
A Note Regarding Implementing Savannah's New Urban Camping Ban

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Mayor and Council—

As you know, yesterday you unanimously adopted an ordinance banning urban camping. Over the next few weeks, the City and our partners will be thoughtfully developing informational materials, operating procedures, and performance metrics for how best to implement the new ordinance. Firstly, we will be producing a flyer that we will hand out to all those we engage experiencing homelessness to inform them of the new law, providing a list of *Dos and Don'ts*, and providing information on where and how to engage with the array of services our community offers.

We will also be producing SOPs and training our officers, service-provider partners and call takers on any new or modified procedures and reporting requirements. This morning, I also reached out to Sheriff Coleman to inform him of the new ordinance change and to ensure that the City and Sheriff's department was connected on this issue.

I understand that you may receive questions or concerns from constituents who are reporting alleged incidents of urban camping and wanting to see immediate action. (I have already received several such requests). SPD can and will enforce the camping ban as needed and appropriate. However, I want to urge patience and realistic expectations as we stand up new procedures and protocols to effectively implement this new law, and to do so as Council intended—with respect for both the law and humanity, and to take any action with dignity and compassion for those experiencing homelessness.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Best,
Jay Melder