompkins County Health District.

§ S-1.02. Definitions. [Amended 5-9-2000²]

When used herein, unless otherwise expressly stated, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

DRINKING WATER — Potable water available for human consumption, food preparation or culinary purposes.

DRINKING WATER SUPPLY — A water supply which provides potable drinking water.

GARBAGE — All animal and vegetable wastes resulting from the processing, preparation, cooking or serving of food, and other putrescible materials.

HOLDING TANK — A watertight container used to receive and store liquid wastes in a sanitary manner until they can be transported for treatment or disposal according to S-11.02f or S-11.03a.

OFFENSIVE MATERIAL — Any sewage or human fecal matter or the contents of holding tanks, cesspools, septic tanks and chemical toilets in either liquid or solid state.

POTABLE WATER — Drinking water which complies with the standard established in Part 5 of the New York State Sanitary Code.

REFUSE — All putrescible and non-putrescible solid wastes including garbage, rubbish, ashes, incinerator residue, street cleanings, dead animals, offal and solid commercial and industrial wastes.

RUBBISH — Includes solid or liquid waste material, including but not limited to: paper and paper products, rags, trees or leaves, needles and branches therefrom, vines, lawn and garden debris, furniture, cans, crockery, plastics, cartons, chemicals, paint, greases, sludges, oils and other petroleum products, wood, sawdust, demolition materials, tires and automobiles and other vehicles and parts for junk, salvage or disposal. Rubbish shall not consist of garbage or other putrescible material, incinerator residue, street sweepings, dead animals, offal, hazardous substances or offensive materials.

SEWAGE — The combination of human, household, industrial, other liquid or animal wastes with water including the waste from a flush toilet, bath sink lavatory, dishwashing or laundry machine, or the water-carried waste from any other fixture, equipment or machine.

WATERS — Includes lakes, reservoirs, springs, wells, rivers, streams and creeks within the territorial limits of Tompkins County and all the bodies of underground or surface water, natural or artificial, public or private (except private waters which do not effect any juncture with natural surface or ground water) which are wholly or partially within or bordering the county or within its jurisdiction.

§ S-1.03. Applicability; legal effects.

A. The provisions of the Sanitary Code shall be in force throughout the County of Tompkins.

B. The code shall be supplemental to the Public Health Law, the New York State Sanitary Code, the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, Penal Law and other New York State Laws relating to public health and shall, as to matters to which it refers, and in the territory prescribed therefore by law, supersede all local ordinances heretofore or hereafter

enacted inconsistent therewith.

§ S-1.05. Penalties for offenses.

The provisions of the County Sanitary Code shall have the force and effect of law. Penalties for violations or non-conformance with any provisions of such County Sanitary Code or of any rule, regulation, order or directions made thereunder shall be in accordance with provisions of the Public Health Law of the State of New York. Certified copies of the County Sanitary Code shall be received in evidence in all courts, and proceedings in the State.

a. Penalty by the Board of Health. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 309 of the Public Health Law, the Board of Health may impose a penalty not to exceed five hundred dollars upon a person for any violation of or failure to comply with any provisions of the Sanitary Code or of the State Sanitary Code, or any order made pursuant to such codes or to law after holding a hearing thereon. Each day on which such violation or failure continues shall constitute a separate offense. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to exempt an offender from any other prosecution or penalty provided by law.

b. Violation. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 348 of the Public Health Law, any noncompliance or non-conformance with any provisions of the Sanitary Code or of any rule, regulation, order or special direction duly made thereunder shall constitute a violation punishable by a fine of not more than two hundred fifty dollars or by imprisonment for not more than fifteen days or by both such fine and imprisonment.

§ S-1.07. Inspection generally.

a. All premises covered by the regulations of this Sanitary Code shall be subject to inspection by the Commissioner of Health. No person shall refuse to allow any officer of the Department of Health or their assistants to fully inspect any and all such premises, and no person shall molest or resist any officer of the Department of Health or their assistants in the discharge of their duties.

ARTICLE IV
Refuse Disposal
[Amended 5-9-2000⁵]

The purpose of this article is to protect public health and the environment by avoiding public health nuisances and public health hazards caused by refuse accumulation, collection and disposal.

§ S-4.01. Accumulation.

a. No person shall accumulate refuse except as follows:

1) All refuse shall be drained as free as possible of liquids.

2) Garbage shall be accumulated in closed, durable, non-absorbent water tight containers. The interior of reusable containers shall be kept clean by thorough washing and

draining as needed.

b. On every premise there shall be adequate containers (S-4.01a2) to accumulate refuse and so placed and maintained as to not create a nuisance.

