



STUDY SESSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, City Manager
Maris Herold, Chief of Police
Sandra Llanes, Deputy City Attorney
Joe Taddeucci, Utilities Director
Cris Jones, Interim Community Vitality Director
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Kurt Firnhaber, Housing and Human Services Director

DATE: April 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Study Session for April 13, 2023
Safe and Managed Public Spaces

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safe and Managed Public Spaces (SAMPS) team was established as a pilot program in 2021 to address barriers to safe and welcoming public spaces. Three key considerations were made to the work:

1. In-source **campsite clean-up and hire a dedicated operational team;**
2. Ensure compassionate **communication with and outreach to unhoused campers; and**
3. Develop programming to **increase visitor and community experience in public spaces.**

The SAMPS team is comprised of the following work groups:

- Operations and Clean-Up
- Urban Park Rangers
- Downtown Ambassadors
- BTHERE Outreach
- Dedicated Boulder Police Support
- Data, Analytics, Legal, and Communications

Unsanctioned camping in Boulder and other cities is increasing nationwide. SAMPS has made a positive impact on conditions along the creek corridor and addressing the effects of illegal camping. In response to increases in illegal camping and associated increases in trash and debris in the community's public spaces, staff see a need to increase city clean-up efforts. Also identified is the need to update protocols as the SAMPS team can no longer be able to rely on

voluntary compliance as in prior years.

There is evidence that, without the work of the SAMPS team, there would certainly be more unsanctioned camping and significantly more trash and debris in the community's public spaces. Since the establishment of the SAMPS team:

- 195,400 tons of trash and debris have been collected.
- 81,000 needles have been collected by the operations team and over 500 pounds of needles were collected from May-December 2022 at one kiosk.
- 836 campsite clean-ups have been completed.

While public space cleanliness is a difficult and fluid challenge, the expansion of the operational team and updates to the abatement procedures should lead to improvements.

In light of the continued escalation of unsanctioned camping and as a result of time spent implementing and analyzing the pilot programs, the SAMPS team continues to make improvements to its program to mitigate the impacts of unsanctioned camping.

- During the 2023 budget process, an additional operational team was funded through the General Fund to broaden the geographic footprint and frequency of the SAMPS clean-up efforts.
- The Abatement Protocol was updated to provide for more immediate responses in limited circumstances, for example, when unsanctioned camping encroaches on commuter corridors (paths, underpasses, roadways).
- A strategic planning session was held to increase alignment across the multi-disciplinary effort and to incorporate field personnel ideas and input, particularly regarding communications, training, and safety.
- An Action Plan was developed to guide and coordinate actions and priorities.

BACKGROUND

The increase in unsheltered homelessness with its associated impact to public spaces is a national tragedy, and Boulder is not isolated in its challenges with this issue. Recent events such as COVID-19, rising housing costs, inflation, changes to drug policy, and strains on the mental health system have led to increases in both the number of and visibility of people living in public spaces. Communities across the nation are struggling to balance their responsibility to the broader community to maintain public spaces while also providing housing, shelter, and services to campers. No one community has found the ideal combination of services and enforcement that has solved this issue. A lack of a national response creates an in-flow of chronically homeless, transient, service wary campers into resource-rich communities mixed amongst long-term unsheltered, unhoused community members, whose mental and behavioral health conditions exacerbate with prolonged life outdoors.

Boulder has exited almost 1,600 people from homelessness since the fall of 2017 and currently exits an average of 30% of all people who have entered homelessness or the community (an inflow/outflow ratio that is higher than most communities). Boulder, in

connection with its partners in Homeless Solutions for Boulder County (HSBC), has developed a wide range of coordinated outreach, sheltering, case management, targeted housing resources, and retention services; these successes are not recognized.

It is important to note that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and who reside in camps do not represent the whole unhoused community. Campsite residency is often correlated with conditions and behaviors that lead to critical barriers to housing, sheltering and services. Campsite residents often have significant mental health, have substance use disorders (with the majority suffering from poly-substance or methamphetamine addictions) and have experienced homelessness and the associated trauma for many years. Many long-term unsheltered community members also have lengthy criminal records which can limit access to landlord-controlled rental units. Most people experiencing chronic homelessness in Boulder for longer than two years have had housing opportunities but have either not been successful in housing, have not been able to find a landlord who will take them, or have repeatedly declined these resources. All of these challenges translate to a population that proportionately does not wish to engage with outreach workers, distrusts the homelessness response system, and has limited resources available to exit from homelessness.

It is a tenet of the SAMPS program that public spaces should be available to all community members, but unsanctioned camping excludes some members of the community from safely benefiting from public spaces such as city parks and multiuse paths.

Issues associated with unsanctioned camping have led to serious health and safety risks for those staying within campsites and the broader community. Campsite residents may be at risk of serious health issues or loss of life due to uncertain weather, public health risks (disease, contamination of living spaces) as well as being victims of crime, as campsites often attract more serious crimes such as drug distribution.

At the same time, camping creates several community issues. Campsites can increase wildfire risks and can negatively impact and endanger wetlands or other sensitive and ecologically important natural areas. Community members, visitors, and city staff often feel threatened by the behavior they encounter in misused public spaces and can come into contact with biohazards in areas such as the Boulder Creek Path or in parks or open space.

Crime disproportionately concentrates in encampment areas. In addition, City staff, both the employees who directly work with campsite clean-up and those who work in city spaces (indoors and outdoors) near campsites, have been subjected to dangerous interactions and do not feel safe.

The effectiveness of SAMPS efforts and enforcement of Boulder's camping ban continue to be in conflict with the distribution of food, sleeping bags and other items by independent groups to campers. This supply distribution is a significant contributor to the amount of debris and trash removed from sites, often directly delaying clean-up activities. Additionally, these distributions can also enable unsheltered homelessness, creating a disincentive for some individuals to engage with services.

There is little consequence to camping in public spaces. The biggest enforcement tool that city

staff has is in the form of ticketing, which is not effective when there are no housing or reunification alternatives to camping. The action of ticketing can create an opportunity for engagement for individuals who appear in Boulder Municipal Court. Those deemed eligible for Community Court are connected with appropriate services, with a view toward housing. However, the lack of sufficient housing resources, as well as the difficulty in finding landlords who will lease to these individuals, makes this a lengthy and sometimes unsuccessful process. If an individual fails to respond to the ticket, then the case goes to warrant status. Bond reform passed within the past few years mandates personal recognizance bonds for low level crimes like unsanctioned camping, which effectively removes jail as an opportunity for intervention. In addition, as of November 2022, there has been a shortage of jail beds available at the Boulder County Jail due to an increase in acute mental health related inmates and a high level of extreme behavioral related inmates. And while the intention is that outreach interactions lead unhoused community members to services, for some repeat offenders who are causing serious harm in the community, there are circumstances where an alternative consequence is merited.

Generally, the SAMPS team relies on voluntary compliance with clean-up processes and removal of unsanctioned campsites. In 2023, the team has experienced a noticeable decline in achieving voluntary compliance, and as a result many tents remain in the abatement area despite the team's presence. Practically, this translates to people reestablishing camp either immediately adjacent to a freshly cleaned-up site or within the same site immediately after it has been cleaned up. This situation is frustrating for the SAMPS team and is leading to increasing community concerns. The recent changes to the Abatement Protocol are intended to address some of these challenges and may need further refinement based on their effectiveness. Additional staffing in both operation teams and in BPD will allow for increased enforcement of the camping ban and propane ordinance in the future as well, which should also help mitigate these issues.

ANALYSIS

Current Strategy

Clean-up Process Overview

When the SAMPS team was created in 2021, the primary goal was to ensure that the city's public spaces are safe and enjoyable for all who use them, including people experiencing homelessness. Acknowledging the need to prioritize the work, the team created a matrix that prioritized sanitation and safety concerns for both natural resources as well as individuals who could be at risk.

Daily, the operations team reviews information submitted through Inquire Boulder and conducts self-directed assessments to inform prioritization. The team returns to occupied sites in public areas and communicates with all individuals camping in the area and posts an official 72-hour notice to vacate. The [Homeless Outreach Team](#), [BTHERE](#), and coordinated resource navigators ensure that individuals in these areas are aware of, and are connected to, available resources. During this time, trash bags and bins for needles are distributed to occupants. While some campsite occupants voluntarily move within 72 hours of receiving the official notice to vacate, staff members have noticed a marked increase in campers waiting until the clean-up begins to

move on and even then, they move within the same general area. Staff have seen some occupants go as far as modifying the appearance of their tent to challenge the validity of the 72-hour notice. A few of the occupants of these spaces take pride in their environment, take care of themselves, and have expressed frustration with their peers.

On the first day of a clean-up, operations team members are supported by the presence of law enforcement. Generally, interactions with campsite occupants are benign, respectful and there is a measure of voluntarily compliance; however, this seems to be changing in recent months, as more campers are refusing to comply with clean-up measures as noted previously herein. A campsite clean-up can usually be completed in one day, but sometimes the site clean-up can take more time. When more time is needed, Boulder Police Department officers may not be able to maintain a constant presence, depending on support need and officer availability. The achievable scope of clean-up efforts is limited when police are not present. Throughout the clean-up lifecycle, outreach workers, including the BTHERE team, provide resources as alternatives to unsanctioned camping.

Abatement Protocol

Currently, the city provides individuals participating in unsanctioned camping 72-hour notice to collect their personal belongings and vacate the area prior to the cleanup of any given encampment. This timing is based on a review of national best practices and has been informed by numerous court decisions, including a recent ruling that required the Denver community to provide seven days prior notice for large cleanups. Some cities provide up to 14 days' notice, and very few communities provide less than 72 hours. There are, of course, exceptions to these notification protocols, but those exceptions have traditionally been very narrowly focused.

Staff members have drafted some narrowly tailored exceptions to the 72-hour notice protocol to address situations such as dangerous obstructions on multiuse paths and underpasses. These obstructions pose a risk both to those illegally camping and commuters such as cyclists who may not be able to react in time to avoid harm on these shared multiuse paths.

Currently, proximity to a school is one of the highest scoring factors in the city's abatement prioritization formula. The city has received community requests to develop school safety zones that would not require a 72-hour notice; however, the issue of implementing school zones is challenging. Designating a safety zone around schools would not add to Boulder's enforcement toolkit because camping is already banned near schools and in all city public places. In other communities where schools are part of a high priority designated area, they too provide 72-hour notice prior to addressing these encampments.

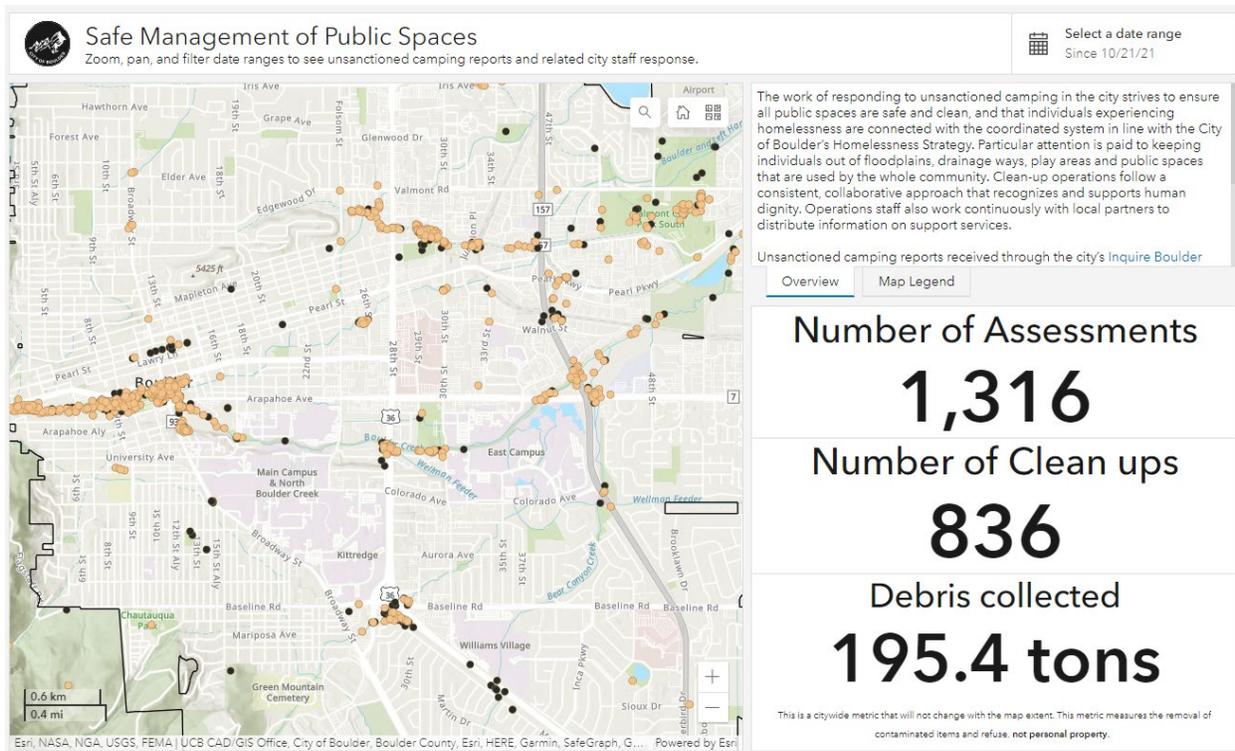
The 72-hour notice applies specifically to the city's encampment clean-up efforts and is attached to the notice to vacate. It does not apply to the existing tent and propane tank ban, though the approach staff shared with City Council in July of 2021, when this ordinance was first adopted, remains the same that BPD will always strive for voluntary compliance where possible but is able to confiscate tents and propane tanks if voluntary compliance cannot be obtained and where circumstances and resources allow. In the event an individual is inside their tent and refuses to come out, additional legal tools may be needed in order to address the situation. Previously, the city was seeing general compliance with both notices to vacate (for camping) and requests to

take down tents (under the tent ordinance), but recent months have seen voluntary compliance decrease. With the proliferation of propane tanks in recent months, and with increased focus from BPD and the operations team, the city has been tightening its efforts around the tent and propane tank ordinance as well.

