



Executive Summary

The following summary is provided for the convenience of the public and is not part of the proposed Resolution.

Burlington Forward establishes a comprehensive policy framework to restore Burlington's public spaces as safe, welcoming, and accessible for everyone. It reaffirms the City's commitment to compassion, dignity, housing, treatment, recovery, and behavioral health services, while also clearly rejecting the false choice between compassion and public safety, recognizing that lasting progress requires both meaningful support for people in crisis and consistent accountability for unlawful conduct.

Rather than creating a single new program or directive, this resolution calls on the City to pursue a coordinated strategy focused on improving public safety resources, expanding accountability and transparency, strengthening regional partnerships, improving data collection and performance measurement, and ensuring that emergency interventions lead to long-term housing, treatment, and recovery.

Major action items include the following:

- **Strengthen Accountability for Unlawful Conduct**
- **Expand the City's Visible Public Safety Presence**
- **Restore and Activate Burlington's Public Spaces**
- **Expand Efforts to Improve Cleanliness, Graffiti Removal, and Public Space Stewardship**
- **Clarify Zoning Policy for Public Health Initiatives**
- **Strengthen Partnerships with Non-Profit Service Providers and Private Property Owners**
- **Establish a Sustainable and Humane Framework for Addressing Homelessness, Behavioral Health, and Substance Use Concerns**

- **Consider Reasonable Expansion of Temporary Emergency Shelter Capacity and Sanctioned Camping, While Improving the City's Response to Unauthorized Encampments**
- **Strengthen State and Regional Partnerships**

Lasting compassion is measured not by our willingness to tolerate harm and suffering, but by our determination to end it. Burlington Forward recognizes that strengthening our City requires that we continue to help those in crisis find lasting stability, while also ensuring accountability for those who repeatedly harm others. By embracing our shared responsibility to these complementary goals, we can restore our public spaces and build a City where everyone can live and thrive in safety, dignity, and hope.

Resolution Related to

BURLINGTON FORWARD: A COMPREHENSIVE FRAMEWORK FOR SAFE PUBLIC SPACES AND A STRONGER COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, Burlington's downtown, parks, sidewalks, streets, libraries, waterfront, bike paths, and other public spaces are among the City's greatest civic assets. They are the places where neighbors gather, children play, businesses and tourism thrives, visitors form lasting impressions, and community life unfolds every day. Preserving these shared public spaces as safe, welcoming, orderly, accessible, and well-maintained for everyone is among the City's most fundamental responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, the Burlington City Council has adopted multiple resolutions and initiatives intended to strengthen public safety, improve community well-being, expand access to housing and behavioral health services, and respond compassionately to the challenges of homelessness, substance use, and mental illness; and

WHEREAS, the City of Burlington, together with healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, businesses, faith communities, neighborhood organizations, educational institutions, and countless volunteers, has committed substantial public and private resources toward emergency shelter, affordable housing, outreach, behavioral health services, recovery programs, harm reduction initiatives, and other efforts intended to assist vulnerable members of our community; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding these efforts and the extraordinary commitment of those serving our community, many individuals, including those experiencing homelessness, addiction, and mental illness, continue to be negatively affected by persistent public disorder, criminal activity, violence, repeated overdoses, open drug dealing and use, prohibited camping, vandalism, aggressive or threatening behavior, and other conduct that unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of Burlington's shared public spaces; and

WHEREAS, these conditions have diminished public confidence, strained municipal resources, adversely affected neighborhoods and businesses, discouraged investment and tourism, harmed morale and recruitment of police and other city staff, and undermined Burlington's reputation while also failing many individuals who continue to experience homelessness, addiction, or untreated mental illness without achieving lasting stability, recovery, or improved health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Burlington is and will remain a compassionate community where residents consistently demonstrate kindness and generosity toward neighbors experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental illness, and other crises. This resolution builds upon those values; and

WHEREAS, the City Council also finds that allowing individuals to remain in circumstances that jeopardize their health, safety, or dignity without meaningful intervention is neither compassionate nor humane. Lasting compassion requires connecting people to treatment, recovery, housing, supportive services, and, where appropriate, enforcement and accountability for unlawful conduct that harms others or unreasonably interferes with the public's use and enjoyment of shared public spaces; and

WHEREAS, the City Council rejects the false choice between compassion and public safety and affirms that accountability, treatment, housing, recovery, public safety, and public order are complementary, interdependent responsibilities that must be pursued together to advance the public interest and the dignity of every person; and

WHEREAS, the City further recognizes that Burlington cannot reasonably or sustainably serve as the exclusive or primary provider of shelter, behavioral health services, and substance use treatment for individuals from throughout Vermont and outside our state, and that these challenges require sustained partnership among municipalities, the State of Vermont, healthcare institutions, nonprofit organizations, and regional service providers to ensure that responsibility is shared equitably throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, restoring and preserving Burlington's public spaces requires clearly articulated values, public policy, measurable implementation, meaningful accountability, prioritized

enforcement of our existing laws and ordinances, sustained regional partnership, and a continuing commitment by every level of government and every community partner.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Burlington City Council hereby adopts the following policy framework to restore and preserve safe, welcoming, orderly, and accessible public spaces; expand meaningful pathways to housing, treatment, and recovery; strengthen accountability for unlawful conduct and conduct that unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of our shared public spaces; and promote shared regional responsibility for addressing the complex challenges of homelessness, substance use, and behavioral health.

