

# COMMITTEE REFERRAL SHEET

## COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>Name of Committee:</b>	Public Health and Safety
<b>Issue:</b>	Consideration of Camping Restrictions
<b>Camping Discussion Referred to Committee on:</b>	May 8, 2018
<b>Subsequent Committee Meetings were Held on:</b>	June 15, 2018; July 20, 2018; August 27, 2018; November 30, 2018; March 29, 2019; June 24, 2019; September 16, 2019 and November 18, 2019
<b>Research and Background:</b>	<p>Police Legal Advisor, Luther Ganieany, conducted research related to how other cities have addressed issues associated with camping. Part of this research included a review of ordinances adopted by these other cities and a review of case law from other jurisdictions to determine whether the methods used would pass Constitutional muster. Various versions of a proposed camping ordinance were discussed with the Committee members, who heard and considered the information provided from not only City staff members, but also from interested outside parties.</p> <p>Police Sergeant, Joshua Klamm, established a method through which homeless individuals could obtain a City-issued photo ID for purposes of enabling these individuals to obtain needed services and conduct day-to-day business. Numerous individuals took advantage of this program and now possess a City-issued photo ID.</p> <p>Division Director of Housing Services, Corrie Wright, took the lead in guiding homeless individuals through the process associated with a new Housing First component of the existing Shelter Plus Care program, a rent-subsidy program started in March 2019. This program is designed to provide housing assistance to individuals without requiring those individuals to be in pre-conditioned services. There has been a great deal of success in getting housing vouchers into the hands of those who need them.</p> <p>The Topeka/Shawnee County Homeless Task Force sent representatives to each Committee meeting to provide input. These representatives included individuals from Valeo, the Topeka Rescue Mission, Community Action,</p>

Second Chance Services, Doorstep and many other local organizations. Several on-site visits were made to homeless camps; some of which were attended by members of the Governing Body.

Dr. Russell Burton provided input at multiple Committee meetings, as did members of the homeless community themselves. These individuals shared their real-life struggles and successes with the Committee members and provided valuable input related to the content of the ordinance.

After considering input received through the course of seven Committee meetings, a revised ordinance was presented and agreed upon by the Committee during their eighth meeting on November 18, 2019. The ordinance consists of a partial ban on camping, with established no-camping zones and locations. Specifically, camping would only be prohibited:

- (1) in, on or under public infrastructure (bus shelters, bridges, overpasses and flood controls works);
- (2) within ten feet of any doorway, loading dock, stairway or fire escape; and/or
- (3) within specified zones (downtown and NOTO).

Testimony presented by Dr. Burton, representatives of the Homeless Task Force and Sgt. Klamm reinforced the Committee's belief that the proposed ordinance would be a viable alternative.

**Recommendation:**

Submit proposed Ordinance to Governing Body creating a new Article III of Chapter 9.45 of the TMC to include restrictions on camping within specified zones/areas of the City.

**Date Committee Referred  
Recommendation to  
Governing Body:**

November 18, 2019

**Committee Action:**

Motion by Councilmember Hiller, seconded by Councilmember Padilla, recommending that the Governing Body adopt the ordinance, as amended, which prohibits camping only in established no-camping zones/locations. Motion passed with a vote of 3-0.

**Members of Committee:**

Councilmembers Sylvia Ortiz (chair), Karen Hiller and Michael Padilla

**Governing Body  
Meeting Date(s):**

December 3, 2019 Agenda - Action