Program Progress and Updates

Campsite Clean-Up Progress/Operations Team

The city’s approach to clean-up operations in public spaces has been iterated upon over the years and continues to evolve. Prior to 2021, an outside contractor, ServPro, was responsible for the clean-up efforts in public spaces. To be more nimble and fiscally responsible, a five-person clean-up crew was funded and tools including a prioritization framework and abatement protocol were developed in October 2021. Following the development of these foundational tools, staff thoughtfully began the hiring process for the clean-up team. The five-person crew was fully operational in June 2022, and from June 1, 2022, to March 10, 2023 (40-weeks), one five-person crew, which includes supervisor, addressed an average of 15 different public spaces per week (see Figure 1 for a summary of all activity).



As part of the 2023 budget request, a second operational team was added through unrestricted funds. The goal of adding this second team is to increase overall capacity and the geographic footprint of the work, as well as to alleviate the burden on other citywide staff acting outside of their normal job functions to address encampment issues. The SAMPS operational team is currently re-evaluating its processes and working to get a second public spaces reclamation team in place. As of March 8, six out of nine positions that are needed to support the two teams have

been filled.

The volume of clean-ups by the operations teams is measured in the system that has been developed for the SAMPS team. The operations team’s output varies throughout the year and is impacted by various factors such as weather and size of encampments cleaned. Output averages ~55 clean-ups per month and peaked at 105 clean-ups in August 2022 (Figure 2).

While encampment reports are measured monthly, the focus is on year-over-year trends. Year-over-year (Mar-Feb), the number of encampment reports rose by over 140%. Part of this growth reflects more consistent, regular reporting by staff (Figure 3).

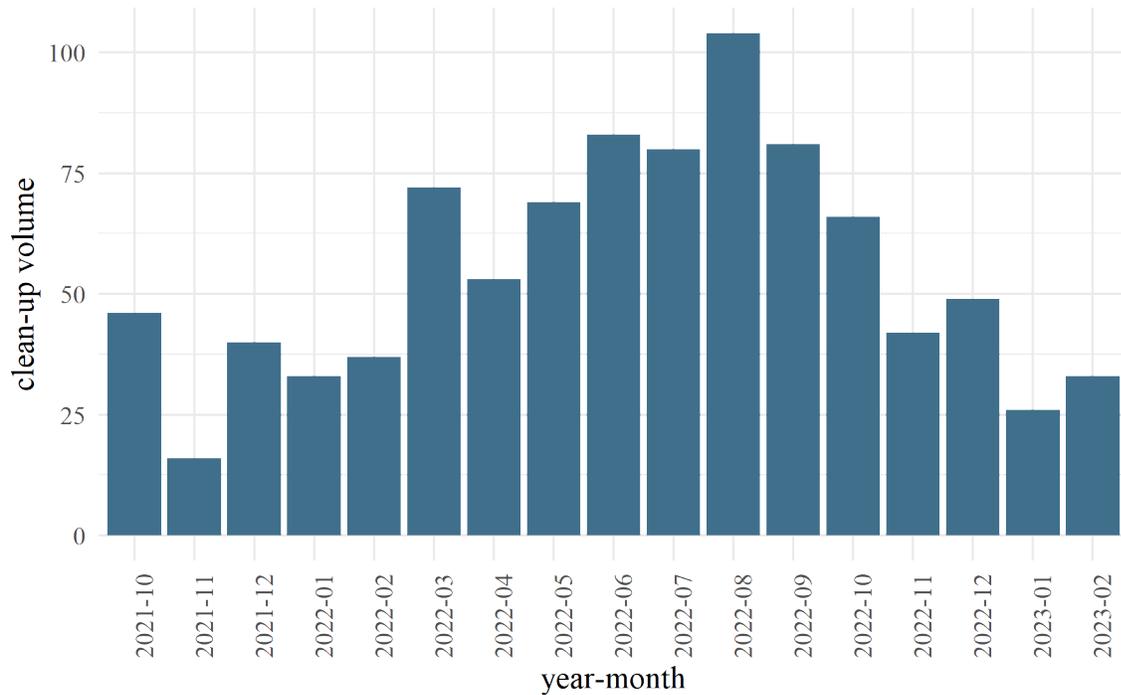


Figure 1: Volume of Encampment Clean-Ups

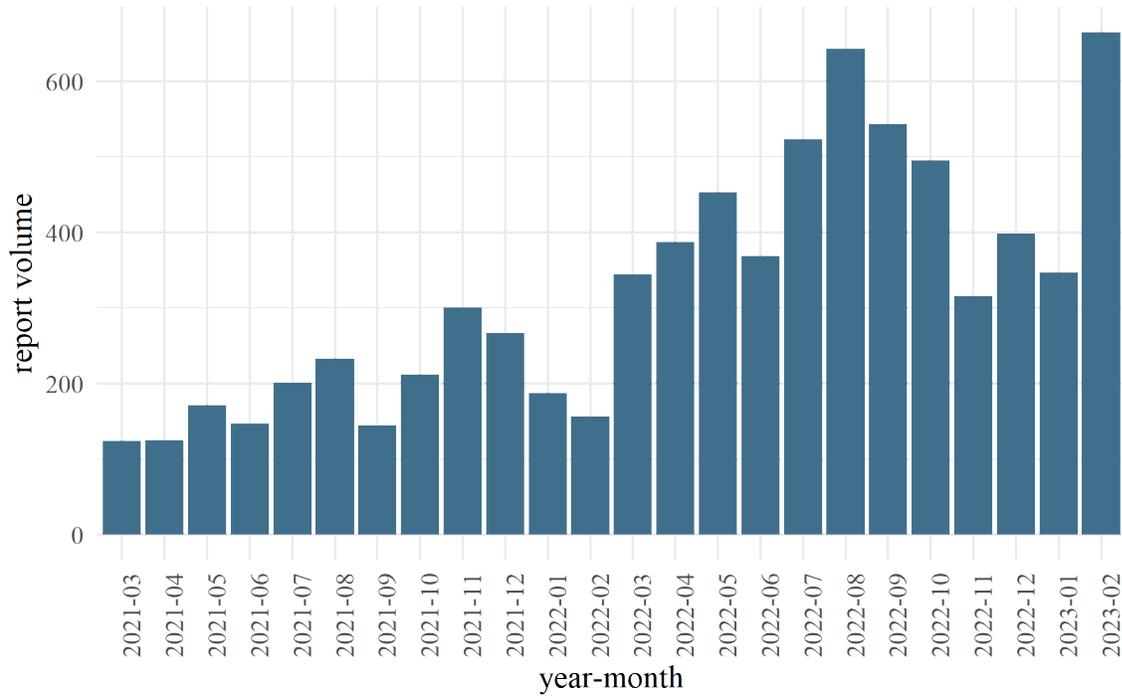


Figure 2: Unsanctioned Camping Reports Received Through Inquire Boulder

Encampment reports continue to be concentrated in the vicinity of Boulder Creek, but they occur in other pockets throughout the city (Figure 4).

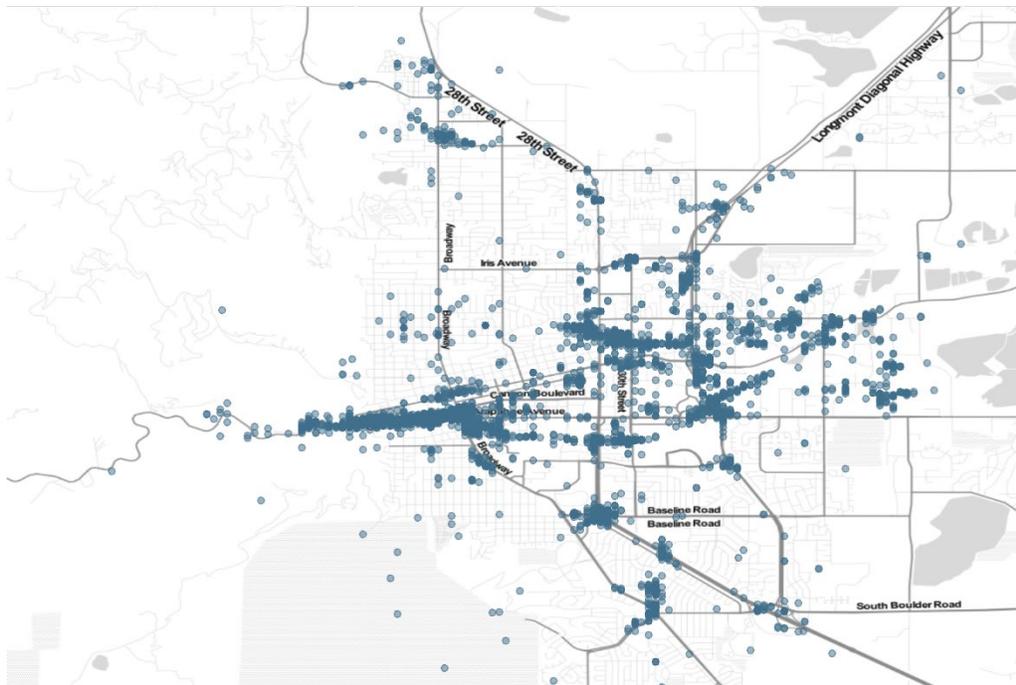


Figure 3: Location of Reports of Unsanctioned Camping in Inquire Boulder

Access and Worker Safety

Operations teams identify in their post inspection reporting if encampments create access issues that restrict maintenance activity or block public access (blocking sidewalks, ADA accessibility, etc.). Nearly 12% of all campsites inspected were found to have access issues, at an average rate of about 10 per month. The volume of campsites that create access issues peaked in June 2022 at 19, and campsites causing access issues are primarily concentrated near downtown, along Boulder Creek (Figure 5).