ARTICLE I

General Policy

Section 1.01. Purpose.

The purpose of this Resolution is to establish a comprehensive policy framework for restoring and preserving Burlington's public spaces as safe, welcoming, orderly, accessible, and well-maintained places for all residents and visitors, while continuing Burlington's longstanding commitment to compassion, dignity, and meaningful support for individuals experiencing homelessness, substance use disorder, behavioral health challenges, and other circumstances requiring public assistance. To achieve these objectives, Burlington must realign its values and related efforts. An honest assessment indicates that neither the current nor previous policy frameworks have achieved their intended results, making a revised strategy necessary moving forward.

Section 1.02. General Policy.

It shall be the policy of the City Council that:

A. Burlington's public spaces belong to everyone. Every resident and visitor should be able to use and enjoy the City's parks, streets, sidewalks, libraries, waterfront, bike paths, public buildings, downtown, neighborhood business districts, and other public spaces safely and without unreasonable interference or exposure to unlawful activity and disruptive behavior.

B. Compassion without accountability is not compassion. The City Council rejects the notion that tolerance of unlawful conduct is itself an act of compassion. No individual has the right to engage in unlawful conduct or conduct that unreasonably interferes with the use and enjoyment of shared public spaces. Effective public policy requires both meaningful

opportunities for prevention, outreach, treatment, recovery, housing, and supportive services and consistent enforcement of criminal laws and municipal ordinances that protect the public's health, safety, and welfare. The City shall pursue both objectives simultaneously to ensure that Burlington's public spaces remain safe, welcoming, and accessible to all.

C. Individuals experiencing homelessness, substance use disorder, or behavioral health challenges deserve meaningful opportunities to obtain shelter, treatment, recovery services, and long-term stability. Burlington shall continue advocating for coordinated regional and statewide responses to homelessness, behavioral health challenges, and substance use disorder, recognizing that these challenges extend beyond Burlington's borders and require sustained partnership among municipalities, the State of Vermont, healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, and other community partners.

D. Decisions affecting public spaces, public health services, municipal resources, and zoning policy shall be guided by objective evidence, public transparency, measurable outcomes, and accountability to the public. Public accountability requires admitting when systems and policies have fallen short, and when existing social services lack the capacity to deliver the interventions needed for consistent improved outcomes.

ARTICLE II

Protecting Burlington's Public Spaces

Section 2.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to restore and preserve Burlington and its public spaces as safe, welcoming, orderly, accessible, and well-maintained places that may be comfortably enjoyed by residents and visitors of all ages while respecting the dignity of every person and ensuring that public spaces remain available for their intended public use.

Section 2.02. Public Space Policy.

The City shall prioritize the restoration and preservation of Burlington's public spaces for the benefit of all residents and visitors. Public spaces shall be managed to encourage lawful activity, positive community use, economic vitality, recreation, civic engagement, and public enjoyment.

Public spaces should not merely be accessible; they should be places where residents and visitors choose to gather and should reasonably expect to feel safe doing so.

The City shall make it a top priority to ensure public spaces remain reasonably free from unlawful conduct and conduct that unreasonably interferes with the public's use and enjoyment of those spaces, and that such spaces are well maintained, clean, and reasonably free of graffiti, litter, unattended personal belongings, and other conditions that detract from their safety, accessibility, and public enjoyment.

Section 2.03. Activation of Public Spaces.

The City finds that well-programmed, well-maintained, and actively used public spaces are among the most effective long-term strategies for promoting public safety, strengthening community life, and discouraging unlawful and disruptive activity.

The City shall expand the activation of Burlington's public spaces through community programming, arts and cultural events, recreational opportunities, family-oriented activities, and partnerships that increase positive public use of parks, downtown, neighborhood business districts, and other civic spaces. Consistent with the FY27 budget resolution, the City Council requests that the Administration continue coordinating with the City Council's Parks, Arts & Culture Committee to develop and implement these efforts.

Section 2.04. City Hall Park and Organized Activities.

