

Encampment Policy Survey

Life Enrichment Committee – 7/6/20

Overview of Encampment Policy Survey

- Distributed on March 17, 2020
- Asks Oaklanders to respond to three categories of questions about homeless encampments:
 - Should there be allowable and disallowable locations for encampments?
 - Should we have standards/regulations at encampments?
 - Should there ever be enforcement at encampments?
- The responses here were received between March 17 and June 3.

Types of Questions Asked

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with how the City of Oakland currently handles encampments in and around the City?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

Do you have any comments on policy elements regarding encampment?

Your answer

The City of Oakland is considering a policy that would designate certain areas of the city as “camping zones” where camping could be regulated but not be restricted or prohibited. Do you favor or oppose designating certain areas of the city as camping zones?

- Strongly favor
- Somewhat favor
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

- General satisfaction - or lack thereof - about current City policies.

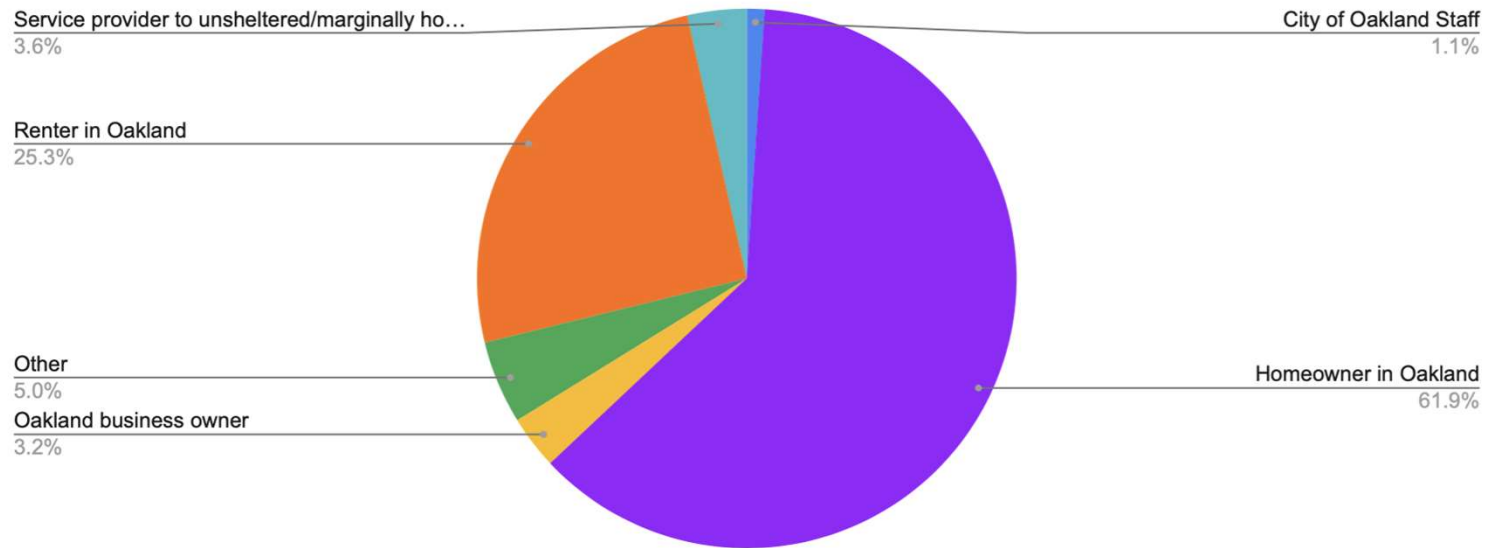
- Opinion about specific policy options.

There are a number of city policy elements regarding encampments that could be considered. Do you favor or oppose each of the following:

	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know
Requiring the city to offer shelter or housing before allowing any enforcement of encampment standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restriction on footprint allowed per person in an encampment (e.g., no more than 8'x8' or 64sf)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

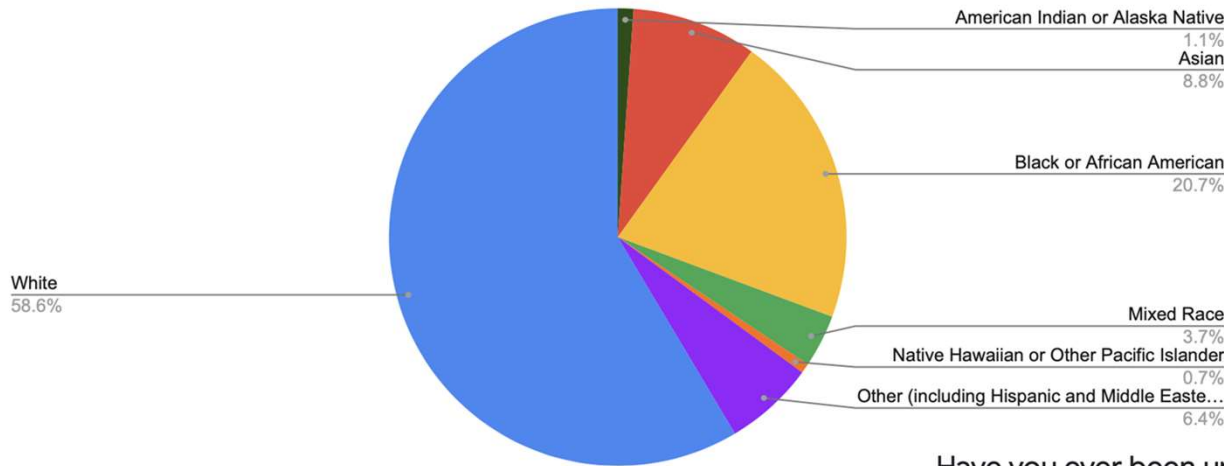
Which best describes you?