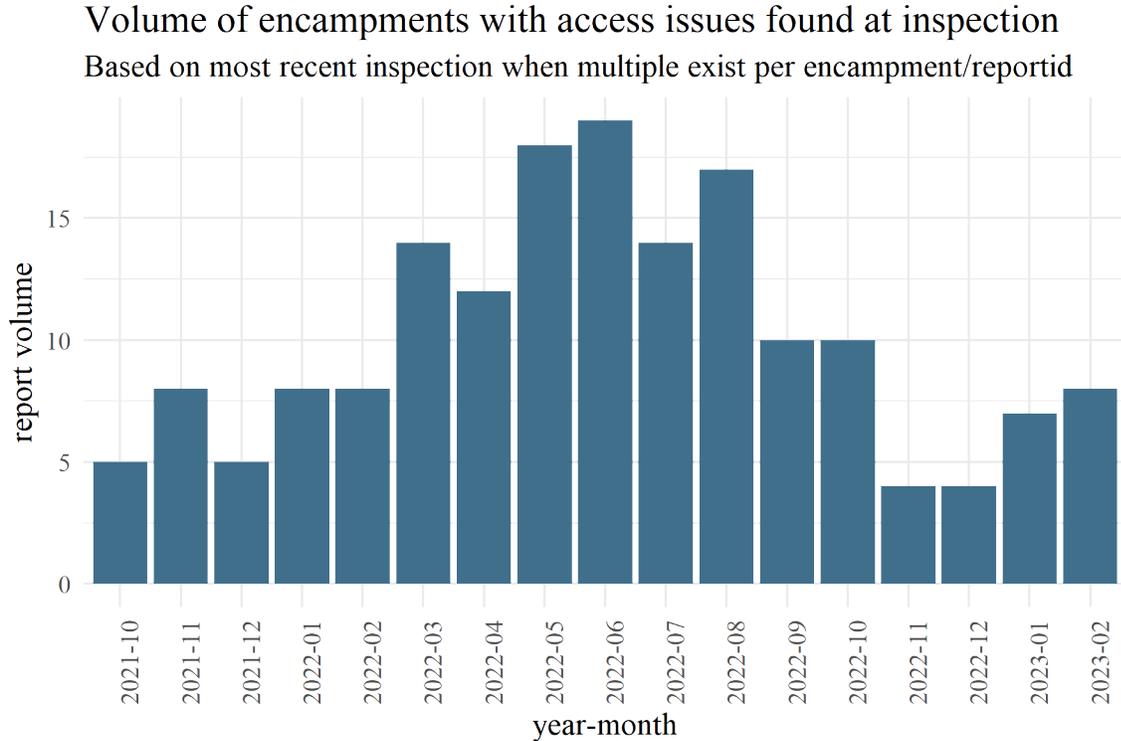


Figure 4: Volume of Encampments with Access Issues Found at Inspection

Identified access issues contribute to priority scoring but do not alone determine clean-up priority. On average, operations teams cleaned 6 encampments per month that created access issues and as many as 14 in June of 2022 (Figure 6).

Encampments cleaned with access issues found at inspection
 Based on most recent inspection when multiple exist per encampment/reportid

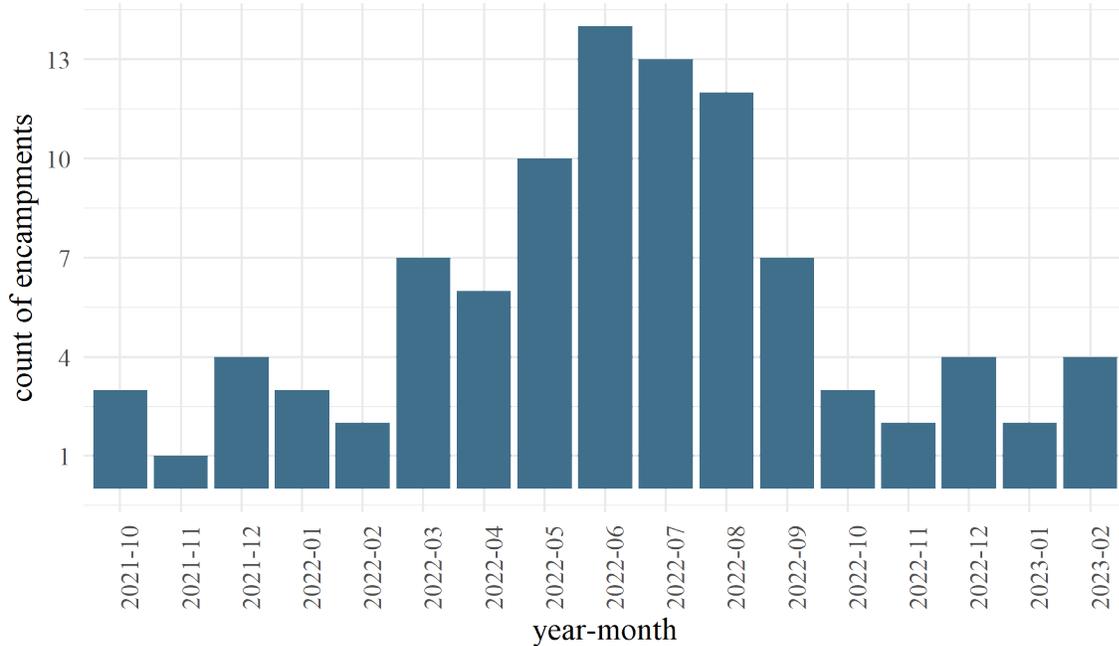


Figure 5: Volume of Encampments Cleaned with Access Issues Found at Inspection

In early 2023, the Communication and Data Team (CDT) developed and distributed a pulse survey to employees in four departments that perform maintenance duties across the city. The survey aims to gather data related to maintenance staff’s perceptions of safety while performing their job duties. CDT members are currently working on initial data analysis and anticipate preliminary findings in Q2 2023.

Downtown Ambassador Program

The Downtown Ambassador program is a partnership program between the Community Vitality department and Downtown Boulder Partnership (DBP). The Ambassador program’s scope of services includes hospitality, safety, and cleaning-related duties in service of enhancing visitor experiences in the downtown corridor. These duties can include such things as hospitality contacts, business contacts, welfare checks, eliminating instances of graffiti, picking up trash and litter, and cleaning up biohazard waste from humans and animals.

The ambassador program has been successful in recruiting and retaining a core of team members. Regular and ongoing feedback from the businesses in the district continues to be very positive. In 2022, the team performed more than 99,798 hospitality contacts, 18,392 business contacts, and nearly 8,286 welfare checks. They’ve eliminated more than 8,300 instances of graffiti, picked up over 2000 bags of trash, and cleaned up biohazard waste from more than 250 humans and animals.

Beginning in April of 2023, CU Boulder will be contributing an additional \$45,000 for a pilot program to augment the Ambassador presence in the University Hill Commercial district. This contribution, along with the city's existing investment, will allow for a dedicated full-time

supervisor position for University Hill. Additional in-kind support is being provided by the City’s Central Area Improvement District (CAGID) in the form of office and storage space and by the Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District in the form of program management, administration, vehicles, and equipment.

Downtown Ambassadors are an important part of the SAMPS work, and their positive impacts go beyond working to ensure visitors have access to knowledgeable resources or city services. Currently, the elected output measure for this effort is the volume of Downtown Ambassador hospitality or business contacts. Output averaged over 3,500 contacts per month, peaking at nearly 8,900 contacts in May 2022.

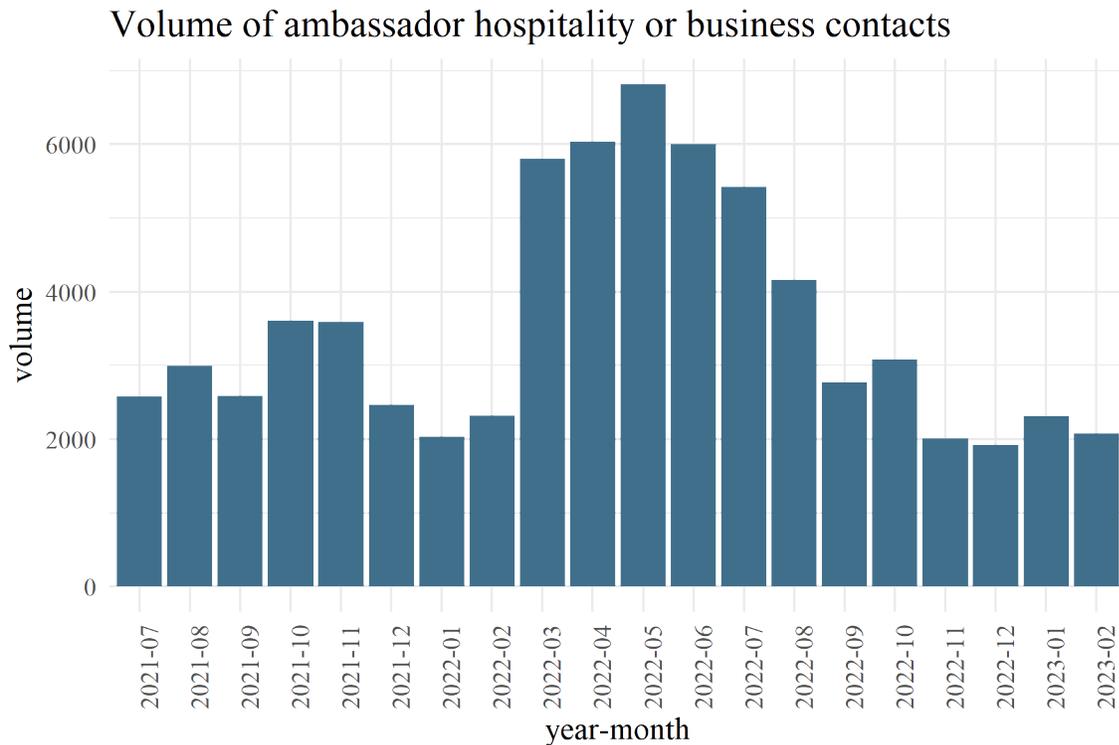


Figure 6. Output: number of hospitality and business contacts generated by Downtown Ambassadors

Dedicated Police Unit/ Crime and Policing

The BPD works alongside the city’s operations team, Focused Re-Entry, BTHERE, Housing and Human Services, and many other groups to reduce harm at unsanctioned campsites in the city of Boulder. In addition to the support BPD provides to other Boulder employees, homeless outreach officers and encampment cleanup officers provide many services to support persons contacted at campsites.

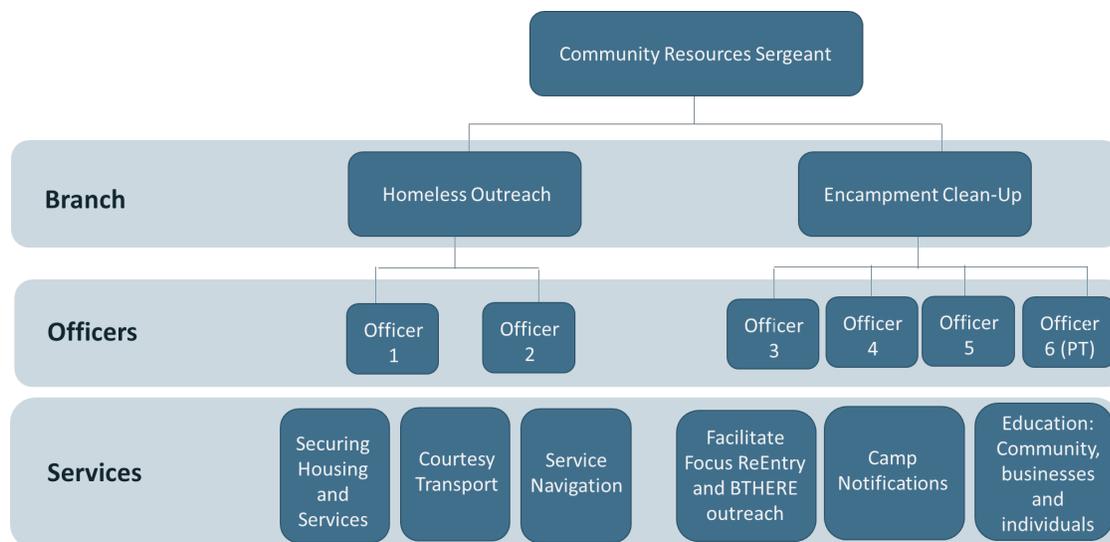


Figure 7: Dedicated Police Unit

Overall, Boulder police officers have spent a significant amount of time at encampment clusters identified by community residents in the past two years. According to Inquire Boulder community report data, unsanctioned campsites cluster and comprise approximately 10% of the city’s geography; however, police officers spend more than one-quarter of their time in these areas responding to community member concerns.

At the August 4, 2022, Boulder City Council meeting, BPD presented data showing the concentration of crime close to unsanctioned campsites and how said crime rates dissipates the further one travels from such areas; this continues to be the case today. While the city identified encampment clusters make up 10% of the city’s geography, on a weekly basis, about 31% of reported crime in the city occurred in these areas. Violent crime is on average 3.2 times more concentrated within one block of encampments than elsewhere in Boulder. An average of 70 crimes occur in these areas per week, and in the last two years approximately half of the warrants served in the city occurred in encampment clusters. In the last three years, BPD has issued approximately 1,300 tickets associated with Camping on Public Property or Prohibited Tents and Propane Tanks, and about 90% of tickets issued occurred where Boulder community members reported unsanctioned camping.