The City Council reaffirms its prior policies regarding the restoration and stewardship of City Hall Park as outlined in the Council's August 2025 resolution concerning the management, activation, and preservation of the Park. The City Council declares again that City Hall Park shall remain one of Burlington's principal civic gathering spaces—welcoming, accessible, well-maintained, and available for the broad enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Within thirty (30) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council asks that the City Attorney's Office prepare and submit to the Council any ordinance amendments necessary to clarify where organized activities may occur within City-owned public spaces, establish when permits are required for such activities, and ensure that such activities do not materially interfere with the intended public use of City Hall Park or other public spaces.

The City Council requests that the Administration renew stalled efforts to assist with navigating how to secure any available and necessary permits for, or if permits are unavailable, offer alternative locations to unpermitted social service activities where participants could be better served while preserving the Park's role as Burlington's principal civic gathering space. If necessary to identify alternative locations, the City Council asks that the Administration evaluate appropriate indoor and outdoor municipal facilities, including Contois Auditorium where practicable and consistent with operational needs.

Within sixty (60) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Department of Parks, Recreation & Waterfront issue a request for proposals seeking one or more vendors, nonprofit organizations, or other qualified operators to activate the patio area located in the northeast corner of City Hall Park through food and beverage concessions, retail kiosks, recreational uses, cultural programming, public amenities, or other uses that increase positive public activity and enhance the visitor experience. Any request for proposals shall encourage creative, seasonal, and year-round activation strategies that promote regular public use of the space and are consistent with City Hall Park's role as Burlington's principal civic gathering space. Alternatively, the Administration may evaluate repurposing the patio area as a centralized operational hub for public safety personnel, in alignment with the intent of the City Council's September 2024 resolution on establishing a downtown public safety hub, to provide a visible, accessible, and continuous public safety presence within City Hall Park.

Section 2.05. Expansion of Public Safety Personnel and Public Space Response Capacity.

The City's sworn police officers, Community Service Officers, Urban Park Rangers, and other civilian public safety personnel continue to perform their duties with exceptional dedication and professionalism in protecting and preserving our public spaces. A number of these roles, particularly sworn police officers, unfortunately continue to face significant challenges to staffing, with available police officers consistently remaining at or below current levels since 2023. As the City continues with long-term efforts to rebuild its public safety infrastructure, there is an immediate need to strengthen the City's visible presence within its public spaces. Accordingly, the City Council requests that the Administration act within sixty (60) days following enactment of the Resolution to present recommendations to the Council on which public safety roles can be most immediately and substantially increased, if even on a temporary basis, to ensure more personnel are assigned to visible public safety and public space response functions. Moreover, the City Council asks that the Chief of Police continue to regularly update the Council's Public Safety Committee on recruitment efforts at the Burlington Police Department.

Immediately following enactment of this Resolution and prior to delivering the above-requested recommendations, the City Council requests that the Mayor take the steps necessary to expand the visible presence of public safety personnel in areas experiencing persistent public safety and public order concerns, which the Mayor's Administration has previously attempted to address through its working group on "hot spots," where ongoing conditions threaten public safety, diminish the public's use and enjoyment of these spaces, and risk undermining the success of generational projects like that at Burlington Square. For this purpose, the Mayor may use, as necessary, the monies allocated by the City Council in the FY27 budget to contract with

third-party public safety personnel, including certified police officers. Additionally, to the extent permitted by existing agreements with contracted public safety personnel, such as those currently assigned to patrol municipal garages, the Mayor is authorized to repurpose these personnel to higher priority areas.

Moreover, to the extent practicable, the City Council requests that the Administration recruit and organize one or more Public Space Response Teams comprised of City employees and employees of other local organizations committed to the vitality of Burlington who voluntarily elect to participate and successfully complete appropriate training. Public Space Response Teams shall supplement, but not replace, traditional public safety resources by increasing the City's visible presence within public spaces, promoting lawful and welcoming public use, and assisting in the preservation of City property. If the City's unionized staff are interested in this volunteer opportunity, the Council acknowledges the potential need to submit proposals to municipal unions as necessary to accommodate this.

To the fullest extent permitted by law and consistent with appropriate training and supervision, members of Public Space Response Teams may be authorized to:

- A.** Address and intercede conduct that unreasonably interferes with the public's use and enjoyment of Burlington's public spaces, including, but not limited to, the open use of drugs and alcohol, public intoxication, smoking where prohibited, disorderly behavior, and the encumbrance of sidewalks and walking paths;
- B.** Issue municipal ordinance citations within the scope of their legal authority;
- C.** Issue notices against trespass and take other lawful actions necessary to protect City property and public spaces;
- D.** Promote cleanliness and sanitation, identify maintenance concerns, and coordinate the prompt removal of graffiti and other public nuisances; and
- E.** Connect individuals experiencing crisis, homelessness, substance use disorder, or other behavioral health needs with appropriate treatment, recovery, housing, and supportive services.

