

Homeless Response Updates

**Council Study Session
November 7, 2024**

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Public Safety and Urban Camping Ordinance Update

Kristin Hooker

Andrea Moore



- The City of Mesa has been enforcing urban camping in accordance with *Martin V. Boise*, by first offering shelter beds, and then citing into community court, if a bed is refused.

- With the decision in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, from June 2024, cities are no longer *required* to offer shelter beds prior to citing someone with urban camping.

- However, the City of Mesa will still seek to provide services first before issuing a citation.

- The City of Mesa Code currently offers two ways the City can enforce urban camping or camping related activity:
 - Public Park Regulations – the "urban camping" prohibition is currently only located in the City Public Park Regulations and is limited to parks. Title 6, Chapter 10.
 - Prohibition Against Blocking the Public Right-of-Way – because urban camping is currently limited to parks, this can be used in certain circumstances in rights-of-way. Title 6, Chapter 1-17.

- The proposed updates to the Park Regulations, and creation of a new Urban Camping Ordinance, would expand the City's ability to enforce urban camping on other public property outside of the parks, in a manner similar to many other communities.
- This proposed update changes the class of misdemeanor for urban camping in Parks, and throughout the City, from a class 1 to a class 3 misdemeanor. Several neighboring cities, including Scottsdale, Phoenix, and Tucson, have also recently made this change to further align with *Grants Pass*.



Summary of Changes (two ordinances)

1. Urban Camping Ordinance

- a. Takes the concept of urban camping in the Parks Regulations and makes it applicable to other City property.
- b. Revised definition of camping requires the establishment of temporary or permanent living accommodations similar to other communities.

2. Public Park Regulations Ordinance

Modifies the Park Regulations to change some violations from Class 1 Misdemeanors to Class 3 or 2 Misdemeanors and Civil Violations. For example: abandoning items for distribution, shopping carts, and camping go from Class 1 to Class 3 Misdemeanors, and littering, failure to pick up dog waste, and ice blocking go from Class 1 Misdemeanors to Civil Violations.

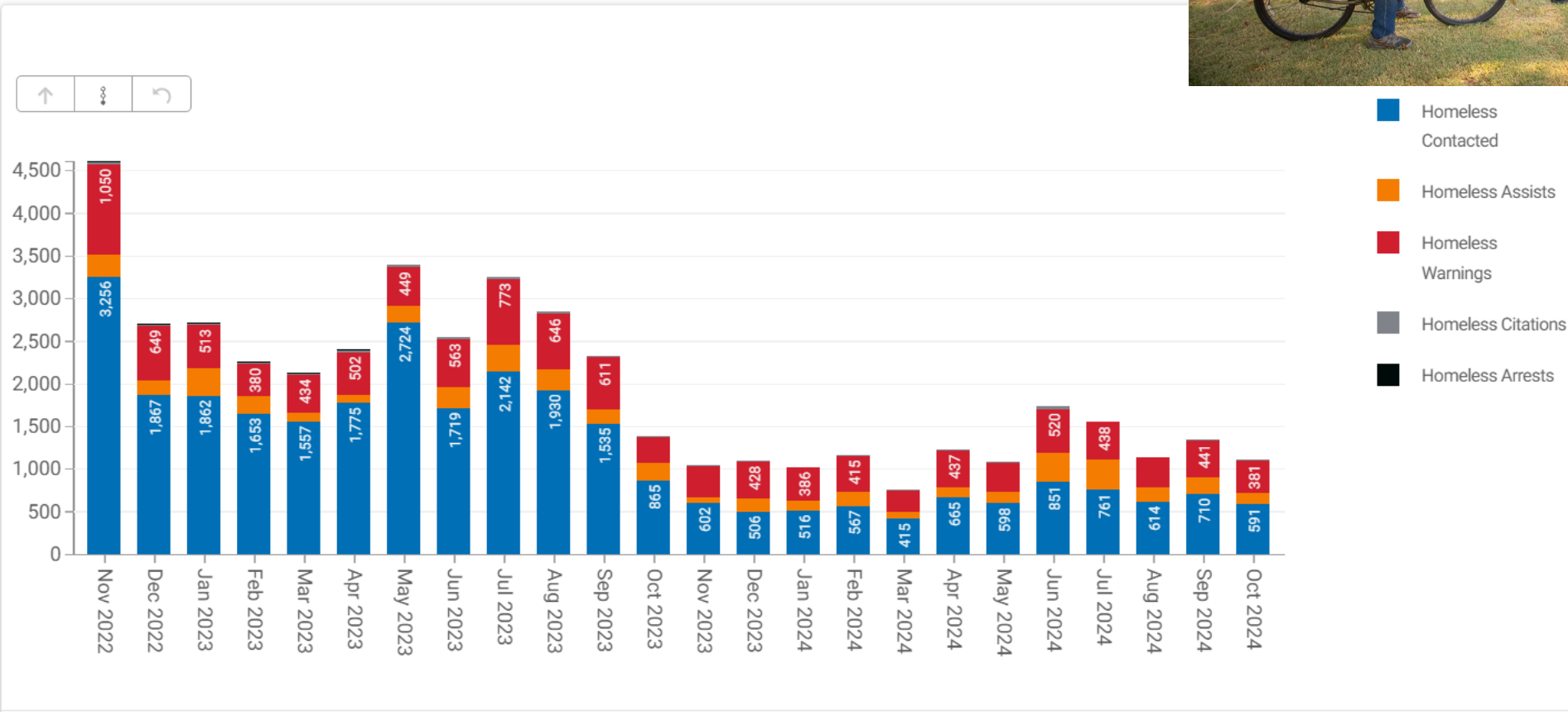
- Proactively seek and encourage frequent, positive contact with all park patrons
- Utilize available resources to support our homeless population, including referrals to “Off the Streets” program
- Hydration Campaign distributions
- Provide information and education promoting a positive park experience
- Keep parks and green spaces safe for all to use
- Embrace role as approachable leaders in the community throughout our city