Considerable harm occurs at unsanctioned campsites and among unhoused persons in Boulder. In the last six months unhoused persons were victimized at a rate of 3.5 greater than housed persons. Among a subset of unhoused persons who have used city services frequently in the past three years, more than half of individuals have a criminal history associated with drug or alcohol charges. During cleanups of unsanctioned campsites from January 2022 through February 2023, 36% of campsites contained hypodermic needles, and this is another indicator of the prevalence and impacts of substance use disorders. These circumstances are in addition to the recovered propane tanks and addressed fire concerns. The Public Space Reclamation Team has recovered 352 propane tanks from unsanctioned campsites from January 2022 through February 2023.

These encampment clusters are like other complex crime hotspots; they are persistent and chronic in nature. Due to the complexities of the work, in 2022 BPD authored and received a

federal Bureau of Justice Assistance Smart Policing Initiative Grant examining a coordinated response to the encampment clusters. BPD is partnering with Dr. Natalie Hipple, a nationally recognized homelessness researcher, to evaluate and respond with innovative and holistic strategies to address harms associated with unsanctioned camping. An advisory board meets quarterly to discuss updates and potential obstacles, and interviews with unhoused community members are planned to begin in the third quarter of 2023. These grant efforts, alongside daily BPD tasks, contribute to Boulder's goal of having safer public spaces.

Boulder Targeted Homeless Engagement and Referral Effort (BTHERE)

BTHERE is a partnership program between the Housing and Human Services (HHS) department and Boulder Shelter for the Homeless (BSH). The goal of this four-person team is to engage with and build relationships with persons experiencing homelessness for future connection to housing or services. The team is comprised of individuals with lived experience, professional experience in outreach, engagement, social support, or homeless services, and mental health training.

Outreach occurs five days a week. The approach is a blend of traditional and targeted outreach. The team proactively engages with individuals presumed to be experiencing homelessness. They provide supportive services in the field including Coordinated Entry, housing assessments and connections to other benefits and services, as applicable to each person, and informing people on the processes, locations, and hours of services. Informing people of the camping ordinances, the possibility of enforcement, and available services for sheltering or assistance. They also provide an additional round of targeted outreach to an area after an official notice to vacate is posted. This layered approach is intentional to separate the different roles of engagement and enforcement.

Over the past 10 months the team has interacted with individuals in the community 1,130 times and has interacted with approximately 419 unique individuals. Each interaction represents an opportunity to meet people where they are to provide case management and assistance with housing-related services that may not have occurred if the persons only option was to travel to the shelter for this type of support. In addition to BTHERE field work, the Coordinated Entry office is located within an area often frequented by people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, allowing for additional assistance to people in the downtown core.

**Homelessness Field Outreach and Referrals into Programs with BTHERE Team
(City of Boulder only)**

Last Updated:
2/28/2023

# of Total Interactions in the Field	Estimated # of Unique Individuals with BTHERE interactions	Average BTHERE Interactions per Person	<p>Notes: Total interactions includes duplicates - program staff interact with many of the same people experiencing homelessness over time; counts are sum of # of interactions per day & location</p> <p>Method of counting unique individuals is an estimate with some room for error. For example, BTHERE staff may note they spoke with a John [unknown last name] and a John Smith. We assume these are different people and every John [unknown last name] is the same person.</p>
1130	419	2.3	
Coordinated Entry Referrals & Diversion as a Result of BTHERE Outreach			
	# of People Receiving Coordinated Entry (CE) in the Field	# of People Receiving CE & Diversion Outcome in the Field	
	28	2	
Housing-Related Services, Assistance & Referrals			
# of Medical Referrals	# of Identification Documents Assistance Provided	# of People Screened for VI-SPDAT (Service prioritization tool)	
33	156	20	
# of Mental Health Referrals	# of Benefits Enrollment Assistance Provided	# of Transport Services Provided	
7	61	36	

Figure 8: BTHERE Data Collected from May 19, 2022-Feb. 28, 2023 (displayed on [homelessness services dashboard](#))

The number of structures (e.g., tents) at inspected sites is used to estimate the number of individuals residing at campsites inspected by the clean-up team. This is not a comprehensive survey of those living unsheltered. The estimated number of individuals residing across the city in the encampments inspected ranged from as few as 74 individuals in December 2021 to as many as 268 in August 2022 (Figure 10).

Estimated number of individuals residing at sites inspected
 Based on most recent inspection when multiple exist per encampment/reportid

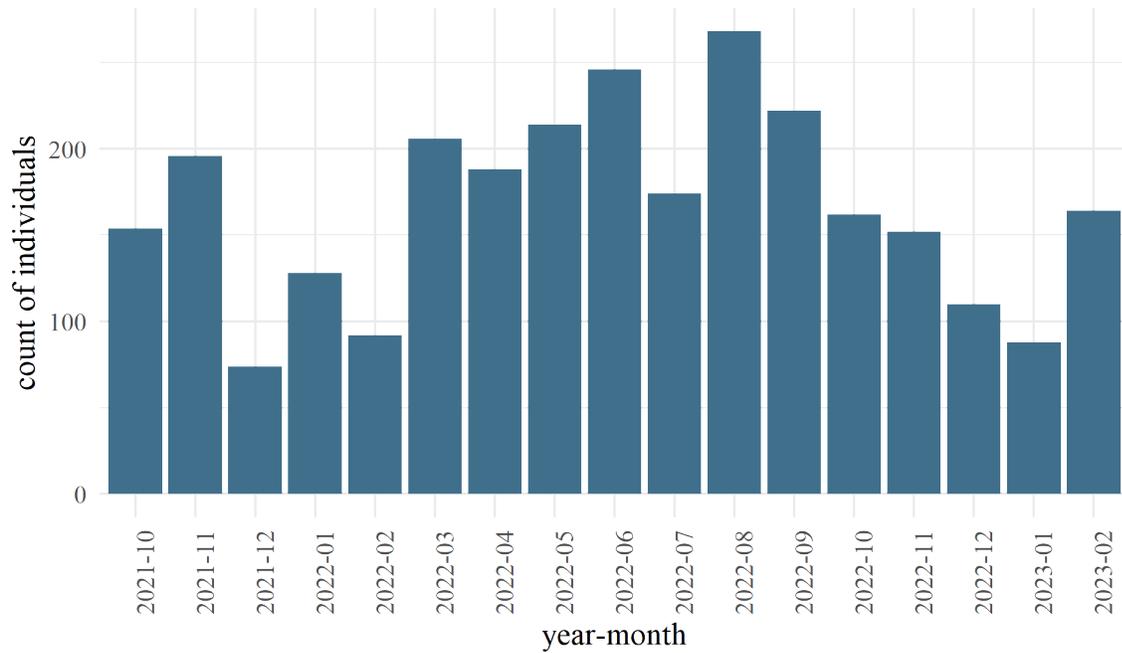


Figure 9. Issue: estimated number of unhoused individuals residing at sites inspected

Unhoused individuals encountered at BTHERE interactions

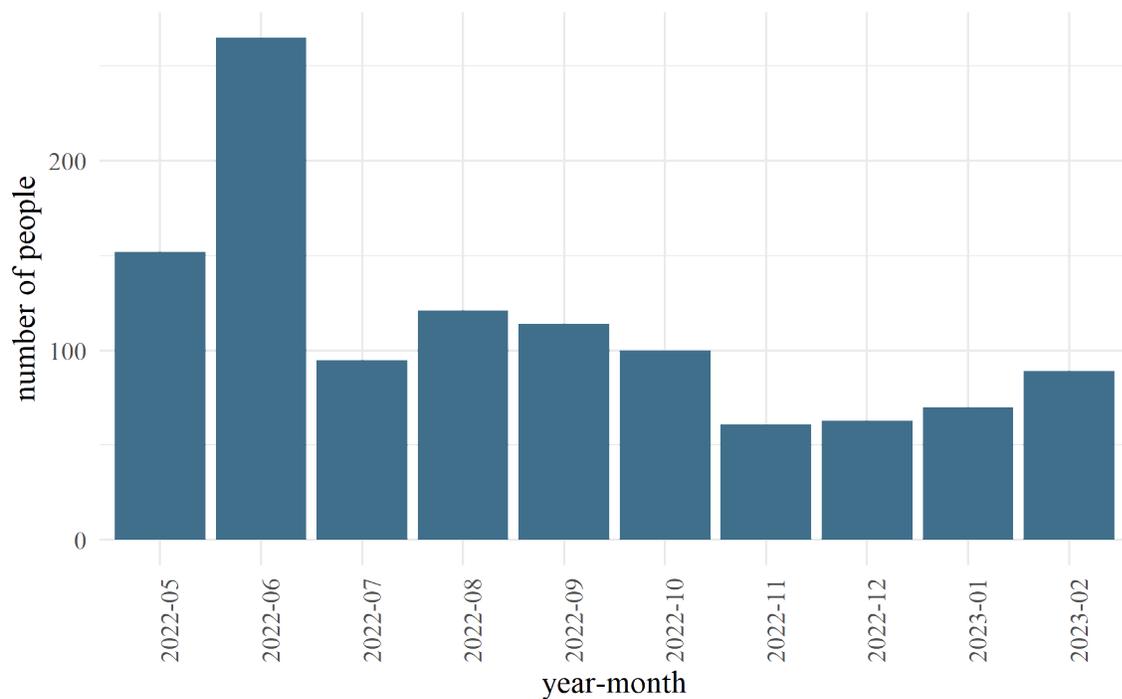


Figure 10. Output: Number of unhoused individuals encountered at BTHERE interactions

BTHERE program reporting was revised in Q2 2022 after the transfer of service provider to the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless. BTHERE aims to connect unhoused individuals to services and thus the output towards this goal is measured as the count of BTHERE site visits. Since May 2022, BTHERE has conducted 470+ site visits ('interactions'). On average, BTHERE conducts 47 site visits and has 113 encounters with unhoused individuals per month, although it can be difficult to identify the total number of unique individuals. BTHERE will often record their interactions by general area visited, which makes it difficult to compare the number of BTHERE site visits 1:1 with the number of encampments inspected or cleaned (Figure 11).

The impact measure for BTHERE was chosen to be the number of individuals that BTHERE connects to pre-housing assistance (VI-SPIDAT and identification documents such as social security cards or birth certificates). BTHERE has connected approximately 100+ unhoused individuals to these types of services since May 2022 (Figure 12).

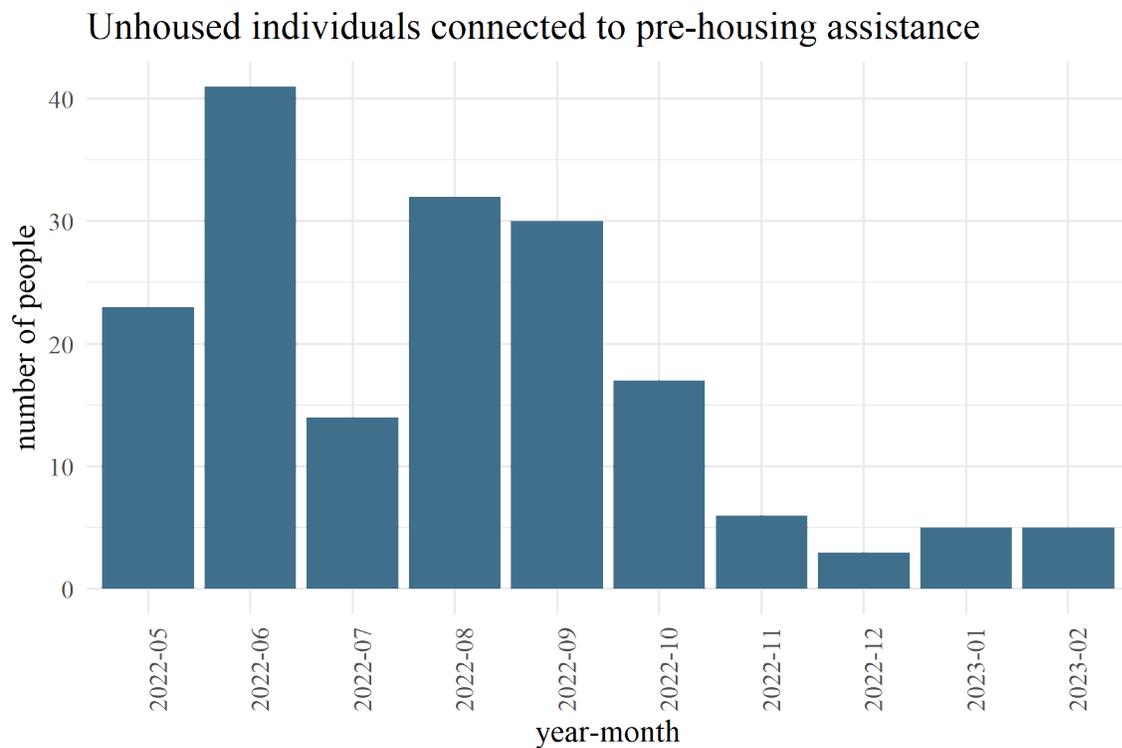


Figure 11. Impact: number of unhoused individuals connected to pre-housing assistance from BTHERE interactions

Homelessness services in Boulder are dependent on voluntary participation in services that provide resources and support that help individuals exit homelessness. In some cases, long-term rapport building will lead to voluntary participation with solutions to homelessness, but in cases where a person has heavy substance abuse or mental health issues there are significant barriers to engagement. Another continued issue is the finite number of resources, and issues related to the access and availability of treatment.