The City Attorney and Chief Administrative Officer shall prepare and submit for Council consideration any ordinance amendments, budget proposals, administrative policies, or other measures necessary to implement this Section.

Section 2.06. Public Safety Cameras and Public Notification.

The City Council finds that visible public safety cameras, when lawfully deployed and appropriately identified, deter unlawful conduct, assist in criminal investigations, and promote public confidence in the safety of Burlington's public spaces.

Within thirty (30) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council asks that the Chief Information Officer prepare and submit to the Council a report identifying all City-owned or City-operated public safety cameras currently operating within Burlington's downtown and other public spaces. The report shall identify each camera's general location, operational status, and any significant gaps in camera coverage requiring future consideration, provided that nothing in this Section shall require disclosure of information that would compromise public safety or law enforcement operations and the report will be provided confidentially to the extent permitted by Vermont's Open Meeting Law. Moreover, in carrying out this Section and any future expansion of public safety camera systems, the City shall remain mindful of the importance of protecting individual privacy and civil liberties and shall ensure that the deployment, operation, and management of such systems are conducted in accordance with applicable law and appropriate safeguards governing the collection, retention, access to, and use of recorded data, including but not limited to the City's Fair and Impartial Policing Policy.

The City Council requests that the Administration install and maintain clear, visible signage at appropriate locations notifying the public that public safety cameras are in operation. Such signage shall be designed to deter unlawful conduct while promoting public awareness that public spaces are actively monitored for the protection of residents, visitors, businesses, and City property.

Section 2.07. Public Space Stewardship and Graffiti Removal.

Recognizing that clean, well-maintained public spaces contribute to public safety, civic pride, and neighborhood vitality, the City Council requests that the Mayor coordinate with the Council's Community Development & Neighbor Revitalization Committee to establish a public space stewardship program to encourage and support volunteer participation in the prompt removal of graffiti from public spaces and other beautification initiatives consistent with the purposes of this Resolution. In establishing this public space stewardship program, the Administration and CDNR Committee may collaborate with organizations and individuals already volunteering to perform the expanded work called for in this Section.

Any program shall provide participating residents with appropriate training, safety guidance, equipment, supplies, and other resources necessary to assist the City in removing graffiti from publicly owned property in a safe, lawful, and coordinated manner.

The City Council reaffirms that the prompt removal of graffiti from privately owned property remains the primary responsibility of the property owner. Any public space stewardship program should also provide a mechanism through which private property owners may authorize trained City employees or approved volunteers participating in the program to enter their property for the purpose of removing graffiti, subject to such reasonable conditions and limitations as the property owner may establish.

Section 2.08. Expanded Partnerships with Nonprofit Organizations and Private Property Owners.

The City Council recognizes that restoring Burlington's public spaces requires meaningful collaboration with businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and other private property owners whose properties directly influence the experience of surrounding neighborhoods.

Accordingly, the City Council asks the Mayor to develop and make publicly available for private property owners educational materials on:

- A.** Procedures for issuing notices against trespass as authorized by law;
- B.** Crime prevention and environmental design strategies;
- C.** Details on the extent to which private property owners can be held criminally or civilly liable for unlawful or other wrongful conduct permitted to continue on their premises;
- D.** Other available tools to assist property owners in responding to unlawful activity while promoting safe, welcoming, and well-maintained properties.

The City Council further asks the Mayor to engage with nonprofit organizations that provide services to individuals experiencing homelessness, substance use disorder, mental health challenges, or other vulnerabilities, and to relay the City's request that such organizations adopt reasonable expectations for respectful and lawful behavior on the organization's property and within adjacent public rights-of-way and public spaces immediately surrounding the organization's facilities, including expectations designed to discourage conduct that creates public safety risks, interferes with the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties and public spaces, or otherwise adversely affects the surrounding community. The City encourages nonprofit organizations to communicate these expectations in a manner that preserves the dignity of those receiving services while reinforcing shared responsibility for maintaining safe, welcoming, and accessible neighborhoods.

Section 2.09. Public Space Performance Standards.

Within sixty (60) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Mayor collaborate with the City Council's Public Safety and Parks, Arts & Culture Committees to adopt measurable performance standards for evaluating the condition of Burlington's public spaces, which shall be publicly posted on the City's Data Hub.

The standards shall include objective performance measures relating to, as appropriate:

- A.** Public safety conditions, including but not limited to the number of incidents, offenses, and arrests in public spaces;
- B.** Quality-of-life complaints, including but not limited to SeeClickFix reports on cleanliness and sanitation, and graffiti response;
- C.** Public space activation and programming;
- D.** Visitor and resident use of public spaces; and
- E.** Such additional performance measures as the Administration determines appropriate to enable the City Council and the public to evaluate progress over time.

