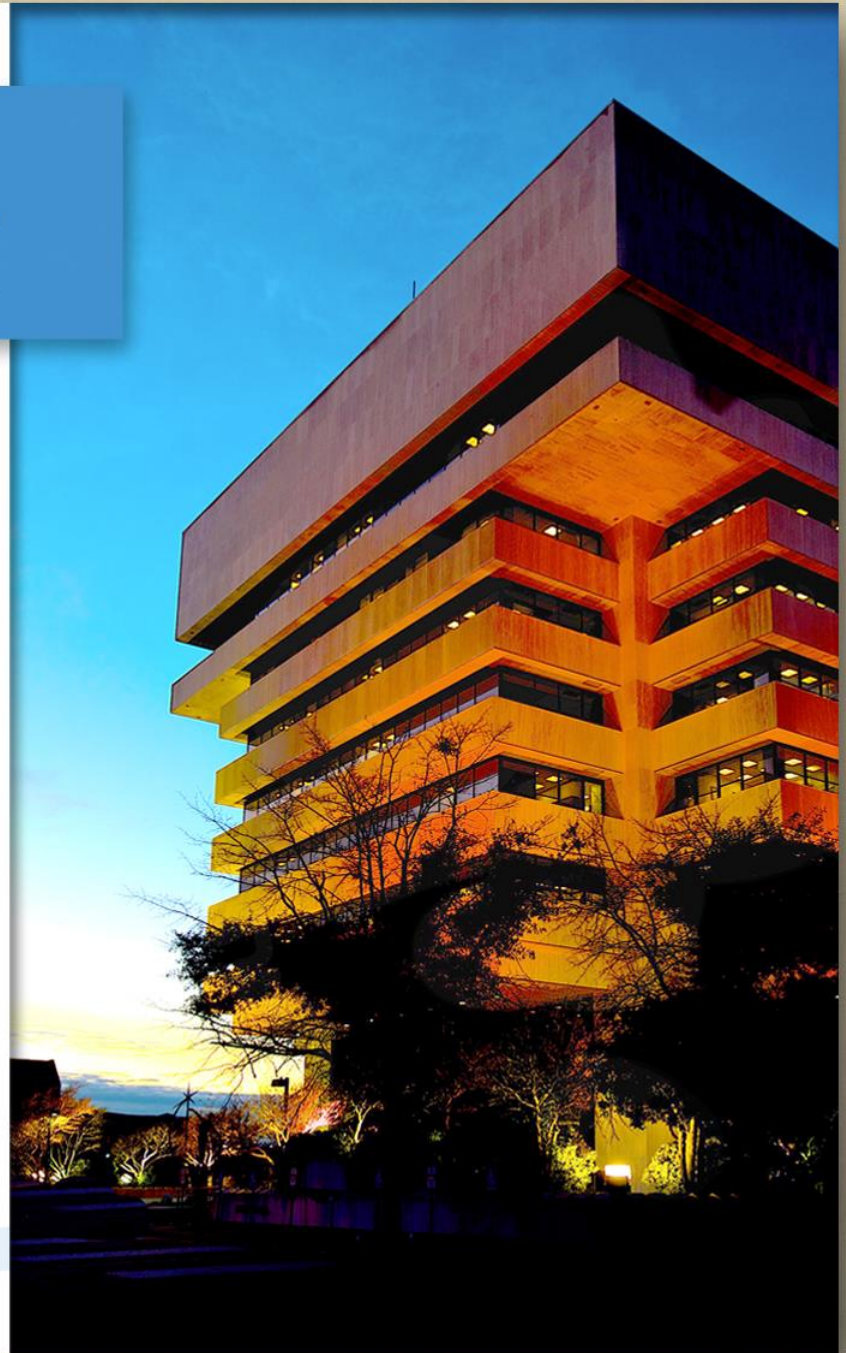


HAMPTON VA

Camping and Storage on Public Property

**City Council
Legislative Session**

March 11, 2026



Agenda

- Proposed Ordinance Prohibiting Camping and Storage on Public Property.

BACKGROUND

- **Stakeholder group met to discuss ordinance originally presented to City Council last summer.**
 - **Consensus on amendments included:**
 - **Preamble statement emphasizing focus on compassionate compliance.**
 - **Reclassification of offense.**
 - **Ensuring that resources are provided before enforcement.**
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Proposed Ordinance

- **WHEREFORE**, most people will accept housing when it is safe, dignified, and appropriate, a small number repeatedly refuse help because they are deeply traumatized. For this group, the answer is not simply tolerance nor simple enforcement, it requires balanced strategy; and,
- **WHEREFORE**, the City will strive to pair persistent outreach with a variety of housing options and insist that public spaces remain safe and usable; and,

Proposed Ordinance

- **WHEREFORE**, when someone's behavior is dangerous or disruptive, the City will address that behavior directly through outreach or co-responder teams and community court programs where possible: No one has the right to endanger others, and no one should be abandoned; and,
- **WHEREFORE**, the City's goal is compassionate compliance; protecting the community while never giving up on the individual; and,

Proposed Ordinance

- Prohibits anyone from camping, laying or sleeping, or storing items on public property.
- *Camp* is defined as “to reside or sleep on public property with or without the use of tents, temporary shelters, vehicles or equivalents, or as evidenced by the use of beds, blankets, cots, hammocks, mattresses, sleeping bags, tarpaulins or equivalents, or cooking tools or fire.”
 - Exception for authorized use, including use of public beaches during the hours that they are open to the public.
- *Public Property* is defined to mean “any and all property in which the City of Hampton, or another governmental entity, has a property interest.”

Proposed Ordinance

- *Store* is defined to mean “accumulating, keeping, leaving, or maintaining personal property on public property for future use or safekeeping.”
 - Exception for authorized storage of personal property on a governmental entity’s public property, or unoccupied vehicles lawfully parked on a public street.

Proposed Ordinance

- Property which is stored on public property in violation of this section, and which is also unattended, may be immediately seized by City staff or contractors. Such property shall be stored by the City for 30 days.
- Individuals may contact the City to determine if an item of theirs is being temporarily stored by the City.
- Items that staff determine to be trash, garbage, debris, unsanitary or hazardous, including any weapons, may be disposed of immediately.

Proposed Ordinance

- First violation is a Class 4 misdemeanor, punishable by up to a \$250.00 fine. Subsequent violation after being convicted is a Class 2 misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail and up to \$1,000.00 fine.
- Someone charged with a Class 2 misdemeanor may be eligible for behavioral health court.

Proposed Ordinance

- Prior to charging any person under this section, such person shall be given a verbal warning to cease such activity and reasonable time to comply with such warning, as well as information on alternative accommodations such as available homeless shelters or hotels, and public and charitable programs that offer housing assistance.

Conclusion / Questions

