



The City of **NORMAN**

225 N. Webster Ave.
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

PARKS AND RECREATION
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May 27, 2026

Subject: Addressing Homeless Encampments in Public City Parks

Dear Mayor Holman and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of the Norman Board of Park Commissioners, we are writing to express our concerns regarding homeless encampments in public parks, most recently at Frances Cate Park. This issue requires timely attention and consideration of ordinances or policy measures to protect public safety and preserve the intended use of our parks.

While we recognize the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness, encampments in parks impact the community's ability to use and enjoy these spaces. Parks are meant for recreation, nature, and community gatherings. When encampments form, they can create discomfort for families and other park users and often lead to increased litter, safety concerns, and potential health hazards. These conditions discourage residents from visiting our parks and undermine their purpose.

A review of municipal codes across Oklahoma shows that many cities already prohibit camping or establishing encampments in public parks. Moore, Noble, Purcell, Oklahoma City, Edmond, Yukon, and Shawnee all enforce such regulations, and Lawton adopted similar measures this week. Tulsa also prohibits camping in parks and extends restrictions to sleeping on sidewalks and public streets. These examples demonstrate that such ordinances are common tools for maintaining safe, accessible public spaces.

In light of these concerns, we respectfully urge the City Council to consider adopting ordinances or policies that prevent encampments in public parks and provide clear procedures for addressing them when they occur. Our goal is to support a balanced approach that maintains safe, welcoming parks while ensuring individuals experiencing homelessness are connected to appropriate services.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and explore collaborative solutions with the City and local service providers. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sherrel Sheriff, Chair
Board of Parks Commissioners