

FACT SHEET:

Visitor and Camping Management Plan, and associated bylaw changes

GOALS:

The District has developed a Visitor and Camping Management Plan for the 2021 visitor season in Squamish to:

- Strengthen the District's ability to manage and mitigate against environmental and social impacts within our neighbourhoods **as a result of increased seasonal visitation activity**.
- Support tourism in a way that moves campers to designated campgrounds and recreation sites that offer a total of 728 campsites.
- Align our bylaw with B.C. Supreme Court ruling to provide the homeless the ability to shelter temporarily overnight on public lands, with clear criteria to safeguard against unintended outcomes such as encampments.
- Focus enforcement efforts on seasonal visitation and historical areas of concern.
- Ongoing work continues with provincial partners to secure affordable housing for under-housed Squamish residents across the housing continuum.

TWO MAIN TAKEAWAYS:

- This effort is primarily to enforce against unauthorized visitor camping, which has historically been problematic for neighbourhoods. Three Red Areas are designated to highlight **no go** zones for camping and homeless sheltering – the Estuary, Mamquam Forest Service Road and Smoke Bluffs Park. *No camping* also exists in the remainder of the community outside of designated campgrounds, though the homeless have a right to shelter on public lands outside of the Red Areas.
- District bylaw officers regularly work with homeless people to prevent encampments. The homeless clause in the bylaw ensures that our bylaws provide criteria under which temporary sheltering for homeless people on public lands is allowed. Should the need arise, these tools will prevent the formation of encampments. The bylaw provides a regulatory framework to ensure the shelters are removed each day.

HOW THE BYLAWS SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER:

The District will utilize a **suite of bylaws** to regulate visitor and camping behaviour across the community, as well as the right to shelter for those experiencing homelessness.

- Camping Bylaw (NEW version)
- Traffic Bylaw (Amendments proposed)
- Parks Bylaw (Amendments proposed)
- Zoning Bylaw
- Noise Regulation Bylaw

WHAT HASN'T CHANGED:

- Camping in parks is not allowed; sleeping on a road has not been allowed (within the Traffic Bylaw) since 2007; the neighbourhoods surrounding the Chief, Smoke Bluffs, Downtown and the Estuary continue to be the areas where there are the biggest visitor impacts (hotspots).

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED CHANGES:

- The District has worked with local stakeholders to identify problems, explore solutions and weigh trade-offs through extensive research, investigation and learned experience, as well as a review of efforts and challenges underway in other communities.

The bylaw changes aim to achieve the following main goals:

Goal	Bylaw	Change	Other supporting bylaws and notes
Effectively manage areas that have consistently emerged as hotspots for recreational camping.	Camping Bylaw	<p>Identifies the known recreational camping hotspots identified as the Red Areas, as marked on Schedule A. Smoke Bluffs Park has been added to the Red Areas in this iteration of the bylaw.</p> <p>The Red Areas (originally established in the Camping Bylaw in 2019) refer to the most environmentally-sensitive areas where no camping, and no temporary homeless shelters is enforced – Estuary, Mamquam Forest Service Road, and Smoke Bluffs Park.</p> <p>(The “Blue Area” was deleted from the bylaw in an amendment on May 18).</p>	<p>Camping continues to NOT be allowed in municipal parks. Except for the municipal campground, municipal parks in Squamish are not zoned for recreational camping.</p> <p>Unlawful camping outside of designated campgrounds will continue to be enforced via the Traffic Bylaw or the Zoning Bylaw.</p> <p>Monitoring will continue this summer and the opportunity always remains for further amendments.</p>



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Goal	Bylaw	Change	Other supporting bylaws and notes
Amend bylaws to manage the ability of the homeless to shelter temporarily overnight on public lands.	Camping Bylaw Park Use Bylaw	<p>Removes sections 3 and 7 from the Park Use Bylaw which prohibits being in parks overnight, and introduces clauses in the Camping Bylaw which regulates park use by homeless people at night.</p> <p>The Camping Bylaw identifies where temporary shelters can be erected by homeless people, and under what criteria. The Bylaw includes language to regulate erecting temporary shelters.</p> <p>Temporary shelters for the homeless can be erected on public lands within the territorial jurisdiction of the District, excluding the list in s 4.1.</p> <p>S 4.1 lists schools, playgrounds, trails, parking lots and some specific parks as being excluded. In addition, no camping or temporary shelters are permitted in the Red Areas in Schedule A. Daily removal of the shelters and belongings is required, and a homeless person cannot return to the same spot the next night.</p>	<p>The District continues its work to action the Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan, through seeking partnerships with other levels of governments to provide residential units across the Housing Continuum. Projects such as Under One Roof (45 supportive units), the affordable seniors building (232 units) and the Buckley Avenue affordable rental building (76 units) are examples of the type of projects the District is seeking.</p>
Prevent recreational visitors from staying or sleeping in their vehicles overnight on public streets during the busy visitor season.	Traffic Bylaw	<p>Adds language to prohibit visitors from staying in their vehicles for more than one hour between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. on a highway, road or District parking lot, May 15 to September 30.</p> <p>Enforcement policy language is being drafted to support the bylaw.</p>	<p>Visitors will be asked to move to designated campgrounds or recreation sites. An online campsite availability calendar will help support visitors in securing one of the 728 managed campsites in Squamish.</p>



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NON-POLICY SUPPORT

Non-policy aspects of the Visitor and Camping Management Plan include:

- A collaborative communications plan in conjunction with local partners, with visitors as the target audience, and conveying educational information on being a responsible visitor, including where to seek a designated campsite.
- Squamish Visitor Management Roundtable to collaborate and align messaging and outreach amongst local organizations.
- Temporary community amenities to support popular recreation areas such as portable toilets.
- Increased bylaw enforcement covering weekend evening hours and statutory holidays.
- Seasonal Plan coordinator staff position to coordinate across various departmental work.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THE UNDER-HOUSED

Work to address the availability of affordable housing in Squamish is a key priority of Council and the District of Squamish, and this is where efforts are being focussed to help residents who are under-housed.

- 417 supportive or affordable residential rental units have been recently built (45), are under construction (308), or are at building permit stage (64).
- Advocacy efforts with provincial funding partners continue to secure additional affordable housing units for Squamish residents.

View a Frequently Asked Questions at [Squamish.ca/visitor-camping-management/faq](https://www.squamish.ca/visitor-camping-management/faq)