ARTICLE III

Sustainable Intervention and Regional Responsibility

Section 3.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to establish a sustainable framework for responding to homelessness, substance use disorder, and behavioral health challenges. The City Council reaffirms Burlington's longstanding commitment to ensuring that individuals experiencing crisis are afforded meaningful opportunities to obtain shelter, treatment, recovery services, and permanent housing while recognizing that emergency interventions must ultimately lead to greater stability, independence, and improved health outcomes.

The City Council further recognizes that compassion requires meaningful intervention, measurable results, and shared regional responsibility. Emergency measures are intended to stabilize individuals and connect them to long-term solutions and should not become permanent substitutes for housing, treatment, recovery, or personal stability.

Section 3.02. Establishing Service Capacity.

Within sixty (60) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Mayor convene representatives of organizations providing emergency shelter, affordable housing, behavioral health services, substance use treatment, healthcare, emergency response, outreach, and other appropriate public and private partners to evaluate Burlington's sustainable capacity to responsibly provide emergency shelter, sanctioned camping, outreach, treatment, recovery services, and related supports. To the extent the City is already convening a group that includes the above-referenced stakeholders, the Administration may expand the scope of that group's work to include developing the assessment called for in this Section.

The assessment shall evaluate available staffing, financial resources, healthcare capacity, emergency response capability, housing availability, case management, sanitation, public safety impacts, fiscal sustainability, and such other operational considerations as may be appropriate.

Based upon that assessment, the City Council requests that the Mayor recommend the maximum number of individuals that Burlington can sustainably and humanely serve at any given time through the coordinated provision of emergency shelter, sanctioned camping, outreach, treatment, recovery services, and related supports. The recommendation shall identify the methodology and assumptions used to establish that number and shall include objective indicators by which the City may determine when Burlington has reached or exceeded its sustainable service capacity.

The Mayor may periodically review the recommended sustainable service capacity and recommend revisions to the City Council as conditions, available resources, or regional participation materially change.

Section 3.03. Regional Responsibility.

The City Council affirms that homelessness, substance use disorder, and behavioral health challenges are regional and statewide challenges requiring regional and statewide solutions.

The City Council further finds that current conditions strongly indicate that Burlington is providing services beyond what can be sustainably supported by its existing housing, shelter, behavioral health, public safety, and municipal resources. While the assessment required by Section 3.02 will establish a recommended sustainable service capacity, the City Council finds that immediate action to promote greater regional responsibility should not await completion of that assessment.

Burlington will continue to lead with compassion. Leadership, however, does not require Burlington to serve as the exclusive or primary provider of services for individuals from throughout Vermont.

The City Council requests that the Administration implement equitable policies and procedures to ensure that, when Burlington has reached or exceeded its sustainable service capacity, individuals seeking services are connected with available housing, shelter, treatment, recovery, behavioral health, and other supportive services in other communities, including through transportation assistance where appropriate. The City shall actively work with the State of Vermont, neighboring municipalities, healthcare providers, housing organizations, and regional service providers to expand service capacity throughout the region so that responsibility for serving vulnerable individuals is shared more equitably.

Section 3.04. Expanded Temporary Emergency Shelter Space and Sanctioned Camping.

Within ninety (90) days following adoption of this Resolution, the City Council requests that the Administration designate one or more locations for expanded temporary emergency shelter space or sanctioned camping to be utilized only when necessary to supplement available capacity at established emergency shelters.

Any expanded temporary emergency shelter space or sanctioned camping location shall be subject to approval by the City Council and generally situated outside Burlington's downtown core, waterfront, shared-use path network, and heavily utilized public parks and shall be selected with due consideration for surrounding neighborhoods, public infrastructure, environmental impacts, and the availability of supportive services. To best serve individuals able to utilize this location or locations, efforts will be made to designate locations with access to drinking water, toilets, shower facilities and handwashing stations, laundry, electricity, and dumpsters. To that end, the City Council acknowledges that while temporary emergency shelter space is preferable to sanctioned camping, neither should be considered a permanent housing solution and should be utilized only for the duration necessary to transition individuals to more appropriate placements.

Prior to approving any designated locations under this Section, the City Council will expect that the location will adopt and enforce operational standards governing admission, sanitation, security, storage of belongings, code of conduct, outreach, behavioral health services, treatment referrals, housing navigation, transportation, case management, and ongoing program evaluation.

The City Council asks that the Administration establish measurable performance standards for any expanded temporary emergency shelter space or sanctioned camping and shall publish the resulting performance data in a publicly accessible format on the City's website no less frequently than monthly. At a minimum, the publicly reported data shall include:

A. The number of individuals served during the reporting period and cumulatively;

- B.** The average daily occupancy and utilization rate;
- C.** The number and percentage of participants successfully transitioned to emergency shelter, treatment, recovery programs, permanent supportive housing, permanent housing, or other stable housing placements;
- D.** The average length of stay for participants;
- E.** The number of emergency service responses to a location; and
- F.** Such additional performance measures as the Administration determines are appropriate to evaluate whether a location is functioning as a temporary intervention that promotes health, safety, and successful transitions to more appropriate placements.

