



**Mayor Suzanne LaFrance**  
**Municipality of Anchorage**

June 25, 2025

**Mayor LaFrance proposes faster intervention for prohibited camping in specific safety areas and unauthorized structures on public lands**

On Tuesday, Mayor Suzanne LaFrance proposed an ordinance to accelerate intervention for prohibited camping in specific areas of the Municipality and for unauthorized construction on public land.

[AO 2025-74\(S-1\)](#) will help prevent people from setting up camp in places where it is most unsafe and inappropriate, including near high-speed roads, schools, playgrounds, and athletic fields. It also creates criminal penalties for the unauthorized construction of structures with hard-sided roofs, walls, or floors on public property, to prevent encampments from becoming entrenched.

The ordinance will help the Municipality intervene in a quick, targeted way to prevent dangerous encampments from developing in specific safety areas:

- It is never appropriate to set up a prohibited campsite near playgrounds, schools, childcare centers, neighborhood recreation centers, and other areas frequently occupied by children.
- It is also critical to keep streets and trails clear. Anchorage is experiencing record numbers of pedestrian deaths. A larger buffer area around our roads, trails, and other rights of way will protect people on foot and behind the wheel.

The ordinance takes a balanced approach to prevent unauthorized construction and inappropriate camping. It can be effectively implemented with the Municipality's current resources, while its targeted scope minimizes risk from potential legal challenges.

"My team put months of work into developing an effective and practical legal tool," **Mayor LaFrance said**. "We've seen what happens when large and entrenched encampments take over our public parks. No one has the right to build semi-permanent and dangerous structures on public land, or to camp on a piece of public land indefinitely. We must act to prevent another large encampment like Davis from taking root."

An interactive online map of the proposed protected areas is available [here](#).

The proposal aligns with the strategy Mayor LaFrance's administration has taken to address homelessness and improve public safety. This strategy includes providing a safety net of shelter and services, enhancing crisis care and outreach efforts, enforcing laws and

removing unsafe and unauthorized camps, and improving access to housing. For more information on what we're doing, visit [addressing-homelessness-muniorg.hub.arcgis.com](https://addressing-homelessness-muniorg.hub.arcgis.com).

This ordinance would supplement the existing civil abatement process, which still applies Muni-wide, as well as current trespassing laws.

The Municipality recognizes that many misdemeanor offenses relate to underlying behavioral health issues. For that reason, in late 2024, Municipal Prosecution adopted a new policy making all categories of offenses eligible for therapeutic courts.

**The ordinance would create clearly defined protected areas and criminal penalties:**

- On or within 200 feet of paved greenbelt and major trail systems (e.g., Coastal Trail, Chester Creek Trail, Ship Creek Trail, Campbell Creek Trail).
- On, or within 100 feet of the outer edge of, any street, road or highway with a speed limit of 35 MPH or greater.
- On or in any street, road, highway, sidewalk, bridges, tunnel, railroad tracks, snow disposal sites, or runways.
- On or within 500 feet of the edge of any playground area, athletic field, or any other maintained (e.g., groomed or mowed) open field on parkland; or the lot line of any parcel containing any school, licensed childcare center, neighborhood recreation center, or permit-based campground.
- Violations are generally a Class B misdemeanor. However, they become a Class A misdemeanor when the protected premises is a school, playground, licensed childcare center, or on any street, road, highway, sidewalk, bridge, tunnel, railroad track, snow disposal site, or runway. These elevated penalties reflect the severity of safety risks in these areas.
- Refusal to immediately comply with a warning from someone with apparent authority also results in a Class A misdemeanor.
- Constructing any hard-walled, hard-roofed, or hard-floored structure on public land without permission is prohibited, as is any unauthorized excavation for camping.
- Violation is a Class A misdemeanor. Possession of materials for such construction is a Class B misdemeanor.

A public hearing on this ordinance will be held during a special meeting of the Anchorage Assembly on July 11.