Just over 60% of respondents were homeowners in Oakland, and 25% of respondents were renters in Oakland.

Demographics

What is your race?



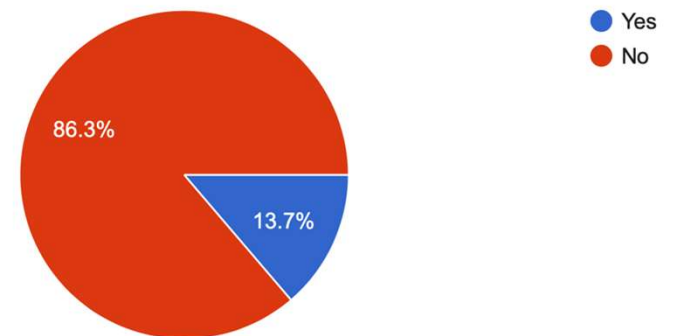
A little more than 58% of respondents identified as White, while about 21% of respondents identified as Black African American.

This compares to a general population that is 35% White and 24% Black.

Have you ever been unhoused living in a vehicle or an encampment?
815 responses

Just under 14% of respondents were currently or had formerly been unhoused.

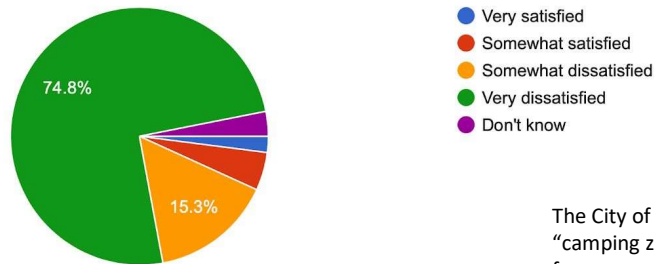
Oakland's homeless population represents 1-2% of its overall population.



It is clear that most Oaklanders do not approve of our current encampment management practice

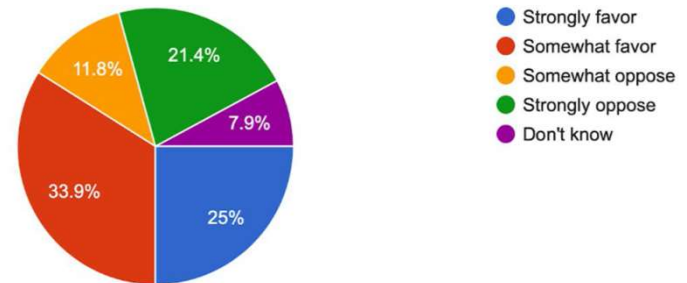
Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with how the City of Oakland currently handles encampments in and around the City?

838 responses



The City of Oakland is considering a policy that would designate certain areas of the city as “camping zones” where camping could be regulated but not be restricted or prohibited. Do you favor or oppose designating certain areas of the city as camping zones?

840 responses



We asked respondents, “Thinking about where encampments could be located in the city, how important is it to you to prohibit or allow encampments in the following locations?” **These were the top five locations that respondents supported allowing encampments.**

The chart shows that, overall, most respondents supported allowing locations on public land identified by the Council. White people are more likely than African Americans to favor allowing encampments overall. Unhoused people are less likely than housed people to favor allowing encampments.

	Public Land identified by the Council Support	Under BART Tracks Support	Near Hospitals/Medical Clinics Support	In Commercial Business Zones Support	Near a college support
African American	65%	40%	32%	29%	18%
White	80%	63%	52%	42%	39%
Housed	76%	55%	51%	37%	32%
Unhoused	56%	43%	39%	26%	20%
Aggregate	72%	54%	45%	36%	31%

For the same question-- "*Thinking about where encampments could be located in the city, how important is it to you to prohibit or allow encampments in the following locations?*"—**these were the top areas where survey respondents opposed allowing any encampments.**

African Americans are more likely than White Oaklanders to oppose allowing encampments in any of these locations. Interestingly, in all but one location, unhoused people were more likely than housed people to oppose allowing encampments in any of these locations.