Section 3.05. Unauthorized Encampments.

The City Council finds that unauthorized encampments located in areas where camping is specifically prohibited are inconsistent with the policies established by this Resolution.

Consistent with applicable legal requirements, the City Council requests that the Administration act more promptly upon discovery of a prohibited encampment, generally within twenty-four (24) hours, to provide notice of a specified date on which the encampment will face ticketing, no trespass orders, other legal action, and removal of any remaining items. This date should be as soon as reasonably practicable following the provision of notice, allowing sufficient time for affected individuals to make alternative arrangements while protecting public health, public safety, environmental resources, and the public's continued use and enjoyment of Burlington's public spaces.

In accordance with City policy regarding sheltering on public lands, encampments noticed for removal will be provided contact information from local social service organizations serving unsheltered residents, the State of Vermont's Coordinated Entry Screening Form with instructions, information on other available community resources, information on the officials responsible for an encampment that is not removed, and details on where any collected personal property will be stored.

For the purposes of this Article, the City Council notes that Section 22-7 of the Burlington Code of Ordinances provides that "[i]t shall be unlawful for any person to camp in any public park in the city." Section 22-1 enumerates the City's parks and Section 22-23 further provides that "the land known as Urban Reserve ... shall be considered a city park subject to this chapter."

To the extent the City does not have sufficient staffing capacity to comply with this Section, the City Council asks that the Mayor's Administration act within sixty (60) days following enactment of this Resolution to present recommendations to the Council detailing how it will promptly increase the number of personnel authorized and trained to provide notices of removal and conduct associated outreach. The recommendations shall identify the staffing, organizational changes, funding, and implementation timeline necessary to ensure that notices of removal are issued consistently throughout the City.

The City Council requests that the Administration establish measurable performance standards governing the City's response to prohibited encampments and shall publish the resulting performance data in a publicly accessible format on the City's website no less frequently than monthly. At a minimum, the publicly reported data shall include:

- A.** The number of prohibited encampments identified during the reporting period;
- B.** The average time between identification of a prohibited encampment and issuance of a notice of removal;
- C.** The average time between issuance of notice and removal of the encampment;
- D.** The number and percentage of individuals contacted who accepted referrals or were successfully connected to shelter, a sanctioned camping location, coordinated entry, behavioral health services, treatment, recovery services, or other supportive services prior to or following removal of the encampment; and
- E.** Such additional performance measures as the Administration determines are appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of the City's outreach and enforcement efforts.

Section 3.06. Accountability and Enforcement.

The City Council reaffirms that every individual is entitled to dignity, due process, and meaningful opportunities to obtain treatment, recovery services, shelter, and supportive services. The City further reaffirms its commitment to prevention, treatment, recovery, and other evidence-based public health interventions.

The City Council rejects the notion that enforcing our laws and ordinances in response to unlawful conduct is an uncaring or unempathetic act, or that tolerance of unlawful conduct is itself an act of compassion. Effective public policy requires meaningful opportunities for treatment and recovery together with consistent enforcement of criminal laws that protect the public and preserve Burlington's shared public spaces.

Accordingly, the City Council declares that Burlington will not tolerate drug trafficking, the unlawful open use of controlled substances, retail theft and other property crimes that frequently support substance use disorder, or other criminal conduct that threatens public safety or unreasonably interferes with the public's use and enjoyment of shared public spaces.

The City Council further declares that enforcement of these laws shall remain a priority of the City. The Council supports proactive investigation, lawful detention where appropriate, arrest when supported by the facts and authorized by law, and referral for prosecution of individuals engaged in such criminal activity. Nothing in this Resolution shall be construed to discourage law enforcement officers from taking appropriate enforcement action authorized by law in response to these offenses.

The City shall continue pursuing treatment and recovery for those willing to accept assistance while supporting the investigation, arrest where authorized by law, prosecution, and appropriate punishment of individuals whose criminal conduct perpetuates addiction, victimizes residents and businesses, or undermines the safety and vitality of Burlington's public spaces.

Furthermore, the City Council notes that both the Situation Table and City Circle initiatives were implemented to improve outcomes for individuals at elevated risk of involvement with the criminal justice system, behavioral health crises, substance use, and homelessness, including by reducing emergency department utilization, overdoses, and other preventable harms, while also providing a more immediate and consistent system of accountability for individuals who repeatedly violate municipal ordinances.

