

In 2019, the City of Cloverdale established the Homelessness Community Advisory Group (CAG) to develop a plan to address homelessness within the City of Cloverdale. The Homelessness CAG held a series of monthly meetings wherein advisory group members shared ideas and views based on their experience working with and interacting with the homeless to help form the core content of a Homelessness Strategic Plan for addressing homelessness in Cloverdale. After a number of meetings and robust discussion, the City Council adopted a Homelessness Strategic Plan on August 2022. The Strategic Plan provides a Vision for Success, Guiding Principles, and seven primary Goals that the Plan intends to achieve. Each goal is connected to a series of over thirty-six Supporting Actions, with detailed recommendations for successful implementation.

As part of the Strategic planning process, a community survey was conducted to identify the top 10 priorities of the Community related to homelessness. As part of the goal making process, fire prevention and mitigating impacts on private property were identified as the Community's top goals

Rank	Top Priority Identified in Community Survey	Relates to Goal
1	Fire Prevention	Goal 1
2	Mitigate impacts on private property	Goal 2
3	Identify people at risk of homelessness	Goal 3
4	Expand enforcement and surveillance	Goal 2
5	Lobby for expanded mental health services	Goal 6
6	Establish regular communication with those who interact with homeless	Goal 4
7	Collaborate with local agencies to lobby for criminal justice	Goal 6
8	Implement a fund for those at risk of homelessness	Goal 6
9	Provide field-based outreach to connect those in need to services	Goal 3
10	Expand outreach	Goal 4

The City of Cloverdale has been working with Sonoma County and local stakeholders to address local homeless populations. The focus has been on encampments along Cloverdale River Park and surrounding area near the Russian River corridor. The encampments along the River have heightened concerns about fire threats and have required extensive public safety response by the Cloverdale Police Department, Cloverdale Fire District as well as the Sheriff's Office. A significant challenge in addressing homeless encampments near the River is the legal protections afforded to individuals who are unsheltered because the city does not have the public or private housing or shelter space to restrict camping on public property and the public right of way. In a 2018 decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in response to a 2009 lawsuit by six homeless plaintiffs against the city of Boise, Idaho regarding the city's anti-camping ordinance. The case referred to as the Martin v. Boise ruling held that cities cannot enforce anti-camping ordinances if they do not have enough homeless shelter beds available for their homeless population. It did not necessarily mean a city cannot enforce any restrictions on camping on public property.

In response to the Martin V. Boise Case, Sonoma County and the City of Cloverdale have begun the process of updating our respective "Camping Ordinances" that addresses the restrictions imposed by the Ninth Circuit while providing adequate protections for our public spaces.

On October 12th, an updated camping ordinance was introduced to the Cloverdale City Council. The Ordinance as currently proposed will add Chapter 9.35 "Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Wildfire Risk Areas" to the City's Municipal Code to provide for the protection of critical infrastructure and wildfire risk areas by prohibiting camping in certain sensitive areas, including:

- At or near "Critical Infrastructure";
- In a wildfire risk area (as specifically defined in the Ordinance);
- Within 150 feet of the high water of the Russian River;
- Within five hundred (500) feet of a well site; and
- Within 10 feet of a building entrance/exit, or a driveway or loading dock.

The camping ordinance includes details of community and environmental impacts caused by the homeless encampments, such as unsanitary, unhealthy, disorderly, detrimental, and dangerous conditions, homeless-related structure and vegetation fires, and threats to the city's water treatment facility and other critical infrastructure. The proposed ordinance would also prohibit individuals from obstructing a clear path of travel on any sidewalk, street or other right-of-way, or occupying an area greater than 10 feet by 10 feet. In addition, the ordinance prohibits the dumping of graywater.

The purpose of Chapter 9.35 is to mitigate the threat of fire or other potential causes of destruction and damage to and interference with critical infrastructure, in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, by authorizing the removal of persons and their personal property in, on or near critical infrastructure and wildfire risk areas, and as necessary to keep public rights of way clean and available for public use in a manner that preserves the dignity and safety of all residents. Violations of Chapter 9.35 can be punished criminally or with administrative fines, and the City is authorized to abate violations. The added provisions listed above are expected to provide relief for those areas in the City where homeless populations and homeless encampments have negatively impacted livability through criminal behavior, public health issues, and safety concerns due to wildland fires.

Under the newly revised ordinance, the city may abate unlawful encampments with 48 hours' notice under the proposed amendments, thereby minimizing risks to public health and safety and adverse impacts to protected habitats and other open spaces. These changes will allow the City to regulate its property more effectively and within the confines of the law, as announced in the Boise v Martin decision consistent with the top goals of the adopted Homelessness Strategic Plan. A Copy of the Strategic Plan can be found on the City's website at: <https://www.cloverdale.net/413/Homeless-Community-Advisory-Group>

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