	Bike lanes oppose	In street oppose	In driveways oppose	Near schools oppose	Medians oppose	Traffic islands oppose	Residential zones oppose	Near City buildings oppose
African American	86%	86%	86%	89%	84%	83%	80%	79%
White	88%	84%	75%	73%	67%	70%	62%	60%
Housed	89%	63%	80%	79%	73%	75%	70%	67%
Unhoused	90%	89%	85%	84%	78%	74%	79%	82%
Aggregate	90%	87%	81%	80%	75%	73%	71%	70%

We asked respondents, “There are a number of city policy elements regarding encampments that could be considered. Do you favor or oppose each of the following.” **These are the top supported policies with regards to encampment standards/regulations.**

Again, African-Americans were more likely than White respondents to support these encampment policies, and in most cases, unhoused respondents were more likely than housed respondents to support them as well.

	Allowing the Fire Marshall to inspect sheltering structures support	Restriction on size support	Restriction on footprint of possessions outside a lived in vehicle allow support	Restriction on total number support	Restrict minimum distance between dwellings support
African American	88%	90%	84%	82%	81%
White	84%	79%	77%	72%	68%
Housed	84%	81%	80%	77%	73%
Unhoused	88%	81%	81%	83%	71%
Aggregate	85%	81%	80%	78%	72%

Finally, **we asked respondents whether they supported or opposed a variety of enforcement approaches.** These were the responses.

Importantly, a majority of respondents opposed a policy of disallowing any encampment in Oakland—indicating that Oaklanders understand the need to provide some accommodations for our unhoused neighbors. White and housed Oaklanders were least likely to oppose this type of policy.

Unhoused Oaklanders were more likely than housed Oaklanders to support allowing the City to enforce City rules at encampments and allowing the City to relocate an encampment. Most favored some allowance for rules enforcement.

	Allow City to enforce rules support	Allow City to relocate support	Require the City to offer shelter/housing support	Oppose disallowing of any given encampment support
African American	85%	76%	62%	47%
White	76%	69%	58%	32%
Housed	80%	73%	59%	39%
Unhoused	81%	78%	50%	53%
Aggregate	80%	74%	57%	54%

Textual responses

We also left plenty of space for respondents to type free-form responses to questions.

We received over 2,000 textual responses. The next few slides represent some of the most common themes and comments representative of respondents' ideas.

Comments on Encampment Locations and Lived-In Vehicles

- Encampments are inevitably in poorer regions of the City and with them come increased crime and increased health and sanitation issues. Our elderly, minority citizens and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged unfairly bear the burden of homeless populations. [Camping zones] will codify this social imbalance and continue to push the ill-effects of homelessness on these already disadvantaged groups.
- City needs to provide hygienic support for RVs as well, since many of them are old and broken down.
- I agree with the concept [of camping zones] however it appears that only certain neighborhoods bear the burden of having these designated camping zones. If all neighborhoods had to take on this burden I would agree this could be a good idea. It is not fair that certain neighborhoods like West Oakland have to deal with the burden of these encampments and all that comes with them.
- Until there is safe parking or permanent housing available, ticketing and towing vehicles that are dwellings must be halted.
- Make sure they are accessible to other services that the homeless need. I suggest you build restrooms and gathering rooms that are more permanent and demonstrate that health and community building is a right for every human being.
- If encampments are going to be allowed, they should be placed where they cause the least burden on and interruption of everyday life for citizens not living in them.
- No cops for enforcement.
- I strongly oppose having RV's in residential areas. I believe that the city needs to have RV parks.
- If an RV is immobile (for any reason, but especially mechanical) it is no longer an RV; it's just a large tent.

Comments on Policy Elements

- Setting standards for hygiene and waste removal that the City must meet. Do not place all encampments in poorer neighborhoods. They should be spread throughout the City. Participation of encampment residents in keeping the encampment as clean as possible. having a helpline for outreach for encampment residents to inform City about dangerous or threatening situations.
- A homeless person in an encampment may well establish a relatively stable existence. Before forcing such persons to leave they need to be offered something at least equivalent in stability and footprint to what they have.
- The idea of regulating encampments with city force or policing doesn't address the historical racist behavior of the police. How will the City ensure those who are mostly unhoused (Black and people of color) will not be unfairly harassed and targeted? However the City moves forward there should be a steering committee mostly made up of people who have been working on the front lines, who have a direct connection including citizens who are currently unhoused. They should have a right to be heard and part of the solution.

Comments from Currently Unhoused about Encampment Life

- You have to give people options before you give them standards. Right now peoples options are to pay an arm and a leg for an increasingly claustrophobic place and for a way of life that probably did not work for them the first time, or to be criminalized outside or treated like a dog in a shelter that often boils down to having full grown adults stand in line for hours before telling them to lay down, shut up, and wait to get kicked out at 6 a.m.
- You need ACCOMMODATING and COMFORTABLE day-room space. No one is going to care about living up to your standards if it is not a place they actually want to be in.
- We should be focusing on such middle ground options and seeing what effect they have long before we start asking if we are justified in shuffling people around and depriving them of rights in what few ways we have not already. contract with each person, make a local leader of a pod of encampments ie. self sustaining and self regulatory.
- try offering people the PRIVILEGE of paid garbage service. If this means they do not need to worry about being swept I am sure many would prove willing to pay it.