ARTICLE V Nuisances and General Sanitation

§ S-5.01. Nuisances; inspection; investigation.

a. The Commissioner or his duly authorized representative shall investigate all complaints of any nuisance which may affect health.

b. The Commissioner or his duly authorized representative may enter upon or within any place or premise where he has reason to believe a nuisance or condition dangerous to life exists or where a place or premise is maintained or operated in a manner to constitute a public health nuisance.

§ S-5.02. Nuisances; notice to owner and others.

If a nuisance which may affect health, or a condition dangerous to life or health has been found to exist, the Commissioner or his representative shall supply the owner, agent and occupants of place or premise with a written statement concerning the nature of the nuisance or condition and initiate procedures as in his opinion shall result in voluntary abatement of the nuisance or condition.

§ S-5.03. Nuisances; hearings and orders.

a. Upon the filing in the department of the written statement (§ S-5.02) the Commissioner may cause to be served upon the owner, agent, or occupant of such place or premise a notice to appear at a stated time and place, to show cause why such condition should not be declared a nuisance, or a condition dangerous to life or health, and why an order for its abatement should not be issued.

b. If after such hearing the Commissioner determines the condition found to exist constitute a nuisance or condition dangerous to life or health, a copy of the findings determination and order shall be served on the owner, agents or occupants, and posted conspicuously on the building. Such order shall specify the time period within which the nuisance shall be corrected and the building, dwelling, or premise placed in a sanitary and habitable condition.

§ S-5.04. Abatement of nuisances.

a. Failure by the owner, agent, or occupants of any premise whereon any nuisance or condition deemed detrimental to the public health exists or causes the existence of a nuisance elsewhere, to comply with any order or regulation for the abatement, suppression, or removal of such nuisance or condition, may be reason for the Commissioner or his duly authorized representative to enter upon the premises to which such order or regulation relates and to abate, suppress, or remove such nuisance or condition.

The expense of such abatement, removal, or suppression shall be paid by the owner, or the Department or County may maintain an action to recover the expense of such abatement in accordance with Sections 1306 and 1307 of the Public Health Law of the State of New York.

§ S-5.06. Public places.

a. Every person who shall provide a toilet or lavatory for the use of employees, patrons, or members, or available to the public shall maintain such toilet or lavatory at all times in a clean, well lighted, ventilated and sanitary condition. The floors shall be impervious to moisture and properly drained. An adequate supply of soap, running water, and sanitary individual towels or their equivalent shall be available at all times. No towel, hair brush, comb, or drinking cup for common use is allowed.

b. In a building or dwelling wherein two or more tenants have common use of a toilet, lavatory, or bath the owner either directly or through his agent in charge of the building, shall be responsible for the sanitary maintenance of these facilities and shall keep them in a functional and sanitary state of repair.

ARTICLE VI

Sewage Holding, Treatment and Disposal

[Amended 5-9-1989; 5-9-2000⁶]

The purpose of this article is to protect the public health and the environment from the dangers of exposure to infectious and other disease causing agents which may be present in sewage, and to prevent the contamination of groundwater, surface water, or soil by wastes from individual or non-municipal sewage systems.

§ S-6.01. Design standards and waivers.

d. Waivers from Article VI of the Tompkins County Sanitary Code may be requested of the Tompkins County Board of Health where specific hardships or circumstances make it difficult to comply with Article VI and the waiver provides for an adequate level of public health and environmental protection.

§ S-6.02. General provisions.

a. Where a municipal sewage system is available and accessible, no person shall construct any other sewage system except for temporary use in connection with a construction project. When a municipal sewage system is available and accessible to any property, the permit issuing official may order the owner to abandon the use of any other sewage system and to connect with the municipal sewage system within a specified period of time.

b. No person shall expose or discharge human wastes or sewage to the atmosphere, or to the surface of the ground, or into any storm sewer or drain or into any water course or body of water. This does not apply to persons operating wastewater treatment systems in accordance with a permit issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation allowing such practices.

§ S-6.03. Construction permit.

a. The property owner, the sewage system operator and the builder of the sewage system are individually required to ensure that a Health Department construction permit has been issued and is in effect for an individual or non-municipal sewage system prior to beginning any of the following activities:

1) Construction, placement or siting of any building or structure requiring a sewage system, or...

§ S-6.05. Other regulations.

Nothing in this article shall exempt any construction of individual or public sewage systems from other applicable local, state and federal regulations.

The issuance of a sewage system construction or operation permit by state or federal agencies or a building permit by local municipalities shall not exempt any person from the requirement for a construction permit under S-6.03 of this article.

§ S-6.06. Special requirements in Tompkins County.

f. Holding tanks.

