

## **Oakland's Homeless Encampment Management Policy and Our Ongoing Policy Work**

Oakland's policy on homeless encampments, known as the [Encampment Management Policy or EMP](#), was passed in October 2020. It is an attempt by the City to improve conditions or remove the hazards created by the homelessness encampments located throughout the City of Oakland. Although it purports to protect all Oakland residents, in our view, it emphasizes the protection of businesses and housed residents while giving short shrift to the plight of homeless people. Improved sanitation and safety are clearly important and worthy goals, especially now during the Co-vid epidemic. We support elimination of unsafe and unsanitary conditions, so long as reasonable alternate housing is provided to the current residents. We believe that razing the current encampments without providing people with other safe, sanitary places to go guarantees that they will remain on the street and at risk.

The encampment policy prohibits encampments within a certain number of feet of schools, parks, playgrounds, bodies of water and retail businesses. It also prohibits most of the cooking and heating equipment used by people living in encampments now. Although these restrictions might appear to be a good idea, we believe that they effectively outlaw virtually all of the current encampments and most accessible places in Oakland. Given that, we are focusing on how to convince the City that it should help the people living in encampments move to safer places including apartments, RVs, tiny homes, or even other encampments with proper sanitation and facilities, before razing their homes.

The policy provides for only 72 hours-notice before eviction and requires the city to offer people facing eviction with two weeks in a temporary shelter. The problems with temporary shelter beds are numerous. Congregate housing is known to be especially dangerous during the pandemic. Most shelters do not allow partners, require people to leave the premises during the day and most will not store people's belongings, forcing them to take everything they own with them every day. Defining what is reasonable alternative housing under the policy is continuing to be considered by the City Council, which has referred the issue to various committees. We are working to convince our Council Members that adequate reasonable alternative housing must be offered to encampment residents with the goal of protecting all of Oaklanders and, as much as possible, keep people safe and off the street. Please join us.