



Press Release: April 27, 2017

## The City of Walla Walla will relocate the temporary sleeping site to Service Center

Last night, the Walla Walla City Council voted 6-0 to allow the relocation of the temporary sleeping site at Par 72 Drive to an area within the Service Center lot at 55 E. Moore St. The location of the Service Center can be seen on this map: <http://bit.ly/wwservicecenter>

The Service Center is where, among other departments, Parks and Recreation and Public Works are located. The interim zoning ordinance that permits the relocation has a one-year time limit for the sleeping camp. During that one-year period, the City will collaborate with the community to provide permanent, barrier-free housing solutions.

City staff members have issued the following recommendations to City Council Members:

- The primary function of the area will be to provide homeless residents with a place to sleep safely and to connect with social service providers.
- The City will provide and enforce the following rules for residents:
  - Residents will be assigned sleeping spots.
  - The sleeping site will open in the early evening and must be vacated each morning.
  - All personal items will be stored in a secure storage area/container or must be taken out of the area each morning.
  - No dimensional lumber, tin roofing, extension cords, generators, etc., will be allowed.
  - No minors, fires, drugs, or alcohol will be allowed.
  - Violation of these rules will result in expulsion.
- There will be an 8-foot-tall chain link fence around the site with barbed wire at the top.
- Street-side fencing will be covered with a privacy/wind screen, and there will be two gates (per fire code) for access. There will be no access into Service Center area.

- Internal signs will provide contact information for social services.
- The City will provide water, portable toilets, and a garbage dumpster.
- The gate/office will be staffed from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. by an overseer to register residents.
- A security guard will be posted at the site from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. daily.
- There will be 24-hour surveillance of the site.

The City's no-camping ordinance will remain in effect. The ordinance prohibits camping and storage of personal property on streets, sidewalks, parking lots, planting strips, medians, parks, or any other public property, rights-of-way, or parks. It also prohibits living in an RV on public property.

There are a number of positive developments in the community that will increase housing access in Walla Walla and provide more mental health and social services:

- Christian Aid Center will be expanding its facility.
- Voters next year will decide a Walla Walla County measure seeking a one-tenth of 1 percent sales tax increase to fund housing access.
- Serenity Point Counseling expanded its services to accept walk-ins.
- Comprehensive Mental Health will be completing a clinic in College Place.
- Life Church's Better Together program is providing assistance, including financial counseling, to those in need.
- The Walla Walla Veterans Home, an 80-bed nursing facility, will be accepting residents.
- Construction will be finished this summer on a teen center, which will offer counseling, medical assistance, childcare, employment assistance, recreation, and a supervised overnight shelter for homeless youth.

To read answers to frequently asked questions regarding the homeless issue in Walla Walla, please go to <http://bit.ly/wwhomeless>

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