- Progressive Enforcement to Maintain Park Safety:
 1. Start with positive explanation of park rules and other City codes
 2. Elevate to written warnings if needed
 3. Repeat and severe violations move to citations
 4. Community Court referrals used as appropriate to circumstance
 5. Mesa Police Department is relied upon for any circumstances that exceed the scope of duties for a Park Ranger



Homeless Interactions

Code, staffing, and programming changes are leading to positive change in the park system.



Community Court

Shawn Haught

- **Established in July 2018**
 - Address unhoused with pre-adjudicated offenses
 - Prevent cycle. Couple legal intervention with compassionate services
- **Navigators: Community Bridges (CBI)**
 - Assess, assist, and connect
- **Common Charges:** Trespass, drug paraphernalia, shoplifting, code/park
- **Referrals:** Police, Park Rangers, Prosecutor's Office, Defense Attorney, Judges
- **Court Directive:** goals to meet prior to next court date
 - Do something good for the community
- **4637 Participants:** meet their goals, housed, and employed (or other income)
 - Charges dismissed
 - Fines reduced



September 2024

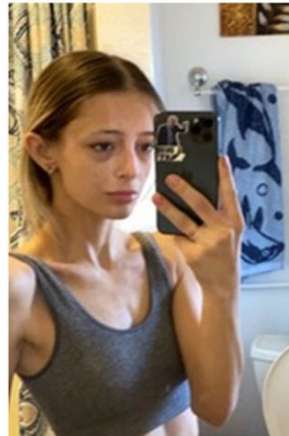
- 46 Housing services
- 77 IDs
- 33 Birth certificates
- 23 Social Security cards
- 11 Outpatient mental health services
- 24 Assistance in hospital/urgent care appointments
- 348 Peer counseling

Scottsdale, Chandler, Tucson & Phoenix

Court Successes

Natalie: 22, living in car and shed
18 months clean of meth, fentanyl, LSD
Works in peer support for addiction recovery

Before



After



Court Awards



Office of Homeless Solutions

Lindsey Balinkie





- **Street Outreach Navigation**
- **Off the Streets Access**
- **Interdepartmental Collaboration**
- **Community Partner Coordination**

Questions?



mesa·az

backup slides

Emergency 911

For a crime in progress.

If you feel unsafe for any reason.

Someone is unstable, yelling/crying hysterically, using substance, or causing a disturbance.

Mesa PD Non-Emergency 480-644-2211

For non-emergency police questions.

To report an incident that has already happened.

Mesa Homeless Resource Line 480-644-HOPE (4673)

M-Th business hour response.
Non-emergency.

To refer anyone requesting services or resources.

For any other homelessness questions about getting/giving help.

Off the Streets Public Safety Hotline

24/7 Line
(Contact Deana Lopez for number)

For First Responders Only
PD/Fire/Parks

To access services/shelter for someone when enforcing urban camping, etc.

Encampment Reporting

Non-emergency pd
480-644-2211

Mesa Now App

Citylink