

ORDINANCE

NO. _____

An Ordinance amending the Columbus Code to repeal and replace Section 14-13. with a new code section that prohibits camping on public property within Columbus, Georgia, and for other purposes.

THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1.

Article I of Chapter 14 of the Columbus Code is hereby amended by repealing section 14-13. **Camping with vehicles** and replacing it with a new Section 14-13 which shall read as follows:

“Sec. 14-13. Urban camping and improper use of public places.

(a) Definitions. The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this section 14-13., shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this subsection, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Bridge means a structure, including the approaches thereto, erected in order to afford passage over any obstruction in any public road, railroad, or other right-of-way; or to afford passage under or over existing public roads, railroads, or other rights-of-way. As used in this section the definition of "Bridge" shall include a controlled access highway overpass as defined herein.

Camp or *camping* means the use of a street, sidewalk, other right-of-way, other park or public land owned by Columbus, Georgia and/or any area underneath a bridge, within Columbus, Georgia for living accommodation purposes such as sleeping activities, or making preparations to sleep (including the laying down of bedding for the purpose of sleeping), or storing personal belongings, or making a fire, or carrying on cooking activities, or using a tent, a vehicle or other structure for habitation. These activities constitute camping if, in light of all the circumstances, it reasonably appears that in conducting one or more of these activities, the participant is in fact using the area as a living accommodation, regardless of the intent of the participant or the nature of any other activities in which s/he may also be engaging. For purposes of this section 14-13(a), the terms "camp" and "camping" do not include activity that occurs solely within city-owned parks in accordance with programs permitted by the Columbus Department of Parks and Recreation or property leased by the City to a licensed business running a campground or RV park.

City means Columbus, Georgia/Muscogee County.

Controlled access highway overpass means a crossing of two controlled access highways or of a controlled access highway and other public road, pedestrian path, railroad or public right-of-way at different levels where clearance to traffic on the lower level is obtained by elevating the higher level.

Interference (or interfere) with ingress and egress means standing, sitting, lying down, using personal property, or performing any other activity on public property and/or in a park, where such activity: a) materially interferes with the ingress into and egress from buildings, driveways, streets, alleys, or any other real property that has a limited number of entrances/exits, regardless of whether the property is owned by the city, a private owner or another public entity; b) reasonably appears, in light of all of the circumstances, to have the purpose of blocking ingress and egress; and c) occurs without the express written permission of the owner of the property at issue. Where written permission has been granted, the individuals interfering with ingress and egress must have possession of the permission at the time of the activity in question.

Park or parks means any city-owned park.

Public property means any street, sidewalk, public land or park and/or other right-of-way, within Columbus, Georgia.

Storing (or store) personal property means leaving one's personal effects unattended on public property, in any area underneath a bridge, and/or in a park, such as but not limited to clothing, bedrolls, cookware, sleeping bags, luggage, knapsacks, or backpacks. This term does not include parking a bicycle or other mode of transportation.

- (b) It shall be unlawful for any person to camp on any public property subject to the exceptions set forth herein.
- (c) It shall be unlawful for any person to store personal property on any public property subject to the exceptions set forth herein.
- (d) It shall be unlawful for any person to interfere with ingress and egress to or from any public property.
- (e) The Columbus Police Department must provide a written or oral notification of violation of subsection (b) of this code section and the violator(s) shall be given eight calendar days to vacate the property.

(f) Where unattended personal property is stored in violation of subsection (c) above, the Columbus Police Department shall notify the Public Works Department which shall remove and transport any such property to the public landfill. A minimum of **eight calendar days** shall be allotted prior to such removal and transport of such property.

(g) The prohibitions set forth in subsections (b), (c), or (d) above shall not apply during an outdoor event for which a written permit is issued by a city official or Uptown Columbus official on property where the outdoor event is located, as set forth in the terms of the official permit, unless the permit explicitly prohibits the activity.

(h) The prohibitions set forth in this section 14-13. shall not apply to city, state, or county officials or employees acting in their official capacity, performing the activities as part of their official city duties.

(i) The prohibitions set forth in this section 14-13. shall not apply to city, state, or county contractors or subcontractors where said activities are associated and performed in conjunction with the scope of work set forth in the city contract.

(j) Any person violating any provision of this section 14-13. shall, upon conviction in the recorder's court, be punished as provided in [section 1-8](#) of this Code.”

SECTION 2.

If any section, clause, portion or provision of this ordinance is found unconstitutional, such invalidity shall not affect any other portion of this ordinance.

SECTION 3.

This ordinance shall become effective ten (10) days after signing by the mayor and transmission to the Clerk of Council.

SECTION 4.

All ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the 22nd day of July 2025; and introduced on second reading at a regular meeting of said Council held on the ____ day of ____, 2025 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting _____.
Councilor Anker voting _____.
Councilor Chambers voting _____.
Councilor Cogle voting _____.

Councilor Crabb voting _____.
Councilor Davis voting _____.
Councilor Garrett voting _____.
Councilor Hickey voting _____.
Councilor Huff voting _____.
Councilor Tucker voting _____.

Lindsey G. McLemore
Clerk of Council

B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III
Mayor