1) Holding tanks for sewage may be approved only for temporary use, whether continuous or intermittent, and only with the written approval of the permit issuing official. Such permits shall be renewable as specified and at least annually. Such facility shall be maintained to comply with all provisions of this article, subject to permit revocation. The permit may include conditions designed to ensure against overload or overflow of such tanks. Holding tanks on recreational vehicles or boats and commercial portable toilets with holding tanks are excluded from this permit or approval requirement.

ARTICLE VII
Water Supply

§ S-7.01. General provisions.

b. No persons shall serve, provide or make available or accessible for others, drinking water which is not potable or from a supply which is not adequately protected and maintained.

c. All drinking water supplies shall be developed, maintained, and operated in accordance with the latest published New York State Department of Health specifications, principles and practices or those principles and practices contained in the latest New York State Construction Code.

§ S-7.06. Bottled water.

No person shall sell, offer for sale or deliver bottled or bulk water for human consumption,

food preparation or culinary purposes unless it was obtained from an approved source and is disinfected, bottled, and delivered under conditions satisfactory to the Department and complies with Part 5-1.40 of the State Sanitary Code.

§ S-7.07. Water delivered by tank truck.

Water delivered by tank truck shall be potable, from an approved source, and at the time of delivery to the consumer shall have a free chlorine residual of at least 1 part per million. Such tank trucks shall have been inspected and approved for such services by this Department or Health Departments in adjacent counties prior to any delivery.

ARTICLE IX

Air Pollution Control

[Amended 5-2-2000 by L.L. No. 5-2000 7; 10-11-2005⁸]

The purpose of this article is to protect public health and the environment by avoiding public health nuisances and public health hazards caused by open fires and other air pollution sources.

§ S-9.01. General provisions.

a. This article is supplemental to applicable rules and regulations of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

b. No person shall discharge into the outdoor air any contaminants, smoke or other material that may cause:

- 1) Nuisance or annoyance to or disturb the comfort or repose of any considerable number of persons or the public; or
- 2) Injury to or endanger the health and safety of any person; or
- 3) Substantial injury or damage to business or property.

Such discharges shall be controlled using all available technology.

§ S-9.02. Open fires.

a. No person shall burn any rubbish in any open fire except in conformity with the provisions of this article.

b. No person shall burn, cause, suffer, allow or permit burning in an open fire of:

- 1) Garbage.
- 2) Rubbish, except:

(i) Rubbish resulting from residential activity, outside of a boundary of 1/8 mile of the periphery of any city or village and so long as no violation of § S-9.01.b is created.

(ii) Rubbish resulting from farming activity.

3) Materials resulting from the demolition of buildings or structures.

c. The following types of open burning shall not be considered violations of § S9.02.b:

(1) Fires in outdoor grills and outdoor fireplaces for the purpose of preparing food.

(2) Campfires and fires used solely for recreation purposes. However, the burning of leaves and lawn and garden debris shall not be considered recreational burning.

(3) Fire-training exercises sponsored by an agency or fire recognized by the Tompkins County Department of Emergency Response.

ARTICLE X **Water Pollution Control**

Chapter II, Parts 75-76 of the Sanitary Code of the State of New York and/or the Laws or Rules & Regulations of the New York State Departments of Health and/or Environmental Conservation shall apply.

The following are supplemental for Tompkins County.

§ S-10.01. Definitions.

As used in this article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

WATERS — Includes lakes, reservoirs, springs, wells, rivers, streams, and creeks within the territorial limits of Tompkins County and all the bodies of underground or surface water, natural or artificial, public or private (except private waters which do not effect any juncture with natural surface or ground water), which are wholly or partially within or bordering the county or within its jurisdiction.

SEWAGE — The water carrying human or animal wastes from residences, buildings, industrial establishments or other places, together with such ground water infiltration and surface water as may be present.

OTHER WASTES — Garbage, refuse, decayed wood, sawdust, shavings, sand, offal, oil, chemicals, all other discarded matter and thermal energy, not sewage or industrial waste, which may cause or might reasonably be expected to cause pollution of the waters of the county.

§ S-10.02. General prohibition.

a. No person shall discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of sewage, industrial waste or other wastes into the waters of the county which: a) cause injury, detriment, nuisance or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public; b) endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public; or c) have a tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property.

b. No person shall, directly or indirectly, throw, drain, run or otherwise discharge into such waters any sewage, industrial waste, or other wastes that shall cause or contribute to a condition in contravention of the standards adopted by the State of New York Water Resources Commission, State of New York Department of Health or State of New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

c. All discharges into the waters shall meet or be treated to meet the requirements of §§ S-10.02a and S-10.02b above.

