

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 5, 2025

**For more information, please contact:**

Brian Giffen, Homelessness Response Coordinator, Office of the Mayor

[brian.giffen@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:brian.giffen@bloomington.in.gov) or 812-349-3406

Desiree DeMolina, Communications Director, Office of the Mayor

[comms@bloomington.in.gov](mailto:comms@bloomington.in.gov) or 812-349-3406

**City Shares Safety, Outreach, and Support Efforts Ahead of Browns Woods  
Encampment Closure**

**Bloomington, Ind.** – The City of Bloomington is providing an update on the planned closure of the Browns Woods encampment, scheduled for Monday, Dec. 8. City staff and outreach partners will be on-site the following morning of Tuesday, Dec. 9, to support the transition. A 30-day notice was issued on Friday, Nov. 7 to all individuals residing at the site. Providing a 30-day notice has become [the City's standard protocol for encampment closures](#) to ensure clear communication, planning time, and sustained engagement with outreach teams.

The Browns Woods property is owned by the Community Foundation of Monroe County and managed as public space by the City of Bloomington's Parks and Recreation Department under a 2002 agreement. For nearly a year leading up to this transition—and throughout the notice period—City staff and local service providers have worked closely with residents of the encampment to identify safer and more stable options. This work has included collaboration with Centerstone, Beacon, HealthNet, Monroe County Jail Comprehensive Correctional Care, Heading Home, Bloomington police mental health professionals and outreach, Wheeler Mission, City of Bloomington After Hours Ambassadors and Mobile Integrated Health, IU Health, the Monroe County Health Department, and New Leaf New Life.

Encampment closures are used only as a last step when there are significant and immediate health or safety concerns at a site. They are not an enforcement tactic but the end point of long-term outreach, service engagement, and repeated offers of safer alternatives.

As of Dec. 3, outreach teams report that only one individual remains at the Browns Woods site, and plans are underway to support their relocation.

A separate encampment north of RCA Community Park is located on County-owned land and falls under Monroe County jurisdiction. Actions taken at that location are not directed, approved, or enforced by the City of Bloomington.

The City follows a standardized process for personal belongings during any encampment transition. Items are gathered and stored for 30 days with the support of outreach teams, unless they are contaminated, perishable, or unsafe to store. Individuals are given multiple opportunities to collect essential items before and during the transition.

The City recognizes the challenges winter poses for individuals living outdoors. Although [Bloomington Severe Winter Emergency Shelter](#) (B-SWERS) has been at or near capacity many nights this season, the shelter coordinates closely with the [Stride Crisis Center](#) to ensure that every person seeking a bed is connected to a safe place to sleep that night.

“These situations are incredibly difficult for everyone involved,” said Mayor Kerry Thomson.

“We use encampment closures only as a last step, and always alongside outreach. Our team and our partners will continue working directly with each individual to support a safer, more stable path forward.”

Mayor Thomson added, “I know people are worried about their neighbors, and I share that concern. We all want a community where no one has to sleep outside to stay safe. Until we get there, we will continue leading with compassion, clarity, and care, and taking steady steps that strengthen our long-term system of shelter, housing, and support.”

Residents can learn more about the City’s broader approach—including investments, partnerships, limitations, and formal encampment-response protocols—in the [Housing and Homelessness Response Report](#). The report, which outlines the City’s long-term strategies to improve safety and stability for community members experiencing homelessness, is available at [bton.in/hrhi](http://bton.in/hrhi).

###