Urban Park Rangers

In April of 2021, Council approved a nine-month pilot of this program and the hiring of two

temporary rangers. Toward the end of 2021, it became clear that the timeline was not realistic with existing staff. Staff received approval from the City Manager to modify the original pilot. Near the end of 2021, a lead Urban Park Ranger was hired to lead and train the team and ensure the development and implementation of a solid program. Two fixed-term urban park rangers were hired in 2022, with one person starting in July and the second person starting in December. Both Urban Park Ranger positions are currently fixed term with terms slated to end in December 2023. All rangers came into their positions with prior ranger experience. In 2022, there was also a seasonal urban park ranger that worked primarily at the Boulder Reservoir. In 2023, there will be two seasonal urban park rangers who will be utilized system wide.

Urban rangers patrol parks for violations of the Boulder Revised Code, generally related to peoples’ safety and protection of public spaces. Among a wide variety of issues, urban park rangers often handle dog violations, wildlife harassment, public trespassing, permit compliance, fires, and littering. While they can and do enforce the Boulder Revised Code, emphasis is placed on providing education and building relationships. They also work with the public to teach them how to interact with the city’s parks, wildlife, natural resources, and other visitors respectfully and sustainably. Rangers may answer questions about Boulder’s history, natural environment, and city resources. They also support city staff doing routine work or special projects throughout the parks system and facilities for extra safety measures, traffic control, or de-escalation. Rangers provide extra security for large public events that are hosted in the parks to make sure participants are having a safe and fun time.

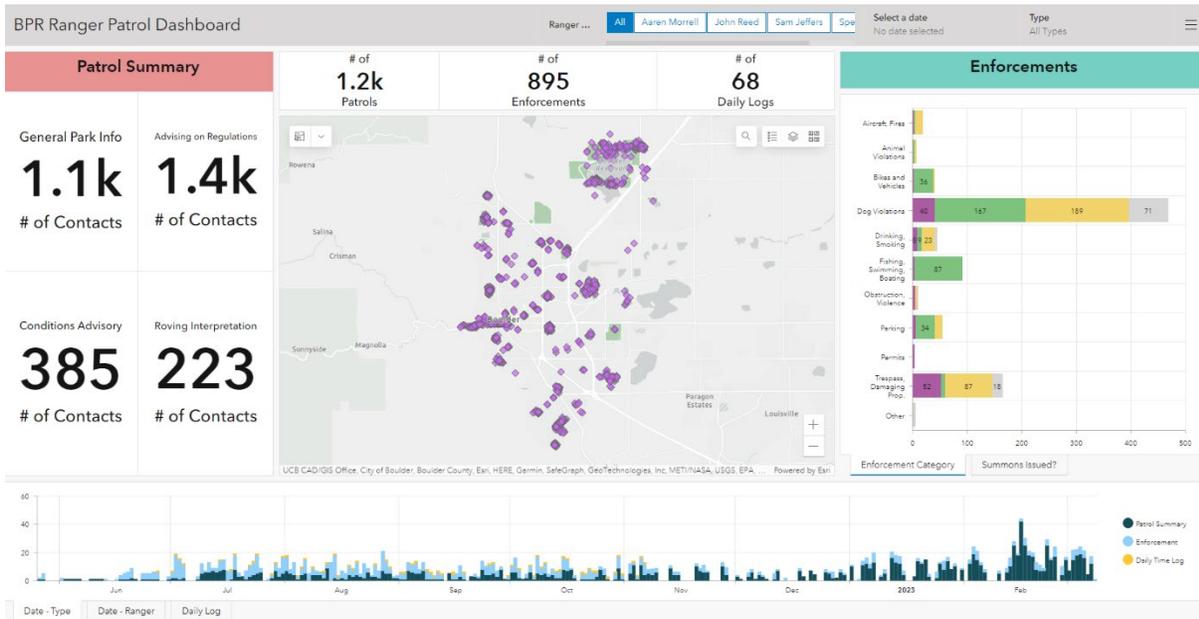


Figure 12 Park Ranger Patrol Dashboard

Since May 2022, Urban Park Rangers have recorded over 1,200 patrols across the system. During those patrols they have made over 1,100 general park contacts, over 1,400 contacts related to regulations, 385 condition advisories and 223 roving interpretations (i.e., pointing out a wildlife or providing information on the natural landscape, which is done to enhance the user experience). Urban Park Rangers have made 895 contacts related to the enforcement of the Boulder Revised Code. When possible, the infraction is addressed with a verbal warning and

then, if necessary, a written warning or citation.

At the present time, one of the biggest challenges to this program is that the needs have already exceeded the program's capacity of 120 hours per week of ranger time. An Urban Park Ranger impact analysis is currently underway and will be completed in time to inform budget conversations later this year.

Urban Park Rangers are an important part of the SAMPS work, and their positive impacts expand further than to the unhoused.

Water Quality

The City of Boulder's stormwater group conducts routine water quality and biological monitoring in Boulder Creek to evaluate current conditions, examine long term trends, and gain a better understanding of the aquatic ecosystem of Boulder Creek. In order to protect these essential stream functions, the city conducts water quality monitoring at 15 locations along Boulder Creek and its tributaries in order to assess water quality conditions and monitor compliance with state regulations. Further information on the city's water quality monitoring program can be found in the Keep it Clean Partnership's [annual water quality report](#) which summarizes the water quality monitoring efforts and results for Boulder Creek and the greater St. Vrain watershed.

Water quality is a complex, multi-faceted issue and it is not possible to draw a direct link between measured water quality and activity at encampments near water sources. City staff members look at trends over time (e.g., five or more years) to see if water quality is changing and have not observed significant changes in E. coli trends. However, mindful of community concerns, the team monitors the number of inspected encampments adjacent to waterways and clean-ups of those encampments.

Encampments inspected near waterways with trash/biohazards Based on most recent inspection when multiple exist per encampment/reportid

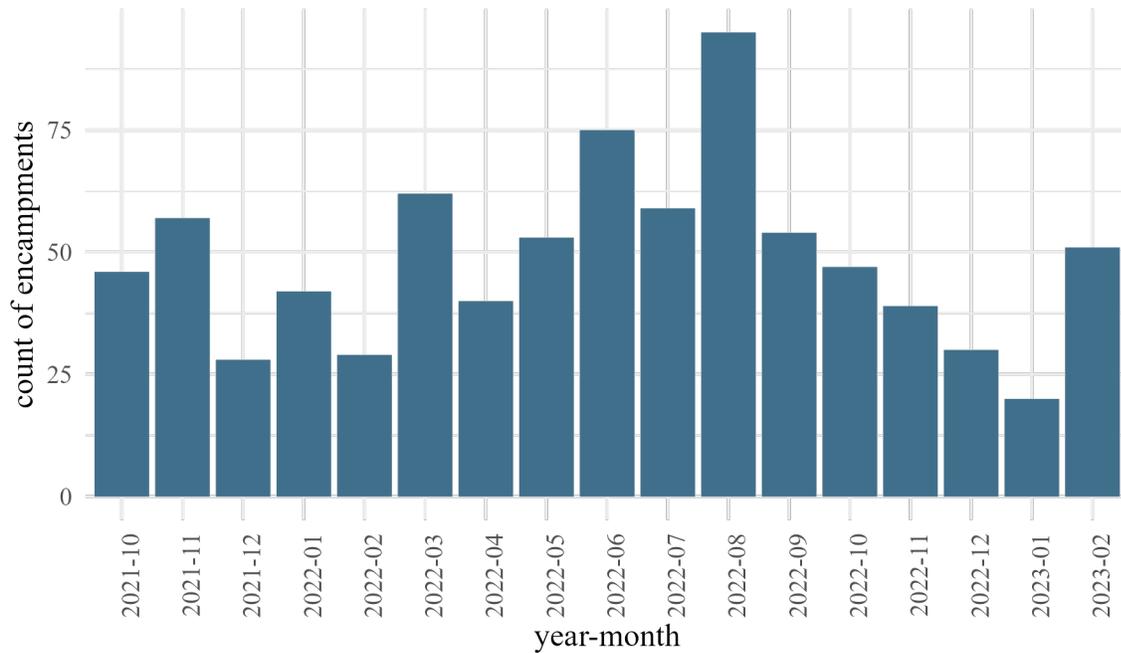


Figure 13. Count of encampments inspected near waterways with trash/biohazards present

Operations crews typically encounter about 50 encampments per month that are near waterways with trash or biohazards present. August 2022 saw a peak of 95 of these types of encampments inspected (Figure 14). These factors account for 30 out of a 100 points rubric that prioritizes clean-ups; nearly 2/3 of encampments inspected with these issues are ultimately cleaned. Operations teams have cleaned over 500 of these types of encampments since October 2022 (Figure 15).

Clean-ups of encampment near waterways with trash/biohazards
 Based on most recent inspection when multiple exist per encampment/reportid

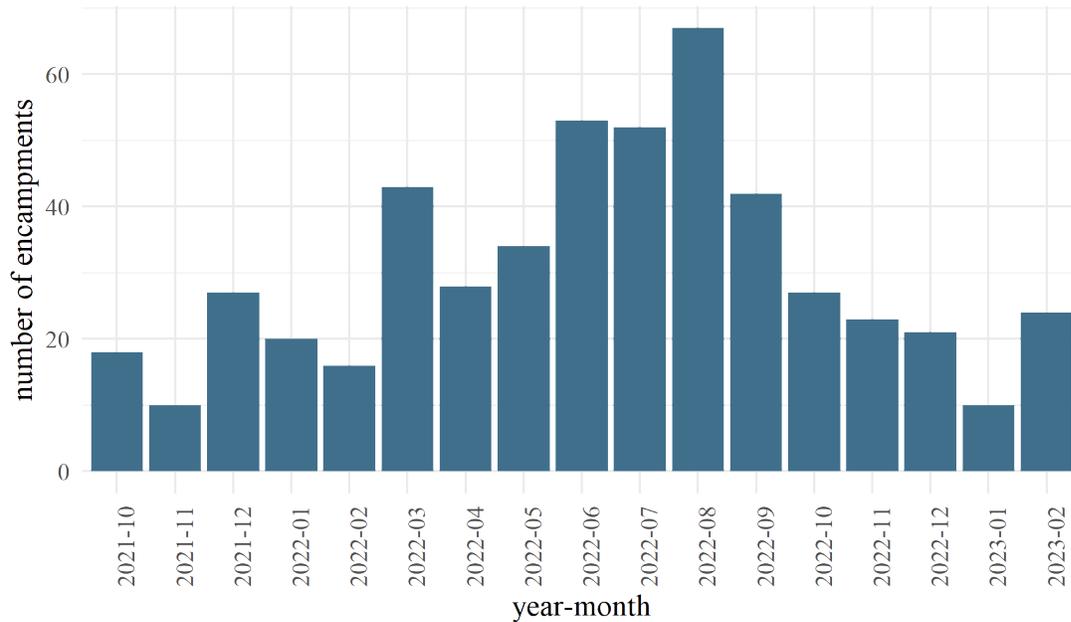


Figure 14. Volume of encampment clean-ups near waterways with trash or biohazards at inspection

Boulder Municipal Court and Community Court Programming

While not a member of the SAMPS team, the work of the Community Court is intertwined with the work associated with camping and unsheltered homelessness. Community Court is a voluntary diversion program where individuals work with homeless navigators to earn dismissal of low-level, quality of life charges for steps towards stability in the community. Through collaboration with a variety of agencies and service providers, Community Court provides access to needed services in a central location. Most importantly, the court’s homeless navigators provide intensive case management to individuals as they navigate the various tasks required to be eligible for housing, to find a landlord, and to successfully maintain housing. This fills an important need that is different from the role of B THERE and other outreach workers. Boulder’s community court takes an individual and trauma-informed approach rather than the traditional punitive approach typically seen in the criminal justice system. People with lived experience have a voice in designing the program and resolving their individual cases.