ARTICLE XI

Offensive Materials, Animal Waste, and Hazardous Substances

[Amended 5-2-2000 by L.L. No. 5-2000⁹]

The purpose of the article is to protect the public health and the environment by avoiding public health nuisances and public health hazards caused by the handling or disposal of offensive materials, animal wastes and hazardous substances.

§ S-11.01. Offensive material.

a. This section is supplemental to applicable rules and regulations of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, including that no person shall engage in the business of removing, collecting, transporting or disposing of offensive material within Tompkins County, regardless of the place of origin, without a permit therefor issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation.

b. No person shall remove or transport, or permit the removal or transportation of, any offensive material from said person's premises except in such a manner or by such conveyance as will prevent the creation of a nuisance or the loss or discharge of such material. All such material shall be handled, covered, or so treated that it cannot escape or be accessible to rodents, flies or other insects or create a nuisance.

c. No person shall permit the deposition or storage of, nor shall hold, any offensive material on any premises or place, or in any building or structure, unless such material is so treated, screened, covered or placed as to not create a nuisance detrimental to health. All containers for the storage of such material shall completely confine the material, shall be rodent and insect proof, and shall be kept in an inoffensive and sanitary condition at all times.

§ S-11.03. Hazardous substances.

a. A person engaged in collecting or transporting, or in any process or procedure for

disposing of, hazardous substances within Tompkins County, regardless of the place of origin, shall do so only in accord with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including maintaining a valid permit if required.

b. No person shall permit the removal of any hazardous substance from his premises, place, building, structure or container except by a person operating in accord with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including maintaining a valid permit if required.

c. No hazardous substance shall be disposed of by discharge or deposition on the surface of the ground, or into any stream, body of water, storm sewer or sanitary sewer, or by injection or discharge into the ground or release into the air without a permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Additionally, a local policy allowing camping by five or more persons or parties on a tract of land for 60 or more hours in any calendar year, may have to be evaluated by the New York State Department of Health to determine if the allowed camping meets the intent of the Campground Code of the New York Codes Rules and Regulations (Subpart 7-3 of the NYS Sanitary Code).

From:Tietjen

Subject: Response to Draft Homelessness Encampment Policy

Dear Director ,

I am writing to respond to the City of Ithaca's draft homeless encampment policy. I am 66 years old, retired, and a new resident of the Amabel co-housing development. I'll be moving in to my house at 115 Inlet Road at the end of the month.

I've tried to quickly absorb the basic proposals in this draft, and I do have several immediate concerns.

1) Safety of not only the residents of the proposed encampment areas, but also of neighboring communities.

--The Amabel neighborhood is very close to the proposed green zone behind Walmart and Lowe's. And Negundo Woods, designated as under discussion, is basically our border to the east.

--The primary public roads leading to Negundo Woods are our residential roads. Many of us chose to live in this community for its quiet natural setting and the security and comfort of knowing all our neighbors.

--I read with some alarm and concern about the chances for "*issues seen in "The Jungle," such as drug manufacturing and abuse, theft and occasional violence, over the last 2-3 years.*"

2) Supervision, sanitation, and containment within the allowed green zone.

--How would it be assured that the encampments don't creep outside the boundaries of the designated zone? Will there be un-crossable barriers around their perimeter? How would a camping resident be prevented from traveling down the train tracks into areas that are not "green?"

--It's alarming to me that city intervention or acts of enforcement might only be triggered, for example, *after* there were fires, garbage had piled up, or trees had been cut down. If the green zone is to be a designated camping area, why not designate and monitor the individual camping "sites" as if it *were* a campground, with specific plots and with appropriate waste, sanitation, and water facilities? Being reactive rather than pro-active seems to me short-sighted as issues can develop quickly and evolve into major problems if there is not very frequent monitoring.

--Obviously simply allowing people to sleep on the ground somewhere is not a very humane solution, and the city must address the problem of homelessness with care for all its causes.

3) The designation of Negundo Woods should be RED—Camping Prohibited.

--Negundo Woods is described as a wetland and a designated Natural Area on the Ithaca Parks

Master Plan of June 2018. It is also to be the site of an extension to the Black Diamond Trail. Any semi- permanent or permanent camping in such an area is likely to degrade water quality, create other problems with waste and noise, and have negative impacts on plants, trees, and wildlife. It would impede enjoyment of the trail, especially for any women hiking alone.

--The presence of homeless people in Negundo Woods could have spillover into our Amabel community. One resident family already had an intrusive break-in to their new house while they were gone for a few days. As many of us are single and older, unregulated camping so close by will create an atmosphere of anxiety and limit our freedom of movement.

Please take these concerns into consideration for the whole policy, and especially when evaluating the suitability of Negundo Woods for any encampments.