The City Council is particularly concerned that the City Circle initiative, which was previously identified by the Mayor's Administration as a key component of Burlington's strategy to improve public safety and accountability, appears to have been substantially curtailed or discontinued. The Council further understands that this change may have been attributable, in whole or in part, to reductions in available funding, and seeks clarification regarding the status of the initiative, the reasons for any changes in its implementation, and whether alternative funding sources or program models have been considered. The Council is also concerned that, to its knowledge, the accountability mechanisms contemplated by the City Circle model, including prosecution or other consequences for participants who failed to comply with restorative justice requirements, have not been meaningfully utilized, and requests information sufficient to evaluate whether the program has operated as originally intended.

Within thirty (30) days of the adoption of this Resolution, the City Council's Public Safety Committee shall prepare and deliver a list of questions to the Mayor's Administration, the City Attorney's Office, and the Community Justice Center, the responses to which shall provide the

Council with a comprehensive update regarding the Situation Table and City Circle initiatives, including, at a minimum: (i) the current operational status of each initiative; (ii) participation levels and measurable outcomes for individuals served; (iii) data concerning compliance with restorative justice requirements and any enforcement or prosecutorial actions taken in response to noncompliance, to the extent permitted by law; (iv) the funding sources supporting each initiative, including any reductions or anticipated funding gaps; and (v) recommendations for the continuation, modification, expansion, or replacement of these initiatives based on their first year of implementation.

Section 3.07. Request for Ongoing Assistance From State Public Safety Personnel

Recognizing Burlington's ongoing public safety resource challenges, the City Council calls upon the Vermont State Police to continue partnering with the Burlington Police Department by providing supplemental law enforcement resources in and around the City's downtown and other locations where additional law enforcement presence is necessary to protect public safety, address criminal activity, and restore public confidence in Burlington's public spaces.

Separately, the City Council calls upon the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles Enforcement Division to expand traffic enforcement efforts within the City of Burlington's principal transportation corridors, including the new Champlain Parkway, where speeding, reckless driving, excessive engine noise, and other traffic violations have become persistent public safety and quality-of-life concerns.

The City Council affirms that, to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law, it welcomes and consents to the enforcement of both the laws of the State of Vermont and the ordinances of the City of Burlington by duly authorized State law enforcement officers operating within the City, consistent with their statutory authority and any applicable intergovernmental agreements governing such enforcement.

ARTICLE IV

Public Health Policy and Permitted Uses

Section 4.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to establish the City's policy regarding the implementation of significant public health initiatives, to reaffirm the City Council's legislative role in establishing zoning policy, and to strengthen collaboration between the City of Burlington and the State of Vermont in addressing public safety, behavioral health, and substance use challenges.

Section 4.02. Public Health Policy and Zoning.

The City Council continues to support evidence-based public health initiatives that improve individual and community health while recognizing that the location, operation, and long-term impacts of significant public health services should be considered through transparent public processes consistent with the City's Comprehensive Development Ordinance and adopted zoning policy.

The City Council finds that significant public health services with substantial neighborhood impacts should not be established through administrative interpretation where doing so effectively creates a new principal use not expressly identified within the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

Section 4.03. Overdose Prevention Centers.

The City Council finds that overdose prevention centers are not presently identified as expressly permitted principal uses within the Comprehensive Development Ordinance.

Accordingly, the City Council declares that any proposal to authorize overdose prevention centers within the City of Burlington should proceed only through amendment of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance following public notice, public hearing, and legislative action by the City Council.

The City Council further declares that, should such an amendment be proposed, overdose prevention centers should not be permitted within Burlington's Downtown Improvement District, as defined by the City's Charter.

Section 4.04. Syringe Service Programs.

The City Council finds that syringe service programs are a valuable public health strategy but are not presently identified as expressly permitted principal uses within the Comprehensive Development Ordinance and should not be deemed to constitute any currently permitted principal use absent express legislative authorization.

Accordingly, the City Council declares that any proposal to authorize syringe service programs as a principal use should proceed only through amendment of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance through the City's legislative zoning amendment process.

The City Council further declares that while syringe service programs should continue to be supported in Burlington, they should not be permitted within Burlington's Downtown Improvement District. The City Council opposes the continued operation or establishment of

syringe service programs within Burlington's downtown core and calls upon the Vermont Department of Health to work collaboratively with the City and local operating partners to identify an alternative location that better advances public health objectives while supporting the restoration and preservation of Burlington's public spaces.

The City Council further calls upon the Vermont Department of Health to consult and collaborate with the City before establishing, relocating, or materially expanding significant public health services within Burlington so that public health objectives, zoning policy, neighborhood compatibility, and impacts upon public spaces may all be appropriately considered. The Mayor's Administration shall promptly notify the City Council upon learning of State-sanctioned efforts to expand public health services within Burlington.