The following municipal offenses are eligible to be seen in community court with permission of the prosecutor: camping violations, tent violations, trespass, alcohol in public, marijuana in public, smoking where prohibited, and other cases include littering and urinating in public. The types of violations that are addressed in Community Court are often committed by the unhoused. Addressing these violations in Community Court provides an opportunity to address underlying causes of homelessness instead of cycling people in between the streets and jail. Boulder Municipal Court only addresses city ordinance violations. Any violations based on state law are seen in Boulder County or District Court.

In line with many experts, Community Court considers housing an indispensable tool to address public safety concerns. According to the data pulled from the municipal court case management system which tracks cases back to 2002, seven high utilizers of the Community Court system accounted for a total of 978 municipal and state court violations. Once those same seven individuals were housed through the coordination between the Community Court and the greater homelessness response system, the total number of Municipal Court cases incurred by these individuals fell to just six. While recidivism is not used as a measure of program success, there does seem to be a correlation between being housed and reducing municipal and state court violations.

Data, Communication and Action Plan

In late 2022, the Communications and Data team (CDT) began the process of creating more robust reporting mechanisms. The work was focused on two themes: developing an Action Plan that included the strategies and 2023 actions to progress toward the aspirational goals, and broadening the measurement efforts to inform programs, policies and budget questions. The Action Plan is included as an attachment to this document.

CDT worked with the executive team, front-line workers, legal services and others to determine key performance indicators, identify gaps in current data collection, establish strategies and actions, and to develop the tools needed to measure the success of the SAMPS effort.

In February, a workshop was held with front-line staff members to gain input on the strengths and weaknesses of the program as well as providing a venue to gather input on solutions to the issues faced by program staff. Key solutions proposed in this session focused on actions within the purview of the SAMPS team and centered on training, coordination, and ensuring the safety of SAMPS staff.

Expanded Measurement and Data Collection

Improving the use of data to guide and evaluate the program remains a focus for all of the SAMPS team's work. While the team continues to track traditional outputs (e.g., the amount of trash collected), measurement efforts now include outputs that are more people-focused (e.g., as how many people have been connected to services through this work), provide measures of the issues addressed by SAMPS, and where feasible, impacts achieved by the SAMPS program (see Table 1, below).

Table 1. Issue, output, impact framework

Category	Description	Example	Features
Issue	Measure of underlying issue	# of encampment reports	Fluctuations give a sense of underlying problems, given City efforts
Output	Measure of effort by program teams	# of encampment clean-ups	Simple measure of effort. Connected to impact with assumptions.
Impact	<u>Where possible,</u> measure of impact had by SAMPS program teams	<u>Reduction in</u> encampment reports caused by encampment clean-ups	Can be complex (or even impossible) to measure and difficult to communicate. Still requires assumptions.

Goals, Strategies and Actions

Eight aspirational goals continue to guide this work. They are:

1. No unsanctioned camping.
2. Individuals experiencing homelessness are connected to services.
3. Access to public space and public infrastructure is not impeded.
4. Reduce crime and disorder in designated areas of emphasis.
5. Visitors have access to knowledgeable resources or city services.
6. Maintenance crews can safely access critical infrastructure in public spaces.
7. Waterways are free of contamination.
8. Users of public spaces report feeling safe and welcome.

A complete discussion of the strategies and 2023 Actions can be found in the attachment to this document, along with the key Issue, Output, and Impact measures that are associated each of the goals.

Public Activity Reporting

In 2022, the team created a [website and dashboard](#) so the public can monitor locations of camping reports and can also obtain information on the amount of debris collected, number of assessments/inspections conducted, and clean-ups completed. Measures associated with perceptions of safety was also being evaluated, including the utilization of information from the Community Survey.

NEXT STEPS

The SAMPS team continues to analyze its work to identify improvements. These range in scope difficulty and potential need for additional resources.

- There is an overall desire to improve communications, both internal and with the community, to clearly explain the challenges faced by the SAMPS team, to be transparent about what can and cannot be accomplished, and to better communicate successes to the

public.

- Staff will be fully implementing the changes to the Abatement Protocol, including the provision of training and the development of a communications plan for staff and the people currently camping in public spaces.
- SAMPS will be reviewing responses from worker safety surveys and implementing improvements.

In order to accomplish the slate of actions listed in the Action Plan and to sustain programs, staff will be putting forth associated recommendations for the 2024 budget.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – 2023 SAMPS Action Plan



Safe and Managed Public Spaces 2023 Action Plan



Overview

Public spaces should be available to all community members, but unsanctioned camping excludes some members of the community from enjoying these public spaces.

Recent increases in unsanctioned camping have led to serious health and safety risks, for those staying within campsites and the broader community. Campsite residents may be at risk of serious health issues or loss of life due to uncertain weather, public health risks (disease, contamination of living spaces) as well as being victims of crime, as campsites often attract more serious crimes such as drug distribution.



At the same time, camping creates several community issues. Campsites can increase wildfire risks and can negatively impact and endanger wetlands or other sensitive and ecologically important natural areas. Residents, visitors, and city staff often feel threatened by the behavior they encounter in misused public spaces and can encounter biohazards in areas such as the Boulder Creek Path or in parks or Open Space.

Camping and unsafe behavior impact the work of multiple city departments and require partnership and joint efforts to achieve positive outcomes. In April 2021, Boulder’s City Council approved a pilot program to formalize this coordinated effort, the Safe and Managed Public Spaces team. The Safe and Managed Public Spaces (SAMPS) team’s mission is to ensure that public spaces are safe and welcoming for all. To accomplish this, and directed by a multi-departmental Executive Team, the SAMPS effort is driven through various coordinated workgroups, including:

- Operations and Clean-Up
- Urban Park Rangers
- Downtown Ambassadors
- BTHERE Outreach
- Dedicated Boulder Police Support
- Data, Analytics, Legal, and Communications

The work of this team is guided through eight long-term and aspirational goals. These goals drive a compassionate approach with residents who are camping while ensuring that the city’s ordinances are enforced.

The Action Plan details the strategies required to meet the long-term goals as well as the activities undertaken in 2023 to support these strategies. This plan was designed to align with the city’s Sustainability, Equity and Resiliency Plan and holds a “people-focused”, compassionate response to a complex community challenge.

Components of SAMPS



Operations and Clean-Up

Prior to 2021, all clean-up work was accomplished through a contract with a third-party vendor. Upon internal consolidation of this work, a five-person crew was created, including a supervisor. The team is fully equipped with vehicles, a dump truck and other equipment necessary to perform this work. This operations team performs clean-up activities five days per week, with an average of one to two clean-ups involving active campsites. On days where active campsite cleanup is occurring, the crew inspects and cleans the creek

corridors and greenways. The team works collaboratively with representatives of other city departments and takes pride in performing the work with compassion and empathy. Part of the notification process involves providing the people living in the camps with information on available services. The notification process, as well as other aspects, such as uniform system of identification, storage, and retrieval of personal property are guided by standard operating protocols developed by the multi-departmental SAMPS team and city leadership.

Urban Park Rangers

The urban park rangers contribute to progress towards several goals related to safe public spaces, including ensuring access to public spaces is not impeded, that visitors have access to knowledgeable resources on city services, protecting waterways and natural areas, and user perceptions of safety. The program began operation in June 2022, after careful focus on ensuring appropriate Standard Operating Procedures, communication protocols, and training (such as de-escalation) plans to support this program were developed.

Downtown Ambassadors

The Downtown Ambassador program is a partnership program between the Community Vitality department and Downtown Business Partners (DBP). The Ambassador program's scope of services includes hospitality, safety, and cleaning-related duties in service of enhancing visitor experiences in the downtown corridor. These duties can include such things as hospitality contacts, business contacts, welfare checks, eliminating instances of graffiti, picking up trash and litter, and cleaning up biohazard waste from humans and other animals.

Additional in-kind support is being provided by the City’s Central Area Improvement District (CAGID) in the form of office and storage space and by the Downtown Boulder BID in the form of program management and administration and vehicles and equipment.

Boulder Targeted Homeless Engagement and Referral Effort (BTHERE)

Originally piloted as a response to COVID-19, this team - consisting of a team member with lived experience in homelessness, a team member with knowledge of or connection to mental/behavioral health resources, and a team member with general homelessness outreach experience – was charged with providing education about public health issues, distributing masks, connecting people to testing and vaccination opportunities, and screening people to determine if a stay at the COVID Recovery Center was necessary. In December 2021, the BTHERE program was incorporated into the Coordinated Entry (CE) program, the screening program for entry into sheltering services run by Boulder Shelter for the Homeless. Incorporation of the BTHERE program under CE allows the system to maintain a brick-and-mortar CE experience but also allows for in-field CE screening and diversion/reunification services. The BTHERE team is also focused on unsheltered homelessness throughout the community and connecting people with housing, sheltering, and other supportive services. The BTHERE team works closely with the operational team to ensure that campsite residents are informed of available resources during campsite notification processes as well as before or after clean-up activities.

Boulder Police Department Dedicated Support

Boulder Police Department has dedicated a six-member team to support camping clean-up in addition to or in some case replacing the support that has been provide by the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)/Mall Unit Sergeant and officers from the Mall Unit. The goal of the dedicated Police unit is to support the work of the SAMPS team, rather than to issue citations. Similar to the operations team, officers provide a compassionate approach to service and provide information about resources and shelter options. This unit also provides courtesy transports, expedites contact between medical personnel and unhoused individuals, facilitates unhoused service provider outreach efforts, and assists with navigational support through unhoused services in Boulder and Boulder County.

Data, Analytics, Legal, and Communications

This team provides internal support to the SAMPS team members. All initiatives are grounded in a solutions-based framework and are thoroughly reviewed for compliance with the city’s legal requirements. In addition, the team manages all communications to and from the public while also developing more robust and transparent communications associated with activity and outcome reporting. The team works in an iterative way; identifying aspirational goals and measurements, and exploring whether robust measurement is feasible.

Components of an Action Plan

An Action Plan is a reflection of our idealized vision for this work and the community it serves. It contains the city's long-term vision for the program in the form of goals and high-level strategies and priorities that will steer the team's actions moving forward. It is the big-picture plan and identifies where the team will focus its energy. The Action Plan is accompanied by performance measures; these too reflect current thinking and will be subject to revision, improvement, and feasibility constraints throughout the year.

Goals

When the SAMPS team was developed in 2021, the Executive team worked with data and analytic professionals to develop eight aspirational and long-term goals. These eight goals provide the foundational framework for all SAMPS work and serve to illustrate the main focus of the work.

Strategies

Strategies are specific efforts, objectives, or services that must be completed in order to progress toward the established goals. Strategies are usually updated every few years.

Actions

Actions are the programs, initiatives and projects that are used to push forward the strategies. Actions are specific to a program of service for a particular year. 2023 actions were developed through input from front-line personnel.

Measures

Performance measures are reported at the goal level and include three categories: Issue, Output, and Impact. Issue measures describe the underlying issues and give a sense or scale of the underlying problems. An example of an Issue measure is the number of encampments reported through the Inquire Boulder system.

Output measures illustrate and measure the effort made by program teams. Output measures are simple measures of effort, but they are often the foundations for Impact measures. While there are any number of Output measures collected across the work of the SAMPS team, there are some Output measures that are highlighted as representative of each of the eight goals.

Impact measures aim to measure the impact, where possible, of the SAMPS team work. These measures can often be complex to measure and are sometimes difficult to communicate. Often referred to as Outcome measures, Impact measures are usually reported as percentage increase/decrease, reductions, or pre and post analyses (e.g., reductions in crime, percentage change in perceptions of safety).

1

No camping in public spaces.

2

Individuals experiencing homelessness are connected to services.

3

Access to public space and public infrastructure is not impeded.

4

Reduce crime and disorder in designated areas of emphasis.

5

Visitors have access to knowledgeable resources or city services.

6

Maintenance crews can safely access critical infrastructure in public spaces.

7

Waterways are free of contamination.

8

Users of public spaces report feeling safe and welcome.