Sincerely,

Tietjen

Nate's Floral Estate's Inc.
205 Cecil A. Malone Dr.
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-272-8400

08/07/2023

To Planning & Economic Development Committee,

We appreciate all your efforts in trying to create tentative guidelines for the homeless, however, we believe you should rethink the proposed green zone location.

One major problem with your plan is that the true homeless will follow it, but the squatters and criminals will not. You are basically giving them 6 warnings – that is too many. Enough is enough, we are tired of not only looking at what the homeless have done to the scenery around Ithaca with all the garbage, needles and squatters standing on the street corners with their cardboard signs begging for money. Ithaca used to be gorgeous, but no longer feels safe to reside in or just visit. Seeing on the news a homeless person stating: "he makes more by panhandling than the average worker, working a 40-hour work week" makes us working people feel angry and upset.

Just last week I had 2 separate issues where my car was approached by a homeless person. In the first incident, I refused to open my window and a homeless man circled my car going from drivers' side to passengers' side and back to the driver side while my husband and I were parked at Jade Garden. The second time occurred while sitting at Tompkins County DSS parking lot where my husband works. Since it was so hot, my daughter and I were sitting in my car with our windows down. Someone approached my passenger window asking if I had any change and I told them no. Both situations felt very uncomfortable. And when you talk to the security and law enforcement with regards to these things, there is nothing they can do. This is not okay. We all should feel safe in our homes, in our vehicles, while out walking, while at a business, etc.

There is camping as most of us have done for vacation where we respect other people's property and clean up after ourselves (as the Scout motto states – 'Leave No Trace'). We should not have to clean up after all the homeless. If they lived at an actual campsite, they would have to follow their rules and if the City of Ithaca has a law of 'No Camping' then why is it being allowed at all?

Although the proposed green zone is convenient for the homeless, it is one of the worst areas in the entire city where one could allow the homeless to be placed. Yes, that area is not only affecting many of the biggest businesses within the city of Ithaca: Walmart, Wegman's, Maguire's & Lowes among others, but you are also proposing an area which is directly adjacent to Nate's Floral Estates – home to over 100 elderly tenants many of whom cannot defend themselves and should not be put at risk of harm! They do not deserve to live in fear every day.

There have been many incidents where homeless have committed theft and property damage within Nate's Floral Estates. Why should our tenants and Nate's Floral Estates have to cover the

expenses of repairs and replacement of personal property when really that should all be on the City of Ithaca to cover the bills for what the squatters and criminals cause? If not the city, then the homeless who commit those crimes should make restitution either by paying back or through community service.

Stop putting our tenants at risk and stop making Nate's Floral Estates and other businesses deal with this disgusting way of life! When I say disgusting, I mean those that just throw their garbage everywhere, not caring about how much we've done to keep it clean, all the dirty needles that are all over. What is it going to take to get the point across - that this is not okay, it is unsafe?

Why don't those on common council open their backyards or homes for the homeless?

Please either rethink where you allow the homeless to reside or be prepared to protect the innocent taxpayers. If this area is approved as a green zone for the homeless then the city will be responsible for whatever may happen and the city should, at the very least, do the following:

- 1) Have a larger 'buffer' zone between Nate's Floral Estates and the homeless i.e., not allow the homeless to camp behind Lowe's or by the railroad tracks across the street from Nate's entrance or along either side of Nate's. All those options are too close.
- 2) Install and monitor video cameras along the fence between Nate's Floral Estates and Lowe's and pay to maintain the fence due to the frequent damage caused by the homeless.
- 3) Provide additional security for Nate's Floral Estates and surrounding businesses. If the Ithaca Police Department has limited resources, then they should request assistance from the Sheriff and NYS Trooper Departments to patrol the area more frequently.

This Land Use plan is a **beginning**, but it must be **modified** because it is lacking something of vital importance - **Keeping our citizens and taxpayers safe!**

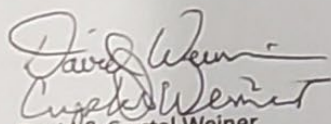
Please consider an **alternative area** within walking distance or city bus to stores where there is no one living nearby who could be harmed, such as:

Any vacant area **away from homes and businesses** - one tenant suggested the golf course. Maybe a vacant state park or vacant property in the city of Ithaca. There must be other places within the city where everyone can be safe, including the homeless.

