

July 29, 2021

Background on the Durham Encampment Policy

This policy is only enacted if and when the Durham city manager or Durham county manager would like to shut down an encampment on city or county owned land. (reasons being: health & safety issues, ADA issues, or when street outreach engagement has taken place and there has been a refusal of services.) If an encampment is found on state property, city or county does not get involved unless state staff members reach out to city/county departments and asks for support to clean up. Private property concerns have not been run through the Durham Encampment policy. Private property concerns tend to go to police for “No Trespassing Signs”

Street Outreach “lead agency”

Being that Raleigh has multiple street outreach providers. The encampment lead agency could be broken out into quadrants where frequent communication occurs with contributing street outreach providers knowing that individuals may be transient.

Strengths from Durham:

- Having a process to evaluate has been helpful for all agencies and providers involved.
- The policy has helped with public education.

Storing belongings

- We’re coming in to clean up in 30 days.
- Bagging and storing in advance.

Considerations and challenges from Durham Colin’s noticed

- City/county Government coordination: Colin shared that it was challenging often to find the direct contact person that would be involved. Ex. Who can help with solid waste pick-up? Can a direct contact person be identified via email/phone?
- When finalizing the policy, ensure that those city/county involved staff members are a part of the conversation to share insights/feedback and so that all are aware of the process in place prior to the policy being enacted.
- Encampment notifications and complaints: Durham has faced challenges of multiple complaints/notifications on an encampment. (Some complaints would come from local citizens via Durham1 phone system others would come from Department of transportation) Having a designated route/place for these calls to be received may be helpful.
- Risk management considerations: Liability and safety concerns for providers contributing to clean up.

Feedback on policy from workgroup

- Coordination with faith based organizations (Seaira Green)
- Providing storage bags/duffle bags for gathering belongings (Amirah Saintyl)
- Flow chart for street outreach teams for encampments. (Seaira Green)
- Checklist and documentation to meet before encampment policy is enacted. (John Niffenegger)
- Policy could be more broad and not only used in times of safety/health concerns: clarity/best practices or written standards on how we want to handle street outreach and encampments. (David Harris)

Durham’s thoughts

- Use of sanitary stations (porta-potty) in encampments; may enable. If thought out may be a positive contribution to encampments.