SAMPS and Homelessness

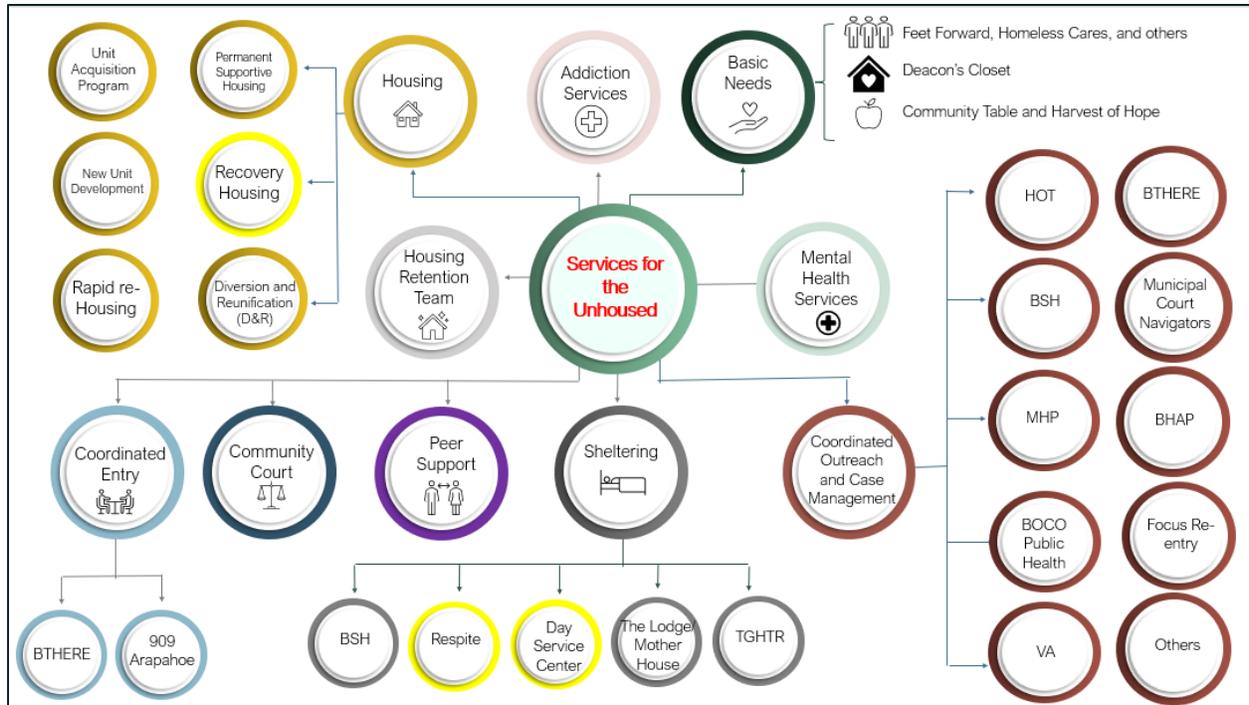
The City of Boulder, along with its collaborative partners, provides a tapestry of services, programs, and housing opportunities that are targeted to ending a person’s homelessness. **Over the past five years, Boulder service providers have exited over 1,500 people from homelessness.** This reflects 85% of the countywide housing effort, and information about ongoing homelessness services can be found on the city’s [Homelessness Services Data Dashboard](#). Exits from homelessness range from reconnecting people to support systems outside of the community (“Diversion and Reunification”), to connecting people to treatment and long-term programs, to the provision of housing. Housing itself can take many forms depending on an individual’s needs including, but not limited to, connecting people to affordable housing, transitional housing programs and permanent supportive housing (housing vouchers with supportive services).

The Boulder Homelessness Strategy, developed in 2017, is rooted in a Housing First philosophy. The Housing First philosophy that centers on providing people with permanent housing quickly and supporting them with services as needed. Housing First recognizes that a person can more successfully address other aspects of their well-being (i.e., employment, health, mental health, education, addiction) once they are stably housed. These programs do not require sobriety or completion of other programs prior to securing housing. Housing First is an over-arching philosophy that guides all programming; it is not a particular program. It is a nationally recognized approach that is has grown in acceptance as, per the National Alliance to End Homelessness notes, “[c]onsumers in a Housing first model access housing faster and are more likely to remain stably housed.”

Often, Housing First is confused with “housing only”. Housing focused programming only works with accompanying supportive services before, during and after housing placement. Rather than not addressing a person’s needs who is perhaps not ready or able to access housing, it guides all engagement toward encouragement of actions that would ultimately lead to housing. Under this philosophy, shelters are therefore not seen as solutions to a person’s homelessness but rather tools to provide basic needs and to connect people to services that aim to end someone’s homelessness. Housing First programs share critical elements:

- A focus on placing and sustaining people experiencing homelessness in permanent housing as quickly as possible without time limits;
- A variety of services delivered following housing to promote housing stability and individual well-being on an as-needed and as-desired basis; and
- A standard lease agreement to housing as opposed to mandated therapy or services compliance.

There are also critical services that are provided “in the field”, meaning that someone can move directly from unsheltered homelessness to housing without ever opting to use a shelter. These services are designed to encourage people living unhoused toward stable housing, and many of these services meet people where they are and help them with their “pre-housing needs”. Multiple outreach workers, navigators and case managers help ensure that individuals have all of their required documentation such as identification, have connections to mental and physical health resources, have access to basic needs (i.e., food, water, clothing) and understand their sheltering options.



An Overview of Services Provided to the Unhoused in Boulder

Unsheltered homelessness in Boulder is fluid; meaning, that while approximately a third of the people living in unsanctioned campsites have been in the community for a significant period of time, the majority of people living in encampments are coming to and leaving the community with regularity. While the longer-term residents typically have at least one case manager who has been working to end the person's homelessness, many have recently come to the community. Because it takes about 17 interactions with a person to effectively engage with services, this fluidity of campsite residency can create challenges for outreach workers and hide what successes the homelessness response team has had in exiting people from homelessness.

It is important to note that for many of individuals living in unsanctioned camps, there are a variety of barriers that impact a person's likelihood to be housed. The most significant barrier to housing is substance use disorder. In the last few years, substance usage has dramatically changed within the unsheltered community. The rise in availability and inexpensiveness of methamphetamines (meth), coupled with relaxed legal consequences for possession, has led to unmatched levels of meth usage in encampments. This increased usage has other impacts that range from an unwillingness to engage with services, increased criminal activity, inability to stay in shelters or regulated communal settings, lack of landlords willing to lease to people with histories or active use of meth, to associated mental health issues. Unfortunately, meth treatment has low success rates, and there are few withdrawal options for people who are living unhoused. Of particular and growing concern is the addition of fentanyl use, either in combination with meth or alone. Preliminary research into fentanyl is that it is highly addictive and leads to similar psychosis in some users.

The unhoused community was also disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Fear and distrust of congregate settings such as shelters led to an increase in people living unsheltered. In addition, social distancing requirements led to limits on jails and many outreach/mental health/case management services. Rising housing prices, general inflation and employment instability have had negative

impacts on homelessness. While the path from eviction and joblessness does not typically lead directly to homelessness – causing a lag in the analysis of cause and effect – the post-COVID environment points to a long-term increase in chronic homelessness and associated unsheltered homelessness.

The causes, challenges and solutions associated with unsheltered homelessness are very complex and have a direct impact on the work of the SAMPS team. Yet, while there is an undeniable connection between homelessness and the work of the SAMPS team, it is not the goal of the SAMPS team to solve homelessness. Rather, the SAMPS team focuses on ensuring that public spaces are safe and welcoming for all who use them. It is in the compassionate approach, particularly in interactions with the unhoused, that SAMPS can contribute to the larger ecosystem that is the city's homelessness response.

When the SAMPS team was created, the team based its response on key factors and considerations:

Unsanctioned campsite enforcement is not a solution to homelessness.

Enforcement of camping and tent ordinances ensures that spaces are clean, safe, welcoming and accessible for all users of the space. While this often involves connecting unhoused individuals with services, it is the network of services and housing resources that provides individual exits from homelessness.

Boulder residents experiencing unsheltered homelessness are vulnerable, and every reasonable effort should be made to help them achieve a safe, stable home in their community.

A key component of all SAMPS work is to hold compassion as a driving feature of the work, with a focus on helping very vulnerable people with all interactions. The SAMPS team believes in the city's Homelessness Strategy and in the idea that having a stable home is the foundation for all other life betterment.

Regardless of outreach efforts, many people who are living in unsanctioned camps are likely to reject offers of service.

Research shows that it takes on average 17 interactions to build enough trust to engage with services. Some people never get to a trust or relationship level with outreach workers. SAMPS-related outreach workers continue to offer services to campsite residents using engagement tools in the hope of future engagement.

People experiencing homelessness are entitled to the same right of enjoyment and welcomeness in public spaces as other residents and "hanging out" is not a crime. Like all members of the community, people experiencing homelessness must follow laws.

It is a goal of the SAMPS program that spaces are welcoming to all, including people experiencing homelessness. Anyone, regardless of housing status, who is following the usage rules of public spaces is welcome to use the space.



Goals, Strategies, Actions, and Measures

Goal 1: No Unsanced Camping

This long-term goal is designed to capture the work of the Utilities and operations teams. The measures associated with this goal are related to the impact of the cleanup efforts as well as the actual output of the team. For 2023, actions were designed to capture the work of an increased team, as approved in the 2023 budget.

Strategy 1.1: Increase Efficiency of Clean-up Operations

Actions reflected in this strategy reflect efforts to establish the second operations team, while gathering input and improvement ideas from front-line staff.

Action 1.1.1: Integrate additional operations team by 2nd quarter 2023

Action 1.1.2: Conduct strategic planning sessions with front-line staff

Strategy 1.2: Broaden Geographic Footprint of Campsite Clean-Ups

The funding source for the second operations team allows for a broader footprint in the community. This will require a refresh of the prioritization system to ensure that areas which have no/limited environmental sensitivity (i.e., bandshell, neighborhood parks) are addressed properly.

Action 1.2.1: Refresh prioritization system to account for non-environmentally sensitive areas

Measures

Issue

Number of unsanced camping reports entered into the Inquire Boulder system.

Output

Number of clean-ups conducted by the field teams.

Impact

Impact to the number of Unsanced Camping reports resulting from clean-ups conducted.

- Note: Data is available, but attribution is hard; this will require some assumptions

Goal 2: Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Are Connected to Services

Goal 2 focuses primarily on the measurement and activities of the outreach components of the SAMPS team. Numerous collaborative activities are designed to provide team members with resources to help people in encampments, and thoughtful activities have been developed to improve the voice of encampment dwellers. This goal includes a distinction between “referral” (letting someone know of a person/agency with which to discuss their situation) and “connection” (active work to solve someone’s homelessness and connection to sheltering/services/pre-housing), with a focus on “connection” rather than “referral”, as this is measurable and is directly attributable to meeting the goal of ensuring “Individuals experiencing homelessness are connected to services”. The subject matter experts in homelessness aided in the development of these strategies and actions, not to create/enhance exits from homelessness but rather to focus on the overlap of the SAMPS and homelessness work.

Strategy 2.1: Understand Personal Property-related Barriers to Accessing Services

This strategy aims to gain lived-experience input regarding storage needs. Actions are related to surveys and evaluation with the knowledge that resources such as the Day Service Center and Boulder Shelter for the Homeless provide storage options.

Action 2.1.1: Survey individuals experiencing homelessness to discover their storage needs.

Action 2.1.2: Evaluate existing and expected resources to determine if any new initiatives would substantively impact the ability to effectively reduce or remove identified barriers.

Strategy 2.2: Ensure connections to services are as efficient and effective as possible.

The focus of these activities is to increase BTHERE’s ability to make strong connections, beyond referral to sheltering. While BTHERE is already accomplishing some of this work, these actions outline the need to strengthen pre-housing and housing activities through this part of the SAMPS team. The Community Court team works closely with many of the same clients, and once the Community Court is relocated to the Day Service Center, they will have an even greater opportunity to collaborate within the SAMPS structure.

Action 2.2.1: Investigate innovative programmatic opportunities through BTHERE to further develop existing relationships with the unhoused community.

Action 2.2.2: Provide specific pre-housing assistance through BTHERE that is coordinated with existing processes.

Action 2.2.3: Connect Community Court activities to outreach efforts (court-specific outreach, navigator office hours).

Strategy 2.3: Mitigate Impacts of Service Limitations Resulting in Staffing Turnover Inherent to the Type of Work Being Done.

Outreach work typically has a high staff turnover. Vacancies in this team can have a deleterious effect on SAMPS operations.

Action 2.3.1: Support BTHREE provider in training and hiring activities.

Strategy 2.4: Improve Connections, Data Sharing and Communication Between SAMPS Team Members.