As for the proposed amber and red zones, we believe they will just complicate issues with the homeless. Your plan needs to be clear, and firm so it should only include green zones. All areas outside of the green zones should be prohibited to the homeless encampments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


David & Crystal Weiner

Nate's Floral Estates co-owners

West End Neighborhood Meeting Notes 2023.07.27

Attendees:

Name	Affiliation	Email
Cynthia Brock	Ithaca Common Council Ward 1	CBrock@cithofithaca.org
George McGonigal	Ithaca Common Council Ward 1	GMcGonigal@cityofithaca.org
Donna Fleming	Ithaca Common Council Ward 3	DFleming@cityofithaca.org
Tiffany Kumar	Ithaca Common Council Ward 4	TKumar@cityofithaca.org
Robert Cantelmo	Ithaca Common Council Ward 5	RCantelmo@cityofithaca.org
Kris Haines-Sharp	Ithaca Common Council Ward 5	KHainesssharp@cityofithaca.org
Ted Schwartz	IPD Acting Chief	TSchwartz@cityofithaca.org
Rich John	Tompkins County Legislature	RJohn@tompkins-co.org
Matt Van Houten	District Attorney	mvh@tompkins-co.org
Tammy Baker	Tompkins County	TBaker@tompkins-co.org
Emily Ashby	OAR	
Deb Wilke	Secondwind Outreach	
Elline Weiner	Owner – Nate’s Floral Estates	
Weiner	Representatives - Nate’s Floral Estates	
Sprague	Nate’s Resident	
Raza	Nate’s Resident	
Bulatek	Nate’s Resident	
Coleman	Nate’s Resident	
Sidle	Nate’s Resident	
Merilahti	Nate’s Resident	
Robbins	Nate’s Resident	
Fenner	Nate’s Resident	
Herman	Nate’s Resident	
Cain	Nate’s Resident	
Stockdale	Nate’s Resident	
Sledziona	Nate’s Resident	
Herkowitz	Nate’s Resident	
Slattery	Nate’s Resident	
Halton	Nate’s Resident	
Vavra	Nate’s Resident	
Funke	Arthaus Manager	
Ayers	Arthaus Resident	
Malcolm	Wegmans General Manager	
McKenna	Wegmans Asset Protection	
James	Walmart Store Manager	
Dietz	902 Taber Street/120-124 Brindley St	
John	West End Stakeholder	
Saint-Perez Jimmy	Candidate Ward 3	
Jordan	Ithaca Voice	
Martin	Ithaca Voice	

Welcome – Cynthia Brock and George McGonigal

The purpose of this West End Neighborhood meeting is to discuss and receive feedback on the [City's Draft Pilot Encampment Policy](#)¹. Notes from this meeting will be submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) by August 7, 2023. Individuals may send written comments to Lisa Nicholas at lnicholas@cityofithaca.org by the deadline. The PEDC will be discussing the policy on August 16, 2023.² Thank you to the Fraternal Order of Eagles for offering their space for the meeting and for their ongoing support for promoting community and connection in the West End.

Hard copies of the policy were provided, and a summary of the policy was outlined with questions received during the presentation.

Community Feedback

Impact of homeless encampments:

- Issues are happening everywhere, not just in the red zone – all areas should be red zones
- Nate's is a thoroughfare shortcut for homeless traveling north
 - Fences are constantly being broken down, gates are damaged, people climb around the fence and go through the flood channel to get through Nate's.
 - Home are being broken into, items stolen from porches when people are home, residents are threatened repeatedly
 - Residents feel invisible – City is not paying attention
 - Repeated fires at the encampments threaten Nate's and safety
- Encampments should not be allowed near residential areas
- It is unfair for the City to allow garbage and trash everywhere in encampment areas when everyone else is fined by the City
- There is a huge upsurge in numbers of people needing food from the pantry, many are from outside the area, homeless individuals are moving around fluidly
- Please do something. We need funding for law enforcement and outreach/peer workers
- People don't feel safe
- Please don't generalize about everyone who is homeless. Encourage interaction and connection with those who are unhoused

Crime and Safety:

- Extreme frustration that City is not addressing the increase in criminal activity and threats to safety that occurs in areas next to encampments.
- Nothing in this policy helps to keep people safe from violence or crime associated with encampment areas (victimizing homeless residents, housed residents, workers, businesses, customers)

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bc60MxwnYqaMIJaSHOnY4n6lwXN7vtdQ/view?usp=drive_link

² City Hall, 108 E Green Street, 3rd Floor. 6pm

- How will the City protect the residents of Nate's?
- How will women and the vulnerable be safe in the green zone? What measures are being taken to maintain safety for residents in the green zone?
- Worry that the dangers associated with homeless encampments are being underestimated
- Encampment areas are currently a breeding ground for criminal activity (no oversight)

Comments pertaining to the draft policy:

- Everywhere should be a red zone
- Do not allow amber zones – it creates confusion, and there is more clarity without it
- There should be a buffer zone between encampment areas and residential and business areas
 - Don't allow encampments behind Lowe's, north of dewatering site –make it a red zone
- The City should install cameras between encampment areas and Nate's Floral Estates to improve safety
- Move the encampments elsewhere – suggest relocating encampments to the City golf course. The West End has borne the burden of homelessness for too long
- Use of the word enforcement is fine – The City needs to be clear what that means. We need a cohesive response that includes law enforcement
- Six chances before relocation are too much – we need rules that work to relocate individuals
- Can the City place a satellite police office on Cherry to address safety?
- When designing encampment zones, please consider/include walking paths. Cannot block off access (will result in removal of fencing and damage as people find their way through private property)
- There is no limit to the number of people living in the Green Zone

Law enforcement side discussion

Q: Law enforcement cannot keep people safe who have housing (Arthaus) – how do we expect law enforcement to address crime and violence in the camping zones? How can we keep the unhoused safe?

A: Arrests require a witness and someone to press charges. Evidence must be gathered to build a case against an individual, and it takes time and law enforcement staffing. When someone is a tenant, they have privacy rights (landlords/police cannot enter apartments without permission). The victim needs to press charges against those who violate them, and if they don't it is limited what can be done to keep them safe.

How to Participate in Public Comment Virtually

Email the Planning & Economic Development Committee:

You may submit a comment for an upcoming Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting by completing this [public comment form](#)³. Comments that are received after 3:00 p.m. on the day before the meeting, will be held for consideration at the next meeting.

Register to Speak Remotely

At 9:00 am on the day of a Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting, a live link will appear on the PEDC webpage for you to register to speak at the beginning of the meeting via Zoom. The first hour of the meeting will be used for Public Comment. Up to 40 people can register to speak. **Registration will close at 3:00 pm** so that the Zoom meeting link can be emailed to you with instructions for participation. You will be selected to speak in the order in which you were registered. You must be present in the waiting room when your turn is called to speak or you will forfeit your time. You can use video or telephone to participate.

³ <http://www.cityofithaca.org/FormCenter/Planning-Economic-Development-Committee-18/Planning-Economic-Development-Committee--98>

Pilot Encampment Policy Framework Circulation

Wibox

In my view, Amber Zones should only be permitted if adequate sanitary facilities, temporary or permanent already exist or are provided.

Frankly, I fear Amber Zones could be the source conflict between our homeless and local residents as competition for using open spaces grows.

It is important to avoid backlash as this effort builds momentum.

Is it possible to table that option for the time being to evaluate the success of the establishment of a secure green zone?

Regarding the role of utilizing police as the introduction of approved and unapproved camping sites is implemented, that should be at the discretion of the civilian administrators and volunteers. They need to feel and be safe, and it should be left to their judgment as to when a police presence would be helpful. I would hope that is not routinely necessary, but until the new camping zone is recognized as being helpful and safe by our homeless, some pushback might be expected.

An over arching concern regarding not only this proposed green zone, but also much of the area south of Cayuga Lake, is the recent expansion of designated flood zones.

Should the newly proposed green zone become flooded, or become threatened by our radicalized climate, I hope our city's current emergency procedures are or can be in place to provide safe temporary housing.

As a resident of this city off and on since the summer of 1971, and a homeowner, I am pleased our representatives are tackling this challenge. It is important to devote personnel and financial resources to flexibly trying out a set of procedures that will enhance the lives of the homeless, as longer term efforts proceed to develop more permanent housing options.

Clearly the Town of Ithaca and the County are also faced with the lack of adequate housing options for those who are often stranded and/or struggling in our county. I appreciated the coordinated effort this proposal demonstrates.

Wilcox

From: Wilke

Subject: Land management policy feedback

I am submitting the comment below that was written by a person who formerly lived in the jungle for several years. He has been in permanent housing for almost 2 years. His comment is in response to the cities draft policy for which you are seeking feedback. Here is his comment:

The people of Ithaca have. Finished the proposal regarding. The different spots in town known as the Jungle is a draft of how they will move forward with the situation I'm impressed happy and humbled by the compassion and what they came up with all the debris trash And size is a problem the different areas people who are not mentally stable don't need to be seen by children or people spending there hard earned money at stores I know when I was there I didn't want people to see me as well I was dirty embarrassed but it didn't matter cause if I was gonna eat I had. To go into public . Most places would have said no more and I been on that situation can't even sit or lay down without getting arrested. They have an area where people can camp it's a lil tucked in and will provide the campers with clean place to shower. Bathroom and keep everyone there up to date with what housing is available at the time. I believe that's fair and hope everyone out there knows they want to help keep you healthy cleaned up and get you into. Housing warm in the winter without any discrimination and are doing all they can to keep police and or law enforcement away so not to confuse people into thinking they are being targeted in that way they understand we're human I know. That lil bit of help whatever it was food medical some socks is what kept me going and gave me some hope when I was out there Thank you Thank u. Go to Ithaca voice is all there. Let me know what u think I'm not a writer just trying to pass on the news and say thank you for understanding and giving us a place and a chance to survive

I hope to submit my feedback before the end of today.