Additionally, within sixty (60) days following enactment of this Resolution, the City Council's Community Development & Neighbor Revitalization Committee shall begin meeting to develop a resolution that reaffirms, revises, or develops new recommendations from its previously developed report on syringe litter that will further the goals of this Section.

The City Council affirms that the positions taken in this Article regarding an Overdose Prevention Center or Syringe Service Programs are in alignment with Burlington's current comprehensive municipal plan, which acknowledges the difficulties associated with the proximity of drug trafficking and use to those in recovery, and provides in pertinent part that:

[H]igh concentration of social service providers can become easily unmanageable if all stakeholders are not working together, keeping an eye on some of the larger interactions and their implications. For example, the downtown is arguably not the best environment for people recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. The presence of active drug dealing and the highest concentration of drinking establishments in the state create serious challenges for those in recovery.

ARTICLE V

Implementation, Accountability, State Partnership, and Continuing Oversight

Section 5.01. Statement of Intent.

The purpose of this Article is to ensure that the policies established by this Resolution are translated into coordinated action through measurable implementation, public accountability, regular reporting, and continuing oversight by the City Council.

Section 5.02. Partnership with the State of Vermont.

The City Council appreciates the Governor's most recent efforts to support Burlington with additional public safety resources and calls upon the Governor to establish a sustained partnership with the City of Burlington to continue addressing the unique public safety, behavioral health, homelessness, and substance use challenges confronting Vermont's largest municipality.

The City Council requests that the Mayor invite representatives of the Governor's Office and appropriate State agencies to meet annually with the Administration, City Council, State legislators, and other regional leaders to evaluate regional progress, identify barriers to collaboration, and recommend additional actions to strengthen the partnership between the City of Burlington, surrounding communities, and the State of Vermont.

The City Council specifically refers back to the requests included in its August 2025 resolution on City Hall Park and its asks for the following specific actions by the State of Vermont and Governor to support Burlington in addressing chronic safety and health challenges: (1) Convene a county-wide committee of local, county and state law enforcement agencies to develop a coordinated response to drug trafficking and related crimes; (2) Convene youth service providers, schools, and staff from the Agency of Human Services to specifically examine trends among juveniles engaged in violence, drugs, and gun possession to identify strategies to interrupt these trends for at-risk juveniles; and (3) Convene a public health strategy discussion between members of the Department of Health and Department of Mental Health to examine how to remove barriers to treatment and address limited capacity to existing drug treatment centers to support people living with substance use disorder finding easier pathways to treatment and recovery.

The City Council further recognizes the substantial progress achieved through the Chittenden County Accountability Docket, which demonstrated that dedicated judicial resources could promote more timely case resolution, meaningful accountability, improved access to treatment and services, and greater confidence in the administration of justice for harm done to our communities. Accordingly, the City Council requests that the Governor, in coordination with the Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court and other appropriate State officials, continue and, as appropriate, institutionalize this model in Chittenden County by supporting the continued assignment of a dedicated judge, prosecutor, public defender, and necessary court personnel and resources to ensure the prompt adjudication of cases involving repeat offenders and individuals with multiple pending criminal matters.

Section 5.03. Legislative Partnership with the Vermont General Assembly.

The City Council calls upon the members of the Chittenden County Senate and House delegations, together with members of the Vermont General Assembly representing communities throughout the State, to support the enactment and strengthening of laws that advance the purposes of this Resolution.

The City Council further calls upon the General Assembly to work collaboratively with municipalities, public safety agencies, healthcare providers, service organizations, and other stakeholders to enact legislation that:

- A.** Strengthens public safety while protecting individual rights;
- B.** Expands access to and investment in behavioral health, substance use treatment, recovery services, and permanent supportive housing throughout Vermont;
- C.** Promotes equitable regional responsibility for addressing homelessness and behavioral health challenges;
- D.** Provides municipalities with appropriate legal authority and resources to restore and preserve public spaces;
- E.** Supports timely intervention for individuals experiencing behavioral health crises or substance use disorder;
- F.** Improves coordination among State agencies and municipalities; and
- G.** Otherwise advances the purposes of this Resolution.

The City Council further directs the Mayor and the City's legislative representatives to advocate for legislation consistent with these principles and to report to the City Council regarding significant legislative developments affecting implementation of this Resolution.

Section 5.04. Continuing Commitment.

The City Council adopts this Resolution not merely as a response to current conditions, but as a continuing statement of municipal policy intended to guide future legislative decisions, strengthen public confidence in local government, and restore and preserve Burlington's public spaces for future generations.

The City Council believes that the strength of a community is measured not only by how it responds to those in crisis, but also by how faithfully it preserves the public spaces that belong to everyone. Through this Resolution, Burlington recommits itself to both responsibilities and affirms that they are inseparable from one another.