These actions are geared toward ensuring that all pieces of the SAMPS team who work with individuals are aware of community outreach efforts on behalf of those individuals and to provide an understanding for operational staff of homelessness response.

Action 2.4.1: Conduct regular staffing and problem-solving meetings between outreach and operations teams.

Action 2.4.2: Enhance data sharing and analyses with the High Utilizer Team and the Boulder Police Department for their use of the Bureau of Justice Assistance grant, which is focused on encampments.

Action 2.4.3: Establish learning and training programs to ensure new team members understand roles and expectations of all components of the SAMPS team as well as to provide a basic understanding of the community's homelessness response system.

Measures

Issue

Volume of pre-housing assistance administered (document assistance, VI-SPDAT screenings for housing prioritization)

- Note: Coordinated Entry screening is an important service and necessary step towards housing, but BTHREE provides other important services such as document assistance, referrals to health care, and transportation.

Output

Number of BTHREE interactions

Impact

Number of estimate of unhoused individuals connected to pre-housing assistance by BTHREE

- Note: number of assistance and referrals are tracked per location and day and not possible to attribute to unique individuals

Goal 3: Access to Public Space and Infrastructure is Not Impeded

This long-term goal is designed to focus on access spaces while also focusing on life/safety risks associated with blocked access. The Steering Committee, along with significant guidance from Legal, spent considerable time in determining what could be accomplished as well as what pieces belonged in Goal 3 versus Goal 6.

Strategy 3.1: Evaluate Programs and Practices That Ensure the Provision of Access to Public Space and Infrastructure.

The Park Rangers would like to re-establish regular bike patrols along creek paths with the goal of consistent visibility (for deterrence) and to educate people camping along creek paths as to the dangers of impeding traffic along these paths. The annual audit of the prioritization framework gives the SAMPS team flexibility in addressing changing conditions.

Action 3.1.1: Re-establish bike patrols on the creek paths.

Action 3.1.2: Establish an annual audit of the prioritization framework.

Strategy 3.2: Establish Criteria for Identifying Areas Which Require Immediate Response Due to Acute Life/Safety Issues or Access to Public Buildings.

The focus of this strategy is to study underpass issues before determining significant changes to policies. In addition, the Parks team is interested in providing regular pre-storm danger education, specifically about the danger of being in the way of snowplows who may not be able to see unhoused people who are in the pathway.

Action 3.2.1: Investigate and address conditions that create more dangerous conditions under certain underpasses.

Action 3.2.2: Identify specific actions targeted to areas presenting an immediate public health hazard (underpasses and people in front of doors).

Action 3.2.3: Establish a pre-storm investigation/information practice (e.g., snow plowing).

Measures

Issue

Number of observed obstruction issues collected during field inspection.

Output

Number of encampments cleaned that had obstruction issues observed at inspection.

Impact

Number of encampments with observed obstruction issues resulting from clean-ups.

- Note: Data is available, but attribution is hard; this will require some assumptions

Goal 4: Reduction in Crime and Disorder in Designated Areas of Emphasis

This long-term goal is designed to focus on crime and disorder in the community. The Boulder Police Department's Data expert developed these strategies and actions.

Strategy 4.1: Evaluate Historical Patterns of Crime and Disorder in Designated Areas of Emphasis.

This strategy aims to allow staff to conduct important evaluation which leads to informed programs and practices.

Action 4.1.1: Distinguish impact of offenses (person, property, and society) in designated areas.

Strategy 4.2: Maintain Police Support in Designated Areas.

This strategy is about increased presence in order to mitigate criminal behavior and disorder.

Action 4.2.1: Increase patrols in designated areas.

Action 4.2.2: Continue to support COB employees during notification and clean-up activities.

Measures

Issue

Number of non-traffic, non-directed BPD calls for service in encampment areas.

Output

Cumulative Police time spent on non-traffic activities in encampment areas.

Impact

Impact to number of non-traffic, non-directed BPD calls for service in encampment area resulting from cumulative Police time spent in encampment area.

- Note: Data is available, but attribution is hard; this will require some assumptions. Seasonality, special events/holidays, unhoused population, city population, park use, inclement weather events can impact this measure.

Goal 5: Visitor Have Access to Knowledgeable Resources on City Services

Different from Goal 2, this goal focuses on the primarily non-homelessness resource components of the SAMPS team – Rangers and Downtown Ambassadors.

Strategy 5.1: Fully Implement Urban Park Ranger Program.

This strategy emphasizes presence and training.

Action 5.1.1: Fully staff and train Urban Rangers with 3 FTEs.

Action 5.1.2: Ensure that Urban Rangers spend at least 50% of their patrol time in areas of emphasis.

Strategy 5.2: Increase Scope of Downtown Ambassador Program.

The focus of this strategy is on personnel development and understanding of visitor access to requested information, specific to the Downtown Ambassadors.

Action 5.2.1: Integrate new personnel/roles into SAMPS framework.

Action 5.2.2: Explore pulse survey methods to gauge visitor access to resource.

Action 5.2.3: Explore partnership opportunities with the University of Colorado.

Strategy 5.3: Improve SAMPS Team Knowledge Base for Visitor Requests/Questions

This strategy is designed to enhance meaningful training and coordination to ensure responsiveness to visitor needs (separate from collaboration on unhoused individuals).

Action 5.3.1: Establish training plans for ambassadors, rangers, and other SAMPS personnel.

Action 5.3.2: Establish a framework for field-based communication and coordination between all service groups.

Action 5.3.3: Enhance city team integration to optimize response to questions.

Measures

Issue

Fraction of downtown users reporting they have adequate access to knowledgeable resources.

- Note: this would require new data collection which may not be cost-effective.

Output

Number of hospitality and business contacts generated by Downtown Ambassadors.

Volume of Parks & Recreation Rangers incidents where they provided Advising on Regulations, General Park Information, Roving Interpretation, or Conditions Advisory.

Impact

Impact to fraction of users reporting they have adequate access to knowledgeable resources resulting from selected output.

- Note: as above, this is contingent on new data collection and may not be feasible.

Goal 6: Maintenance Crews Can Safely Access Critical Infrastructure in Public Spaces

Goal 3 addresses community safety, while Goal 6 focuses on the teams who do this and associated work.

Strategy 6.1: Ensure that Crews are Aware of and are Monitoring Critical Public Infrastructure.

This strategy focuses on maintaining an awareness of critical infrastructure that aids in review of prioritization processes and ensuring proper responses.

Action 6.1.1: Create/verify documentation on location of critical public infrastructure.

Action 6.1.2: Establish Inventory processes.

Strategy 6.2: Explore Methods to Improve Measurement of Barriers to Safe Access.

This strategy focuses on maintaining an awareness of critical infrastructure that aids in review of prioritization processes and ensuring proper responses.

Action 6.2.1: Improve descriptive statistics tracking circumstances at areas over time.

Strategy 6.3: Identify Methods to Improve Worker Safety in Parks and Public Spaces.

This strategy guides work to understand the safety issues faced by SAMPS team members, with an additional goal of reducing staff turnover. Field worker input has identified a need for enhanced communications and training to address safety concerns.

Action 6.3.1: Evaluate pulse survey responses and strategic planning session input to develop meaningful responses and safeguards.

Action 6.3.2: Track incidents involving workers and evaluate trends/mitigating factors.

Action 6.3.3: Establish a training protocol including topics such as de-escalation tactics, situational awareness, and effective communications.

Action 6.3.4: Improve internal communications and responses to increase flexibility in addressing worker perceptions of safety.

Measures

Issue

Number of City maintenance staff reporting safety concerns while conducting core work.

Output

To be determined based on interventions developed by the staff team to support safety.

Impact

To be determined based on interventions developed by the staff team to support safety.

Goal 7: Waterways are Free of Contamination

Goal 7 is specific to waterways, and the strategies and actions reflect measurable steps that are within the control of the SAMPS team.

Strategy 7.1: Reduce Trash/Hazards in Waterways.

Specific to waterways, these actions allow for evaluation of ideas to mitigate the impact of fecal matter and trash.

Action 7.1.1: Encourage restroom use in designated areas.

Action 7.1.2: Investigate innovative ways to reduce trash introduction into drainage ways.

Strategy 7.2: Maintain Stable or Reduce E. Coli Trends, Especially During Recreation Season (May – Oct.) with the Recognition that There are Many Sources of Contamination in Boulder Creek.

Focusing on E. Coli trends ensures that actions that are within the SAMPS team's scope reduce the contamination in waterways.

Action 7.2.1: Continue to systematically investigate and control sources of bacteria where possible.

Action 7.2.2: Enhance education and current water quality efforts, risks and how to recreate safely.

Measures

Issue

Number of encampments that are near a waterway with trash/debris/feces observations during field-team inspection.

Output

Number of cleaned encampments that are near a waterway with trash/debris/feces present.

Impact

Impact to proportion of cleanups near a waterway with trash/debris/feces present.

- Note: as above, this is challenging and subject to many assumptions.

Goal 8: Users of Public Spaces Report Feeling Safe and Welcome

The focus of Goal 8 is on communication and perceptions of safety, for the community at large and the city's employees.

Strategy 8.1: Improve Information Sharing on “Designated Areas of Emphasis”, and Crime/Calls for Service (CFS) Data for Those Areas.

SAMPS work requires transparency in reporting and communications, particularly communications related to responsiveness.

Action 8.1.1: Improve responses and follow up to Inquire Boulder submissions.

Action 8.1.2: Strengthen communications on efforts made - reporters and community at large.

Strategy 8.2: Continue to Improve Site Activation.

Site activation – using public spaces for cultural and recreational purposes – was identified as a key method to reduce unsafe activity and to increase perceptions of safety.

Action 8.2.1: Evaluate public infrastructure locations as a function of available alternative places, and continue to improve site activation at access points to commonly used public areas in the city.

Action 8.2.2: Explore how public events intended to activate areas of emphasis will be supported by Urban Rangers, Downtown Ambassadors, and BTHREE.

Strategy 8.3: Investigate Ways to Change Prioritization Rubric to Highlight High Visibility Areas.

With the addition of a second operational team, a review of the prioritization rubric is necessary to build confidence in the team's ability to address high visibility areas.

Action 8.3.1: Identify areas that are perceived to be unsafe areas (city buildings including Library, underpasses, etc.).

Strategy 8.4: Improve Compliance with Debris/Needle Disposal.

Reducing the incidence of used needle debris protects the community and aids in the perception of safety.

Action 8.4.1: Add two sharps containers in high use areas.

Action 8.4.2: Explore litter mitigation programming.

Measures

Issue

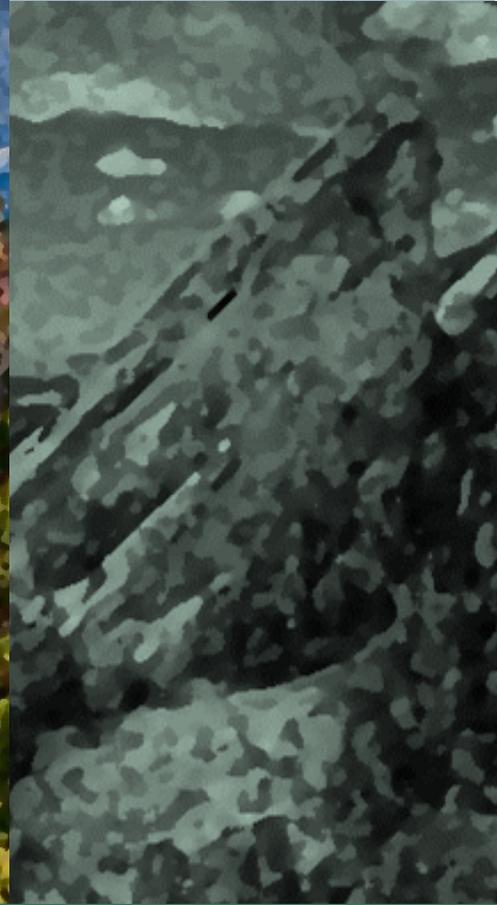
Perceptions of safety measured by the 2023 Community Survey.

Output

Traffic to public materials provided by the City on this issue

Impact

Determinants of perceptions of safety measured by the community survey



Summary

Guided by compassion and a people-focused approach, the work of the SAMPS team reflects a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach that leverages expertise and community partners to manage the city's public spaces.

This work represents the overarching goals and strategies as well as the actions specific to 2023. The SAMPS Communication and Data workgroup will report progress against milestones and measures and will develop 2024 actions in concert with field personnel and leadership.