Thank you,
Wilke
Homeless Crisis Alleviation Coordinator

From: Winn

Subject: Encampment Plan Feedback

I believe the city's proposed policy on unsanctioned encampments is flawed in a number of ways.

The area of 'Jungle #1' behind Warehouse Carpet Outlet should be included into the Brindley street Red Zone. It has been claimed by members of council this is impossible due to much of it being railroad property. The railroad has requested the city address these encampments in writing. There is the potential for someone to be hurt or killed by a train. To enforce the ban on the city property in Jungle #1 means getting the entire site under control. This area is a hotbed of violence and criminality. The entire area needs to have the trees and brush cleared and a series of concentric fences erected to render the area impossible to access. There is no practical reason Jungle 1 should not be included as a zero tolerance area.

My primary objection is the city sanctioning encampments in what is called the Green Zone. This area will become what amounts to a concentration camp for the homeless. It is remarkably reminiscent of a storyline on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. Crew members find themselves in a 'Sanctuary District' for the homeless in year 2024. Please take the time to view the video clip I have included regarding the episode from the DVD extras.

The Green Zone, if implemented, is doomed to failure. There is a potential for a runaway growth in the population once word is out that you can live for free on city land. Violence and arson are a certainty.

I have imagined a scenario where some enterprising students take what would be a few months rent and use it to construct a domicile for themselves in the Green Zone. There is seemingly no check or control on who could and couldn't camp in the Green Zone.

The Amber color coded zones should be eliminated entirely. It contributes further uncertainty to an already confusing situation. There should be clear guidance on where it is appropriate to camp and where it is not. No ambiguity is appropriate on this issue.

There should, in my opinion, only be Red zones. Sanctioning these encampments means ignoring the illegal behavior that is their defining feature. Crowding people with substance

abuse and mental illness together when there is already a clear pattern of violence and arson is tantamount to murder. The crime, drug dealing and overdoses of the encampments will now be happening in a city sanctioned area. The Ithaca Police Department does not have the resources to police this population.

What needs to be done is to enforce existing laws. The city has a national reputation as a good place to live on the street. That reputation must be combatted. People who come here to camp on city land should find out it is unacceptable immediately. The long, extended series of warnings is impractical and only serves to embolden those violating the law.

I suggest the city turn this entire issue over to the County Legislature. Sanctioning these encampments will be like gasoline on a fire. This is all a very bad idea.



To: City of Ithaca Working Group for Unsanctioned Encampments

Thank you for sharing the draft policy: City of Ithaca Pilot Procedures for Administration and Relocation of Unsanctioned Encampments on City Property, I appreciate having the opportunity to review it through the lens of USICH's 7 Principles for Addressing Encampments. The 7 Principles document was shared and subsequently presented to the group that crafted the draft policy, in December with the option of having me come back for further discussion if needed.

I want to acknowledge that the expectation that local officials "do something" has created an additional urgency that was already present due to the pandemic, rising housing costs, and attacks on policies that center housing with voluntary services. With communities exploring new and potentially punitive laws that may disproportionately increase law enforcement contacts for people experiencing homelessness, USICH wanted to share solutions that we believe lead communities toward responsible, humane, and effective responses, while speaking to the urgency of what communities are expressing. In the draft policy: City of Ithaca Pilot Procedures for Administration and Relocation of Unsanctioned Encampments on City Property, one of the first statements is that the City lacks the experience, capacity, and jurisdiction to provide the broad response of social services required to comprehensively address the needs of unhoused individuals. That level of introspection and understanding could have been the catalyst to create the recommended Cross-Agency, Multi-Sector Response team that included Continuum of Care representatives, advocates, hospital/medical care systems, the faith community, and McKinney Vento liaisons to name a few key partners not included in the creation of this plan. A real opportunity could have been missed and it would benefit the city to take a step back, pause, and bring partners around the table to create a comprehensive, inclusive plan for addressing the needs of persons living in this long-standing encampment and the surrounding neighborhoods. I am attaching the Seven Principles for Addressing Encampments and hope that you use the information, after you build the recommended response team, to recreate your policy. "Out of sight, out of mind" policies don't solve homelessness—they just move it and I am here as the USICH Senior Regional Advisor to serve as the federal representative to help you create meaningful and lasting solutions.

Carver, MS

Senior Regional Advisor (Regions 1 and 2)

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness